

BIG LOVE

Episode 1.06

"ROBERTA'S FUNERAL"

written by

Eileen Myers

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"ROBERTA'S FUNERAL"

FADE IN:

INT. NICKI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bill on top of Nicki, in the middle of sex "for procreating" purposes. Yet another task in Bill's day about to be completed...

NICKI

I want to have your baby. I want so much to have your baby. Give me a boy, Bill. Come on, give me a boy.

And, he's done. Sweaty, spent; kisses her on the forehead; rolls off of her, immediately out of bed and starts dressing, hurriedly. The lack of a post-coital moment is not lost on Nicki, but she makes the best of it.

NICKI (CONT'D)

What do you think of the name "Newel"?

BILL

I think it says, "kick me and take my lunch money."

She smiles. He throws a sock at her.

NICKI

Well think of boy names.
(just occurs to her)
We should name him after you!

INT. NICKI'S HALLWAY - SAME TIME (PREVIOUSLY SCENE #9)

Margene has just arrived outside the door.

BILL

(non-committal)
Yeah, we could do that. I'll come up with a list.

Margene quickly knocks, pops her head in.

MARGENE

Nicki? Oh!
(retreats into hall)
Sorry.

(CONTINUED)

BILL
Hi, honey.

MARGENE
I didn't know you were back.

NICKI
He's back.

MARGENE
Oh good. Nicki, my garbage
disposal's broken again.

NICKI
What do you PUT down there?

MARGENE
Nothing!

NICKI
(mouths the words to Bill)
Why do I always have to fix
everything!?

BILL
Margie, see if you can get Ben to
look at it.

MARGENE
Ok.

Margene nods. Bill buttons his shirt and looks to Nicki:
"satisfied?" Nicki shrugs.

BILL
And do NOT call a plumber.

MARGENE
No, we are do-it-yourselfers.

Margene loafs in the hall to see what else may happen, the
door slightly ajar; Bill goes to kiss Nicki goodbye.

BILL
I gotta get back to the office.

NICKI
Thanks for coming by on such short
notice.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Nicki, you don't have to thank me.

Nicki nods, beatific pre-mother-to-be.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'll call you later.

He's out the door and plants one on Margene. Does it again.

BILL (CONT'D)

I gotta get.

Nicki listens, discomfited.

MARGENE

Bye.

He's gone. Margene and Nicki, opposite sides of the wall.

CUT TO:

INT. LOIS SEDAN - COMPOUND COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

ON LOIS, applying lipstick in the rearview mirror. She seems a bit shaky and vulnerable, but a woman with a purpose, nonetheless. She looks down at a plate of poorly wrapped jalapeno corn bread, then glances up at--

Her POV: A BLACK RIBBON on the Community Center door.

INT. COMPOUND COMMUNITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

A wake. Food laid on a table.

Frank sits on a settee, the paterfamilias surrounded by Six grieving Wives. Some stand behind him, some sit close him, tucked next to him on the settee, one holds his hand, all arranged as though posing for a family portrait. Lois enters and scans the room.

Lois POV as Roman speaks to Frank--

She stalls, waiting for Roman to leave Frank's side.

ROMAN

My deep condolences, Frank. She was a good woman.

FRANK

Wasn't she though?

(CONTINUED)

ROMAN
Yes, indeed.

Frank glances over at Joey and Wanda.

FRANK
She inspired devotion..

Roman nods. When she sees the Roman's moved off, Lois walks away from someone who is mid-sentence and makes a bee-line to Frank. He regards her.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Why Lois, glad you could make it.
You're sunshine on an otherwise
dark and cloudy day.

Wives titter. Lois isn't sure how to respond to his sarcasm. She nods to the wives, some say "hello" to her. She addresses them, trying for sincerity:

LOIS
There's nothing like the passing of
a loved one, is there? Poor, dear
Roberta.

Some of the wives agree, others roll their eyes at each other, as they all know Lois hated Roberta. Lois is twisting in the wind. Frank looks at her, waiting.

FRANK
(points to cornbread)
Watcha got there?

LOIS
For potluck.

FRANK
Sweet, savory or strychnine?

Wives titter, again. Frank laughs, enjoying his own joke.

LOIS
Savory.

Lois is having a hard time continuing.

FRANK
C'mon now, I'm just having a little
fun with you. You've got something
to say, so out with it.

(CONTINUED)

LOIS
I'd prefer to do this privately.

On NITA, a particularly soft, rosy cheeked wife, beside Frank.

NITA
There ought not be any secrets
between us, Sister Lois.

Lois glares, then an imploring look to Frank. Frank makes a motion for the wives to scram.

FRANK
Maybe you all could go fix me a
plate of something.

They leave.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Yes, my darling?

LOIS
(steels herself)
Quit it, Frank. I've come to
collect on your promise.

FRANK
You don't want to be first wife do
you?

That's exactly what she wants.

LOIS
(a forceful whisper)
You said when Roberta had passed,
we would be legally wed. As second
wife I'm entitled. It's right, it's
proper and it's what is due me.

FRANK
That was 45 years ago. I would say
a few things have changed since
then.

She is unmoved. After a beat, Frank acts as though he is seriously considering it.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Well, I was supposed to have you
first anyway.

(CONTINUED)

This is a bitter pill for Lois. She was usurped by Roberta and has never gotten over it.

LOIS

It's a piece of paper. It's a half hour to the county clerks office to make me legal. That's all.

She waits. She tries a warm smile. He fixes her with a level gaze.

FRANK

All the same, I don't think so. Not if there were a gun to my head, which knowing you, is a scenario I can envision.

Lois is furious that he is reneging, but powerless to do anything about it.

LOIS

Frank. You are Satan himself.

FRANK

You should have been a little bit nicer to me.

She goes, hurriedly. Calls after her:

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hey, don't forget your cornbread. I'm pretty sure no one here wants it!

She slams the door. People stare.

INT. HOME PLUS OFFICES - DAY

Bill with his attorney, Lee Hatcher go over the "Secured Loan Agreement" that Bill signed with UEP when Roman advanced the loan six years ago. Lee wears cuff links that glint in the light--

Bill's POV on them as Lee reads the document.

LEE

Who drafted this thing?

BILL

Roman's son, Alby.

(CONTINUED)

LEE

Wow. The agreement is incredibly sloppy.

BILL

Just your opinion: Will the "15% of all future earnings clause" apply to each and every new store we open or not?

LEE

Well, like I said, it's a poorly drafted document, most likely not enforceable. There's a little sticking point though, which is that it could be the basis of an action at equity. They could assert a claim against you based on "intent" as expressed in the loan agreement.

BILL

So what do you suggest, I take my chances and see if the claim sticks? I just want to be done with this.

LEE

At this point, the best thing to do is offer him a consideration. Cash in exchange for a release of all claims. I can broker the deal with his attorney if you want.

Bill considers, wheels turning.

BILL

No...I don't mind handling it. I could go up there for a funeral, actually.

LEE

My condolences. Someone in your family?

BILL

Yeah, you could say.

Lee waits for Bill to elaborate. Bill doesn't.

(CONTINUED)

LEE
Ok, well, look, come up with a
formula based on what he might have
received and make an offer.

BILL
Thanks, Lee.

They shake.

LEE
You bet.

CUT TO:

INT. BARB'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Bill breezes through to pick up his bags. Barb is dressed in
dowdy clothing and doesn't want him to see her. She ducks
into the pantry.

BILL
Barb?

BARB
Yeah?

BILL
I'm going.

BARB
OK

She licks her lips and sticks her head out of the pantry
door, trying for composed, yet sexy.

BARB (CONT'D)
I'm just reorganizing some things
in here.

BILL
OK.

He kisses her in a sultry, slow way.

BILL (CONT'D)
I'll miss you.

BARB
I'll miss you, too.

(CONTINUED)

He bites her neck.

BILL

Call me.

He goes, knowing he's a stud. She closes the door and sits on the floor of the pantry for a moment, flushed, hot, and staring at jars of preserves.

BARB

Heavenly Father, if this is the right thing, give me a sign. Let me know.

She waits. OFF her nod.

CUT TO:

0 EXT. THE THREE HOUSES - LINDA VISTA LANE - DAY

10

Ben, on roller blades, takes slap shots into a hockey net. Bill bounds out of the house with overnight bag.

BILL

Nice shot.

Ben raises arms like "I am the champion of the world." Bill gives Ben a hug/half nelson as they walk/skate to the Denali.

BILL (CONT'D)

Hey. I'm gonna be gone for a couple of days, keep an eye on things for me, all right?

BEN

Where're you going?

BILL

Roberta's funeral.

BEN

Mom said you weren't going.

BILL

(covering)

Thought twice and changed my mind. Act in my place. Man of the house til I'm back. Okay?

BEN

Okay.

(CONTINUED)

BILL
Help out your moms. Watch over
them.
(Bill musses Ben's hair;
Ben smiles; proud)
Call me if you need anything. And
take a look at Margene's garbage
disposal, would ya?

BEN
Sure thing.

BILL
Love you, Ben.

Ben waves as his Dad drives off, then looks up at the three
houses in his charge. Skates back to his net.

CUT TO:

1 INT. NICKI'S BEDROOM - DAY

11

Nicki changes sheets, re-makes her bed and sings "This Land
is Your Land" with Raymond, Nicki adding lyrics to help her
make the bed "This land is your land, hand me the pillows,
from California.." Wayne pees through the half-open doorway
in the bathroom, singing along.

BARB (O.C.)
Nicki? Hey Nicki?

Barb comes up the stairs, a bit out of breath, with a
clipboard and a pen.

NICKI
Yeah?

BARB
(enthusiastic)
I'm making the schedule.
(to Raymond)
Hi, Sweetie.

WAYNE
(calls out)
I'm here, too.

BARB
Oh, hi honey, I didn't see you.

(CONTINUED)

WAYNE

I'm standing right here.

NICKI

Boys go visit Teenie. What about the schedule?

The boys run out of the room.

BARB

(casual)

I thought maybe you could look at your calender and give me an estimate of your cycle.

NICKI

My "cycle" cycle?

Barb starts helping Nicki make the bed.

BARB

If you have a rough idea when you'll be ovulating, I can schedule you and Bill for those days.

NICKI

Why don't we just do it like we used to. Keep the schedule the same and give him to me, in addition, on an as-needed basis.

BARB

Well of course, it's not an exact science, but if we can work out a ball park guess... it would be more efficient.

NICKI

Okay, but, the chances of getting pregnant are better if I can monitor my temperature, and I can't do that in advance.

BARB

Yes, but you only ovulate two days a month--

NICKI

Why are you being so persistent?

(CONTINUED)

BARB
(lightly)
Sorry. Guess I'm in organizational
overdrive today.

NICKI
You do that when Bill goes away.

BARB
That's not true.
(then;)
I'll just leave it with you, and
get it to me when you can. But, you
know, before the end of the week.

They smooth the bed, Nicki's POV on BARB; Nicki switches
gears.

NICKI
So...I've been meaning to tell you
I was wrong about Bill.

BARB
Wrong how?

NICKI
He's not seeing a fourth.

BARB
Oh? I didn't think he was. What
gave you the idea, anyway?

NICKI
Little things. He wasn't where he
said he'd be, he left the house at
odd hours...

Barb nods; twists in the wind a bit. They fold the afghan.

BARB
Oh.

NICKI
(pointed)
But it turns out I had my signals
crossed.

BARB
Well, that's easy to do.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

11 11

Nicki tries to read Barb. Barb fluffs a pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. NICKI'S BATHROOM - DAY

Nicki, with a packet of birth control pills.

ANGLE on the pills. She pops one out, takes it.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. LOIS'S CABIN - COMPOUND - DAY

12

Bill drives his Denali, tailed by Roman's "security detail"-- Goons in pick ups and SUV's and tinted windows. As he pulls up to Lois's cabin, they follow; come to a stop. He gets out, grabs a box and bag. A few Goons get out, too.

BILL

I'm saying hello to my mother, if that's all right with you.

3 INT. LOIS'S CABIN - DAY

3

Lois thrilled to see Bill as he presents her with the TV and over-the-moon about the gift. Hugs and kisses Bill.

LOIS

Oh my word!

BILL

(now lit up)

See it's small enough, you can just take it to work, this way you won't miss Larry King.

LOIS

Oh for heaven's sake would you look at that! Portable. Incredible.

BILL

We should maybe look into getting you a satellite dish up here...get you better reception.

LOIS

I don't need anything fancy! You didn't come all the way up here just to bring me this?

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Sure. I wanted to bring it to you.
And, also I thought I'd go to
Roberta's funeral.

LOIS

(turning on a dime)
What for?

BILL

She was very good to Joey and me
when we were kids, Mom. You know
that.

LOIS

(waves it off)
Let your father walk all over her
is what she did. Never a word
against him. She'd lay down and let
him wipe his feet on her back.

Bill doesn't argue. Pause. Lois sits, irritated.

LOIS (CONT'D)

(peevish now; looks at TV)
You'll have to set this up for me.

BILL

You just plug it in.

Pause. Bill waits to see if things will go permanently sour.
The ball's in her court. She decides to go the martyr route.

LOIS

Ro-ber-ta. I'd hoped that I'd
become his legal wife
now...but...it's no good.

BILL

I don't understand.

LOIS

What don't you understand? I'd
wanted, I'd hoped to finally make
you and Joey and your poor sister
legitimate.

Lois is visibly pained and uncomfortable at mentioning his
sister.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

(gently)

Mom, I'm 43 years old. You don't need to make me legitimate.

LOIS

(sincere)

It's not just that. I suppose I thought I finally would have some protection. I'd like to know that should anything happen, I'd be taken care of, that's all. I came with a lot of money and now it's all in Frank's estate and I have no claim to anything, and he's made it perfectly clear he doesn't intend on providing for me. So, I'm just, oh well, I'm just out here, on the fringe. Aren't I? Didn't used to be like that.

BILL

I know.

LOIS

Your Grandfather was a great man. A true Prophet. This was not the life intended for me, Bill. Nor you or Joey.

BILL

I'm doing fine, Mom.

LOIS

Oh, I know you are. It's the rest of us.

She shakes it off, rises.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Let me get you a piece of cornbread.

OFF Bill, moved by her plight.

CUT TO:

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - DAY

14

Ben stands by the sink and pointlessly switches the garbage disposal lever several times.

(CONTINUED)

He's taking this seriously, trying to be in charge. Margene, leans against the sink and observes. Intermittently waves at Lester who sits on the floor with pacifier. Aaron swings in a wind up swing, nearby.

MARGENE

Do you even know what you're doing?

(off his annoyed look)

I don't know why it keeps breaking.

BEN

(climbs under sink)

Did you put something down here
you're not supposed to?

MARGENE

Like what?

BEN

Like metal.

MARGENE

Why would I put metal down the
sink?

BEN

I don't know.

MARGENE

(stares at his legs
sticking out)

I don't think I did.

BEN

(gets out from under sink;
drinks from juice box)

Least this time it drains. But the
blades won't turn. I don't know
what to do.

MARGENE

Your Dad says we CAN NOT call a
plumber.

BEN

I know.

MARGENE

Do you think he's a cheapskate?

BEN

Uhm, I believe the word is thrifty.

(CONTINUED)

MARGENE
(moronically exaggerated)
Oh, is that what the word is?

BEN
(laughing)
Shut-up.

MARGENE
The word is thrif-ty. Is that
what the word is?

BEN
(overlapping)
Don't be stupid you moron,
don't be stupid you moron,
don't be stupid--

MARGENE
You're the moron, mmm-kay?

Snarfs his juice. Both giddy with the GIGGLES.

BEN
Stop! It's coming out my nose.
Wait, shhh.

He burps obnoxiously.

MARGENE
Classy.

OFF Ben grinning like an idiot.

CUT TO:

INT. NICKI'S FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Nicki lounges in slippers and robe, feet up, eating a box of Cheez-its and watching the A&E documentary about mothers who put their daughters in beauty pageants. A six year old dances in a cowgirl outfit to "Hot Stuff."

BEN
(taps on the door)
Hey Nick? Nicki?

NICKI
Yeah?

BEN
Can you take a look at Margene's
disposal? I can't figure out what's
wrong with it.

(CONTINUED)

She gives him her best "you've got to be kidding me" gaze.

BEN (CONT'D)

What?

OFF Ben's: "What did I do?"

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Margene's phone rings. She answers, enthusiastically.

MARGENE

Hello?

Intercut with Nicki, still eating crackers and watching TV.

NICKI

It's me.

MARGENE

Hi!

NICKI

I'll look at it tomorrow, OK?

MARGENE

Sure, no rush. Do you want to--

Nicki clicks off abruptly. Margene, sits at table and stares into space for a moment, bored. Picks up phone, dials.

INT. PAM'S HOUSE - SAME

Intercut with Pam at home. Behind her are rows and rows of shelves filled with dolls - she's a collector.

At present, she is sewing on a button to one of the doll's outfits.

PAM

Sure! What movie?

MARGENE

"Love, Actually."

PAM

Ooh, I wanted to see that. It's PG right?

MARGENE

I think it's PG-13.

(CONTINUED)

PAM

Well, I think we can handle that.
How about I come over around 7?

MARGENE

OK great!

PAM

See you then, sweetie.

OFF Margene, glowing.

6 EXT. JOEY'S CABIN - COMPOUND - DAY 16

Bill's Denali pulls up in front of Joey and Wanda's. He glances over his shoulder, relieved to see "escort" gone.

Joey and Wanda on the porch wave "hello".

7 INT. JOEY'S LIVING ROOM - JOEY'S CABIN - DAY 17

Bill newly arrived, watches through the window as the SUV takes off. Joey comes in. Bill eyes the place, which is basically a hovel. Joey is upbeat and eager to please.

BILL

They're gone.

JOEY

Good deal. So why does Roman have security detail on you, anyway?

BILL

Just how involved are you in his senior citizen thing?

JOEY

Not so involved that I'm seeing any money from it.

BILL

So you can't be connected?

JOEY

Nope.

BILL

Good. He's the lowest of the low isn't he? Robbing old people of their retirement. I mean, gee whiz.

(CONTINUED)

JOEY

Yeah, I feel terrible about that.

Wanda enters from the kitchen with two iced teas, Bill clams up.

WANDA

Here you go.

BILL

Thanks a bunch.

WANDA

(as she exits back into kitchen)
It's not as though Joey had a choice.

JOEY

Bill wasn't saying that, Sweetpea.

Joey clinks his glass. Bill drinks. Joey looks at him expectantly. Bill notices.

BILL

(holds up his glass)
Delicious.

JOEY

(emphatic)
She's got a way with tea.

Bill struggles to think of something nice to say about Joey's hovel. Wanda eavesdrops.

BILL

So, the place is nice.

JOEY

Yeah, it's gonna be great once we fix it up. Just needs a little a little elbow grease is all.

Bill nods. It needs a wrecking ball.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Hey! Let me show you your room.
Give you the nickel tour.

They walk to the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

JOEY (CONT'D)

I'm sure glad you decided to come up. We had some nice times at Roberta's.

BILL

We sure did.

Joey opens the door. INTO the decrepit BEDROOM, featuring a well-made bed, quilt, etc.

JOEY

This is it.

BILL

Great, great.

(he eyes the place)

Wait, isn't this your room? Where do you sleep?

JOEY

No, we prefer the back. It's quieter.

Bill's not convinced but decides to let it go. Joey closes door. In the dim hallway, away from Wanda's eavesdropping, Bill takes the opportunity to quietly discuss Roman.

BILL

So, you have any idea if Roman is up here, or in the SLC offices.

JOEY

No, he's around. He was here for sacrament this morning and I'm pretty sure he'll be at the burial. Why? What's going on exactly?

BILL

Nothin'. Don't worry about it. I'm just going to straighten him out a little.

JOEY

Don't do anything stupid.

BILL

(punches him on the arm)

Me? I'm the smartest guy you know.

Off Joey.

18

EXT. COMPOUND HEADQUARTERS - DAY

18

Bill walks up to the building. One parked car in front; not much sign of activity.

INT. COMPOUND HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Bill opens the door, and goes into a Reception Area. A Little Girl sits on a chair with an Etchsketch. From behind a closed partition, sound of AN ELECTRIC TYPEWRITER CLACKING away. Bill KNOCKS, then presses a BUZZER. BUZZER again. Nothing. One more time. Suddenly, a LOCK TURNS, and ADALEEN abruptly opens AN OPAQUE WINDOW in the partition that connects to her office. She sits behind her IBM Selectric typewriter.

ADALEEN

WHAT?

(half-beat)

Oh, hello, Bill! What are you doing here?

BILL

I'm here for the funeral.

ADALEEN

Oh, of course you are. How nice.

BILL

It's nice to see you, too. I was hoping to have a word with Roman.

ADALEEN

The Prophet's not hearing any requests tonight. We're closed. Sorry.

Points to sign in window which reads "WE ARE CLOSED".

BILL

I spoke to Roman this morning; we agreed to meet-- tomorrow. Maybe you can fit me in.

ADALEEN

I can tell you that he's booked solid tomorrow.

BILL

It's important.

(CONTINUED)

Adaleen pauses. Considers. Gets up and exits. Bill waits a moment, hearing a series of other doors open and close-- he cranes to listen. Adaleen re-enters.

ADALEEN
10 o'clock tomorrow morning. Please
be prompt.

BILL
I always am.

ADALEEN
I know you are, dear.

WINDOW IS PULLED SHUT. TYPING SOUNDS resume.

9

CUT TO:

INT. JOEY AND WANDA'S BEDROOM - JOEY'S CABIN - DUSK

22

As Bill returns to Joey's, Wanda's caulking a window on the porch.

WANDA
Hey, Bill.

BILL
Wanda. Whatcha doing?

WANDA
Calking.

BILL
How's Joey doing, Wanda?

WANDA
Good, so far. Been sober seven
months. Everyone says first year is
the real test. We're over halfway
there.

Frank's truck comes SQUEALING up to the front, HONKING his horn.

BILL
On no. I'm not seeing him.

More HONKS. Joey steps outside.

WANDA
Don't make Joey be alone with him.

(CONTINUED)

22 22

OFF Bill's face, torn.

23 23

INT. BARB'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Barb and Peg, at the kitchen table, the sound of the TV emanates from the other room, Sarah watches with Teenie. Barb places a mug and a plate of cookies before Peg; glances to where the kids are, makes sure they are occupied and can't hear. Barb keeps her voice down.

BARB
So.

PEG
What?

BARB
I'm having an affair.

You could here a pin drop.

PEG
With who?

BARB
Bill.

PAM
Your husband Bill?

Barb nods; smiles; giggles-- expects the same from Peg:

BARB
At first I didn't know what was happening, but we started meeting in motels. I don't like the sneaking around -- actually, that's not true, I LOVE the sneaking around. It's so exciting
(off Peg's attempt to say something)
What?

Peg seems uncomfortable, and a bit thrown.

PEG
I don't know I...I'm suprised I guess. What do you expect to come of this?

(CONTINUED)

BARB

Well I'm not really thinking of what's going to come of it, I'm just enjoying it. I thought you'd find it, I don't know, amusing?

PEG

(with a glance to where Sarah and Teenie are)
I just think that --

BARB

I guess I thought if anyone could relate to this, you could.

PEG

Yes, I can, I understand that it's difficult sometimes to feel special in your marriage, but, this just feels dangerous to me.

BARB

I think you're over-dramatizing.

PEG

Well I certainly wouldn't want Don to do it to me. You love Bill. So do the two other women who are married to him.

BARB

I just think there's more to it than that. It's complicated.

PEG

It is, of course. Look, I don't want to see you get hurt. He's not going to leave his wives.

BARB

I know that. Look, forget it. I thought you would get kick out of, it. I obviously struck a nerve.

PEG

I don't mean to sound critical. But you have to look at what you're doing. You've had two marriages to Bill. Which is the one you're committed to?

(CONTINUED)

They look at each other, uncomfortable with the tension between them. Just then Sarah comes into the kitchen with a cereal bowl. Barb and Peg smile at her wordlessly and drink their tea.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANKLIN'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Bill, utterly bleak to be stuck here, crammed into Frank's pick-up with Joey and Frank.

FRANK

So I guess you know your mother
shot out my tires.

BILL

(glances at Joey)
No, I didn't know that.

FRANK

Brand new radials.

BILL

She says you threatened to kill
her.

FRANK

You said she tried to poison me.

BILL

I did not explicitly say that.

FRANK

What're you, a lawyer? I
"explicitly" endured 14 shots of
dimercaprol into my stomach.

(beat)

Then she has the nerve to ask me to
take her as first wife.

JOEY

Still, you've gotta admire her
pluck.

FRANK

What?

JOEY

Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

Bill and Joey exchange an amused glance. Frank notices; their shared joke pisses him off. He wants to get to them.

FRANK

Mark my words, I will never do anything that might bring that woman the smallest sliver of contentment, if I can help it. And in this case, I can.

He gloats; they feel badly for their mother. Frank decides to twist the knife a little more.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It's good that you came up, Bill. I'm glad you've decided to pay your respects to Roberta. She was always good to you.

BILL

Mm-hmm.

FRANK

Only one who could get you to stop stuttering.

Bill ignores him. Joey looks uncomfortable.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Don't know how she did it.

(beat; he's really enjoying this)

My gosh, you were a wacky kid! Remember Joey? He'd get up there to give his testimony. Clear his throat, open his mouth and "B-dah. B-dah. B-dah, b-dah, b-dah."

Frank laughs gleefully.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh, that was funny! You remember, Bill? Sounded like Porky Pig!

Bill says nothing. Frank is giddy.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh, come on now. Why so solemn?

(beat)

Your mother always let it be known she married beneath her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FRANK (CONT'D)
But looky now; I'M on the
Priesthood Council-- and she's
pfft.
(half-beat)
B-dah, B-dah, B-dah--
B-dah, b-dah.

OFF Bill, silent... fury accelerating.

EXT. LINDA VISTA LANE - NIGHT

Pam hurries across the street with two bulging shopping bags.

REVERSE: Ben, at the end of the breezeway, with trash can,
watching Pam go INTO MARGENE'S.

OFF Ben, on the curb, suspicious, debating what to do.

CUT TO:

INT. SAVER'S CLUB - NIGHT

Bill and Joey, a couple paces behind Frank, who's briskly
walking through the store with a burly, BEARDED CLERK. Joey
pauses for a second when he sees a jumbo pack of motor oil.

FRANKLIN
(turns)
Joey quit dawdling! You'd think
you're still hooked on those pills,
walking around in a fog half the
time.

JOEY
I was going to get some oil.

BILL
(to Frank)
Calm down! He's here doing you a
favor. You should be thanking him.

FRANKLIN
He should be thanking me!

Frank and Clerk steam ahead. Joey comes up to Bill:

BILL
I don't know how you can stand him.

(CONTINUED)

JOEY
(covering)
I try not to spend much time with
him.

Frank comes back around the corner.

FRANKLIN
Hurry up!

AISLE NINE: Joey, Frank and Bill found what they came here
for-- an array of COFFINS laid out before them. Frank points
to a scuffed floor model: \$279.99.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
There, that's the one.

BEARDED CLERK
Let me see if it's in stock.

FRANKLIN
Not "in stock", THAT one. How much
off the three-ninety-nine on
account of it's scuffed a bit?

BILL
It's made out of particle-board.

FRANKLIN
They'll give a discount.
(to Joey)
Go get us a dolly, we'll load it
onto my truck.

BILL
(pulls out credit card)
We should get her something nicer.
(points to several pastel
steel coffins @ \$999.00)
That lavender one.

FRANKLIN
Roberta was a simple woman. She'd
have never gone in for a fancy
coffin. If you'd bothered to spend
any time with her you'd have known
that. Should have done something
for her when she was ALIVE.
(knocks Bill off-balance)
But if it means that much to you,
you can buy the cheaper one.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

That's real generous of you.

Bearded Clerk, uncertain of what to do, just stands there.

FRANKLIN

Well go ahead, Paul Bunyon, take
his credit card.

The Clerk does.

26

CUT TO:

INT. MARGENE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

27

Pam and Margene sit on the couch, watching a "Love Actually"
like two peas in a pod. All of the shades to the back are
drawn. Margene eats popcorn, Pam has two shopping bags filled
with toys next to her. She periodically chooses a toy and
bubble wraps it.

MARGENE

This is much sadder than I thought
it would be.

PAM

I guess he's a schizophrenic,
right? Isn't he?

MARGENE

I think so. She should just explain
that to the hot Carl-guy instead of
just answering the phone every
thirty seconds.

PAM

I know. It's like "Hello.
Communicate." I love Hugh Grant,
though.

MARGENE

(offers popcorn)

Me too.

PAM

No thanks, Sweetie. I have
diverticulitis.

(CONTINUED)

MARGENE

Oh, I'm sorry.

(Pam waves off, "Poo")

What causes it?

Ben peers in the front window. He tries to flag Margene's attention, to no avail. He disappears.

PAM

Stress, mostly. And nuts.

MARGENE

Gosh. Stress causes everything,
doesn't it?

Pam nods emphatically.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME TIME

Ben in the backyard, trying to peer through the kitchen into Margene's living room...

INT. MARGENE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

PAM

(re: bubble wrapping)

You don't mind this do you? I have
to finish it by tomorrow.

MARGENE

Oh, not at all. Is it for charity?

PAM

(nodding)

Relief society. We're toy-bombing
Africa.

MARGENE

That's so sweet!

PAM

Helping those in need feels so
good, sometimes I think I'm
downright selfish.

(a beat; then)

What's the story with your
neighbor?

(off Marge's freeze-up)

That blonde one, Nicki.

(CONTINUED)

MARGENE

What do you mean?

PAM

Don't you find her a little strange? Standoffish? I wave, she doesn't wave back. And the way she dresses? What's she like?

MARGENE

She's-- shy.

PAM

What else?

MARGENE

That's it.

Margene shrugs and smiles.

EXT. MARGENE'S HOUSE - SOON AFTER

28

Pam exits the house with her shopping bags. Margene peers out, furtively, then gives a little wave.

Ben watches from Barb's garage.

INT. MARGENE'S KITCHEN - SOON AFTER

29

Ben comes in the back door. Margene screams, then laughs. Ben is furious.

MARGENE

Oh, you scared me! Knock!

BEN

What are you doing?

MARGENE

What?

BEN

You had the neighbor lady here!

MARGENE

So? Her name's Pam.

BEN

What do you think because my Dad's away you can do what ever you want?

(CONTINUED)

MARGENE

Wait, what's wrong with you?

BEN

You know you have to be careful
about who you have over. So you
just like disregard that and who
that effects?

MARGENE

No! God!

BEN

Don't say that!

MARGENE

Stop yelling at me!

BEN

I just think you're being really
disrespectful.

MARGENE

I just wanted to watch a fucking
romantic comedy, Ben.

He stares at her in disbelief. He sits down on the couch.
Margene stands, teary, defiant; then:

MARGENE (CONT'D)

Don't tell your father I said that.

BEN

I won't. Why would you even think
that?

MARGENE

Well, you're being so Joe-Bossy!

Ben is frustrated and embarrassed. This isn't going well.
Then:

BEN

I'm just...trying to protect the
family.

(half-beat)

Don't be mad at me.

She sees he's miserable now and sits down next to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGENE

I'm not mad at you.

BEN

(after a beat)

Are you unhappy?

MARGENE

No. It's hard having to be so cautious about people all the time. I'm not used to it, and we just, hit it off. You don't know how much of my day I spend alone.

BEN

You just need a place to go that's neutral. Like a class or something where you can meet people. You just can't invite them over.

She looks at Ben, considering him.

MARGENE

Is it hard for you?

BEN

It was at first. But now it's not. I just keep things...separate.

MARGENE

You never complain.

(he shrugs)

You're a good guy, you know that?

BEN

Thanks.

She nods. They look at each other for a beat in silence. She hugs him. They hold onto each other for a while.

They stand up and linger for a moment, somewhat shyly. He gives a little wave and walks out the door exhilarated.

CUT TO:

INT. BARB'S KITCHEN

Sarah sitting there eating Oreos and looking at a mail-order catalogue as Ben comes in. He takes a cookie.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH
Brynn called.

BEN
When?

SARAH
About 15 minutes ago. She was very
curious. Where were you?

BEN
I was at Margene's. What'd you tell
her.

SARAH
That you were out.

She gives an enigmatic "Do you know what you're doing?" look.
He doesn't understand the look. And no he doesn't understand
what he's doing. She looks back at her catalogue.

BEN
What?

SARAH
(not going there)
Nothing.

He takes three cookies and goes up the stairs.

)-32 CUT TO: 3 32

3 INT. JOEY AND WANDA'S BEDROOM - JOEY'S CABIN - NIGHT 33

Bill, laying in his bed in the dark. From the back room, he
hears Joey and Wanda, LAUGHING and sharing intimacies with
each other in their darkened room.

WANDA (V.O.)
You're so sweet.
(GIGGLES)
Kiss me.

Bill reaches for his cell and dials.

4 INT. BARB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 34

Barb, sewing a button on a shirt, answers the phone.

BARB
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

INTERCUT: Bill & Barb. Bill whispers:

BILL
What are you doing?

BARB
Sewing a button on a shirt.

BILL
No. What are you doing?

Beat. She catches on. Relieved.

BARB
Oh. Taking my blouse off.

He closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. COMPOUND HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

Bill pulls up in front of the headquarters. Members of the congregation and also his "Goons" gather and gawk at him in silence as he enters.

INT. ROMAN'S OFFICE - SOON AFTER

The door to Roman's office is opened by a young Attendant; Bill steps inside.

Roman, in his bolo tie and velvet slippers, in a club chair eating a jelly donut. Rhonda stands three feet in front of him. He glances up at Bill.

ROMAN
Bill, come in.

BILL
Roman.

ROMAN
I'd shake, but my hands are a bit sticky. Rhonda's just been reciting. Go ahead, dear.

Bill, uncertain whether to sit, stand looks to Rhonda. She recites in a slow, wooden fashion. It's weirdly entrancing.

(CONTINUED)

RHONDA

The day came slow, till five
o'clock,
Then sprang before the hills
Like hindered rubies, or the light
A sudden musket spills.
The purple could not keep the east,
The sunrise shook from fold,
Like breadths of topaz, packed a
night,
The lady just unrolled.

Roman CLAPS his hands together.

BILL

(spooked and awed)
Really lovely. That was super.

Rhonda smiles her thanks and Roman pats his chair for her to
sit beside him. He wipes his hands on a napkin.

ROMAN

She knows a treasury. Now, what can
I do for you?

Bill sits, assess Roman and Rhonda. Figures he might as well
go ahead with it, not let Roman's games throw him.

BILL

Look, I think it's time we
discussed settling our dispute once
and for all. Just square
everything up.

ROMAN

Shame on you, Bill. We're are
bereaving the loss of our Roberta.

BILL

I'd like to talk about it.

ROMAN

(with a chuckle)
I'm not talking business, Bill.
Rhonda, recite another.

RHONDA

By Nebo's lonely mountain, On this
side of Jordan's wave, In a vale in
the land of Moab --

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Excuse me.

(Rhonda stops; to Roman)

Excuse me!

An intense moment. Roman is indignant, Rhonda awaits instruction, Bill holds his ground, defiant.

ROMAN

(to Rhonda)

Excuse us, dear.

Rhonda smiles, curtsies and exits. Roman stands from his chair and crosses to take his seat behind his desk. He glares at Bill.

BILL

I propose a buy out.

ROMAN

Oh my word. A buy out.

BILL

Yup.

ROMAN

You got a figure?

BILL

You bet.

Pause.

ROMAN

Am I supposed to guess?

BILL

A settlement composed of two figures. The first is fifty thousand in cash.

(Roman scoffs)

And the second...how are your real estate ventures doing?

ROMAN

That's not exactly germane to this conversation.

BILL

What if I told you it was. Desert Properties lawsuit.

(CONTINUED)

ROMAN
What's that?

BILL
You know what it is.

ROMAN
Bill, I don't know what you're talking about.

BILL
Then ask your son.
(Roman is suddenly less jovial)
It's small now, but the Attorney General's office tells me they'd like it to be the basis for a broad investigation of the UEC. Fraud, subpoenas, auditors, investigators.
(lets it hang)
They're just waiting for my phone call.

ROMAN
What's the second figure?

BILL
The cash equivalent in the legal fees you'll save by avoiding a fraud investigation.

ROMAN
You've got to be kidding.

BILL
Now, I don't want to fleece you, Roman. I'm prepared, right now, to pay back the initial loan in full, plus interest of one over prime. Give me a release, stop the harassment.

Pause. Roman folds his hands and becomes icy.

ROMAN
Leave now.

BILL
It's a good offer. You should take it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (CONT'D)

And tell your son he better never
come near my homes or my family
again.

Roman stands and exits through a door in the wall mural.

CUT TO:

MARGENE'S KITCHEN - DAY

37

Nicki, under the sink disassembling garbage disposal as
Margene feeds her boys breakfast. Wayne and Raymond play in
the other room.

MARGENE

(to Lester)

She says the blades are wrecked.
She says "someone's" been bad.

NICKI

(coming out from the sink
with the unit)

Because "someone" put a can down--

MARGENE

Well it wasn't me!

NICKI

Needs a whole new unit.

MARGENE

Oh. Barb can get one at the store.
And don't tell her I broke it.

NICKI

Barb's not here.

MARGENE

So we'll talk to her when she gets
back.

NICKI

This is not exactly an "efficient"
system.

(beat)

Do you think she's happy for me
about the baby?

MARGENE

Of course! She loves babies.
Sometimes I think she wishes my
boys were hers.

(CONTINUED)

NICKI

Sometimes I think they wish the
same thing.

MARGENE

Oh, ha-ha.

NICKI

(suddenly grabs car keys)
I'll go get your new disposal.

MARGENE

You can't do that, Nicki.

NICKI

Do you want it fixed or not?

She's out the door.

CUT TO:

1-42

EXT. COMPOUND COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Mourners file in for the funeral as Bill pulls up with Joey,
Wanda and Lois. Frank, Nita, Lourdez and Sue-Sue stand at the
door to the Center.

Bill assists Lois from the Denali.

LOIS

I have no business being here. I'm
going to be publicly humiliated.

BILL

There'll be no humiliation. Today
we're all just family.

LOIS

I've given my life to them and they
all hate me.

BILL

Come on. Take my arm. We're here
for you, Joey and Wanda and me.

Frank shoots over an enigmatic smile as they pass by.

LOIS

What are you looking at?

14

INT. COMPOUND COMMUNITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Roberta in her open coffin on a bier in front. Roman seated on a kind of throne chair to one side, observing the ceremony, lending his presence. He gazes forward, consciously and icily shunning Bill-- not so much as a glance at him. Adaleen, in the entrance, hands out programs to the mourners:

ADALEEN

Program. Program. Program...

Bill leads Lois to the first pew where Frank and Wives sit. Joey and Wanda are behind him. She starts to go to a mid-section pew-- Bill keeps trying to pull her forward and Lois stops moving, pulling back as a dog on a leash.

BILL

Mom! What are you doing?

LOIS

Not there.

BILL

That's where the family sits.

LOIS

I was asked not to.

BILL

What?

LOIS

Don't make a fuss. No one wants me.
I don't care. I DON'T care!

WANDA

(knows the score)

C'mon Lois.

Wanda takes Lois by the hand, leads her to the middle pew and shoots Bill a slightly disapproving look. Then gives evil eye to Franklin. Bill follows, bothered and concerned.

EXT. HENRICKSON'S HOME PLUS - PARKING LOT - DAY

Nicki circles the busy lot-- pulls into a space.

INT. HENRICKSON'S HOME PLUS - CHECKOUT STAND

Inside she hoists the garbage disposal unit onto the checkout stand. CASHIER, 40, friendly, freckled, scans it. Her large button reads "Home Plus: Where Service Makes A Difference."

CASHIER

And how are you today? Find everything alright?

NICKI

Yes, thanks. I get an employee family discount on this.

CASHIER

May I have your Employee Discount card please?

NICKI

(grandly)

I don't have the card with me, but it's under the name Barbara Henrickson.

CASHIER

Oh, I'm sorry ma'am, but you can't get the discount without the card. That's the policy.

NICKI

(proffers her credit card)

Well, you'll have to call someone upstairs, because I definitely get a discount. It's under Barbara Henrickson. As in Henrickson Home Plus.

Cashier swipes credit card and looks at it.

CASHIER

(still friendly)

Okay, but your credit card here says "Nicolette Grant."

NICKI

If you call upstairs to Don Embry-- he'll vouch for me.

(CONTINUED)

CASHIER

But I have no way of giving you the
discount if you don't have the
Discount Card.

NICKI

You've said that about fifty times.
You keep repeating yourself. But if
you pick up your phone. Pick it up.
Just pick up the phone.

A cowbell sounds as Bill's pre-recorded voice comes over the
PA SYSTEM. Nicki starts when she hears him --

BILL (V.O.)

"Hey, shoppers, whose up for
Barbecue? Grill and grill
accessories are now 20% off.
Someone save me a burger!"

-- as the credit card machine reads DECLINED. Machine flashes
HOLD CARD.

Cashier picks up a mic:

CASHIER

(into mic PA-system)
Manager to lane five.

NICKI

What are you doing?

CASHIER

Manager to lane five--

ON Wendy Hunt walking the floor, suddenly looking over
sharply.

NICKI

Please stop that.

CASHIER

I've got a "Hold Card" instruction
from your credit card company. I
need a manager.

ON Wendy, quickly approaching--

NICKI

Give me my card.

(CONTINUED)

CASHIER
I can't do that--

WENDY
(arriving)
Is there a problem?

CASHIER
It says "Hold Card!" And she says
she's entitled to Barbara
Henrickson's family discount.

WENDY
Mr. Henrickson's wife?

NICKI
Correct.

WENDY
But you're not Barbara Henrickson.

NICKI
No-- However I have been asked by
Barbara Henrickson to purchase this
disposal for her family.

WENDY
I see. Are you a relative of the
Henricksens?

NICKI
I'd like to speak to Don Embry,
now, please. Or Peg.

Wendy almost gasps, her hand to her mouth, then regains her
composure and places her hand to her side.

WENDY
He's not here today.
(solicitous)
Ma'am, why don't you come with me
and I'm sure we can work something
out.

NICKI
(uncertain, first flash of
wariness)
Alright. Fine.

Nicki takes the disposal unit, glares at Cashier and follows
Wendy, who looks like the cat whose about to eat the canary.

17 INT. COMPOUND COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Frank hovers over Roberta in her coffin, dressed in her Masonic-Chef Boyardee death outfit, complete with green apron and hat (standard attire). He intones the words of her "final veiling", as he slowly pulls a veil over her body. Beside him, his three Wives minus Lois.

FRANKLIN

And I will call you, wife, through
the veil in the celestial kingdom
by the name known only unto me. And
I shall pull you through to be re-
united with me for all eternity.

Frank's lower lip trembles; he's actually moved:

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(to Roberta)

How can I ever be worthy of you?

Sounds of people CRYING, SNIFFLING. Bill looks at her face one final time.

Lois, nervous, unwraps a hard candy, it makes a crinkling sound. She pops it in her mouth.

Frank steps in front of the coffin for a brief eulogy; a sisterwife hands him a mike.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

As many of you have attested today:
Loyalty. Humility. Kindness. Love
of God, Love of Family. Roberta.

Wives behind him nod in agreement. Some teary, hold hands.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I can't imagine a better first
wife, or a better sisterwife. Lord
knows, I can't.

Bill looks to Lois who is visibly uncomfortable, like a rooster trapped in a pen.

Frank, smiling wickedly at Lois:

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

But I know she'll be smiling down
when dear Nita comes to take her
place as first wife.

(CONTINUED)

Nita beams as Frank takes her hand and brings her forward from the pack. Lois looks as though she's been punched in the stomach. Slight WHISPERING and turning of heads ensues.

Frank, with beatific expression, files into the first pew with his Wives.

Bill looks to Lois to see how she's taking the news.

Lois's eyes are glassy with tears; She fiercely clutches Bill's hand.

Beside the coffin, a Woman with an autoharp on her lap and a Young Man With a Guitar begin to play. Rhonda stands beside them, singing "WILL YOU MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE?" The song is sad and sweet-- hearkens back to something good; lost.

Bill stares at his mother, humiliated and alone as the song soldiers on and the shabby coffin floats down the aisle toward the doors. She's powerless to stop the tears; wipes them away, quickly as she can, tries to maintain her dignity.

Bill's had it-- with Frank, with Roman, with his parents on-going battle, with Joey's poverty, with this place-- Once the coffin passes him, Bill rises and makes his way to Frank.

Mourners start to file out pew by pew to the MUSIC.

BILL
I want to talk to you.

FRANKLIN
I'm a little busy right now.

Bill grabs him forcefully by the arm. Frank is surprised and a little intimidated.

BILL
C'mon.

Bill hustles Frank out a door. Roman notices. CHOIR STILL SINGING and Congregates notice, also.

EXT. COMPOUND COMMUNITY CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Along the side of the center, Bill and Frank stand in the bright sun, the SONG DRIFTING through the door.

BILL
Just what in the heck do you think
you're doing?

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

I'm trying to bury my wife, if you
don't mind.

BILL

How much?

FRANKLIN

How much what?

BILL

How much for you to stop
humiliating and shunning her and
just take her on as your first
wife, once and for all?

FRANKLIN

I couldn't do that to Nita.

Bill squints at him in the sun, waiting...

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Fifteen-thousand.

BILL

Not fifteen-thousand dollars.

FRANKLIN

I can't do it for less than ten.

BILL

Three.

FRANKLIN

Ten.

BILL

I'll give you five. How's your
roof?

FRANKLIN

Leaks as always.

BILL

I'll throw in roofing tiles.

FRANKLIN

How many?

BILL

As many as you need.

(CONTINUED)

WENDY (CONT'D)

First she said she was your sister,
then she said she was your
neighbor, and I thought this sounds
like identity theft to me.
(grabs the disposal from
Nicki)

BARB

Oh! If I had just given her the
card.

WENDY

You mean, your sister?

BARB

But I was in such a hurry this
morning, it just slipped my mind.

WENDY

(to Cashier)

Bonnie, can you please scan this
for Mrs. Henrickson?

Cashier takes it and scans it.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Mr. Henrickson is super strict
about family members presenting the
actual discount card, because
otherwise, you know, someone's
"neighbor" or "sister" or something
can come in and say "Oh, I'm
related to so-and-so in the stock
room, I get 20% off, too."

BARB

(collects the disposal)

I understand. Thank you.

(to Nicki)

Shall we go?

Nicki rises to full regal bearing and exits with Barb. She
throws a look back at Wendy, who watches them leave with
utmost suspicion.

EXT. HENRICKSON'S HOME PLUS - PARKING LOT - SOON AFTER

Nicki, still lugging garbage disposal, stands in the NOW
EMPTY SPACE where her car used to be. ANGLE on bottom part
of a sign "Loading Only - 15 minute parking".

Barb pulls up in her Station Wagon:

(CONTINUED)

FRANKLIN

You really like her, don't you?

Frank rocks back on his heels and listens to the SONG for a moment, considering.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I need the tar, too. Throw in the tar and we've got a deal.

Frank holds out his hand for Bill to shake it.

BILL

I'll cut the check and send the supplies soon as you show me a marriage certificate.

Bill looks at him with disgust, turns around and walks back into the church.

Just at the door he bumps into Roman, who greets mourners as they file out. They hold a long look at one another.

ROMAN

God will have a humble people.
Either we can choose to be humble,
or we can be compelled. You'll soon
have my answer to your proposal.

With that, Roman offers a withering, furious glare at Joey, then returns to consoling mourners:

ROMAN (CONT'D)

God bless you lovely people. God
bless.

CUT TO:

INT. HOME PLUS - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Barb and Wendy at the side of the registers. Nicki, morose and petulant, sits in a chair with a Security Guard on either side of her. Nicki still clutches the garbage disposal.

WENDY

I'm so sorry Mrs. Henrickson, to
have had you come all the way down
here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BARB

Get in.

Nicki walks away. Barb drives slowly along with her.

BARB (CONT'D)

Nicki, just get in the car.

OFF Nicki, who finally relents.

INT. BARB'S STATION WAGON - DAY

Nicki and Barb stopped in the car in some kind of queue. They sit in silence. Nicki looks like she might have an aneurism.

BARB

(finally)

I don't understand why you just didn't ask me.

NICKI

(snaps)

Because I do not want to have to ask for your permission for everything--!

(kicks the glove compartment)

Every single thing that I do!

She kicks with each word, freaking out.

BARB

Don't break my glove compartment.

Nicki kicks it again. Barb rolls down her window; tries to maintain composure:

DRIVE THROUGH VOICE (V.O.)

Welcome to Checkers. May I take your order?

BARB

Can I get two strawberry shakes, please.

DRIVE THROUGH VOICE (V.O.)

Will that be all?

BARB

Do you want anything else?

(CONTINUED)

NICKI
(sullen)
No.
(half-beat)
Fries.

BARB
A Medium fries please.
(to Nicki)
I'm trying, Nicki. I'm really
trying.

DRIVE THROUGH VOICE (V.O.)
You're total's \$5.03.

NICKI
e honest?

2 EXT. CHECKER'S DRIVE IN WINDOW - SOON AFTER
Barb receiving the shakes and fries.

BARB
Be honest about what?

DRIVE THROUGH ATTENDANT
Would you like ketchup?

NICKI
Of course we want ketchup. They're
fries!

BARB
Don't take it out on her!

ATTENDANT wordlessly hands it over.

NICKI
Well it's a stupid question!

Barb peels out into a parking space.

INT. BARB'S CAR - CHECKER'S PARKING LOT - SOON AFTER

The argument has a ferocity to it, and is at a fever pitch in
a second. Nicki is beside herself, crying, angry, and unable
to confront Barb about the affair, almost like a hurt child.

BARB
I'm so tired of you goading me!

(CONTINUED)

NICKI

"Sorry Mrs. Henrickson."

BARB

That is exactly what I'm talking about. What is this about?

NICKI

I'm trying to have a baby and you want to control the schedule.

BARB

(thrown off balance)
I just thought it would be...
easier.

NICKI

You never did that before. You were always so excited when we were getting pregnant. Just tell me the truth. Just say it. You don't want the baby.

BARB

That's not true.

NICKI

I'm doing it to bring the family closer together.

BARB

I'm part of that family and you seem to have an awful lot of complaints.

NICKI

About what?

BARB

About me, Nicki! About everything I do! About my responsibilities.

NICKI

It's hard being second wife. You just saw what it's like. I have no public life with Bill and you control everything.

BARB

Well I'm sorry I DIDN'T die.

(CONTINUED)

NICKI

Shut up.

(then)

How can you say that to me? How can you even say that? I'm the one that took care of you.

BARB

I know that.

NICKI

It's like you forget. Or you want to. Do you know how hurtful that is, when I spent so much time praying for you and tending to you?

Nicki cries, truly wounded. Barb looks at her, then grabs both of her hands and faces her intently.

BARB

Listen to me. I will never forget what you did for me. I will NEVER forget it.

This is the thing that binds them. Barb, then turns away and sobs. After a moment:

NICKI

Why are you crying now?

Barb shakes her head. Quiets herself and recovers. There's a lull. Barb has come to something.

BARB

I want you to have the baby.

NICKI

(a long beat)

I wanted a girl for you.

Nicki sips her shake. Barb looks at her, wanting to believe it.

BARB

It's been a long time since we had a baby girl in the house.

Barb takes Nicki's hand. After a moment:

NICKI

We could name her Barbara.

(CONTINUED)

OFF them in the car, not moving.

INT. BILL'S DENALI - INTERSTATE 15 - SALT LAKE CITY - DUSK

Bill drives home, finally. The radio plays David Grisman's cover of 'THE BALLAD OF FRANKIE LEE AND JUDAS PRIEST.' The sun glints off the mountains. His CELL PHONE RINGS. He ID's it. It's his mother. He debates, finally, answers:

BILL
Bill, here.

INT. LOIS' CABIN - SAME TIME

INTERCUT: Bill & Lois.

LOIS
You left in a hurry.

BILL
I wanted to get on the road.

LOIS
Well, I was just calling to tell you that your father had a change of heart.

BILL
About what?

LOIS
We're going to be legally married.

BILL
Congratulations.

LOIS
(a joke)
No gifts, please.

BILL
(smiles)
Are you happy?

LOIS
(without irony)
Oh, you know me, I have a naturally cheerful countenance. Anyway, I just wanted to let you know.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOIS (CONT'D)

We won't move in together, which means we'll get along a little better, but it doesn't matter anyway. He won't be around much longer.

BILL

(beat; alarmed)

What do you mean?

LOIS

Oh, just that he's not getting any younger is all. And don't you go telling him I said that!

BILL

No, I won't.

LOIS

We'll be just fine.

CLICK.

OFF Bill, spooked.

EXT. BACKYARD - DUSK

After dinner on the picnic tables, Ben and Nicki in the backyard. Nicki clears remaining plates. Ben puts chairs away. Seen inside Barb's house, Barb at the sink doing dishes. Margene, Teenie and Sarah bustle around the kitchen putting things away.

Bill suddenly appears in the kitchen, he's returned from his trip.

NICKI'S POV as Barb turns to greet him.

NICKI

(to Ben)

You're Dad's home.

She goes into the house to greet him as Wayne, Raymond and Teenie surround him. Ben puts his chair down and glances up.

Ben's POV on his father, the returning patriarch, as he steps into his role with strength and effortlessness. Bill kisses Margene, Barb. Nicki...

I/E. MARGENE'S KITCHEN / BACKYARD - NIGHT

It's late. Most are in bed. Bill gets a glass of milk, turns off the kitchen light. Goes to lock the sliding glass door. Opens it, and looks outside up at the stars. Leans against the door jam, drinks his milk.

After a moment, Ben appears at Barb's back door:

BILL

Hey.

Ben walks over to him.

BILL (CONT'D)

(breathes in)

Nice and brisk. Clouding over.

Ben stands with his father in the frame of the sliding glass door, half in, half out of the house.

BEN

Dad?

BILL

What is it?

BEN

Do you think I should have more than one wife? I mean, do you want me to live the Principal when I'm ready?

Bill doesn't know how to answer.

BILL

Is it something you feel you want?

BEN

I don't know. I hadn't really thought about it. I just wanted to know if you had planned it for me.

BILL

(considers it)

Plural marriage is a tremendous responsibility, Benny. And it can be terribly abused. It's not for every man. God calls us to it, and we have to answer with fortitude.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BILL (CONT'D)

But if what your asking me is "Do I
think you're capable?" Yes I do.

BEN

I think I've had, an idea-- like,
that I could be good at it.

BILL

That doesn't surprise me. You've
got a big heart.

(musses Ben's hair)

Why don't we keep an eye on it?

Father and son look at each other. Ben nods. Bill, puts his
hand on Ben's face, affectionately, for the first time
wondering if he'll pass the mantle of polygamy to his son.

PULL BACK to see all of the houses lights on in the windows;
the domain, as Bill and Ben stand together in companionable
silence in the night.

FADE TO BLACK.