

ROOMMATES

BY

DARRELL A PENNINGTON

4-3-26

EXT - SUNNYSIDE SENIOR CENTER - DAY

Snow falls directly on the large, weathered wood sign in front of the facility. It has seen better days, as has the building.

A car pulls up in the circular drive and stops in front of the door. The driver exits hurriedly, slipping on the snow, and runs to the passenger side door. He opens the back door and gets out a walker and preps it for his passenger. He opens the front door and helps out an elderly lady.

INT - DIRECTORS OFFICE - DAY

The DIRECTOR (mid 70s) of the Center and CHARLIE are having an early a.m. discussion. The Director picks up a styrofoam cup of coffee and sniffs it. Decides against taking a drink. CHARLIE (19), twirls his long hair around a finger. He doesn't look the Director in the eyes.

DIRECTOR

Charlie, we need to make sure to inject some new activities this week. Getting complaints. Everyone is tired of bingo and Family Feud. Steve Harvey is no Richard Dawson. Neither was Louie Anderson, God rest his soul. But he was fat. Probably contributed to his dying so young. But still very funny!

CHARLIE

Like what?

DIRECTOR

Definitely no more bringing in pets from the Humane Society. Wanda still swears that doberman ate her dentures. Woman leaves them everywhere and most days can't remember she even has dentures but can give you every last detail of what she ate on the way in and why Dobie pulled them right out of her mouth! Maybe go for the yogurt and not the Sausage Egg and Cheese biscuit, Wanda!

CHARLIE

OK. Then what?

DIRECTOR

Definitely no oil painting. Clarence is still complaining he can't get the stains out of the carpet.

Wants overtime to work on it.

CHARLIE

How about ideas of what I can do?

DIRECTOR

Definitely no more wine tastings! My Lord, when the Schneiders picked up Louise, even with her walker she couldn't walk straight.

CHARLIE

None of that helps.

DIRECTOR

Well, Charles Pennington. We hired you to bring some youthful energy and ideas to this center. You came highly recommended.

CHARLIE

From my grandmother. Who goes here.

DIRECTOR

Peggy is one of our most cherished attendees. And yes, she recommended you highly. Said you were creative and energetic. I'm hearing lazy and entitled.

CHARLIE

You never like my ideas.

DIRECTOR

Strip poker was not only not funny, it was downright offensive. And horrifying. Those images haunt me to this day.

CHARLIE

It was April Fools Day. I thought they would know I was joking.

DIRECTOR

Nintendo game Olympics? Also not funny. Or safe. That was an E&O claim waiting to happen.

CHARLIE

I was promoting vision, dexterity and reaction time. I guaranteed you they would improve over time.

DIRECTOR

The point being, Charlie, I need some reasonable ideas. The path to this desk is not an easy one.

CHARLIE

Path?

DIRECTOR

You're never gonna get to Director with three strikes on your tenure. I'm not going to work forever.

CHARLIE

Why would I want to 'get' to Director?

DIRECTOR

Charles? Tsk, tsk. You're 19, no high school diploma and no prospects for improvement? You're lucky your Grandmother loves you so much and we love her so much.

CHARLIE

What?

DIRECTOR

She's looking out for you, Charles. Don't disappoint her.

INT - ACTIVITY ROOM - DAY

Charlie stands in front of THREE rows of folding chairs. Seven elderly people sparsely fill the rows.

CHARLIE

So, just make sure you leave all your valuables and ID here. I'll explain the rest in the van.

DOUG raises his hand.

DOUG

My blood sugar is low. Can we stop by Krispy Kreme on the way?

CHARLIE

No can do, Doug. Can't have you in a diabetic coma before we finish the activity. Take another shot.

ELIZABETH raises her hand.

ELIZABETH

Can we run thru Frontier's drive-thru? I need some vodka.

CHARLIE

I told you Elizabeth. I fucked up with the wine tasting. There's no drinking on premises.

CINDY

We will be off premises.

Charlie reassesses.

CHARLIE

Good point. I'm driving so no issues. OK gang, let's bundle up and head out. Everyone knows their assigned seats. No arguing or 'forgetting'. Doug you got bitch today.

DOUG

YES!

INT - SUNNYSIDE CENTER VAN - DAY

The Sunnyside Van is in the handicapped parking spot in front of the main entrance of Eastland Mall. Charlie is turned in the drivers seat to address the gang. Elizabeth takes a swig from a pint of vodka and passes it to Cindy.

CHARLIE

OK. Everyone remembers the activity?

Peggy, in the back row, raises her hand.

CHARLIE (con't)

Memaw?

PEGGY

This isn't a good idea, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I told you. I cleared it with the boss.

PEGGY

David Winstead would never approve of this.

CHARLIE

Memaw. Chill. OK? David said if I was so invested in video games that I should think of some activity from my favorite game and apply it.

PEGGY

There are no appropriate activities in Grand Theft Auto.

CHARLIE

GTA, Memaw. Let's show respect.

PEGGY

This isn't a good idea.

CHARLIE

Seriously, Memaw. I know exactly what I'm doing. Exactly. OK guys - so no one has their ID, right?

SPENCER pulls his Life Alert necklace up.

CHARLIE (con't)

Hand it over, Spencer. OK, anyone else? Good. So remember, store security is not the police. You don't have to do anything they say. Just leave the item and say 'I need to go change my diaper'. Whoever has the most retail value by 2:00 wins a banana split from Lics. Any questions?

EXT - EASTLAND MALL MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Charlie relaxes in the van, scrolling his phone as he has earbuds in listening to horrorcore rap. Peggy exits the mall in handcuffs. She looks over to the van and Charlie's obliviousness to it all. She shakes her head as she gets in the patrol car.

EXT - SUMMER BREEZES ACTIVITY CENTER - DAY

An open-air activity center in COSTA RICA bustles with energy and activity. Over 100 residents fill the courtyard and reggae music blares as mid 50's to mid 70's couples are having a blast at 2:00 in the afternoon. DARRELL (late 50's) and PENNY (late 50's) are at a TIKI BAR enjoying margarita's and taking in the scene of a limbo contest. PENNY's CELL PHONE buzzes a notification. She picks it up to read a text.

CHARLIE (text)
Memaw got arrested again.

PENNY
What the fuck?

DARRELL
What is it?

PENNY
Mom. Again.

DARRELL
Again?

Penny nods affirmatively.

DARRELL (con't)
Like again, again?

PENNY
Again.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY

Peggy stands in handcuffs and an orange jumpsuit next to a public defender. GARY (early 80's) sits in the courtroom with 30 or so others waiting for their family member to appear before the judge. Penny and Darrell burst into the room, pulling luggage and wearing tropical resort wear. Gary motions to them.

PENNY
We made it as fast as we could.

GARY
They just walked her in.

PENNY
Oh my God. Handcuffs. For Mom? I think that's a tad dramatic. Why isn't Neil up there?

GARY
Who's Neil?

PENNY
Dad! I told you on the call. I texted you his contact

info to call him as soon as we hung up. We went over it three times, Dad.

GARY

Pen, I don't do texts. You know that.

PENNY

But we said this was an important moment. We were using text in this instance. For Mom.

GARY

I said that?

PENNY

Dad!

GARY

How are you doing, Darrell?

DARRELL

Good Gary.

GARY

You're looking so tan.

JUDGE (60's) calls out case number and name.

JUDGE

Case number F3678WR - the State vs Peggy Pennington.

PEGGY

Here, Judge.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (female, late 20s) pulls down Peggy's hand and interjects.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Yes, your honor. Mrs. Pennington is represented by public defense. Due to Mrs. Pennington's age and condition and due to the fact that she cares for her elderly diabetic husband, we are requesting that the state offer bail until the time that she would stand trial.

JUDGE

Does the state concur?

A PROSECUTOR (late 50s, balding and obese) stands and replies after catching his breath.

PROSECUTOR

The state does not, your honor.

The Court Room comes to life with surprise at the response. The Public Defender looks at the Prosecutor.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

I'm sorry?

JUDGE

The state wishes to deny bail to an 80 year old wife who is caring for her husband? Her diabetic husband.

PROSECUTOR

This is a fourth offense your honor. We've tried rehabilitation, we've tried community service, we've tried counseling. Clearly, we have an issue here and the retail community of this city doesn't need a serial shoplifter out on bail.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Warren. We talked about this. Her husband is going to do a better job. He promised.

PROSECUTOR

Your honor, do we think her husband tried the last time? I mean my God, she was on a field trip with her daycare center.

PENNY

What did he say?

DARRELL

I heard it too.

GARY

Charlie didn't tell you?

PENNY

No, he didn't tell me.

GARY

They had to fire him. Said this was the last straw.

Judge strikes his gavel.

JUDGE

There will be order in the courtroom. Mr. Hale, surely there is an acceptable solution other than having Ms. Pennington sit in an overcrowded jail for 30 days waiting for a trial.

PROSECUTOR

I'm open to ideas, Judge.

Penny stands up suddenly.

PENNY

I'll take care of her.

DARRELL

What?

GARY

Thank you, Pen.

JUDGE

I'm sorry. Who are you?

PENNY

I'm the daughter. Penelope Pennington.

JUDGE

And you live here?

PENNY

I live in Costa Rica, Judge.

JUDGE

And how do you propose to take care of her from Costa Rica?

Penny looks down at Darrell and his 'please don't' expression. Looks at her Dad and his glowing smile. Looks at her Mom who still has her back to the gallery.

PENNY

We'll move here, Judge.

JUDGE

Today?

PENNY

Sure. We'll move in with my Mom and Dad until her court date. We'd like to remove the public defender, no offense, dear, you are great. I'm sure. And we'd like to have Neil Chapman assigned as her attorney.

JUDGE

You are committing, in a court of law, that you are moving in with your Mother and Father today to serve as caretaker until such time that she can stand trial for felony shoplifting?

PENNY

Yes, Judge.

JUDGE

And you would like to replace her current attorney with Neil Chapman?

PENNY

Yes Judge.

JUDGE

Mr. Capman appears in this court quite often. I'm familiar with his schedule. That will extend the trial date a minimum of 60 days, I'm quite certain.

DARRELL

What?

GARY

Thank you, Pen.

Gary pats Darrell on the back.

GARY

Thank you, Darrell.

PENNY

Yes Judge.

Judge strikes his gavel.

JUDGE

I hereby release Peggy Pennington to the custody of

her daughter, Penelope Pennington, who will serve as live-in caretaker until trial. Have Mr. Chapman file a change of attorney request ASAP.

Opening Credits roll.

EXT - 816 S. HOOSIER AVE SIDEWALK - DAY

Penny and Darrell stand in front of the house with their luggage as snow falls. They look at the house with a sense of despair. A 30-foot camper sits under a camper cover in the double-wide blacktopped driveway. The Uber drives off.

DARRELL

No discussion at all, huh?

PENNY

What did you expect me to do, Darrell? Let my 79-year-old Mom sit in jail for 30 days or more while we do the limbo in Costa Rica? Sure would love to see Marian Winstead's posts then.

DARRELL

Maybe it's time.

PENNY

We're not doing that. It'll kill them. Both.

DARRELL

Perhaps a tad over-dramatized.

PENNY

We're not putting them in a home. I promised my Dad.

DARRELL

Why don't we move these pleasantries indoors?

INT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

PENNY

Oh!

DARRELL

That's piss and shit. Human.

PENNY

It's burning my nose!

SAM, the 6-year-old family Husky, limps into the room, blissfully unaware anyone was there. His tail starts wagging when he sees Penny and Darrell. Penny squats to his level and invites him in for a hug and kisses.

PENNY

Come here, boy! How are you doing big guy? How's our miracle puppy? I've missed you so much. The most!

DARRELL

Have you let the kids know we are in town?

PENNY

Yes.

DARRELL

And?

Penny finishes loving on Sam and stands up. She starts pulling her luggage into the guest bedroom.

DARRELL (con't)

And? (rubs Sam unenthusiastically) Hey buddy.

PENNY

And what? Same as always. No response. They don't need anything from us. When they do, they'll see the texts.

DARRELL

You don't think calling was the choice?

PENNY

When is the last time anyone other than my Dad has answered one of our calls?

The doorbell rings and interrupts the discussion.

DARRELL

Should we answer?

PENNY

It's our home now, too.

DARRELL

No. No it's not. You answer. I'm gonna take a shit.

Darrell takes his luggage and Pennys' to the guest room before heading to the bathroom.

PENNY

Close the door!

DARRELL (O.S.)

I thought this was our house now, too.

PENNY

Suit yourself.

Another doorbell ring reminds Penny of the task at hand. She rushes to the door and opens it. Standing with the storm door open is MICHELLE (late 50s), Penny's best friend.

MICHELLE

Welcome home!

PENNY

Oh thank Christ. Get in here and give me a hug!

Michelle and Penny embrace, soaking in each other's physical presence for the first time in nearly two years. After an elongated reunion Michelle backs up, wrinkling her nose.

MICHELLE

It smells like shit in here.

DARRELL (O.S)

The door is closed!

PENNY

Smells like a 1970's diaper pail, doesn't it?

MICHELLE

Oh my God! When the lid gets pushed down and the air rush smells like turd flavored Lysol? (gag sound and reaction)

PENNY

(waving her hand in front of her nose) That was the worst. So yeah, that's Gary and Peggy feces you're getting a whiff of.

MICHELLE

Smells like Cindy's fragrance to be honest.

Darrell walks in, drying his hands on a hand towel. He strides towards Michelle.

DARRELL

Get over here, girl.

MICHELLE

How's Big D?

DARRELL

Oh, you know. Just gettin comfortable in my new digs and all. Bought it sight unseen. Well, no discussion at least.

PENNY

Sack up. This is our new reality.

DARRELL

Temporarily. Doesn't that just sound wonderful? Where's Les?

MICHELLE

Really? Not in the snow. All I need is for that man to throw his back out again.

DARRELL

I feel him.

PENNY

Hey Gramps, it's 5 O'clock somewhere. Cocktail hour.

INT - BASEMENT - DAY

Darrell mixes cocktails at a small wet bar while Penny and Michelle discuss the current legal situation.

PENNY

That little fucker put them up to it. He gets off scot free.

DARRELL

He did get fired.

PENNY

What the fuck does he care?

MICHELLE

Cindy said it was a bum rap anyway. They were just taking fragrance testers and the security guard was flexing.

PENNY

My Mom had three fanny packs filled with shit around her waist under her sweater.

MICHELLE

But not from that store!

DARRELL

How does your Mom never get nicked?

MICHELLE

(significant pause)Cindy...only steals food. She said she stole two seventy-five dollar boxes of chocolates And Wonder Bitch ate all of it before Peggy got busted. Where that diabetes comes from/ I wonder, bitch.

Penny's cell phone text notification dings. She looks at the phone and opens the text.

CHARLIE (text)

Are you all at Memaw's and Ganny's?

PENNY (text)

Yes.

CHARLIE (text)

Can I come over to talk?

PENNY

Make mine a double.

EXT / INT - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Charlie and his girlfriend (KAYLEIGH, 17) stand on the front porch, each wearing a backpack and holding a cat carrier. Three garbage bags of clothes and a box of cat litter /litter box sit on the porch. Penny and Darrell stand with the front door open, the storm door the only barrier

between the four. No one looks happy. Darrell opens the storm door.

DARRELL

Hey buddy, get in here!

Darrell awkwardly moves in for a hug. Charlie attempts to return it but the cat carrier is in the way. He sits it down as Kayliegh mimics him and moves in to hug Penny. Sam walks back in. Charlie points all of his attention to Sam.

CHARLIE

Hey Sam. How are you buddy?

Charlie and Sam hug and kiss as Sam gets more excited and starts barking joyfully and verbally welcoming his best friend. The cats hiss, Kayleigh starts crying and mass chaos erupts. Darrell and Penny look at each other hopelessly.

INT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Penny, Darrell, Charlie, and Kayleigh are sitting around the dining room table. The cat carriers sit in Charlie and Kayliegh's lap as Sam sniffs around them. Charlie strokes Sam's fur.

PENNY

Kayleigh. It's nice to finally meet you in person. Zoom calls are great but face-to-face is much better. You're even prettier in person.

CHARLIE

Momma.

PENNY

It's true.

CHARLIE

Her physical appearance doesn't give her more value.

PENNY

You're exactly right. Kayliegh, I stand corrected. Now, why are you here with all of your belongings?

CHARLIE

We got evicted. I was behind on the rent.

PENNY

You couldn't be that far behind. We just turned off the auto pay two months ago.

DARRELL

How far behind are you?

CHARLIE

Two months.

PENNY

Charlie. Jesus Christ.

Kayleigh starts crying again.

CHARLIE

Kayliegh is a Christian.

DARRELL

Really?

CHARLIE

Communists and Christians can co-exist.

PENNY

Can they? History suggests otherwise.

CHARLIE

We've managed just fine for almost a year.

PENNY

Can't say the same about the rent, apparently. Two months? Come on, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I don't know what you want me to say. I didn't ask for this.

PENNY

Charlie, you're 20 years old.

KAYLIEGH

In a week.

PENNY

You're 20 years old. And you have a family to be responsible for.

CHARLIE
We're not married.

DARRELL
But you could be.

CHARLIE
Not legally.

DARRELL
Excuse me?

CHARLIE
She's seventeen.

DARRELL
What?

CHARLIE
You didn't tell him?

PENNY
We were gonna ease into it.

CHARLIE
It's been a year.

PENNY
Yeah. Ease.

DARRELL
I'm sorry. You've been living with an underage girl for the last year and we've been paying for it? We're accomplices in this, you know.

PENNY
Don't be a drama queen. I checked. Age of consent in Indiana is 16. He's legal.

DARRELL
He's legal. You're legal. Well thank Christ for that.

Kayleigh starts crying again.

INT - THREE-CAR DETACHED METAL GARAGE - DAY

Penny and Michelle sit on mismatched chairs around a wood burning stove bundled up. They each have a lit joint. The tool shed around them appears not to have been used in a decade.

MICHELLE

Feels just like high school again.

PENNY

Better weed now (cheers the joint with Michelle).
Thank God.

MICHELLE

That ditch weed was hay basically. Still nothing
from Jaq?

PENNY

It's fine.

MICHELLE

It's been two years. Almost. Give it a break
child.

PENNY

It was rough for a long time before that.

MICHELLE

She should still be sending you pictures of Laine. And
call you on Mothers Day.

PENNY

My mom sends them. We text. We don't have to have a
face-to-face calls. How 'bout your mustard butts?

MICHELLE

OK, I'm so glad you asked. I did a thang..

PENNY

Michelle...

MICHELLE

Too late.

PENNY

What?

MICHELLE

It's not a big thing. Seriously. But I'm sort of combining CJ's engagement party with a Welcome Home party for you two.

PENNY

What? You didn't even know we were coming home 72 hours ago.

MICHELLE

This girl knows how to text.

PENNY

I don't want this to be a big deal. We're not back. We're just visiting.

MICHELLE

You never know. But so what? It's a good excuse for another fun party. But you do need to prepare yourself (lifts the joint in the air).

PENNY

Oh. Really?

MICHELLE

Everyone has said they're coming.

PENNY

Everyone?

MICHELLE

Pretty much.

PENNY

Damn, girl.

MICHELLE

I know how to throw a party.

PENNY

So I have three days. Better start dosing up.

Penny takes a big hit from the joint as her cell phone text notification dings. Penny looks at her phone.

PENNY

Oh shit.

MICHELLE

What?

PENNY

Jaq is on her way to Evansville.

MICHELLE

From Kansas City?

PENNY

She'll be here in an hour.

Charlie pokes his head in the garage. Sam stands beside him.

CHARLIE

Oh wow. It reeks in here.

MICHELLE

Got the good stuff today!

CHARLIE

Memaw and Ganny are back.

PENNY

Your sister is on her way here.

CHARLIE

From Kansas City? It's turning into a family reunion.

MICHELLE

I'm gonna get out of your hair. Give me a call. Les wants to see you all when you get settled in. Let's go to Peep Hole for dinner tomorrow.

INT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Penny and Darrell sit at the dining table with Gary, Peggy, Charlie and Kayliegh.

PENNY

Can we discuss the mall excursion?

CHARLIE

I think it's pretty transparent. It's not like those corporate thieves aren't stealing this country blind. They'll be fine.

PENNY

That's not the point. You put all of them in harm's way Charlie.

CHARLIE

Memaw, did you feel in danger?

PEGGY

No. I like the rush. But it was still a bad idea.

CHARLIE

See. She likes the rush. I bet getting arrested again made it even more fun, didn't it Memaw?

PENNY

Come on Charlie. Work with me.

CHARLIE

David's been ridin' my ass for the last month. I hate that job. You know that.

PEGGY

He's always been an asshole. You can ask Marian about that one. Right, Daddy?

GARY

Don't pull me into this.

PENNY

You hate every job.

DARRELL

Work in general.

CHARLIE

Yeah. I do. Learned from the best.

DARRELL

Jesus Charlie, I worked for 38 straight years!

Kayleigh attempts to stifle another cry. A tear streaks down her cheek. Charlie places his hand on her leg for comfort.

CHARLIE

And hated every day of it.

DARRELL

Of course I did! It's work? But it needed to be done. I had responsibilities. Bills to pay.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Costa Rica resorts aren't cheap. Ganny, did you like your job?

GANNY

I'm gonna stay out of this one Charlie. Uncle Sam still pays my bills every month. But I sure am glad to see you and Kayleigh.

CHARLIE

Can we stay here for a little bit? Until I get back on my feet and figure out what we're gonna do?

GARY

Well yes.

PEGGY

Sam will be so happy to see you every day.

GARY

I've told you if you ever need anything we are here for you. I'm so glad to see you all. Everyone. All here at once. If only Jackie and Laine was here too.

PENNY

Well, Dad. It's sure shaping up to be your day.

The doorbell rings. Penny stands up.

PENNY

I'll get it.

INT / EXT - LIVING ROOM / FRONT PORCH - DAY

Penny walks to the front door and opens it. JAQ (24) and LAINE (5) stand on the porch. Jaq holds a suitcase. Laine holds a rabbit cage with a baby rabbit. Penny opens the storm door. She steps a foot on the porch to give Jaq a hug.

PENNY

Baby girl. It's so good to see you.

She hugs Jaq. Jaq doesn't return the hug. Penny bends down to hug Laine.

PENNY (con't)

How are you, little princess?

LAINE

Hi Mimi. See Floppy?

PENNY

I do see Floppy. Is that a new rabbit?

LAINE

Daddy got it for me for Easter. Before he died.

PENNY

What? (looks to Jaq) Austin died?

Jaq bursts into tears. Penny rushes to console her and get her in the house.

PENNY

Here, let's get all your stuff in.

She looks at the HONDA CRV parked on the street. Packed to the gills with everything Jaq and Laine own.

PENNY (con't)

Well, let's get you all in here.

INT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Penny and Jaq sit on a couch. Jaq uses a tissue to wipe her face and nose. She composes herself as Laine sits on the floor playing with the rabbit through the cage.

PENNY

What happened?

Laine replies without looking up.

LAINE

He's with the angels now. Nana said he's all better and I'll get to see him when I go to the Angels.

JAQ

Can we go to the garage?

INT - GARAGE - DAY

Penny and Jaq sit in the chairs. Jaq pulls out a one hitter.

JAQ

Do you mind?

PENNY

Of course not. So what happened?

JAQ

Drunk. Flipped the car down the side of that embankment on highway 71. I told him a million times he was a fucking idiot for taking that highway. I guess a hundred dead before him wasn't enough proof. And of course, there's no convincing him of Uber.

PENNY

I'm so sorry, sweetie. How are you doing?

JAQ

I'm fine. We are...were, text only and just about pick up and drop off times. Laine doesn't understand. And his Mom is so dead set on sugar coating everything and dressing it all up in the angels and God's plan. I'm so sick of hearing God's fucking plan. I had to get out of town. I couldn't take it any longer. When you texted about Memaw, I thought now was as good a time as any.

PENNY

Of course. Why wouldn't it be? So, what are you going to do?

JAQ

I don't know, mother. We just got here. All the snow and shit. I'm a nervous wreck. (loads the one hitter) I just need some time to chill and figure things out.

PENNY

I'm just asking.

JAQ

I think I'll ask Ganny if we can stay a few days

PENNY

Why not? The more the merrier.

INT - BASEMENT - DAY

Jaq, Charlie and Kayleigh hang out while the parents and grandparents discuss plans and love on Laine upstairs. Kayleigh and Charlie rest against each other affectionately on a couch. Sam sits on the other side of Charlie, his arm draped around Sam. Jaq sits in a slide rocker, sliding back and forth.

JAQ

You're so much cuter in person.

CHARLIE

Jesus...(to Kayleigh) I'm sorry. Sis, come on. Momma's bad enough.

JAQ

That cuts.

CHARLIE

It should.

JAQ

But it's still true. And there's nothing wrong with it. No, you're not more valuable because you're cute. But the world is gonna be a hell of a lot easier for us and no shame in knowing it.

Charlie surveys his surroundings carefully.

CHARLIE
Thank God we're not ugly.

JAQ
This is the chair Memaw rocked us in. (sings) You
are my sunshine...

KAYLEIGH
My only sunshine.

CHARLIE
You know that song?

KAYLEIGH
My grandma sang it to me every night.

CHARLIE
Really?

KAYLEIGH
She used to love me.

Charlie hugs and consoles her.

JAQ
So she just kicked you out?

CHARLIE
Sis?

JAQ
What? Was it a secret? Oh shit. I'm sorry.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry. It just came out when we were texting.
I wasn't spreading your shit.

KAYLEIGH
It's fine.

CHARLIE
Really? I am sorry.

KAYLEIGH
Yeah. I like your family.

JAQ
Give it time girl.

INT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The entire family squeezes into the living room. Kayleigh sits in Charlie's lap and Darrell and Gary stand. Cat carriers, a rabbit cage and Sam clutter the floor. Penny commands the room.

PENNY
OK, folks. So we got ourselves a bit of a predicament. But hey, we're family and family comes together in times of need. Never imagined it would be this together but life throws you lemons.

LAINE
And you make lemonade!

PENNY
(startled) Why yes, princess. Where'd you hear that?

LAINE
Mommy says it all the time.

Penny looks at Jaq lovingly, a glow of pride and accomplishment radiates from her face.

PENNY
She does, huh?

LAINE
Yes. Family doesn't have a lemon law so we're stuck and might as well make lemonade. Right Mommy?

Jaq looks at Penny.

PENNY
She's so right. Real fountain of wisdom, your mother. You hear, Darrell. Raised an Einstein.

DARRELL
Two of them.

GARY

That's right. Smartest grandkids on the block,
ain't that right, Mom?

PEGGY

That's right, Daddy.

JAQ

Ewww... Memaw. Settle down.

PEGGY

What?

JAQ

Do you even know what Daddy means today?

Peggy sticks her tongue out at Jaq.

PEGGY

Words existed before you were born, little girl.

CHARLIE

Oh, Burn! Memaw burned you.

Sam barks in agreement.

JAQ

You hush Sam. She didn't burn me.

PENNY

If I can butt in for a moment, so everyone knows
where they're going to rest their precious little
heads tonight.

Jaq, Charlie and Peggy take turns sticking their tongues at
each other, Charlie and Peggy teaming up on Jaq.

PENNY (con't)

Charlie, you get the camper with the cats. This
is Sam's house and it's not fair of him to have
the cats invading his space.

Sam sits with his face close enough to one of the cat
carriers as the cat reaches out and pats Sam's nose.

CHARLIE

You mean me and Kayleigh.

PENNY

Kayleigh gets the room next to the laundry room.

CHARLIE

What?

PENNY

Hey, Memaw and Ganny's house, Memaw and Ganny's rules. Don't like it, pay your rent.

JAQ

Ohhh, you got burned.

Sam barks in agreement. Charlie flips off Jaq.

GARY

Charlie. That's your sister.

Jaq sticks her tongue out at Charlie.

PENNY

Jaq, you and Laine and Floppy get the rest of the basement and the pull out couch.

JAQ

Thank you Ganny. We really appreciate it. It'll just be a few days.

GARY

You all stay as long as you like, sweetie.

PENNY

Darrell and I will take the guest room. So just to make sure the ground rules are set and everyone abides. This little experiment of insanity only works if everyone follows the rules. Got it?

Penny surveys the room as a sea of blank faces sit expressionless.

PENNY (con't)

Got it?

EVERYONE

Got it.

PENNY

Great. So Rule # 1 - no intercourse for any unmarried individuals. Rule #2 - no guests for unmarried individuals. Rule #3 - curfew of 11:00 p.m. for unmarried individuals. Rule #4 - weed is confined to the garage.

Jaq and Charlie look at Memaw and Ganny.

MEMAW

Your mother explained that it's a must. Medicine. For your heads.

JAQ

What do you think Ganny?

GANNY

I'm so happy you all are here. If your mother says it's a must, it's a must.

PENNY

And just some overall consideration and empathy will do wonders. This is Memaw and Ganny's house, not ours.

CHARLIE

Sounds just like ours.

DARRELL

Consequences buddy. Consequences.

INT - NEIL CHAPMAN OFFICE - DAY

Peggy and Penny sit in chairs opposite of Neil behind an impressive mahogany desk. The lavishly appointed office occupies the Penthouse corner of the tallest building in the city. A billboard advertising the Chapman Law Firm can be seen over Neil's shoulder.

NEIL

Ok, the change of attorney was approved. Looks like the court date will be August eighth.

PENNY

August?

PEGGY

Your birthday!

PENNY

Shit.

NEIL

I'm sorry. It's the earliest I could get.

PENNY

They're really going through with a trial? You can't get them to drop it?

NEIL

It's a felony, Penny.

Penny looks at Peggy. An awkward expression emerges as she's not sure whether to be sad or mad. She settles on both.

PEGGY

I'm sorry.

Penny wants to accept the apology but she can't. She just stares back at her mother blankly. Wondering how she got to this exact spot. Neil breaks the awkward silence.

NEIL

I am too. But it was the best I could do. So Peggy, why don't you walk me through this again just so I understand.

PEGGY

Charlie had just taken us on a field trip to the mall. It was a contest for a banana split. Lics. (looks at Penny) That's Daddy's favorite so I was gonna get it for him.

PENNY

That's great , Mom.

NEIL

Your Charlie?

PENNY

The same.

NEIL

Shit.

PENNY

Yeah. Considering, I was hoping it didn't need to get brought up.

NEIL

If we try to place responsibility on the senior center you know they are going to flip it on him.

PENNY

That can't happen.

NEIL

I'm aware. But, I don't know of a better defense. I don't know of another defense.

PENNY

Neil, Charlie can't be a part of this. We're so close to this being behind us. My God, we're talking petty shoplifting.

NEIL

The law sees it differently. Look Peggy, this is your fourth time. Do you understand what you are looking at here?

PEGGY

No.

NEIL

This is a felony. You're looking at up to six years in prison.

PENNY

Six years! She's 79. That's a death sentence.

NEIL

The judge can make allowances for her age but he's not obligated to do so.

PENNY

Can't we pay some sort of fine or something. Just get it taken care of? Like with Charlie. Make it go away.

NEIL

You're oversimplifying. We didn't make it just go away. Clearly.

PEGGY

Will you be able to take care of Daddy? So he won't need me to?

PENNY

What?

PEGGY

If I have to go to jail. Will you be able to take care of your Dad?

PENNY

Mom, you're not going to jail.

Peggy looks at Neil.

PEGGY

Can I go to jail?

NEIL

You could. If we use the senior center as your defense I think we can get a not guilty.

Peggy looks at Penny.

PEGGY

But that will cause problems for Charlie?

PENNY

It cou...

NEIL

Yes. I can assure you they will turn it on Charlie.

PEGGY

Well, we can't have that.

INT - PEEP HOLE - NIGHT

Penny, Darrell, Michelle and Les sit at a large square table in the middle of The Peep Hole, a hole in the wall

bar and greasy burger joint that the foursome regularly patronized before Penny and Darrell left for Costa Rica.

MICHELLE

You gotta hear the latest dumbass thing limp dick did.

LES

This is good.

DARRELL

All ears.

MICHELLE

So you know he had the penis pump.

DARRELL

I mean limp dick paints a picture.

MICHELLE

Right. So you're supposed to clean it every time you use it but of course he never did.

PENNY

Ewww. You didn't make him?

MICHELLE

I didn't want anything to do with the man's dick.

PENNY

But still.

MICHELLE

Stop. So anyway he was on this plan where every year they send new supplies to start over. Dumbass forgot to update the shipping address so it came to the house the other day. Delivered in a sorta clear plastic bag with a shipping label and there's all these tubes and batteries and I don't know. So I gave it to Izzy when she and Junior went to visit. 'Here, give this to your father', 'what is it?', 'you'll have to ask him'.

DARRELL

Damn girl.

PENNY

Damn girl nothing. He's lucky she didn't just snip that floppy vienna sausage off when she had the chance. That's what I told her to do. Hear that Les?

LES

I ain't fucking up!

The bar is full and AMANDA (30s), a plump and cute waitress, the only one working tonight, attempts to keep everyone served and satisfied. She approaches the table and recognizes them.

AMANDA

Oh my God! Penny and Darrell!

She bends down to hug them both.

AMANDA (con't)

Oh my goodness. How long has it been?

PENNY

Almost two years.

AMANDA

Are you shitting me?

PENNY

In May.

AMANDA

You all are back?

DARRELL

Temporarily. Temporarily.

PENNY

We're staying with my parents. The kids have some stuff going on. My Mom does. It was just easier if we came back to help out for a bit.

AMANDA

Well, I don't blame you for not wanting to stay.

Amanda looks out the front of the bar at the snow-covered street. Looks around the hectic and chaotic weeknight surrounding her.

AMANDA (con't)

I see all your pictures on Facebook. I'm living through you vicariously.

LES

We all are.

PENNY

So how are things with you?

AMANDA

Oh you know. The same. Shitty job, shitty boyfriend.

PENNY

Well you can come visit us anytime you want. You know that.

The short order COOK (30s) rings a bell violently.

COOK

Order up!

AMANDA

OK, I gotta get this. Do you all need menus? I remember the usual.

DARRELL

Give us four of those. Round of Mich Ultra's too.

AMANDA

Fireball shots?

DARRELL

Sur...

PENNY

Oh Lord no.

MICHELLE

I'll take one.

LES

Me too.

DARRELL

Same.

Amanda looks at Penny waiting to see if she will change her mind. She non-verbally encourages Penny to take one.

PENNY

Why not?

INT - PEEP HOLE BAR - NIGHT

15 or so people stand around Darrell and Penny's table as Amanda brings a third tray of shots for everyone and passes them out. The song SHOTS (Lil Jon) blares over the bar sound system. The packed bar is a scene out of the 1990's. GENE (60'S black man) holds his shot the highest, nearly reaching the low ceiling.

GENE

To Darrell and Penny. Welcome Back!

Darrell attempts to be heard above the roar as people slam the shots back and loudly drop the glasses on nearby tables.

DARRELL

Temporarily!

INT - GARY AND PEGGY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peggy methodically goes through every leftover in the refrigerator, opening the container, taking a sniff and more often than not taking a bite. She repeats the process ten times at least. She closes the fridge. She examines an open bad of gumdrop candy on the counter. Takes five and heads down to the basement.

INT - PEEP HOLE - NIGHT

Amanda brings a tray of food and the crowd disperses. She places a plate with a stacked BLT (extra bacon) and crinkle fries in front of each. Sets a condiment caddy in the center of the table and refreshes everyone's beer.

AMANDA

I think that's everything.

MICHELLE

Thank you girl.

PENNY

Oh my God, I've been craving this ever since we boarded the plane.

MICHELLE

So what are you going to do?

PENNY

Wring Charlie's neck?

DARRELL

We have too much invested.

MICHELLE

Maybe you could delay the trial?

PENNY

What?

MICHELLE

If Charlie's probation is up in November then just try and get the trial moved past his end date.

DARRELL

No way. We are not staying here until November.

PENNY

Hold on. That's not a terrible idea.

DARRELL

It's the worst idea yet.

PENNY

Just shut it for a minute. Yeah, his probation ends October thirty-first.

Flashback

EXT - 1980's STYLE STATION WAGON - NIGHT

A beat up station wagon sits ner the back door of the Humane Society. Charlie sits in the middle row. Two friends, JERIAD (15) and CALEB (16), sit up front. Each has

a facemask rolled up, sitting on the top of their head. Jeriad holds a crowbar, Caleb an antique nine-pound hammer, and Charlie an industrial-sized lock cutter. Horrorcore Emo Rap plays in the background.

CALEB

OK, I disabled the cameras before I closed up tonight. Alarm is hard-wired, though. Couldn't figure it out. I'm guessing six minutes tops. I got the back door and then we go in and open as many cages and rooms as possible.

They pull the face masks down and exit the station wagon, leaving the doors open and car running. They walk to the building's back door. Caleb slams the hammer down on the door handle, breaking it off as the alarm sounds. The three rush in and go about freeing as many animals as they can. Charlie stops at a cage with a husky puppy.

CHARLIE

You ready to get out of here buddy?

He snips the cage lock and opens the door. Reaches in and hugs and kisses the dog.

CHARLIE (con't)

Go on buddy. You're free. Halloween is your liberation day!

The three go about freeing more animals. Two police cars with blue lights flashing but no sirens sounding screech to a halt in the front parking lot. Blue light floods the space. An officer exits each cruiser and approaches the front door with guns drawn.

JERIAD

Shit! Let's go.

CALEB

Hit it Charlie.

The three run to the car and dive in. Caleb guns the gas as he slams the car in reverse. A yelp is heard as he moves the gear shift to drive and starts to peel out of the parking lot.

CHARLIE

You ran over the husky!

Caleb eyes the rearview mirror. Charlie's face is red and a tear runs down his cheek.

CALEB

Get out of my view.

CHARLIE

You ran over the fucking husky.

Caleb slams the gearshift to park. Charlie exits the car and rushes to the dog. He picks him up. His left leg looks hyper extended and the dog yelps when Charlie touches it. The two police officers approach the car, guns drawn.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY

Charlie and Neil stand at a table in front of a Judge.

JUDGE

Due to your status as a minor, this conviction for breaking and entering, reckless endangerment and animal cruelty is ordered sealed until November first 2026. Until such time, defendant will be placed on probation. Conviction of any crime during the probationary period will unseal this conviction and regular sentencing guidelines will apply.

End Flashback.

DARRELL

Let's talk about this when we haven't had three shots.

PENNY

What is there to talk about?

DARRELL

We have options.

PENNY

What options, Darrell? My Mom is looking at six years. Charlie's looking at that much at least if we bring him into it. You tell me.

DARRELL

I don't want to stay here until November!

Darrell pushes his plate to the side and finishes his beer in one drink.

DARRELL (con't)

This is the shit you wanted to leave. Why are you so determined to stay here as long as we can?

PENNY

This is where our family is Darrell! Not in Costa Rica.

Michelle and Les are uncomfortable.

PENNY (con't)

I'm sorry guys. We can go. You don't need to be subjected to this.

MICHELLE

It's OK. Really.

Darrell motions Amanda they are ready to pay.

DARRELL

I'm ready to leave.

INT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Penny and Darrell share a joint as Penny sits close to the wood burning stove while Darrell paces the space.

PENNY

I don't understand where the hostility is coming from.

DARRELL

That's not fair.

PENNY

What do you call it?

DARRELL

Efforting.

PENNY

Efforting?

Penny's eye twitches.

DARRELL

See? That there. It's back.

PENNNY

I'm just tired.

DARRELL

It started twitching as soon as we got on the plane.

PENNY

I'm stressed!

DARRELLY

Exactly!

PENNY

What do you expect?

DARRELL

I'm stressed too. I get it. But you seem awfully damn determined to get back here. We said five years. It isn't a reset if we don't take the full five years.

PENNY

OK. Circumstances change. We adapt. We've been doing that for almost 40 years.

DARRELL

Exactly! When does the focus turn to US? Kids are moved out. You're parents don't ever leave the house unless Peggy needs to steal some shit.

PENNY

You know COVID really freaked them out.

DARRELL

Yes. So they're homebodies. The kids left home. Lisa. We needed a reset. I'm not ready to come back.

PENNY

I can't just abandon my parents.

DARRELL

Putting them in a facility is not abandoning them. It's actually better for them.

PENNY

Oh please, you're just spewing the propaganda 'cuz you don't want to be here. How many people died in those places during COVID? My dad is TERRIFIED about going in one. I'm not doing it. If you want to go back to Costa Rica without me that's your choice. But clearly, we're needed here. I would appreciate your help but if you can't do it then you can't do it.

DARRELL

That's so not the point?

PENNY

Then what's the point, Darrell?

DARRELL

The point is you're miserable when you're here. Despite your Dad's pollyanna hallucinations, everyone living under one roof is not a blessing. He's looking for end of life reassurance that his life and his family actually mean something. Just because he's nice now doesn't erase the previous 70 years.

PENNY

That's mean.

DARRELL

It's not mean. We found each other and decided to LEAVE our parents. We were kids ourselves.

PENNY

Yeah, kids. Not always looking at things clearly. Or with any sort of insight. We've grown since then.

DARRELL

My insight is very clear. We made it. In spite of our parents.

PENNY

And here we are. The kids don't care to have us around. Jaq couldn't wait to get to Kansas City and Charlie would rather live in a shitty apartment - as long as we pay for it - than live with us. What does that say about us?

DARRELL

It says we tried our best.

PENNY

Maybe they tried their best too.

DARRELL

It's not the same and you know it.

PENNY

So then what?

DARRELL

So let's find a goddmaned attorney that's worth a shit that can get this dropped, let's get the kids resettled and let's get the fuck back to Costa Rica and resume our life. We've rescued everyone else enough. It's time for us.

PENNY

Us is more than me and you.

Penny flicks Darrell the joint and walks out of the garage.

DARRELL

Fuck.

INT - COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Penny sits at a table by herself, texting Michelle.

PENNY (text)

What if we decided not to go to CJ's engagement party? I don't want to detract

from their day.

Michelle is typing a reply. Neil walks up with two coffees and sets one in front of Penny as he takes a seat.

NEIL

Still black I presume.

PENNY

Still black. Thank you.

MICHELLE (text)

Not a chance! You're going and you'll enjoy it. Or else.

PENNY (con't)

So, any great ideas to make this go away?

PENNY (texts)

OK, OK. Smoke tonight?

NEIL

It's really not going away, Penny. We gotta go through the process just like we did with Charlie. I like the idea of trying to delay it to November. That would be a great help. Not sure the judge will go for it but I can try. There might be another way.

PENNY

Yeah?

MICHELLE (text)

Does the Pope like little boys?

NEIL

Let's at least talk to the senior center. Try to get a feel for their stance. Maybe we'll be surprised.

PENNY

You think?

PENNY (text)

Ewww. Can you stop and get some edibles on the way over? I need something with the weed.

NEIL

No. Especially if they have a good legal team. But maybe they don't. It's worth a shot.

PENNY

OK. Yes - yes, let's do that. Maybe that will get Darrell off my back for a bit at least.

MICHELLE (text)

The usual?

NEIL

Not real excited to be back, huh?

PENNY

Not really, no.

NEIL

I understand. Costa Rica is beautiful. And it was probably time for a reset.

Neil places his hand on Penny's. He starts to retract the touch but lets it linger.

NEIL (con't)

Who could blame him?

Penny looks at Neil's hand before pulling it away to take a drink of coffee and text Michelle back.

PENNY (text)

Yeah.

PENNY

Yeah.

INT - BASEMENT - DAY

Jaq, Kayleigh, Charlie and Sam hang out in the basement. Charlie can't keep from hugging and loving on Sam.

JAQ

So, what's your plan?

CHARLIE

What's yours?

JAQ

I asked you first.

CHARLIE

I guess I'll go back to Angelos.

JAQ

You hate that place. But you hate every place.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

KAYLEIGH

He would get to bring home great food every night.

CHARLIE

See. Isn't she the eternal optimist? So unlike me.

Charlie leans over and kisses Kayleigh on the cheek.

JAQ

Yeah, Communists don't have the rosiest perspective.

CHARLIE

You know, I just say that to get under their skin. Especially Pops.

JAQ

I know. Everyone knows.

CHARLIE

Really?

JAQ

Communists don't generally spend their entire check on doordash.

CHARLIE

Twenty-first century Communists might. Food

insecurity is a real thing.

JAQ

You're the most secure insecure person alive.

CHARLIE

Perspective. So what about you?

JAQ

What about me?

CHARLIE

What are you going to do? You coming back?

JAQ

I don't know. I need time to figure shit out.

CHARLIE

Colten know you're in town?

JAQ

No.

CHARLIE

Okay.

JAQ

Well, he knows. We haven't talked.

CHARLIE

Invite him to the welcome home party.

JAQ

Ewww. No. Fucking. Way.

CHARLIE

Why not?

JAQ

Don't be retarded. Too much family.

CHARLIE

Two years is a long time. He's a great guy. He's probably forgotten about it by now.

JAQ

I assure you he hasn't.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

Peggy walks to the refrigerator and opens the door. Doesn't see anything she likes. Notices the gumdrop package on the counter and closes the fridge. Three left. She eats them one at a time and heads upstairs.

INT - EDIBLE SHOP - DAY

Michelle impatiently stands at the counter, her arms full of edible products. A door behind the counter opens and a life sized cloud of smoke billows out as a CASHIER (early 20s) emerges, waving the smoke away. He slowly ambles to the counter.

MICHELLE

Still having the buy two get one, right?

CASHIER

All month.

MICHELLE

Good. Do you have more of the cosmic crunch gummies in stock? I got the last six bags.

CASHIER

You buy all of them every time you come in.

MICHELLE

What? Are you Google? Tracking all of my purchases and shit?

CASHIER

Those are the only six bags we have.

MICHELLE

When will you have more?

CASHIER

I don't know lady. I ring people up, not inventory.

INT - GARAGE - DAY

MICHELLE

Little fucker sure was a smart mouth.

PENNY

Well this is certainly enough for a while.
Thank you.

MICHELLE

So what did Neil say?

PENNY

Said it was worth a shot. Wants to talk
to the senior center.

MICHELLE

Really?

PENNY

Just to feel them out. It's a longshot at
best.

MICHELLE

David and Marian will be at the party.

PENNY

Really?

MICHELLE

Yeah. They're your mom and dad's best
friends. The more the merrier, right?

PENNY

Not so sure about that these days.

MICHELLE

We could spike the snacks with some edibles.
We could get them to agree to anything on
100 miligrams.

PENNY

100 miligrams? That'll kill them.

MICHELLE

Didn't kill Cindy.

PENNY

What?

MICHELLE

You know that woman can't keep her hands off candy. I just left a bowl of 10's out when she came over one day. Sure enough, she ate everyone.

PENNY

What happened?

MICHELLE

(pulls out her phone) Wanna see?

PENNY

What??

Michelle pulls out her phone to pull up a video. A text from Les dings in. Darrell pokes his head in the garage.

DARRELL

Hey Michelle.

MICHELLE

What's up?

DARRELL

Living the dream. Hey, you got a minute?

PENNY

Michelle's getting ready to show me something.

MICHELLE

Actually, I gotta go. Les is jonesing for Chinese and I told him I would get some on the way home. I'll show you later.

Michelle gets up and hugs Penny as she stays seated and walks over to hug Darrell.

MICHELLE

Hang in there sport. You know shit always works out.

Michelle leaves and Darrell takes a seat.

DARRELL

Hell of a haul.

PENNY

Girl doesn't know the meaning of a little.

DARRELL

Look, I'm sorry. You're right. Of course. I just love our life so much right now. You're in such a great headspace and your parents have a way of fucking with that. Everything has been perfect for a good run. I selfishly want it to stay that way.

PENNY

I do too! It's not selfish. It is, but I get it. I feel the same way. You know I do. But I can't just turn my back to this. You have Patrick to deal with your Mom. It's just me. They want to depend on me. On us. I want them to depend on us. Neil had an idea.

DARRELL

I'm sure he did.

PENNY

Darrell. We discussed this.

DARRELL

Yes. So what was the idea?

PENNY

He wants to talk to the center. Get a feel for where their head's at. Maybe they won't turn it on Charlie.

DARRELL

Really?

PENNY

It's a longshot. But it's something.

DARRELL

I guess. When?

PENNY

Michelle had a good idea

DARRELL

Said no one ever...

PENNY

Darrell!

DARREL

Fun ideas? Yes. Good? We tend not to remember the previous day when Michelle throws out ideas.

PENNY

Well, funny you should say that.

Penny picks up a bag of edibles. Opens it and takes out a cosmic crunch gummy for each of them.

PENNY (con't)

Take one of these. And let's talk.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

Peggy reviews the contents of the fridge. Gary walks in.

GARY

Watcha looking for Mom?

PEGGY

A snack. I'm hungry.

GARY

Don't forget. It's taco night.

Charlie and Kayleigh bound up the steps from the basement. Sam eagerly follows.

CHARLIE

What's for supper, Ganny?

GARY

Your Dad's making tacos.

CHARLIE

Oh, he makes the best tacos.

KAYLEIGH

Really?

CHARLIE

He's actually a really good cook.

KAYLIEGH

That's where you get it from?

CHARLIE

My Mom is good too.

Jaq walks up the steps.

JAQ

What's for supper?

CHARLIE

Pops is making tacos.

JAQ

Yes!

Darrell and Penny walk in the back door of the house to the crowded kitchen.

PENNY

Whole gang is here.

CHARLIE

You're making tacos, Pops?

DARRELL

Yeppers. Wanna help? Sis too? And Kayleigh?

Charlie looks at both. Jaq and Kayliegh shrug their shoulders.

JAQ/KAYLEIGH

Sure.

DARRELL

Grab Laine and let's get started.

INT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Darrell checks on browned ground beef, adds more seasoning. Sam waits beside him, hoping to luck into some meat. Laine sits on the island and carefully places taco shells in a cake pan as Darrell comes over to help and kisses her on the head. Jaq looks at them and smiles. Charlie and Kayleigh chop onions, and fresh jalapenos. Sam moves over to Charlie who can't keep from loving on him. Jaq empties shredded cheese and lettuce into bowls. 70's rock plays.

INT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Penny, Gary and Peggy sit around the table as the evening dinner is finished, dishes cluttering the table. Penny drinks a glass of wine, Gary a bottle of Corona and Peggy a glass of tea.

PENNY

So, we need to let Neil do all of the talking. This might be our only shot to figure this out to everyone's benefit.

GARY

I love David, but he's an asshole.

PENNY

But not the smartest bulb.

PEGGY

You got that right. How Marian has put up with him all of these years, I'll never know.

GARY

So Neil really thinks he can keep Charlie out of it?

PENNY

It's a longshot. But we need to take every shot we have.

PEGGY

Does that mean you all will leave again?

PENNY

That's not what we're talking about right

now, Mom.

PEGGY

It's what I'm talking about. And your Dad too.

GARY

I didn't say a word.

PEGGY

We talk about it all the time.

Penny looks at her Dad. He looks away as he takes a drink of beer.

PENNY

All the time?

PEGGY

Yes. We miss you.

PENNY

I know, Mom. We miss you too.

PEGGY

It doesn't seem like it.

PENNY

It's not that easy, Mom.

GARY

Are you still mad at us, Pen? At me?

PENNY

Dad.

GARY

I know we weren't the parents you needed. I wasn't the father you needed.

PENNY

Dad, that's not the conversation we're having right now.

GARY

OK. Well, I really am glad you all are here. And I want you to stay as long as you want.

INT - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Darrell and Penny lay in bed reflecting on the current state of events.

PENNY

What do I say to that?

DARRELL

God, that's a tough one.

PENNY

What would you say to your Mom?

DARRELL

The one I never talk to?

PENNY

She's gonna be there Saturday.

DARRELL

We have gummies.

PENNY

So what would you say?

DARRELL

Nothing. We don't talk and won't, so not a problem. But that's not this.

PENNY

That's not helpful.

There's no response from Darrell. Penny looks over more closely. Darrell's neck is bent down. He let's out a snore.

PENNY

You never fail to amaze me.

She gets out of bed, puts on a bathrobe and leaves the guest room.

INT - HOUSE - NIGHT

Penny wanders the sleeping household, checking in on everyone. Gary and Peggy in separate beds. Peggy has a open empty bag of jelly beans on top of the comforter. She

pauses and looks lovingly at Jaq and Laine. Jaq is restless, Penny leaves so as to not be seen. Checks on Kayleigh.

EXT/INT - CAMPER IN DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Penny checks on Charlie. He sleeps with his arm around Sam. Sam's tail wags happily as Penny pokes her head in. She looks around as the mess the camper has already dissolved into. Laughs knowingly to herself.

INT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Penny smokes a joint and reminisces about growing up in the house. Montage scenes of Gary being verbally abusive. Gary spanking her with a purple belt. Peggy standing there watching. Scene jumps to Jaq as a little girl and Penny putting her in time out. Penny can't stand it, comes over and kisses her and takes her hand as they both smile. Jaq as a teendager in tears screaming at Penny. Penny yelling back. Darrell stands silent. Jaq comes in and interrupts the mental movie.

JAQ

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know anyone was out here.

PENNY

It's ok. Grab a seat.

JAQ

You sure?

PENNY

Of course. (offers a puff)

JAQ

No, I took a gummy. I just was restless and didn't want to keep Laine up.

PENNY

What's on your mind?

JAQ

Colten.

PENNY

Yeah?

JAQ

Charlie said I should ask him to the party.

PENNY

You should.

JAQ

Really?

PENNY

I don't know. What do you think?

JAQ

I think I'm nervous he'd say no.

PENNY

He might. I'm sorry.

JAQ

Mother.

PENNY

Really. We both are.

JAQ

I don't want to have this conversation.

PENNY

I do. I really am sorry. We should have been more careful and aware. We had no right to be talking like that where anyone could hear it. We were high. Just being silly.

JAQ

Clearly, Colten didn't think so.

PENNY

It has been two years. Do we ever get forgiveness?

JAQ

Do I ever get Colten back? He was my soul mate Mother. We loved each other. You destroyed that.

PENNY

I'm sorry. We never intended that.

JAQ

You never intended a lot of things. But they still happened, didn't they?

PENNY

Yes, sweetie. They did. And I'm sorry for every one of them. I wish I could take them all back.

JAQ

But you can't.

PENNY

We're family babe. We're fucked up, imperfect groups of people genetically intertwined. But we love each other and I want you in my life. I want Laine in my life.

JAQ

We're not moving to Costa Rica, so I guess that's not gonna happen.

Jaqueline gets up and leaves the garage. Penny looks in the distance. Lights the joint and takes another deep inhale.

INT - GARAGE - DAY

Michelle pokes her head in.

MICHELLE

I thought I'd find you in here. I come bearing coffee.

Michelle holds up two large coffee cups.

PENNY

My hero!

MICHELLE

Hold that thought for just a moment.

PENNY

What?

MICHELLE

It's not that big of a deal...

PENNY

What, Michelle.

MICHELLE

Lisa Underhill was at the coffee shop.

PENNY

Oh no. Please tell me you didn't mention anything.

MICHELLE

Well...

PENNY

Michelle.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking.

PENNY

Well fuck.

MICHELLE

She can't come Saturday. But she already was going to be at church Sunday anyway she said. Something to do with the campaign. I'm sorry - don't be mad at me.

PENNY

It's fine.

MICHELLE

Are you going to tell Darrell?

PENNY

No! And you aren't either. Got it??

MICHELLE

Got it. Got it. Not trying to change the subject but Jesus, you look like hell.

PENNY

Thanks.

MICHELLE

Rough night.

PENNY

I couldn't sleep. Came out here to smoke one and wind down the night. Jaq came out and we talked.

MICHELLE

Oh good.

PENNY

No.

MICHELLE

Ahh. Really?

PENNY

How many times did we promise each other the shit stopped with us? Clean slate we said. We're not having that type of relationship with our kids. And here I am, smoking weed all night in my parents' garage and Jaq can't stand to stay in the same room with me for more than an hour. It's all come full circle.

MICHELLE

Nope. We're not moping. That's not the deal.

PENNY

Then what is the deal, Michelle? Cuz I still haven't figured it out.

MICHELLE

We learned. That's the deal.

PENNY

Appears I didn't learn shit.

MICHELLE

Boo-fucking-hoo. We learned we aren't perfect. We learned we are way more like our parents than we'd ever like to believe. And we learned grace. Grace for our parents and grace for our kids. But most importantly

Michelle pauses for dramatic effect.

...grace for ourselves.

PENNY

Oh OK, Dr. Phil. You really love that bullshit, don't you?

MICHELLE

I'm serious. You know I would have killed Cindy by now. Lord knows I have 33 ways to do it. 32 of them I wouldn't even get caught. But grace allows us to peacefully, well not really peacefully, but we can be in a room without me thinking about killing her the entire time. That's progress, baby!

PENNY

Well, I don't want to kill anyone. Darrell every now and then. I hope that grace is a two-way street.

Charlie and Sam poke their heads in.

CHARLIE

Ganny said to tell you breakfast is ready.

Michelle and Penny look at each other.

MICHELLE/PENNY

Fried eggs, bacon and burnt toast.

INT - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - DAY

GARY

There she is. Hey Michelle, I didn't know you were here.

PEGGY

She's Penny's dealer.

PENNY

Mom?

PEGGY

Am I wrong?

MICHELLE

I'm her best friend, Peggy!

PEGGY

You got a dime bag in your coat don't you?

CHARLIE

A dime bag? Memaw. How do you know what a dime bag is?

PEGGY

I watch Law and Order. Ice Cube is always busting people with dime bags.

MICHELLE

Ice T?

Peggy looks at her glass.

PEGGY

No, but I'll take some orange juice, daddy.

Gary comes in carrying two platters of food. One with fried eggs and bacon. The other with three stacks of toast, every piece burned black.

GARY

Mom, we gotta get a new toaster. It keeps burning the toast.

Michelle, Penny and Charlie crack up.

INT - FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

Penny, Michelle, Cindy and CJ (late 20s) set up tables, chairs and busy themselves with general preparation for the engagement party the next day. A bluetooth speaker plays 80's hair metal.

CINDY

Michelle, it's not appropriate to be playing that blasphemous noise in church.

Michelle ignores her. Penny laughs with CJ as if they've seen this scene a million times.

MICHELLE

CJ, what time is Andrew bringing the food?

CINDY

Michelle, you need to turn that off.
Lightning is going to strike the building.

MICHELLE

Then let it strike the goddmaned building,
Cindy.

Cindy is aghast at the language. Penny covers her mouth to stifle a laugh.

MICHELLE (con't)

So, what time?

CJ

I think...

Cindy interrupts.

CINDY

Marlow Michelle, I raised you better than that.

MICHELLE

No you didn't. So, what time?

CJ

I think Andrew is picking it up at two. So by two-thrity.

Cindy walks over to turn off the blue tooth speaker. Without turning around, Michelle addresses the situation.

MICHELLE

Don't touch that speaker, woman. OK, so make sure the big fridge has all the shelves cleared. You can move anything over to the small fridges if you need too.

PENNY

I'll help you CJ.

Penny and CJ head to the kitchen area to prep the fridge.

INT - KITCHEN SPACE OF FELLOWSHIP HALL - DAY

CJ

How's Jaq and Charlie?

PENNY

Well, it's a time of transition for all of us right now. Austin died.

CJ

Mom told me. I'm so sorry. I texted Jaq. I hope we can catch up at the party.

PENNY

Oh good, I really appreciate that. Are you getting nervous?

CJ

What do you think?

PENNY

It'll be fine, I'm sure.

CJ

Please. We all know it's not gonna be fine. Mom and Dad are never fine in the same city, much less the same building. The question is, how not fine is it gonna get.

Michelle comes huffing and puffing into the room. Cindy is close behind.

MICHELLE

Wanna go light one up?

PENNY

Always.

CINDY

Michelle, I'm not done talking to you.

MICHELLE

Yes you are.

EXT - CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Penny and Michelle stand by the back door, smoking a joint.

PENNY

What else can I do?

MICHELLE

Keep me from number seventeen.

PENNY

Seventeen?

MICHELLE

Lock Cindy in the church cellar. No one's been down there for decades. No way they find her.

Darrell pulls into the parking lot, a small U-Haul attached, and parks the car near Penny and Michelle. He gets out, proudly wearing his new purchase: a baby-blue tux with navy satin trim and a puffy pirate shirt.

PENNY

Oh my God.

Michelle does a spit take after a big puff and nearly falls over laughing.

DARRELL

Yeah? What do you think ladies? Am I ready or am I ready?

PENNY

Are you going to the prom in Carrie?

MICHELLE

Oh my god, Darrell. I think most dealers wear black tuxes. (she can't stop laughing).

DARRELL

I went to every Goodwill in town. This is all I could find that fit.

PENNY

Looks like a shmedium to me.

DARRELL

I probably won't keep it buttoned all night.

MICHELLE

I think you look great. Best dressed black jack dealer I've ever seen.

PENNY

What's with the shirt Captain Jack?

DARRELL

It's the best option I could find.

PENNY

It's not stellar.

MICHELLE

You hush. He'll be the most handsome one there.

PENNY

He'll be the most something.

Darrell relaxes his model-pose and walks to them, reaching for the joint and takes a puff before handing it back to Michelle.

DARRELL

So how's everything going here?

MICHELLE

(holds up the joint) As you'd expect.

DARRELL

I've got the roulette wheel, blackjack table toppers and slot machines in the trailer. Where are the coins and I'll get everything set up.

MICHELLE

Limp dick is supposed to have put them all in the storage room.

PENNY

Chances they're there?

MICHELLE

Decent, I made Junior and Izzy promise to stay on his ass until they were delivered.

DARRELL

OK, I'll go check and start getting everything set up.

Darrell walks in the back door as Michelle pulls a joint from her bra.

PENNY

Ewww...

MICHELLE

Deal with it princess.

PENNY

So, tell me again why the theme is casino night.

MICHELLE

You remember the pakistani dude?

PENNY

Ruby Tuesday fuck buddy?

MICHELLE

The one. Putty in my hands. Literally. I don't know what those pakistani's eat but it was just like putty.

PENNY

Wow.

MICHELLE

It was after some prostrate play.

PENNY

Enough. So 2300 bags of chocolate coins, huh?

MICHELLE

Yeah. Hadn't talked to him in years. He was taking out the gold coin chocolates from all of his stores. Said he remembered Cindy stealing them and I could have all of it if I wanted. For free.

PENNY

How lucky for you!

MICHELLE

Kinda just wrote itself after that. CJ was hoping for a french rustic theme.

PENNY

Kinda missed the mark there.

MICHELLE

I told her I was leaving the crust on the sandwiches. French onion dip for the chips and sparkling grape juice. Welches, The good stuff. Viola.

PENNY

I think it's perfect.

MICHELLE

No thanks to limp dick. He hasn't done shit. Except complain about having to go to church with everyone the next day. Are you all coming?

PENNY

Oh yes. Can't wait to get my crew up and out the door by 10:30. What a great way to end the weekend.

MICHELLE

Well, thank you. I know it's a pain in the ass. But for some reason, CJ wanted us all to go to church the next day. I think she's trying to make her grandmother happy.

PENNY

She's such a sweetie. I'm just giving you shit. Of course, we're happy to do it for her. Oh, and my dad said he wants to take everyone to Golden Corral after church.

MICHELLE

Everyone?

PENNY

I warned him. He said he wanted to do it. You're part of the family and it's his gift to CJ.

MICHELLE

Ahhh. I love that toast burnin son of a bitch.

Penny smiles meekly. Darrell walks back out. He holds up a red net bag holding 20 gold foil wrapped coins.

DARRELL

Limp dick came through in the clutch.

PENNY

Score one for limp dick.

MICHELLE

Yea, limp dick.

DARRELL

OK, give me an hour and we'll be good. See you at home?

PENNY

Home, huh?

DARRELL

You know what I mean.

PENNY

Yeah. Michelle and I gotta run and get a few more things and then I'll be home in time for supper. Want me to bring anything?

DARRELL

Noble Romans?

PENNY

Noble Romans it is.

EXT - DARRELL AND PENNY'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Darrell and Penny share wine and a joint on the back patio this summer night. 80's music masks sounds around them. COLTEN (20s, black man) walks down the bricked path along the side of the house, holding 3 Noble Roman's pizza boxes. He can hear Penny and Darrell laughing on the patio as he pauses to listen. Penny says something, the music covers up her words and fades away as Darrell responds.

DARRELL

Did she really say that?

PENNY

She's got your sense of humor.

DARRELL

That's your sense of humor. Little Hitler.
I've said it for years.

Darrell and Penny laugh as Laine opens the french doors and pokes her head out.

LAINE

Mommy said Colten's on his way.

PENNY

OK, sweetie. Thank you.

Colten hears the door shut. He sets the pizza boxes down and walks off.

INT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Penny walks in as everyone anxiously awaits for her arrival. She carries five pizza boxes and a bag with three 2-litre colas. Charlie gets up to help with the items.

CHARLIE

Yes! I'm starving. Did you get a cryin' hawaiian?

JAQ

Double pepperoni?

PENNY

Yes. Of course.

Pizza boxes start moving around the table as Penny takes her seat. Sam sits under the table, waiting. Everyone is served and silent as they devour the pizza.

PENNY (con't)

OK, let's go over everything again. Just to make sure we're all on the same page. It's gonna be a hectic couple of days so everyone needs to pitch in and stay with the program.

Got it?

Mumbled agreements and nods from everyone. Penny takes out a sheet of paper and ink pen from her hoodie pocket.

PENNY (con't)

Good. OK, first things first. Here is the shower sign-up sheet for tomorrow and Sunday. Pick a slot and STICK TO IT. Not even five minutes off. Seriously. We gotta be a conveyor belt with one shower and seven people. Mom, you go first.

Penny hands her the sheet and pen. Peggy doesn't take it.

PEGGY

I don't need it. I've already showered.

PENNY

That was yesterday, Mom.

PEGGY

So.

PENNY

So, we're going to CJ's engagement party tomorrow and church on Sunday. You need to shower for each.

PEGGY

No I don't. The doctor says once a week is enough.

PENNY

Does he know you piss yourself all day long?

JAQ

Mother!

PEGGY

I'm wearing my diapers.

PENNY

Mom, you're still pissing yourself. You can't go out in public if you don't clean yourself. You smell bad.

PEGGY

Then I won't go.

PENNY

What?

PEGGY

I don't want to go.

PENNY

Because you have to take a shower?

PEGGY

Yes.

PENNY

Dad?

GARY

The doctor did say that, Pen.

PEGGY

Do I smell bad" Down there daddy?

JAQ

Memaw, please with the daddy.

GARY

You know I can't smell anything Mom.

PEGGY

I can wear extra perfume.

KAYLEIGH

I have some new perfume, Mrs Pennington.
Charlie gave it to me for Valentine's Day.

PEGGY

Thank you, sweetie.

PENNY

You need more than perfume, Mom.

PEGGY

Then I'm not going.

Charlie slides his hand under the table with a generous pizza crust for Sam.

PENNY

You are going Mom! This is for Michelle and CJ. And you and Charlie in case you need a reminder. We're still trying to figure out how to keep you and Charlie out of jail for God's sake.

PEGGY

No one asked you to do that. You volunteered.

GARY

Mom.

PENNY

Excuse me?

PEGGY

No one asked.

PENNY

Asked what?

PEGGY

What I wanted.

PENNY

You wanted to sit in your piss and shit in jail for 30 days?

Darrell puts his hand on Penny's arm. She slaps it away. Charlie puts his hand on Kayleigh's leg and Jaq rubs Laine's back. Gary looks around helplessly.

PENNY (con't)

Is that what you wanted, Mom? Or should I say convict? Repeat convict. Hell it is number 4.

JAQ

Mom.

PENNY

Because I'm more than happy to take my ass

back to Costa Rica and let you figure it
the fuck out. Fine by me.

Penny gets up, throws her napkin in the plate and walks out
of the room.

LAINE

Mimi!

INT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Penny and Michelle sit around the wood-burning stove. Penny
is crying.

PENNY

She really does bring out the worst in me.

MICHELLE

Of course she does. She's your mother. You
do the same too.

PENNY

That's the fucking truth.

MICHELLE

We all do.

PENNY

Maybe Darrell's right. And if they get
fucking COVID then they get fucking COVID.

MICHELLE

Are you sure about that?

PENNY

I don't know, Michelle. No. Of course not.
But fuck me - why do I need to put me, put
us, through this?

MICHELLE

You don't.

PENNY

No I don't.

MICHELLE

Of course not. But you might want to.

PENNY

Not a fucking chance.

MICHELLE

Maybe not. But maybe.

PENNY

You're not jedi mind tricking me right now.

MICHELLE

I'm not. I'm just saying that you can't let one blow up decide the rest of their life for them. You would regret that later. You just need to give it enough time and you'll know. You'll know. Just like always.

Gary pokes his head in.

GARY

Pen, oh hey Michelle.

MICHELLE

Hi Gary.

GARY

Can we talk sweetie?

Michelle stands up and walks over to hug Penny. She whispers as she tightens the hug.

MICHELLE

Just listen to yourself. Never steered you wrong before. I love you.

She walks over to Gary and hugs him.

MICHELLE

Ready to have some fun tomorrow?

GARY

I sure am.

MICHELLE

And thank you for Golden Corral. It's Les's favorite you know.

GARY

Mine too!

MICHELLE

Call me later, girl.

INT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Gary puts fresh wood in the stove. He takes a seat.

GARY

I know your Mother can be annoying. She annoys me too.

He reaches up as if fiddling with his hearing aids.

GARY (con't)

That's why these are so helpful.

Penny laughs and starts to regain her composure.

GARY (con't)

You're not obligated to come take care of us, Pen. You and Darrell deserve the life you all have built for yourselves. Me and Mom are a good team. We are getting along just fine.

PENNY

But Dad, you're not. I mean let's look at reality. You both have enough meds to choke a horse. You're on insulin. We don't even have to go into why exactly Mom chooses to live the life of crime. You do need help.

GARY

But it's not your responsibility.

PENNY

Then who? You refuse to accept someone coming into the house to help clean, fix a meal.

GARY

Your mom doesn't want anyone in the house she doesn't know. Doesn't trust them.

PENNY

Do you recognize the irony in that statement?

GARY

Yes. I haven't lost it all. Yet.

PENNY

So then who? Who else is gonna come in and help? So if I have to help...

GARY

That's what I'm telling you, Pen. You don't have to.

PENNY

You know what I mean. If I want to help, then you all are going to have to accept the help. I get it, it's your house. No one wants the kid being the parent. Trust me. But the reason I'm here is because you all need help. But you gotta take it. I'm not forcing it on you.

GARY

I want you here, sweetie. I really do.

PENNY

I don't think Mom does.

GARY

Of course she does. I'll talk to her. Just try to be patient with her.

PENNY

I've been patient my whole life.

GARY

I know you have.

PENNY

You haven't always known that.

GARY

I know now. At least one good thing about old age. I see things better now. Cataracts and all.

Penny and Gary stand up. Penny receives Gary's embrace reluctantly. As it continues she starts to relax and can feel the warmth of the embrace. She returns the warmth. Charlie pokes his head in.

CHARLIE

The cops are here.

INT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Peggy sits on the couch. Gary and Penny stand with the two OFFICERS (both 40s). Sam chases one of the cats through the room. Laine chases Sam, cackling. Jaq walks in and tries to marshall everyone out so Penny and Gary can talk with the officers.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Full house this Friday night, huh?

PEGGY

Oh it's not just Friday nights.

PENNY

Can I help you officers?

POLICE OFFICER #2

We're just hear for a check in.

PENNY

For what?

POLICE OFFICER #2

Court mandated. For Ms. Pennington.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Random weekly check ins. You signed the custodial agreement.

PENNY

Yes, yes. Of course. I just forgot.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Pretty full house by the looks of things.

PENNY

My husband and I have been out of the country for almost two years. Using the occasion for a family reunion I guess you could say.

POLICE OFFICER #2

That's so nice.

PENNY

So nice. It is that for sure.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Family's important.

POLICE OFFICER #2

The only thing we got, really.

PENNY

I don't mean to be rude, but do you have paperwork or something I need to sign? We're eating supper.

Kayleigh walks in the living room.

KAYLEIGH

We put everything up since supper is over.

PENNY

Well, we just finished. But it's a big weekend in the Pennington household so we do have quite a few things to attend to. Can I help you all with anything else?

POLICE OFFICER #1

How are you Ms. Pennington. Are you getting along OK? Staying out of trouble?

PEGGY

I piss myself. Ask her.

POLICE OFFICER #2

Excuse me?

GARY

It's fine officers. My daughter has everything under control.

Gary puts his arm around Penny and pulls her in for a squeeze/hug.

GARY (con't)
She's doing a great job.

INT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Penny stands at the head of the table while everyone else sits around it. Everyone is dressed smartly for the party. Sam sits obediently beside Charlie. Final instructions are gone over before they head to the party.

PENNY
OK gang. Big night.

Looks at Darrell for reassurance. He gives it with a wink and loving smile.

PENNY (con't)
So this is a three-fer. CJ's engagement, our Welcome Home, and operation free Peggy. Neil is going to be there. David has no idea he's coming. Just let Neil do his work.

Penny looks at Gary and Peggy. They both nod affirmatively.

PENNY (con't)
No helping him with some funny aside...

Penny looks at Charlie

CHARLIE
What?

PENNY
Or clever quip.

JAQ
Moi?

DARRELL
Uh, Memaw and Patrick are going to be there too. Please no egging them on.

PENNY
Exactly. Mom, you hear that? No egging

Gaynell on.

PEGGY

Huh?

Peggy looks at Jaq, Charlie and Kayliegh and winks. They laugh.

PENNY

OK, all hands in.

Everyone stands and closes in tight to the table and extends their right hand to the center.

PENNY

One, two, three...

EVERYONE

KICK ASS!

INT - FELLOWSHIP HALL - EVENING

The clan walks in clearly ready to accomplish big things. Peggy leads the way with her walker. As they enter the fellowship hall Michelle is scurrying around like a chicken with her head cut off.

LIMP DICK (JAMES) (50s), Michelle's ex, sits at a table with his PARENTS (late 70s), his GIRLFRIEND (early 30s), and two COUSINS (late 40s). He sips a pint of Jim Beam hidden in his blazer jacket. GAYNELL (78), dressed to impress, and PATRICK (48), dressed in overalls and a rebel flag t-shirt, are setting out food and accessories. Cindy sits by herself, unwrapping gold coins and eating the chocolates.

MICHELLE

Oh thank God.

DARRELL

When did they get here?

MICHELLE

About an hour ago. She's already pissed Cindy off.

DARRELL

I'm sorry.

MICHELLE

Don't be. Hadn't heard a peep out of her since. Just over there doing coma prep.

PENNY

How are you doing?

MICHELLE

Oh, I'm a fucking wreck. Ol' limp dick brought the whole trailer park.

PENNY

They are CJ's family.

MICHELLE

I don't give a fuck.

PENNY

Noted. Got time for a smoke?

MICHELLE

Fuck yes. People aren't supposed to get here until 7:30

Penny spies the clock at the back of the hall. 6:55.

PENNY

Why don't you go say hi to your Mom and Patrick. We're gonna go smoke.

DARRELL

Do I have to?

PENNY

Yes! You knew this was coming.

DARRELL

I thought there'd be more time.

PENNY

Just go get it over with. And then meet us out back.

Darrell leans over and gives Penny a kiss.

DARRELL

Wish me luck.

PENNY

Oh, it's gonna be a disaster. None of my
mojo can prevent that.

Darrell walks over to Gaynell and Patrick.

GAYNELL

Nice to see you son.

DARRELL

Hi Mom.

GAYNELL

Were you going to call me?

DARRELL

Penny said she told you we were back.

GAYNELL

She sent me a message on Facebook when you
were still in Costa Rica. Be nice to hear
from my own son.

DARRELL

I'm sorry Mom. You know I hate to be on the
phone.

Darrell leans in and gives an ass-out pat on the back to
Gaynell. Turns and give Patrick a bro hug.

PATRICK

You look ridiculous.

DARRELL

You're one to talk.

PATRICK

But I want to dress like this.

DARRELL

Exactly.

Darrell pulls on the necklace Patrick is wearing.

DARRELL

What is this?

PATRICK

My coon dick.

Darrell drops it like it's hot.

DARRELL

Of course it is. Are you all going to church tomorrow?

GAYNELL

I didn't know anything about it.

DARRELL

Well, now you do. And after Gary wants to take everyone to Golden Corral.

PATRICK

Ohh. My favorite.

DARRELL

Michelle said you already pissed Cindy off.

GAYNELL

I did?

PATRICK

When you said you'd just hold on to your purse because you didn't want someone to steal it.

GAYNELL

I have five thousand dollars in this purse.

DARRELL

Jesus Mom. What on earth for?

GAYNELL

It's casino night isn't it?

DARRELL

Not real money, Mom. Michelle got candy coins to use.

GAYNELL

Well when Cindy eats it all come see me.

DARRELL

You didn't think five thousand was a little excessive?

GAYNELL

Oh it's nothing. This is just from my play funds from the insurance stash.

DARRELL

God Bless Bruce.

GAYNELL

No, this is from Bill's insurance.

DARRELL

Bills. Of course. Bill. Bruce. Hard to keep track.

PATRICK

Don't forget Vic.

DARRELL

How could I? OK, well. We'll have all night to catch up. I gotta go make sure I'm not needed somewhere. Anywhere.

EXT - CHURCH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Penny looks at her phone. 7:08.

PENNY

20-minute time check.

MICHELLE

I hope CJ likes this.

PENNY

Of course she will.

MICHELLE

Limp dick said I was chintzy.

PENNY

Fuck him. It's cute and quirky. It's perfect

and of couse she is gonna love it. And Junior gets to run Roulette and Izzy and Darrell dealing blackjack? How much more perfect could it be?

MICHELLE

I just don't want her to be disappointed. She dealt with enough of that. She still wants us to get back together.

PENNY

She's starting her own life. She's not gonna be worrying about you as much and that's a good thing.

MICHELLE

I hope you're right.

PENNY

Just listening to myself. Hasn't steered me wrong yet.

Darrell walks out the back door.

DARRELL

Jesus H Christ. Please tell me there's some Left.

Penny retrieves a joint from her bra.

PENNY

Saved one just for you.

DARRELL

My Saviour!

MICHELLE

OK kiddos, I gotta go make one last run through. First deal is at eight, sport.

DARRELL

Roger that boss. (a beat). Hey Michelle.

MICHELLE

Yeah?

DARRELL

You done good, girl.

Michelle mouths 'thank you' and walks in the back door. The moment rests for a few seconds before Penny smacks Darrell's arm playfully.

PENNY

Look at you showing an emotion.

DARRELL

One.

PENNY

I love it. (changing subjects) I'm so nervous.

DARRELL

She doesn't have a clue.

PENNY

Are you sure?

DARRELL

Pretty sure.

PENNY

Did I do the right thing?

DARRELL

I hope so.

PENNY

Would you have done it?

DARRELL

Not a chance.

Flashback

EXT - DARRELL AND PENNY'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Darrell and Penny share wine and a joint on the back patio this summer night. There's no music. COLTEN (20s, black man) walks down the bricked path along the side of the house, holding 3 Noble Roman's pizza boxes. He can hear

Penny and Darrell laughing on the patio as he pauses to listen.

PENNY

I asked Jaq what we were having at the rehearsal dinner.

DARRELL

Fried chicken?

PENNY

That's what she said! She said she should have gotten more serious with Juan since tacos are her favorite food. She said she put her foot down at collard greens though.

DARRELL

Did she really say that?

PENNY

She's got your sense of humor.

DARRELL

That's your sense of humor. Little Hitler. I've said it for years.

Darrell and Penny laugh as Laine opens the french doors and pokes her head out.

LAINE

Mommy said Colten's on his way.

PENNY

OK, sweetie. Thank you.

Colten hears the door shut. He sets the pizza boxes down and walks off with shoulders stooped.

End flashback

INT - HALLWAY TO FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

Colten strides confidently down the hall through the fellowship hall. The buzz from the room starts to echo louder the closer he gets to the entrance. He stops just short of entering and gingerly pokes his head in.

A casino night scene explodes into Colten's vision. Dim lights silhouette over 100 guests filling the space, 70's rock filling the room as guests are seen playing casino games, having conversations, telling stale marriage jokes.

Colten scans the room and finally spots Jaq at a table with her back to the door. Charlie, Kayleigh, Laine, Patrick, and CJ sit around the table. Laine looks up and sees Colten. She can barely contain her excitement as Colten puts his finger to his mouth and slowly creeps up behind Jaq. Just as he's putting his hands up to Jaq's head...

LAINE

Colten!

JAQ

What?

COLTEN

Surprise.

JAQ

Oh my God!

She jumps up, knocking over her chair and jumps up to hug Colten. They embrace for a long time. Laine looks up at them both. Finally..

PATRICK

We are in church kids.

JAQ

(wiping tears) Shut up Patrick.

Patrick gets up and offers his chair to Colten.

PATRICK

Here you go Colten.

Colten dabs up Patrick.

COLTEN

Thank you Patrick.

Colten looks at Laine. He holds open his arms.

COLTEN

What are you waiting for?

Laine runs and jumps into Colten's open arms, wrapping herself around him tightly.

COLTEN (con't)

I've missed you.

LAINE

I've missed you too.

The hug loosens but Laine still hangs tightly. Colten takes her face in his hands and kisses her forehead.

COLTEN

I'm sorry about your daddy.

Laine jumps down out of the hug.

LAINE

Nana said it was his time to go to the angels. God needed him more than we did.

COLTEN

That's what Nana said, huh?

LAINE

Yep.

COLTEN

Well, I'm not gonna argue with Nana. When you need some help with something though, you call me. Got it?

Laine nods her head affirmatively and runs off to the grandparents table. Colten sits down in the chair.

JAQ

What are you doing here?

COLTEN

Your Mom asked me.

JAQ

What?

COLTEN

Yeah.

JAQ

When?

COLTEN

The other night. You have no idea how weird it was to get a message at midnight from your former future mother-in-law 'U up?'

JAQ

Oh my Lord. Mother. I'm so sorry. She has no clue.

COLTEN

It's cute.

JAQ

It's so not. So she just texted you and you all talked?

COLTEN

Yeah. She explained a lot. I had some stuff to say. She was really nice. Really nice. I'm glad she called.

JAQ

Oh my gosh. I am too.

COLTEN

I really am sorry about Austin. We weren't the biggest fans of each other. I mean I hated the son of a bitch but I really was so sorry to hear for Laine. And you. I should have texted you.

JAQ

Don't be silly. And thank you. Really, that means a lot. So, what's up with you?

Jump to the grandparent's table as Laine sits in Gaynell's lap and holds a fifty dollar bill.

GAYNELL

It's been so long since I've seen you little

girl. You have gotten so big.

LAINE

Were you really five nine in seventh grade?

GAYNELL

What?

LAINE

Mommy said she had 'Memaw tells someone she was five nine in seventh grade in the first hour' on her bingo card.

GAYNELL

Bingo card?

LAINE

That Michelle made. For the adults though. Mommy said not everyone gets to play.

Michelle and Penny sit at a table, high as fuck, cracking up as they review the Family Bingo Cards Michelle created. The twenty five squares identify individuals and events likely to occur during the party. People start to wander over to the table to learn what all of the cackling is about.

PATRICK

What's so funny Thelma and Louise?

Michelle grabs Penny's square and turns them both over.

MICHELLE

Nothing.

PENNY

Oh come on. You have to share this.

MICHELLE

He's on it.

Penny grabs a card and reads it. Finds the square. Shrugs her shoulders knowingly.

PENNY

You're not the queen for nothin'.

MICHELLE

Thank you!

PATRICK

Come on. (sits down) No fair if I'm on it.

PENNY

OK, but you have to promise no Redneck Diva routines. No pouting, being a pussy snowflake. Sack up as they say.

PATRICK

Done.

Penny hads him the square. Patrick takes it and starts reading out load.

PATRICK (con't)

Cindy steals something. Peggy steals something. Charlie makes fun of republicans. Patrick says something obviously racist followed by 'What'?

Patrick pauses as he formulates a response. Keeps his promise.

PATRICK (con't)

Yeah, I'd say you nailed it.

All three crack up, drawing more attention. Charlie wanders over.

CHARLIE

I wanna know.

PENNY

You wanna know what?

CHARLIE

Whatever is going on over here.

Michelle looks at Penny. She mouths the word 'Kayleigh'. Penny shrugs her shoulders.

PENNY

Are you in your woke pissed at the world Mood?

CHARLIE

No, not at all actually.

PENNY

Mushroom tea?

CHARLIE

Exactly.

PENNY

OK. This is humor. Like actually funny stuff. Not what passes for humor today. It's supposed to be offensive. Because it's true.

PATRICK

You can't handle the truth!

CHARLIE

Like with Colten?

PENNY

Well. You got a good point. But it is what it is. He's here isn't he?

CHARLIE

I see that.

PENNY

So anyway. Read at your own risk. I love you and all that shit if we never talk again. I'm joking. Go ahead - it's funny.

Charlie turns over the card. Murmurs to himself as he reads. A couple of loud laughs. Reads out loud..

CHARLIE

Penny smells like she's been to a Bob Marley concert. Limp dick makes a drunken ass of himself. Kayleigh cries.

He giggles.

CHARLIE (con't)

Of course she's going to. She's come a long way though. She understands my friend Jesus is not a sacreligious attack on

Christianity.

PATRICK

Hey Zues, huh? He legal?

CHARLIE

Bingo.

PATRICK

What?

As others walk towards the Bingo Card review, the entire fellowship hall is revealed as 80's, 90's and 2000's rock music plays. Two black jack tables with gold foiled chocolate coins strewn about, a roulette table with stacks of gold foiled candy, and five table top slot machines spitting out chocolate gold coins are ringed by tables of food and drink and accessories. Ten tables fill in the area. A Happy Engagement CJ and Andrew sign and banner blaring Welcome Home with TEMPORARILY scrawled in industrial sized sharpie hag at each end. A hundred people or more laugh, talk, and visit and the volume makes intimate conversation impossible.

EXT - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jaq and Colten stand outside the kitchen area to get some quiet and give Jaq the opportunity to dampen her anxiety. She packs a one hitter and looks at Colten while he talks to her, oblivious to anything he is saying.

COLTEN

Jaq? Did you hear me?

JAQ

I'm sorry. What?

COLTEN

Do you know how long your parents are staying?

JAQ

No. I mean at least for 90 days but if my Mom has her way then until November first.

COLTEN

Wow. November first. What do you think about

that?

JAQ

I don't know. I mean. I would never tell anyone but you but I kinda like it if you can believe that?

COLTEN

Woah...

JAQ

I know. My Mom has chilled out. Hell, who am I kidding? I've chilled out too. Probably more than she has.

COLTEN

You've had to deal with a lot.

JAQ

It'd be sorta shitty if I didn't learn something from it. I know you hated Austin but he had some really good qualities. He just drowned them in Jack Daniels.

COLTEN

That's why I hated him. He didn't realize what he was shitting on.

JAQ

Laine wanted to adore him, she really did. But he just wouldn't let that happen. Probably for the best with how everything turned out.

COLTEN

So what are you going to do?

JAQ

I haven't figured it out. I might stay. If my parents are comin back here for good. Laine needs family and Austin's parents are in their 80's. It'd be nice to be close to Charlie and god love 'em even Memaw and Ganny would be good to check in on. Laine could remember her great grandparents.

COLTEN

Better wear that MAGA hat when you go.

JAQ

I don't let him wear it out in public with us!

COLTEN

I hope you stay.

Patrick busts out of the back door looking for Colten.

PATRICK

Hey Colten, I think someone you know is here. Some guy named Cooper.

COLTEN

My brother?

PATRICK

He is black but I thought you all called each other cuz now, not brutha.

JAQ

Patrick!

PATRICK

What?

INT - FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

There is a ruckus at the Grandparents table. Neil, his boyfriend COOPER (30s, black) and David Winstead are being separated by Darrell, his pirate shirt ripped, Les, Gary and Limp Dick. David's nose is bleeding and Neil is shaking his reddened hand in pain as Cooper attempts to calm him down. Laine sits in Gaynell's lap, her arms tight around Gaynell's neck and Peggy and Cindy are having a laugh. MARIAN (mid 70s) pulls on David to sit down.

LIMP DICK

What was your name again? Michelle told me but I can't remember it for shit.

LES

Les.

LIMP DICK

Yeah, that's it. Les. Makes sense.

Jaq and Colten come in with Patrick. Colten runs to Cooper when he sees the situation.

COOPER

Colten?

COLTEN

What the hell are you doing here?

COOPER

I'm here with Neil.

COLTEN

Why's Neil here?

JAQ

He's Memaw's attorney.

COOPER

Don't tell Mom.

COLTEN

I'm not telling anyone.

COOPER

We haven't been able to go out of town in months. Work (glares at Neil). So - a casino night at a cracker church? Bingo.

PATRICK

That's racist.

Colten surveys the scene more carefully.

COLTEN

What the fuck is going on?

DAVID

Neil Chapman is getting his ass sued is what's going on here!

MARIAN

David, settle down.

Neil interrupts as Marian is tugging on David's slacks to get him to sit down. Gary hands David a napkin for his bloody nose.

NEIL

Fuck you you homophobic racist.

GAYNELL

We have a child here.

DARRELL

If we can just have everyone settle down and sit down.

Penny and Michelle come walking into the fellowship hall, laughing their asses off. As they enter the hall they are surprised to see the sedate crowd and lack of activity. They look over to the grandparent's table.

CINDY

Who let a skunk in?

CHARLIE/KAYLEIGH/JAQ

Bingo!

INT - KITCHEN AREA OF FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

Neil and Penny are having a heated discussion.

NEIL

I'm sorry Penny. I have no choice. It's an ethical requirement.

PENNY

Ethics? You're a fucking ambulance chaser. Just wrapped in a skinny suit and cool billboards. Not even that cool really.

NEIL

Look, I'll refer you to a great attorney. No fee from me. But in light of the situation there's no way I can represent your mother or Charlie now if he needed it.

PENNY

Well that's just fucking great Neil. Thank

you for that. That's so swell of you. Great guy. Your lack of restraint sure sucks though!

NEIL

He told Cooper he thought coloreds didn't like queers!

PENNY

You've never heard worse?

NEIL

Fuck you.

PENNY

You're a target Neil. Every redneck in this town despises you. And we got a lot of rednecks. Sack up.

INT - FELLOWSHIP HALL - NIGHT

Cindy wanders the hall, putting gold coins and salt and pepper shakers in her purse. Everyone has left except for Michelle's and Penny's groups. Limp dick is shaking Darrell's hand and struggles to stay up right.

LIMP DICK

Turned out to be a hell of a party! Little chintzy.

DARRELL

Chintzy my ass. It was perfect. Well, except for the slurs and assaults.

LIMP DICK

Don't tell anyone but Michelle throws a hell of a party. I give her a hard time because I'm a dick.

DARRELL

That you are James. That you are.

LIMP DICK

OK, well I gotta go. Get that trailer a rockin' if you know what I mean.

DARRELL

Pump it up.

LIMP DICK

What?

DARRELL

Nothing. Make sure she drives.

LIMP DICK

Sure thing man.

Limp Dick takes out the pint bottle and finishes it as he heads out of the hall. He slips on a spilled liquid and busts his ass as his girlfriends yells with concern.

MICHELLE

BINGO!

INT - GARAGE - NIGHT

Darrell, Penny, Michelle and Les drinks beers and smoke a joint. A tray of the party sandwiches and a punch bowl full of chips sits on a folding table between them. Darrell grabs a sandwich and takes a bite.

DARRELL

So what are we going to do?

PENNY

Uh, chew with our mouths closed.

Darrell finishes his bite.

DARRELL

So, what's the next move?

PENNY

I haven't figured that out yet?

MICHELLE

Everyone is still going to church tomorrow, right?

LES

I doubt David and Marian will be there.

PENNY

We'll be there.

MICHELLE

Just be prepared for Lisa.

DARRELL

Lisa?

PENNY

Michelle!

MICHELLE

Oh shit.

DARRELL

Lisa Underhill?

LES

Who's Lisa Underhill?

DARRELL

Is it her?

PENNY

Yes.

DARRELL

What the fuck, Penny?

MICHELLE

It's my fault.

DARRELL/LES

How is it your fault?

MICHELLE

Look, I'm sorry. I saw her at the coffee shop and she was asking if I had talked to Penny, just making small talk. I completely forgot all about it.

DARRELL

How the fuck could you completely forget all about it?

MICHELLE

It was probably the gummy.

PENNY

At seven a.m.?

MICHELLE

Don't judge me. It's been a stressful month!

LES

Forget what?

DARRELL

It's over. It's fucking over.

PENNY

Oh stop being a drama queen.

DARRELL

It's in the agreement Penny. 90 days and it's over. It's why I pleaded with you to think through this. Like we could just hide out from her while we were here and she'll never find out. So much for a five year reset.

LES

OK, don't tell me. (looks at Michelle) Will you please tell me what they're talking about?

MICHELLE

It's not my story to tell. That's why you don't already know.

PENNY

It's fine.

MICHELLE

Are you sure?

PENNY

Better you than me.

Michelle tells Les the story. Darrell sits there with his head in his hands and Penny looks off in the distance as

she puffs but doesn't pass. As Michelle finishes Les sits in stunned silence.

LES

Wow. (looks at Penny) Why would you do that?

DARRELL

Boy isn't that the million dollar question, Les.

PENNY

Fuck you.

DARRELL

Literally. A million dollar question.

Penny storms off to the house. Michelle runs after her. Darrell and Les sit in awkward silence. Les grabs a sandwich. Darrell finishes his beer.

LES

Man, I'm sorry. I know Michelle must feel terrible for bringing all of this up.

DARRELL

It's alright. It needed to come to the surface. It's just been sitting on our faces, smothering us.

LES

And Michelle just farted all over your faces.

DARRELL

Bit of a mixed metaphor but you're on the right track, I suppose.

LES

Can I ask a question?

DARRELL

Sure.

INT - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Penny lays on her bed crying, Michelle lays beside her, stroking her leg. The door to the room is cracked. Sam pokes his head in. Michelle shoos him away.

MICHELLE

Why'd you do it?

PENNY

What?

MICHELLE

I've never asked you. I just stood beside you and made sure I was there for anything you needed. Honestly, I've never even thought of it before tonight. Why did you do it?

PENNY

Because she asked me to.

MICHELLE

I didn't even know you all were close.

PENNY

We weren't. Not really.

MICHELLE

A million bucks is pretty damn close.

PENNY

That was insurance.

MICHELLE

Still cost you a shit ton. Would not want to see that insurance premium when it comes in.

PENNY

God, don't remind me.

MICHELLE

So why'd you do it.

PENNY

I felt sorry for her.

MICHELLE

Yeah. Me too.

PENNY

We never even went out after Junior League. It literally was the first time we'd gone out for drinks after a meeting. But there we were, me with a coke zero and she's slamming two vodka tonics in five minutes and I'm like 'hold on girl'. And then she just unloaded.

MICHELLE

What a dick.

PENNY

What a dick. She was so mortified that it was going to come out that he was the father and they had decided they were going to wait until after the election to separate.

MICHELLE

And she still lost!

PENNY

And she still lost. Yeah. Real kick in the puss there. Do all of that and she still loses the election. She's DUI free and I'm a reckless driver who paralyzed an old lady. So bad on me for feeling sorry for her in the moment. Not able to resist. She was crying and pleading 'PLEASE'. When I heard the sirens I just said 'OK'. Jumped in the drivers seat and now I'm a million dollar loser on parole for reckless endangerment who just managed to get a visa waiver to live abroad for sixty months. A five year reset Darrell called it. Said it's what we needed. It wasn't just that. The kids needed a break from us, I needed a break from my parents. So then this curse turns into a blessing because Lisa agrees to pay the bill so long as I keep quiet. Lemonade out of lemons. Just like always. Yea me!

MICHELLE

Is Darrell right?

PENNY

Technically?

MICHELLE

At all.

PENNY

Yes. I don't understand it but something about our legal status is disrupted if we come back to the states for 90 days in a row after taking this special visa she arranged. So if that happens she stops paying and we can't afford to live in a private resort in Costa Rica.

MICHELLE

What would you do?

PENNY

You're looking at it.

MICHELLE

Oh. Really? I'm sorry.

PENNY

Don't be.

MICHELLE

Really?

PENNY

Yeah.

MICHELLE

Did you take a gummy too?

Penny laughs, wipes her face and sits upright, criss cross apple sauce. Michelle does the same thing and they face each other.

PENNY

No. But do you have one?

MICHELLE

Here for ya.

Michelle pulls out a gummy from her hoodie pocket. Pulls off the pocket fuzz and hands it to Penny.

PENNY

Eww.

MICHELLE

Deal with it princess.

PENNY

Yeah. I want to come back. I miss the kids. And seeing Laine every day. Oh my goodness. That little girl melts my heart.

MICHELLE

Your Mom's a pisser.

PENNY

Yeah. It's OK. They need someone to help them. My dad is so happy all the time now just because we're here. I've never got to experience that.

MICHELLE

My mom is gonna throw this in my face.

PENNY

Cindy's different.

MICHELLE

You're goddamn right she's different. Well, I didn't want to say it but I was hoping you were gonna stay. I've missed you. I'm glad you're coming back.

PENNY

Me too.

As they lean in to hug Jaq is standing outside the bedroom listening and smiling. She silently walks off.

INT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The grandfather clock stands tall and solitary, the heavy tick, tick, tick counting off seconds as the pendulum swings back and forth. The face comes into focus as a powerful dong starts counting off ten o'clock. The house is

a hive of chaotic activity as Penny stands in the center hall space the downstairs and upstairs share. She's half dressed and yells so the entire house can hear her.

PENNY

Asses in seat in 15 minutes! Got it?

No response.

PENNY

Got it?!

OCCUPANTS

Got it!

Colten pokes his head into the living room as he pushes open the front door.

COLTEN

Knock, knock.

EXT - GARAGE - DAY

Peggy wanders out to the garage. The remains from last night's discussion remains. She picks up half empty beer bottles and throws them in the trash. Picks up the last sandwich on the platter. It has a bite out of it. She eats it all. Picks up a bag of candy from one of the chairs. Cosmic Crunch Gummies. Three left. She pops all three in her mouth.

INT - TRUCK CAB - DAY

Darrell drives Gary's truck with Penny, Gary and Peggy as passengers. Peggy starts to get a far away look in her eyes. Jaq follows in her car with Colten, Charlie and Kayleigh. Darrell pulls up in front of the church to allow everyone to unload. Penny helps her Mom. Jaq drives on to a parking space.

DARRELL

I'll meet you all in there.

PENNY

OK, we'll save you a seat.

Darrell texts Lisa as he drives off.

DARRELL (text)

Here. Back door of fellowship hall.

The crew take up three pews. Limp Dick and crew occupy a pew, Michelle, her three kids, Andrew and Cindy occupy a pew and Penny's group take up the third. An open spot next to the aisle waits for Darrell. Jaq passes Penny a note written on the service bulletin.

JAQ (written note)

Where's Pops?

PENNY (written note)

Parking.

JAQ (written note)

It's been 15 minutes!

PENNY (written note)

Probably pooping.

JAQ (written note)

Mother!

Penny looks at her and shrugs her shoulders.

Peggy looks around the sanctuary. It bends back and forth as she looks from one side to the other, the gummies have kicked in. She wants to talk but can't make herself.

JAQ (written note)

Memaw's acting so weird.

PENNY (written note)

She is weird.

JAQ (written note)

I'm glad your staying..

Penny looks at her with surprise.

JAQ (written note)

I heard you talking to Michelle.

Penny nods her head knowingly. Squeezes Jaq's leg affectionately with her hand.

JAQ (written note)
Does Pops know?

Penny shakes her head negatively.

JAQ (written note)
What are you going to do?

Penny shrugs her shoulders.

JAQ
(whispers) Colten asked me to stay.

Penny lets out a happy yelp before putting her hand over her mouth. Darrell walks up and slides in the pew as Jaq folds the bulletin and puts it in her purse. Darrell whispers to Penny and she whispers back.

DARRELL
Had to take a dump.

PENNY
I figured.

The choir sings a hymn as the offering plate is passed up and down the pews back to front. As the plate enters Michelle's pew it passes smoothly from hand to hand. As Cindy grabs it she opens her purse.

The contents of her purse occupy the screen: a crumpled ten dollar bill, a small hand lotion, coupons for Hardees, about 100 gold foil candy coins and six or seven salt and pepper shakers.

She reaches in and drops 6 gold coins into the plate and passes it up to Limp Dicks row. As they hand it one to another each takes out a coin. When the plate is handed to the deacon nothing is in the plate.

PENNY
(whispering) Jaq has some big news.

DARRELL
Really? Gonna be one of those days I guess.

PENNY
Yes. She'll tell you at lunch I bet.

DARRELL

I can't wait.

PENNY

Maybe things are working out for the best.

DARRELL

I bet they are.

Darrell and Penny interlock hands and smile as they start singing the hymn.

INT - GOLDEN CORRAL - DAY

The banquet room houses everyone as family groups sit together in the U-shaped configuration. Individuals walk in and out with various plates and bowls of food. There is a constant hum of conversation. Gary leans over to Penny.

GARY

Where is Patrick and Gaynell? I thought this was Patrick's favorite restaurant.

DARRELL

Oh trust me, it is.

PENNY

They drove back early this morning. Patrick didn't want to miss the race.

DARRELL

They did?

PENNY

I told you last night.

GARY

Well I hate he had to miss it.

Michelle stands up and taps her glass with a fork. Everyone silences and turns their attention toward her.

MICHELLE

If I could just have a quick moment.

LIMP DICK

Oh Lord, here we go. Hope ya'll don't have

anyplace to be.

Michelle glares at Limp Dick. Prepares a witty comeback and then decides against it. Regaining her composure.

MICHELLE

OK, I know I have a reputation for being a bit long winded so I'm just going to take a quick moment to say how thankful I am that you all came last night and today. It really means a lot to me to have my family here. And all of you are my family. All of you. My first little girl isn't my little girl anymore. I'm so proud of her and I can't wait to watch her and Andrew grow into their relationship. So thank all of you for helping us celebrate them.

GROUP

Here, here...cheers CJ

MICHELLE

And one more thing...

LIMP DICK

I knew it.

Les speaks up.

LES

Hey Limp Dick. I mean James. Let's pipe down over there and let Michelle finish what she has to say.

Everyone looks at each other with surprise, impressed. Michelle beams as she finishes her thought.

MICHELLE

And I just want to say thank you to my best friend. I know you didn't plan on being here, but I'm so glad you are. I hope I get to see a lot more of you before you have to leave.

PEGGY

Why is everyone yelling?

JAQ
No one's yelling Memaw.

MEMAW
What?

JAQ
No one's yelling.

PENNY
No one's yelling Mom.

PEGGY
I want some ice cream.

Gets up to walk to the buffet.

COLTEN
Here, I'll get it for you Peggy. You sit
down.

Peggy brushes him off.

PEGGY
Quit yelling. I can get it for myself.

Michelle sits down as Cindy stands up and starts to speak.

CINDY
I also..

MICHELLE
Cindy!

CINDY
Just a quick word.

MICHELLE
Sit your ass down.

Cindy takes a seat as Limp Dick stands up and slams his
fist on the table to get everyone's attention.

LIMP DICK
Since we're all taking a moment to speak.

Darrell leans over to Penny

DARRELL

Are we all supposed to have something to say?

PENNY

He's drunk.

LIMP DICK

I just want to say how proud I am of my little girl. Daddy loves you CJ.

CJ mouths 'thank you' and motions for him to sit back down.

LIMP DICK

Andrew, I still want you wearing rubbers until you're married.

JAQ

Oh my god.

LIMP DICK

And I have my own good news to share as well. Janelle and I are getting married too! Maybe we can make it a double wedding and save some money.

CJ shakes her head negatively and mouths 'NO!' before putting her face in her hands. Andrew rubs her back soothingly. Peggy walks back in with a plate full of whip cream. She sits down.

PENNY

Mom, that's not ice cream.

PEGGY

It most certainly is.

PENNY

OK. Have at it. (looking at Darrell) It's whipped cream.

Darrell rubs her back soothingly. Charlie stands up to say something but Kayliegh grabs his hand and jerks it hard. He looks at her. She shakes her head no authoritatively. Charlie sits back down. Jaq and Penny observe the odd

exchange and look at each other. Jaq shrugs her shoulders. Penny does the same. Darrell stands up.

DARRELL

Well, not to steal anyone's thunder but while we're all here I thought this was as good a time as any to tell everyone.

Jaq looks at Penny. Penny looks back with a blank stare, no idea what's about to be said.

DARRELL (con't)

Because I have GREAT news.

He pauses for dramatic affect and scans the room. Looks down at Penny and smiles.

DARRELL (con't)

I am here to say that at nine a.m. tomorrow in the circuit court room of her honorable Lisa Underhill, all charges will be dropped against Peggy. It will be done. Over with. Finito. No need for live in oversight. Penny and I will be on a plane at six p.m. back to Costa Rica. Everything back to normal.

Peggy's face drops lifeless into her plate of whipped cream.

EXT - GOLDEN CORRAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Paramedics load Peggy into the back of the ambulance as everyone stands in the parking lot looking on.

GARY

Mom, we'll be right there. Just relax.

Penny pulls Darrell over to the side.

PENNY

What was that?

DARRELL

Probably just got lightheaded and passed out.

PENNY

No. What's with the announcement?

DARRELL

I know. Aren't you surprised.

PENNY

You could say that.

DARRELL

I got it all figured out.

PENNY

How?

DARRELL

I just let Lisa know it would be in all of our best interests if we could make this go away.

PENNY

Lisa?

DARRELL

Yeah. I was telling Les the story about everything and he said I could convince her to help. He made a pretty compelling case so I called her. He was right.

PENNY

Go Les.

DARRELL

Yeah, I signed the forms this morning at church. All taken care of. All by myself!

PENNY

You blackmailed her?

DARRELL

I know. It's kinda cool isn't it?

PENNY

Not really.

DARRELL

Oh stop worrying. It's not blackmail. It

isn't. But she understood why we needed to just get everything back to the way it was. The throwdown with Neil and David turned out to be the chance we were looking for. Good thing you did ask him to come.

PENNY

Yeah. Good thing.

DARRELL

Look. I know you always have to do everything. You always have and I know it's not fair. I try to help but I just always get in the way. But I wanted to take care of this so you didn't have to. Just like you've always asked. So let's get to the hospital and make sure your Mom is OK and then go home and pack!

Darrell walks over to Gary and starts to get everyone rounded up to go to the hospital. Jaq walks over to Penny who is still shellshocked.

JAQ

Are you OK?

PENNY

I don't know.

JAQ

So you're really going back. Tomorrow?

PENNY

Looks like it.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY

Gary, Penny and Darrell sit in the front row, waiting for the Judge to arrive. The public defender sits at the defendant's table with Peggy. The prosecutor sits by himself at the plaintiff's table. clock reads 8:59 and as the second sweeps to 9:00 the bailiff shouts out:

BAILIFF

All rise.

LISA (50s) walks in in her Judge attire and proceeds to the bench.

BAILIFF

The court of the honorable Lisa Underhill is called to order.

LISA

Please be seated.

Everyone is seated as Lisa sorts papers. She looks out to the courtroom and sees Darrell. She gives no expression as she adjusts the microphone and shuffles papers. She clears her throat and speaks into the microphone.

LISA

F3678WR - the State vs Peggy Pennington.

Peggy raises her hand.

PEGGY

Here judge.

The public defender pulls Peggy's arm down and stands.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Yes your honor.

LISA

So it appears as if we've had quite the shuffling with this case doesn't it?

PUBLIC DEFENDER

It does your honor. Mr. Chapman has asked..

LISA

I am aware of the circumstances.

Lisa looks at Darrell. Penny looks at Lisa then looks at Darrell.

LISA (con't)

Due to the unique circumstances that have developed I took the liberty of reviewing the case and consulting with Judge Evans and Mr. Hale. I think a fresh set of eyes has helped bring some clarity to the situation.

Is that a fair assessment Mr. Hale?

PROSECUTOR

If you say so, your honor.

LISA

So after lengthy consultation with all applicable individuals it has been determined that all parties are in agreement and the state wishes to dismiss all charges against Ms. Pennington. Case dismissed.

EXT - GARY AND PEGGY DRIVEWAY - DAY

Penny and Darrell stand outside in their resort wear, luggage by their side. Everyone is outside to give them hugs as the Uber waits on the street with the trunk popped. Jaq has tears in her eyes as she hugs Darrell

JAQ

Bye Pops. You all have a safe flight.

DARRELL

Bye baby girl. So every Sunday right?

JAQ

Six p.m. Zoom call every week.

Colten shakes Darrell's hand.

COLTEN

Have a safe flight.

CHARLIE

Be safe Pops.

Darrell hugs Charlie tightly.

DARRELL

Six p.m. I want you there on every call too.

CHARLIE

It's on my calendar.

Penny is sad as she hugs her Dad and Mom.

PEGGY

When are you all coming back?

PENNY

I'm not sure Mom. Probably Christmas.

GARY

That's a long way away.

PENNY

I know Dad.

Penny bends down to give Laine a hug and kiss.

PENNY

Bye little girl.

LAINE

Bye Mimi.

PENNY

So you'll send me a new one every week,
promise??

LAINE

I promise. I'll stay in the lines.

PENNY

Everything you color is beautiful. I just
need one every week OK?

LAINE

Yep.

Kayleigh and Charlie walk over to Penny. Kayleigh hugs
Penny

PENNY

Keep him line, OK?

KAYLEIGH

I'll do my best.

CHARLIE

She always does.

Penny hugs Charlie tightly and strokes his hair. A tear runs down her face.

PENNY

I love you.

CHARLIE

I love you too, Momma.

PENNY

I'm glad your landlord agreed to let us get you caught up.

CHARLIE

Me too. I'll pay it on time. Every month.

PENNY

I know you will.

Penny kisses him on the cheek. Jaq walks up. Penny and Jaq embrace and Jaq starts crying. Penny does too.

JAQ

I'm gonna miss you Momma.

PENNY

I'm gonna miss you too, baby girl. A lot.

JAQ

Colten said we could come visit you all.

PENNY

That would be the best. You come anytime at all. Anytime.

JAQ

I'll send you pictures of Laine. All the time.

PENNY

Please do.

DARRELL

OK, folks. Fernando is waiting. We gotta get to the airport.

CHARLIE

You really take that 3 hour suggestion seriously don't you Pops?

DARRELL

You can never be too early to the airport, buddy.

Penny and Darrell load their luggage in the back of the car and waive to everyone. They get in the back seat. Penny looks out the window and keeps waiving. More tears roll down her cheeks.

DARRELL

I'm sorry Michelle couldn't make it.

PENNY

Me too. She couldn't get out of training.

The Uber pulls up to the departure drop off at the airport. He hops out and takes the luggage out of the trunk. Darrell shakes his hand.

DARRELL

Five stars for sure. Thank you Fernando.

FERNANDO

THank you. Sir.

Darrell and Penny walk into the airport. They print out boarding passes and wait in the TSA lines for inspection. They zip thru the process in the sparsely filled airport. They pull their luggage to a bar and select a table to wait the two and a half hours until loading. Penny looks at her phone for text messages. There are none.

DARRELL

Mich Ultra?

PENNY

Sure.

Darrell walks to the bar to order the beers. Penny looks at her phone again. She open her text app to send a message to Jaq.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

Peggy types a message to Cindy.

PEGGY (text)
I'm ready.

EXT - GARY AND PEGGY DRIVEWAY - DAY

Cindy pulls up in her beat up car. Honks the horn.

INT - KITCHEN - DAY

Peggy takes her purse and her walking cane and heads out.

INT - BASEMENT - DAY

Gary plays solitaire on his computer, oblivious to the happenings upstairs.

INT - AIRPORT BAR - DAY

Darrell scrolls on his phone and drinks his beer. Penny and Jaq are texting.

JAQ (text)
Colten says I should think about going back to school. At least part time.

PENNY (text)
That's a great idea!

JAQ (text)
Do you think we're moving to fast?

PENNY (text)
Do you think so?

JAQ (text)
No.

PENNY (text)
Trust your gut. It won't steer you wrong.

A text message from Michelle pops in.

MICHELLE (text)

Call me ASAP!

PENNY (text)

Oh baby girl, gotta go. Michelle needs something.

JAQ (text)

OK.

JAQ (text)

I love you.

PENNY (text)

I love you too!

Penny calls Michelle. Michelle answers yelling so loud Darrell can hear her voice but not the words.

PENNY

Are you fucking kidding me?

DARRELL

What?

PENNY

Fuck me. Damn that woman. OK, the one on Burlew boulevard?

Penny hangs up and orders an Uber.

DARRELL

What?

PENNY

Again.

DARRELL

What?!

Penny and Darrell arrive in the Clarks Pump and Shop parking lot and hop out of the Uber. Penny runs in the store as Darrell gets the luggage out of the back. A police car is pulled into a parking spot, door open.

INT - STORE - DAY

Peggy and Cindy stand beside the drink machine. Cindy eats a Kit Kat candy bar. Michelle is talking to the POLICE OFFICER (50s). Penny walks up.

PENNY

OK, I'm here. What's going on?

MICHELLE

This is Billy Bradshaw.

PENNY

Bradshaw? Applebees Billy?

POLICE OFFICER

You told her?

MICHELLE

She's my best friend.

PENNY

Nice to meet you. So what's going on?

POLICE OFFICER

Apparently your mother was shoplifting.

PENNY

For what?

POLICE OFFICER

Pretty random stuff actually. A kit kat, WD-40 and air fresheners. Wasn't even attempting to be discreet about it. As soon as I walked in she put her hands out for me to arrest her. Said she was a hardened criminal. Needed to be locked up.

PENNY

How'd you know?

MICHELLE

Cindy recognized Billy and he recognized her. He called me. Still had me in his phone.

PENNY

Can I talk to her?

POLICE OFFICER

Of course (as Penny walks away). You didn't tell her everything, right? I'm not supposed to use my uniform or implements in unofficial business.

PENNY

Mom? What in the worlds going on.

PEGGY

I don't want you to leave?

PENNY

What?

PEGGY

Just come to court again and tell the judge you'll watch me.

PENNY

Mom, it doesn't work that way.

PEGGY

Why not? It did last time.

PENNY

Mom, this is number five.

PEGGY

Case was dismissed. We're back to four. So we can get a do-over.

PENNY

No Mom, that's not how it's going to work.

PEGGY

Well it should.

Darrell walks up.

DARRELL

Boy that didn't take long, did it Peggy?

PEGGY

Why do you want to be in Costa Rica so bad?

DARRELL

What?

PEGGY

Can't you tell everyone wants you all to come back? How many more times do I have to get arrested?

PENNY

Mom, what are you talking about.

PEGGY

I'm talking about you coming home. Where you belong.

PENNY

Mom, we sold everything. We don't have a home to come back to.

PEGGY

You've been living with us.

PENNY

That was for a week.

PEGGY

See.

Michelle walks over.

MICHELLE

Billy is going to let them go.

PENNY

Really?

MICHELLE

You're welcome.

Michelle winks at Penny and walks off. Penny stares at her, then at Peggy, then at Darrell. She has no idea what to say or do next.

SUPER: July 4th

EXT - GARY AND PEGGY BACKYARD - NIGHT

The backyard is filled with family and friends for an early evening backyard wedding. A table with cake, punch and bowls of gold foil coins stands next to coolers filled with beer, cola and waters. Miscellaneous card tables and folding chairs dot the yard

Jaq, dressed in a pale blue sun dress, and Colten, in a coordinating skinny suit and white shirt, stand before a flowered arch. Les is in the middle of the arch. Laine stands beside Jaq as a flower girl. Cooper stands beside Colten as best man.

LES

By the powers of the state vested in me I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride.

Jaq and Colten kiss as the crowd applauds. Jaq takes the bouquet from Laine and throws it high in the air. Cindy nearly knocks over Peggy as she positions herself to catch it.

Charlie is holding a 6 month pregnant Kayleigh's hand and hits play on his phone and a blue tooth speaker starts blaring Taylor Swift as Sam barks and makes his way from guest to guest and a line forms for food and drinks.

Penny takes a table furthest from the music. Michelle joins her.

MICHELLE

How you hanging in there? I haven't seen you in a week.

PENNY

I have no idea. The last 3 months have been a blur.

MICHELLE

I bet. How's Darrell taking it?

PENNY

Like it's the greatest thing ever.

MICHELLE

Still, huh?

PENNY

Said this was the reset we needed. Moving in to take care of my parents.

MICHELLE

Who the fuck stole him and who is this?

PENNY

He's gonna start writing.

MICHELLE

What?

PENNY

Hasn't said a word about it in decades. Probably since we graduated college. Never seen him write a word outside of a greeting card in all the years we've been married.

MICHELLE

Oh shit. What's he gonna write?

PENNY

A movie.

MICHELLE

Get the fuck out of here. A movie huh? What if it sucks?

PENNY

That's what I said! Gonna write what he knows he said.

MICHELLE

What's it called?

PENNY

Roommates.

Fade To Black.

