

FILTHY RICH

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ACT ONE

INT. CRAPPY SMALL APARTMENT - NEW IBERIA, LA - 1980'S - NIGHT

A small, bare apartment. In the corner, a big box with Zenith written on the side. We slowly push in on the box.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

When Margaret and I first got married, we found ourselves in the tiniest apartment of New Iberia with a wedding gift we had no use for. A Zenith color TV. Years later we decided to take it out of the box.

The box dissolves revealing the TV.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

And that's when our lives changed forever.

Over a LITTLE BOY, 1, AND LITTLE GIRL, 5, as the girl turns on the TV.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

One evening, hearing the sounds of gunfire and foul language, we jumped out of bed to find Rose and Eric, glued to that TV for Lord knows how long.

Over TWO ADULTS rushing into the room, scooping up the kids and yanking the TV's cord from the wall.

INT. STAGE - LOUISIANA PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL - 1985 - MORNING

MARGARET MONROE, 30, stands in front of an audience of TEN WOMEN sitting in folding chairs.

MALE (V.O.)

Margaret knew she could never destroy the evil Zenith, but perhaps she could guide it to a better place.

The women have very big hair but not as big as Margaret's. Behind her is a folding table with four chairs.

A single CAMERAMAN raises his hand indicating that he's recording. Margaret takes a nervous, deep breath.

MARGARET

Good Morning. I'm Margaret Monroe.
And this is *Wings of a Dove*.
(voice cracking)
Welcome to my show.

The women nod unenthusiastically. One actually claps.
Margaret steadies and closes her eyes. Her lips move silently
in prayer. Then she opens her eyes and continues as if she's
done this her entire life.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Today, I'm going to show you how to
properly set a table. A table from
your heart. A table set with items
that represent you and your faith.
Because each day provides an
opportunity to show your best self,
yourself in the eyes of God.

We widen to see that Margaret's first show is being
projected...

INT. STAGE - NEW ORLEANS - MORNING - PRESENT DAY

On a screen in Margaret's current day stage. Five hundred
riveted fans make up the live studio audience of her
nationwide hit show, *WINGS OF A DOVE*.

The current day set is modeled after a beautiful southern
porch. There are swings and wicker furniture for guests. To
the right, a kitchen to die for.

EUGENE MONROE (60's) charming and VERY SOUTHERN stands before
the audience, oozing with charisma, he wears a sear-sucker
suit and buckskin shoes.

EUGENE

I'm Eugene Monroe, and that is how
my wife's mission began all those
years ago.

INT - BACKSTAGE/WINGS - PRESENT TIME

MARGARET MONROE - Mid 60's, is receiving final touches from a
MAKEUP ARTIST backstage. She hears the crowd cheer.

MARGARET

I never get tired of that story.

Margaret's daughter, ROSE, 30'S, prettyish, fiddles with her
mother's dress.

ROSE
 (sarcastically)
 Well, the whole world knows it by
 now.

Rose herself wears a tight multicolored sequined skirt. If
 "subtle" were a color, Rose has never met it.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 You look great. See you out there.

Rose kisses her and leaves. Margaret turns to the artist.

MARGARET
 Are my eyes too smoky? I think
 they're too smoky. I plan to dance
 in heaven, not on Bourbon Street.

BACK ON STAGE: Lights dim as a **SECOND CLIP (Circa 1995) PLAYS** -
 This set is much nicer. The lighting better. Margaret (hair
 now half the size) stands in front of several cakes and
 pastry bags filled with icing. She pulls a card and calls.

YOUNGER MARGARET
 Francis Jenkins, come on up here.

A squeal from a large audience. A nervous FRANCIS runs up to
 Margaret's side. The clip jump-cuts to see the cakes fully
 iced and decorated. Margaret hugs a now crying Francis.

YOUNGER MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Francis, these cakes were a big job
 and you didn't think you could make
 them pretty. But you did. Think of
 these pastry bags as the bible.
 Think of the icing inside as the
 scripture. Like decorating a cake,
 go slow, squeeze out a little at a
 time so you can understand and
 embrace what god tells you. And
 then with a steady hand and an open
 heart. You can do anything.

The **CLIP ENDS**. The crowd rises and applauds. A few people
 wipe tears from their eyes.

EUGENE
 Soon, letters came from fans
 seeking guidance on living one's
 best life so we started the
 Sunshine Network. Margaret knew her
 TV family needed guidance on a
 bigger scale. So, she brought
 Reverend Thomas to join us.
 (MORE)

EUGENE (CONT'D)

And today, his ministry is the most
watched in the world.

Applause raise REVEREND PAUL LUKE THOMAS, 40, (Think Joel Osteen) from his seat. He waves to the adoring crowd.

BACKSTAGE: Rose helps Margaret onto a small platform which has been attached to a wiring rig. Nearby, ERIC MONROE, 32 and ridiculously handsome (think JFK Jr.) stands as his wife BECKY (30, prim, snooty) and his children EMILY and MATTHEW (8,10).

FRANKLIN LEE (60, black, in a suit) addresses the Monroes.

FRANKLIN

Everything we rehearsed will be on
Teleprompter. Take your time.

Becky straitens Eric's tie.

BECKY

(to Eric)
Go get 'em, baby.

BACK ON STAGE: Eric emerges. The crowd cheers.

ERIC

The word Zenith is defined as - *The
time at which something is most
powerful or successful.*

Rose now walks out on stage behind her brother.

ROSE

Or - *The point in the sky directly
above the observer.* That's my mom
and she's the star above us all.

The lights dim. Ferlin Husky's *WINGS OF A DOVE* begins to play as Margaret rises from behind the curtain on the platform.

Feathered wings have been attached to the wiring around Margaret's shoulders. A *spray of sparks* shoot out behind her. The crowd eats it up. For many in rural, red-state America, Margaret Monroe and her family are a rising beacon of hope for something better and something to live up to.

The platform lowers and Margaret grabs Eugene's hand and steps out of the wings.

MARGARET

Happy mother's day to you all. This
momma bear's been starving herself
for a month so I could fit into
this dress. Ladies, I think it's
time we had some fried chicken.

Just then assistants run up and down the aisles of the studio
passing out fried chicken to everyone.

INT. LAS VEGAS - THE LIBRARY STUDIOS - SAME TIME

MOANS OF MALE ECSTASY coming from a closed door as GINGER
SWEET (mid 20's, beautiful, fierce) walks past several themed
mini-sets (classroom, hospital exam room, Antebellum bedroom)
each built to face an open laptop. A SEXY NUN makes her way
onto the classroom set.

GINGER

Got him for an hour. Nice work.

RACHEL (O.S.)

Ginger.

Ginger turns to see RACHEL (mid 20's, gorgeous) stepping up
in a "Baywatch" costume.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

You better go check on your mom.
She's back watching TV again.

INT. THE LIBRARY STUDIOS - OFFICE - DAY

TINA SWEET (50's, rougher than someone who used to be drop
dead gorgeous should be) is glued to the live coverage.

The show resumes with Margaret waving to the audience as she
herself is brought a plate of chicken and takes a big bite.

Tina is a blend of sadness and envy. Ginger and Rachel enter,
see the ADORING CROWD.

TINA

She has the perfect pageant wave.

GINGER

You can put wings on pigs but it
doesn't make them eagles.

MARGARET (ON TV)

We have a great show planned for our Mother's Day special and when we come back, I have an exciting announcement to -

Ginger turns the TV off, kisses the top of her mother's head.

INT. WINGS OF A DOVE SET - MOMENTS LATER

Margaret and her family sit on stage.

MARGARET (ON TV)

"Always together makes a family forever." Many people in this country say people with our morals are out of touch or even stupid. Many of our sponsors wish they didn't need your business. I prayed to God about it and he said, "Margaret, if they don't appreciate your business, then hit 'em in the pocketbook.

The Sunnysshop.com logo appears on the screen.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It's time for us to start shopping in god's light. So, a month from today, you'll be able to purchase everything from books to clothes and groceries from us.

EUGENE

And we can assure you that every employee, associate, and vendor will have Christian values like yourselves.

ROSE

People who care about your family.

Eric goes off book.

ERIC

Some online retailers offer pornography for their subscribers? So, next to the Clorox in your cart you can also have "Drunk Amateur Teen Girls" and "Boys Gone Wild".

Boos ring out in support of Eric's condemnation. Margaret leans in to her son.

MARGARET
 (under her breath)
 That's enough, Eric.

Eric doesn't listen.

ERIC
 Amazon sells a product called Anal
 Ease. I won't go into what that is
 exactly but I can tell you the
 Monroes will not be selling it.

Eric catches eyes with Reverend Thomas who nods in approval.
 Half of the crowd cheers while others are still shocked by
 the explicit image in their minds.

MARGARET (ON TV)
 Twenty percent of our revenues will
 go back to our faith. To charities
 and missions that are on the front
 lines. So, today, I'm proud to
 present to you: Sunnysshop.com,
 Revenue between those like you.

INT. PARTY TENT - LATER

Eugene, Margaret and Reverend Thomas stand with Franklin.

EUGENE
 What's the early word?

FRANKLIN
 Valuation's off the charts.

REVEREND THOMAS
 We got a real winner with this,
 Eugene. Crowds like this don't lie.

Eric steps in and kisses his mother.

ERIC
 Sorry, mom. I know that wasn't the
 planned speech but I-

REVEREND THOMAS
 You did great, Eric.

EUGENE
 Subtlety is the footbridge to
 integrity, son.

REVEREND THOMAS
 True integrity means you're the
 same in public as you are private.

Eric smiles appreciatively. Margaret looks to the Reverend.

MARGARET
 You attract bees with honey, not
 Anal Ease. May your life preach
 more loudly than your lips, Paul.

REVEREND THOMAS
 (ignoring Margaret)
 Walk with me, Eric.

With that, The Reverend leads Eric away.

MARGARET
 Eric lacks confidence. Lack of
 confidence leads that to that crass
 rhetoric of his.

EUGENE
 One speech and those two are acting
 like this was my retirement party.

MARGARET
 Act like you trust the Reverend,
 Eugene. But do not.

INT. PARTY TENT - LATER THAT DAY

The Monroes dance to the sounds of a Cajun band. Margaret dances with Eric and Eugene dances with Becky. Rose walks up to her mother. She's miffed.

ROSE
 Why didn't you tell the audience I
 designed your dress?

Eugene looks sympathetic to his baby girl and crosses toward her. Eric goes back to Becky.

MARGARET
 Confidence is silent, honey.
 Insecurities are loud.

ROSE
 From the woman flying in here with
 rockets shooting out of her ass?

MARGARET

Oh, baby. That's not insecurity.
That's show-business.

EUGENE

The dress was beautiful, honey.
I'll make sure mom gives you credit
on air Monday morning.

Rose storms off. Franklin walks up.

MARGARET

Don't encourage her. She's wants
her clothing line on Sunnysshop.

EUGENE

It's her dream, Margaret.

MARGARET

Wish she'd put half that energy
into starting a family.

FRANKLIN

Time to get on the plane.

EUGENE

Darlin', I've got to go to D.C.

MARGARET

Tonight? I was hoping you and I
would have some time together.

EUGENE

The minute I'm back. I promise.

INT. PRODUCTION STUDIO - SAME TIME

Ginger enters a Western theme set in the studio. She spots
her mother, very drunk, crying in a chair.

GINGER

Come on let's get you out of here.

TINA

I'm sorry I'm not Margaret Monroe.

GINGER

Mom, we've been through this.

TINA

We sell sex fantasies.

GINGER
And we're in profit.

Ginger picks up her latest issue of Fortune magazine (with Eugene on the cover) and turns it face down.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - DAY

Eugene sifts through papers as TWO ATTRACTIVE STEWARDESSES enter. Eugene beams, happily shoves his work to the side.

INT. TINA AND GINGER'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ginger reads the magazine with Eugene's cover in their apartment. Tina is passed out with her head in Ginger's lap.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

10-YEAR-OLD GINGER enters the apartment. TINA's passed out on a similar couch, VODKA BOTTLE nearby, SHOE BOX cradled in her arms. Ginger sifts through the box's contents: DOZENS OF LETTERS FROM EUGENE. A POLAROID OF TINA AND EUGENE, happy.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - BEDROOM - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Eugene (shirt unbuttoned) drinks from a champagne bottle, polishing it off to the chagrin of the two women now in bed.

YOUNG WOMAN
You didn't save any for us.

EUGENE
Plenty more where that came from. I
am one rich son-of-a-bitch.

He drops his trousers and dives in bed. Giggles turn to screams with a sudden POPPING SOUND and an altitude drop.

EUGENE (CONT'D)
Just turbulence, don't panic.

Eugene looks out the window, sees an ENGINE EXPLODE.

INT. MONROE MANSION - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Margaret's on her knees, praying, as she does daily.

MARGARET

And bless us as we move forward
with Sunnyshop. Life is not
measured by how much you own. First
and foremost I honor your word.
Watch over us, Lord, and Eugene.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - DAY

The women are terrified and crying. Eugene is praying.

EUGENE

Lord, have mercy on this sinner.

EXT. LOUISIANA COAST - DAY

Engines ablaze, the plane plunges into the marshy, alligator-filled wetlands of the Louisiana coast.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. COUNTRY BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Reverend Thomas delivers a eulogy. Margaret, Rose, Becky and her children are in tears. Eric and Franklin are stoic.

REVEREND THOMAS

Death takes the body. God takes the
soul. Faith says we'll meet again.

MONTAGE: NEWS FOOTAGE of Eugene's crash site. Fan boats swarm around a muddy, debris filled whole in the swamp.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

Private memorial services were held
today for conservative icon Eugene
Monroe in his childhood church as a
search failed to recover his body
from the marshlands of Louisiana.

NEWS FOOTAGE of flowers, candles left at the gated of the
MONROE ESTATE; flags fly at half-mast all over New Orleans.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The tragic crash took the lives of everyone on board. And now the nation mourns the loss of a man admired for his principles...

INT. MONROE MANSION - MARGARET'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Margaret's a mess, curled up in bed with Rose and Margaret's white terrier mix, EARL. They are surrounded by newspapers, watching the news.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

Questions remain as to the launching of the company's retail division without Eugene. Meanwhile, where is Margaret Monroe? Monday morning marks a month without her on air. Her fans need to hear from her. They need to heal if the network is to go on. Not to mention Sunnyshop.

Margaret turns off the TV.

MARGARET

I don't know if I can go back.

ROSE

I keep thinking how different that day would have been had I known. I was mad about your stupid dress and I didn't even tell him goodbye.

Rose rises out of bed and kisses her mother.

MARGARET

I know you were Eugene's special little girl, but you know how much I love you.

Rose nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Please don't leave me. Stay at the house with me for a while.

ROSE

Of course, Momma.

INT. THE SUNSHINE NETWORK - PARKING GARAGE - NEXT MORNING

With a SECURITY DETAIL, are Franklin and Eric. Eric opens the door of a Rolls Royce to find Rose and Margaret who is holding Earl.

INT. THE SUNSHINE NETWORK - ELEVATOR - DAY

Margaret, Eric, Rose and Franklin ride with SECURITY.

FRANKLIN

Fans waited in line all weekend for a seat in your audience.

ERIC

We turned away a thousand people.

As they step out and make their way to another bank of elevators, they're spotted by a CRUSH OF CAMERAS AND REPORTERS. Among them is newspaper reporter TREY ATKINS, 30.

MARGARET

Not even the privacy to grieve.
(determined to be strong)
How do I look?

ERIC

Beautiful. Have a great show.

Eric kisses his mom on the cheek. Margaret charges forward. Franklin and the Security Detail shield Margaret from a barrage of questions: "How are you coping, Margaret?" "Are you appointing a new CEO?" But it's Trey who breaks through with:

TREY

Did you know the women on the plane with your husband?

The audacity of his question draws a look from Margaret.

INT. THE SUNSHINE NETWORK - MAKE UP ROOM - DAY

Margaret receives finishing touches from her hair and makeup team as Rose and Franklin look on, Earl in her lap.

MARGARET

Why would someone ask such a thing?

Look of guilt and trepidation crosses Franklin's face.

ROSE

You said it yourself, we're in show-business.

FRANKLIN

Most questions will be about succession. About Eric.

The TV audience can be heard settling into their seats off stage. Margaret rises out of her chair.

MARGARET

Eric isn't ready.

INT. THE LIBRARY STUDIOS - DAY

Ginger walks down the halls of the studio. Just then, a MALE SERVER steps up, envelope in hand.

SERVER

Ginger Sweet?

She takes the envelope.

MALE SERVER

You've been served.

Ginger tears it open, flashes emotion across her face.

INT. SUNSHINE NETWORK- DAY

A studio audience anxiously awaits Margaret's arrival. Behind a curtain, Margaret watches. She's nervous about her first appearance on air since Eugene's death. Franklin steps up.

FRANKLIN

America misses you and they all love you.

Margaret lowers her head in prayer.

MARGARET

Dear Father, be with me today as I begin this journey without Eugene. Give me the...

Margaret suddenly stops her prayer. A sense of something causes her to breathe heavily...

INT. THE LIBRARY STUDIOS - SAME TIME

Rachel is now dressed as a Swiss Milkmaid complete with blonde, braided pig tails. She stands next a milking cow and talks into a chat-room camera with a bad Swiss accent.

RACHEL

I'm so hot. Should I cool off?

We hear dinging noises in the room indicating that her customer has paid the fee. Rachel picks up a bucket of milk and pours it all over her breasts. Ginger opens the door.

GINGER

I have to leave for a few days.
You're in charge until I get back.

Rachel nods as more dinging sounds come from her customer.

INT. SUNSHINE STUDIOS - BACKSTAGE - SAME TIME

Margaret opens her eyes from her prayer. She's deeply troubled by something she can't quite figure out. Perhaps a divine message of caution? Margaret grabs Franklin.

MARGARET

Something's not right.

As an announcer calls Margaret to the stage. She runs away.

INT. SUNSHINE NETWORK - MARGARET'S SET - LATER THAT MORNING

Franklin approaches Margaret's set to find Margaret sitting on a couch. No one is around. She looks at him.

MARGARET

The worst thing about being
deceived is knowing you weren't
worth the truth.

Margaret is HOLDING EUGENE'S WILL WHICH SHE JUST READ.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Were you just going to let go back
on air me without telling this? I
knew it felt wrong. Now I know why.

FRANKLIN

Margaret, I wanted you to get back
on air first.

Franklin crosses to her and sits.

MARGARET

My audience needs all of me which includes the truth. That's who I am.

FRANKLIN

You've done nothing untruthful.

MARGARET

Acting as if all is okay is the same as lying. When I think of all the crap I put up with to keep our family together. Keeping the lid screwed tight on my honey jar while he cheated all along. And you knew.

FRANKLIN

You can't say you didn't.

She can't. And it hurts her terribly.

MARGARET

I knew there were one night stands... But, I never dreamed there were children.

INT. COLORADO RANCH - MARIJUANA GROWING HOUSE - DAY

JASON (Mid 20's) sits on a sofa in small grow house full of pot plants. Nothing but boxers on the body of an athlete, Jason talks on speaker phone.

JASON

Very low THC. Mostly CBD but still great for pain management without all the wiggy-wag and anxiety.

A knock. Jason opens the door to find a FEMALE SERVER.

FEMALE SERVER

Jason Conley?

She hands him an envelope just like Ginger's. The server treats herself to look at Jason's body.

INT. QUEENS, NY - BOXING RING - DAY

ANTONIO RIVERA (19, tatted up, sinewy muscle and angelic looks) spars with a partner as:

MALE SERVER (O.S.)

There a Antonio Rivera in here?

JESSE RIVERA (50) points to the ring for the MALE SERVER:

ANTONIO

Hey, you tell the D.A. I'm not
testifying against anybody else --

MALE SERVER

No subpoena -- will notification.

Antonio steps over, takes the envelope, who tears it open.

ANTONIO

Who the hell is Eugene Monroe?

INT. THE SUNSHINE NETWORK - FRANKLIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Margaret paces, her mind reeling with this news.

MARGARET

Contest it. There's no way on God's
green earth I'm handing a single
piece of my family to a hooker, a
hoodlum and a drug dealer.

FRANKLIN

Think of the public scrutiny.
Exposing Eugene's behavior would
almost certainly doom a network
built upon family values.

Sudden realization washes over Margaret.

MARGARET

Does the Reverend know about this?

FRANKLIN

Of course not.

MARGARET

What am I going to tell the kids?

INT. MONROE MANSION - FOYER - DAY

CLOSE ON a CIGARETTE perched between the fingers of someone
wearing a YELLOW PLAYTEX LIVING GLOVE. REVEAL Margaret
sitting in a chair at the top of the stairs.

She stares down the stairs as Eric, Rose and Franklin enter.

ERIC

What's the emergency -- Mom, why
are you smoking?

ROSE

Why are you wearing that glove?

Rose wears a "chic" outfit, wet-eyed, tissues in hand.

MARGARET

I'm not messing up my nails with nicotine stains. I'm a lady who needs a smoke. I'm not a smoker.

Eric and Rose swap looks -- what the hell is going on?

FRANKLIN

Come downstairs, Margaret.

MARGARET

Chi-Omeegas never smoke standing up.

She takes a ladylike puff. Savors it.

FRANKLIN

I get the feeling you're trying to delay the news we need to share.

MARGARET

Fine! Your father...

She realizes how hard this is going to be for them.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

...was a good man, but not a faithful man. He... had three children outside this marriage -- from three women.

ERIC

What?

No.

ROSE

**

FRANKLIN

Your father left 45% of the company to your mother with the remaining shares divided equally between his children. And well, there are five of you now.

Margaret puts her cigarette out in a potted plant. She walks down the stairs and pulls both Eric and Rose in for a hug.

ROSE

That's not my dad.

MARGARET

We'll get through this together.

Rose pulls away wiping tears from her eyes. Distraught, Eric looks to Franklin for answers.

FRANKLIN

It's very true and I so sorry.

(Off their looks)

Eugene would have a few drinks occasionally and become remorseful. He would call me and insist that the kids be included. Later, he would reinstate the original will, with no extramarital kids.

MARGARET

It seems the drinky-poo-will was in place at the time of the crash.

ROSE

"Always together is a family forever"? What a load of crap.

Rose is crying. Eric's sorrow turns to anger.

ERIC

"Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery. Those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." That's Galatians 5:19. Dad sent me to college with that verse in hand. What a hypocrite.

(turns to Margaret)

Both of you. Why didn't you stop this?

Margaret crosses to the bar and pours a drink.

MARGARET

I never knew about the kids, but he did fess up about that whore in Vegas. I was so mad, we slept in separate beds for six months. And he only got "handys" for six more.

Both Eric and Rose are grossed out by this admission, and stunned that she's making it. Margaret strips off the glove.

INT. MONROE MANSION BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - MORNING

Eugene kneels next to Margaret and opens a ring box. Margaret stares down at a 12 carat Emerald ring.

EUGENE

Green is the color of forgiveness.
I love you. Please forgive me.

Margaret stares at the ring with no emotion - END FLASHBACK -
Margaret is now looking at this same ring on her finger.

MARGARET

And I did forgive him.

ERIC

This can't be legal. Especially if
he was drunk.

MARGARET

I've dealt with a lot of bastards
to get where I am. These three will
be no different.

ERIC

Reverend Thomas must not find out
about this. If he does, it's over.

ROSE

Who are they, what are they like?

This question hangs heavy in the air. Margaret rises and
crosses to her Playtex glove and puts it back on.

MARGARET

Well, ah... I suggest a cocktail so
I can walk you through it.

INT. GINGER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tina and Ginger are having an emotional conversation. Tina
holds a tissue in her hand. A car honks outside.

TINA

Please don't go. You promised to
never make me go through this.

GINGER

He's dead now, mom. So, now I need
to go through this. I love you.

Ginger kisses her mother and grabs her suitcase.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS - VARIOUS/INT. TAXI - MOVING - DAY

Ginger makes her way into the city. The French Quarter,
Jackson Square, churches, street musicians.

They roll up to a huge tower in the Financial District. Ginger looks up and sees a sign at the very top: The Sunshine Network.

INT. THE SUNSHINE NETWORK - LOBBY/ELEVATOR - DAY

Dressed to kill, Ginger enters the lobby. The REPORTERS are back, but aren't paying attention. Ginger catches Trey's eye.

Ginger reaches the elevators, where Jason (in jeans and a T-shirt) punches the call button. He smiles. They're joined by Antonio, diaper bag on his shoulder and his toddler (JESÚS) on his hip. Trey's keenly focused on this motley crew.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOVING - DAY

Ginger selects the penthouse. Since Antonio's hands are full:

GINGER
Which floor?

ANTONIO
That's good.

JASON
Same.

Jason takes a puff of pot from a vape pen. Antonio pulls the child away from the smoke.

ANTONIO
Bro? Do you mind?

Jason offers Antonio the pen.

JASON
Knock yourself out, man.

ANTONIO
No. Don't smoke that by my son.

GINGER
...'Course, I'm not the only one.

The guys share a look as Ginger reveals her letter.

GINGER (CONT'D)
I'm Ginger and apparently I'm your sister.

INT. THE SUNSHINE NETWORK - EXECUTIVE OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Elevator opens. Franklin greets them as they disembark.

FRANKLIN

My name is Franklin Lee, I'll need
your letters and your ID's.

Each obliges. Franklin sees a bearded photo on Jason's ID.

JASON

Shaved it off about a month ago.

INT. THE SUNSHINE NETWORK - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Eric, Rose (wearing a bright skirt) and Margaret stand as Franklin brings in the guests. A huge portrait of the Eugene Monroe hangs on the wall. Franklin gestures for them to sit.

Awkward silence as everyone eyeballs everyone else. Jason sits between Rose and Antonio. Franklin sits next to Eric. Jason notices Rose's short skirt and watches as she crosses her very tan legs. Rose catches Jason gaze.

JASON

Cool outfit.

ROSE

Thanks. I designed it myself.

She shoots a look at her mother -- see?

MARGARET

Hello everyone. I'm Margaret,
Eugene's wife. You must be
Ginger... Jason... and Antonio.

Margaret approaches Antonio. She notices his tattoos. Looks for ring on his finger then focuses on the little boy.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Who is this little cherub?

ANTONIO

This is my son, Jesús.

Margaret draws in a huge breath through her nose.

MARGARET

If only somebody could bottle up
the smell of little babies.

GINGER

If anybody could have, it would
have been Eugene.

MARGARET

...Well, alright then. These are my children, Eric and Rose.

ERIC

I'm the Senior VP of Operations, at least until the dust settles. And from my perspective all this is --

MARGARET

Eric, let's not be impolite. Can I get you an iced tea or a slice of my hummingbird cake. Made it myself this morning, especially for y'all.

Ginger is immediately suspicious of Margaret's hospitality.

GINGER

No thanks.

ANTONIO

(to Jesús)

You want some tea, baby?

Jesús nods, drinks as Margaret steps up to Jason.

MARGARET

Jason, would you like some?

JASON

Yeah, sure, I guess.

She pours him a glass, but he doesn't touch it.

MARGARET

Needless to say it was a surprise that all of you appeared in Eugene's will.

ERIC

Which we are prepared to contest, by the way. And trust me, our lawyers are better than any you -

MARGARET

- But in fairness, and sensitivity, we are prepared to make an offer.

Margaret rises to serve the cake.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Contingent on the results of DNA testing and the signing of a non-disclosure agreement, you'll each receive one million dollars.

Franklin rises to pass out DNA testing kits while Margaret serves. The three are stunned. Only Ginger is offended.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Now, I insist y'all try my cake.
After you provide your saliva.

Margaret begins putting slices of cake in front of everyone served on her best china with sterling silver forks.

GINGER

I grew up dirt poor knowing Eugene Monroe was my father.

Margaret is stunned upon hearing Ginger knew about her dad.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Today, I ride up in an elevator with two siblings no one ever had the courtesy to tell me about, and you think I'm gonna walk away for a million bucks?

MARGARET

It's quite generous considering each of you represent, at most, ten minutes of my husband's pleasure.

FRANKLIN

Given the costs of launching our online shopping division along with the loss of Eugene, our shares have taken a hit. So, a million is the best we can do. Just spit in the tubes and seal.

Jason shifts a bit, but Antonio immediately obliges.

GINGER

No.

MARGARET

Honey, we can't guarantee the numbers will be the same tomorrow.

GINGER

Well, honey, there are three New Orleans companies that are off the Fortune 500 in 2017 and one new one, Monroe Holdings.

As Ginger lets her business savvy fly, an anxious Jason grabs a glass of tea, gulping it down.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Off the list this year are WestRock Inc. and The ARRIS Group since moving to New Jersey.

ANTONIO

Hey man, that was my kid's.

With that, Jason spits in his tube.

GINGER

You're valued at 2.2 billion. So, low-balling us to get us out of your hair is not happening. The three of us are going to need time to discuss this.

MARGARET

Take all you need. But for the financial well-being of the company, your discretion is required. We wouldn't want anyone finding this out, nor should you.

Nothing more unsettling than a threat said with a smile.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I guess that's all for now.

Ginger spits in her tube and rises with her plate of cake. Jason and Antonio sit there.

GINGER

Come on!

They rise, grabbing their plates as well. Margaret watches as her china and silver leave with them.

INT. - OUTSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The three siblings walk out of the conference room. On a sofa sits Reverend Thomas. He stares at them quizzically as they enter the elevator. Ginger nods as the doors shut.

INSIDE CONFERENCE ROOM -

ERIC

(shaken, upset)

I'm so mad at dad. He's who I'd ask
what to do right now.

ROSE

I know they're a little rough
around the edges, but maybe we
should have some sort of
relationship with them. I mean, If
dad thought enough to include-

MARGARET

Those "edges" will bring down the
network and Sunnysop will be dead
on arrival.

The Reverend enters the open door and knocks.

REVEREND THOMAS

Knock, knock.

The Monroes turn and stiffen. What has he heard?!

REVEREND THOMAS (CONT'D)

How'd that go?

MARGARET

How'd what go?

REVEREND THOMAS

Margaret, darling, I was Eugene's
spiritual advisor. I've known about
those children for years.

GULP! Margaret, Franklin, Rose and Eric are speechless.

REVEREND THOMAS (CONT'D)

Sorry to drop by unannounced but I
just wanted to tell you to fix this
and fix it quick. My ministry can't
be associated with such scandal.

FRANKLIN

We have a plan in place that-

The Reverend cuts him off.

REVEREND THOMAS

How about this for a plan.

(to Margaret)

You need to get back on air.

(MORE)

REVEREND THOMAS (CONT'D)

People watch Sunshine for two reasons. You and me. Without you, I suffer. And well, I don't like to suffer. So, go back to what you do best, recipes and advice. Eric, Franklin and I will take over operations as Eugene would have wanted.

(off their looks)

Wanna grab some lunch, Eric?

The Reverend locks eyes with Eric, holding his gaze. Eric immediately joins the Reverend's side. As they leave, Margaret turns to Franklin.

MARGARET

From this moment on, Nothing gets done without going through me first. I'm in charge of the Network. Got it?

FRANKLIN

Yes. Fully.

INT. SWANKY HOTEL - FRONT DESK - DAY

BELLMEN usher Ginger, Antonio (carrying Jesús) and Jason into this five star hotel. Getting harder to be unimpressed.

JASON

Whoa. Margaret really hooked us up.

As Jason and Antonio check in, Trey steps up to Ginger.

TREY

Trey Atkins, New Orleans Times. Mind if I ask what business you had today at the network?

He hands her his card. They lock eyes.

BELLMAN

Sir, you need to leave.

TREY

(to Ginger as he leaves)
Call me anytime.

Something about this Southerner intrigues Ginger.

INT. MOTHER'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The Reverend and Eric are eating Poboy's. Eric is distraught.

ERIC

It doesn't make any sense. Dad was the smartest person I know.

REVEREND THOMAS

We are all sinners, Eric. Your father prayed hard and felt forgiven by the end of his life. I must tell you, it took your mother longer than it should have to forgive him.

This lands hard on Eric.

REVEREND THOMAS (CONT'D)

And now, You have a job to do.

ERIC

I can't. Not yet.

REVEREND THOMAS

Eugene once asked me to watch over you if anything were to ever happen to him. I know you love your mother, but she can't host her show and run the network at the same time. Trust that I have your best interests in mind.

INT. SUNSHINE NETWORK- DAY

A studio audience anxiously awaits Margaret's arrival. Behind a curtain, Margaret watches. She's shaken and nervous about her first appearance on air. Franklin steps up.

FRANKLIN

All your momma bears need you right now. You can do this.

INT. WAFFLEHOUSE - NIGHT

The siblings sit in a booth near the counter. Baby Jesús in a high chair. A mounted TV has the news on.

JASON

Why'd we even need DNA testing anyway? Shouldn't the fact that we were in his will be enough?

GINGER

We have to prove paternity, but that way was purely an intimidation tactic. We've already been erased from the Monroe family record once. We can't let it happen again -- not without fair compensation and right now they're playing us.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Antonio. You're a boxer, right?

ANTONIO

I got a shot at the regional. But, I gotta protect my street cred. It don't look to good when your dad's a rich Jesus freak who probably don't like brown people.

GINGER

Hanging onto our shares could mean millions with an S. You could go pro. One of the richest men in America screwed your mom. That's some gangster shit right there. And Jason, pot's going recreational. You need capital to build enough brick and mortars to meet demand. We have just as much right to his fortune as the other two. And we'll get it, if we stick together.

A worker turns the TV to The Sunshine Network as Margaret's show begins. An announcer calls her out.

ANNOUNCER

And here she is... Margaret Monroe

The trio turns to the TV and sees Margaret crossing the stage. The crowd cheers. Many in the audience are crying.

MARGARET

Thank you. Thank you all so much.

The crowd quietens.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

One month ago I lost my beloved husband and best friend. Your love and support has meant so much to me any my family and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. I miss him greatly and truthfully I didn't know if I could go on.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Then I thought of one of Eugene's favorite verses: 'Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.' Because of Eugene. Because of your faith in us and me, I'm back here today. I must go on because we have work to do in our great country. We are under constant attack. And now more than ever, I realize we must all stay close to our families and keep them strong, both at home and right here with the family we have in this room.

END OF ACT TWOACT THREE

INT. MONROE ESTATE - MARGARET'S ROOM - MORNING

Margaret and Rose are bringing clothes out of Eugene's closet, folding them and putting them in boxes. Rose holds up an old multicolored sweater. It looks like a child made it.

ROSE

I was in sixth grade when I made daddy this sweater. It's pitiful.

She holds it up to her chest and looks in a mirror.

MARAGARET

Eugene didn't think so. Anytime it fell under sixty degrees, he had it on. One time, the maitre d' at Galatoires tried to make him wear a blazer over it. Eugene called him an asshole and we walked right out of there and never went back.

ROSE

He was the only person who believed in my clothes. Believed in what I'm trying to do. I miss him.

Margaret can't argue with this statement.

MARGARET

I do too, but my feelings are all being sat on by those three.

ROSE

This is the most real we've ever had to be. Our family's been so rehearsed and so full of shit for so long... I mean nobody can live under that kind of self-imposed pressure. If you try, you mess up. That's what I think daddy did. Let's not live that way anymore. I want to be happy for the right reasons and on my own terms.

This lands hard on Margaret.

ROSE (CONT'D)

They're not bad people mom. Ginger isn't a pornographer.

MARGARET

What else would you call it?

ROSE

Have you even ever seen porn, Mom?

MARGARET

Lord no! Of course not. Heavens.

ROSE

Well, I have and that's not what Ginger is doing.

EXT. SWANKY HOTEL - DAY

Jason's in a hurry as he climbs into a taxi with his duffel.

JASON
Airport please.

Antonio, in running gear, startles the hell out of him when he appears at the open window. Jesús is in a jogging stroller.

ANTONIO
Hey -- are you leaving?

JASON
I'll be back tomorrow. There's an issue at home.

Jason puts the window up. The taxi goes. Off Antonio, huh.

INT. MONROE ESTATE - DAY

Gorgeous and serene. Margaret and Franklin are on horseback.

FRANKLIN
How are you holding up?

MARGARET
It was right to get back on the air. Our ratings shot way up. How's the Reverend?

FRANKLIN
He calls me everyday for an update. And he expects Eric to be named CEO. You can make that happen if you want to.

MARGARET
Not yet.

FRANKLIN
(reading a text)
Our offer is declined. They want to be treated as family.

MARGARET
What about those DNA tests?

FRANKLIN
Positive, except Jason's sample was contaminated. He's re-taking his.

She stops, sits with it for a moment -- no denying this now.

MARGARET

They're only playing hardball
because of *her*.

FRANKLIN

If the others take the deal, she's
basically helpless.

MARGARET

The only time a Monroe girl is
helpless is when her nails are
drying. And even then she could
shoot the pecker off a housefly.
She may be blood, but that doesn't
mean she belongs here.

EXT. SWANKY HOTEL - POOLSIDE - SAME TIME

Ginger sits poolside with Antonio. Jesús plays on a beach
towel at their feet.

GINGER

You have no idea what your mom's
relationship with him was?

ANTONIO

All I know is she was custodian at
the network, got pregnant, came
back to New York with enough money
to buy a house. Never told anybody
who my father was. She died of
cancer when I was two. My uncle
raised me after that.

GINGER

My mom was a cocktail waitress out
in Vegas. He knocked her up and
when she told him, he called her a
whore, insisted I was another man's
baby. Destroyed her -- she lost her
mind and about everything else.

HOTEL STAFFER (O.S.)

Ms. Sweet?

The HOTEL STAFFER presents Ginger with a gilded invitation.

HOTEL STAFFER (CONT'D)

This is for you from Mrs. Monroe.

ANTONIO

What is it?

GINGER

Seems, I've been invited to a
"Ladies Luncheon".

INT. HOSPITAL, COLORADO - SAME TIME

Jason makes his way to room 111 in the ICU. Jason steps to hospital bed where a BEARDED YOUNG MAN is hooked up to tubes and monitors. Clearly, incapacitated.

Jason is met by his father, JOHN, and mom, PAT.

JOHN

They're going to open his skull in
the morning to release pressure.

JASON

(to his brother in bed)
You got to wake up, bro. The slopes
are waiting on us.

JOHN

You were supposed to go get the
settlement and get right back here.

Jason pulls a DNA testing kit out of his backpack, preps it.

JASON

There are three of us - and what
they offered is a pittance compared
to what it's really worth.

Gently, Jason swabs his brother's inner cheek. He rises and kisses his brother's forehead.

PAT

Frank, listen to me. I want you to
stay. He knows when you're here.
You'll get him through the surgery.

The man we thought was Jason is really named Frank. Frank and the real Jason are brothers who were both adopted. Frank has been masquerading as Jason so as not to lose the settlement his brother is entitled to should his potential death complicate things. We will continue to call Frank, Jason.

JASON

He's gonna be fine. I got to go.

JOHN

This is not the time to get greedy,
son. If something happens to him
before an agreement is reached-

JASON

He would do the same for me.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS COUNTRY CLUB - VALET - DAY

Valets park Rolls and Mercedes as the wealthiest and
stufiest women of New Orleans file into the club. Margaret
is dressed as conservatively as always. Rose dons another
wild outfit showing her tan arms and shoulders.

ROSE

Who dressed these women? Dianne
Feinstein?

MARGARET

It's called dressing age
appropriate. One day you'll
understand.

ROSE

Christian women can look sexy too.
No matter what their age... You
always do.

Margaret shoots Rose "a don't play me look".

MARGARET

(regarding Rose's arms)
Well, I wouldn't be caught dead in
a top like that with the way my
arms look.

ROSE

It's summer, momma. Tan fat is
muscle.

INT. BANQUET ROOM - LATER

Helen Sterling, also perfectly put together, makes her way
over to Margaret and Rose.

HELEN

Madge, darling. You look wonderful.
Did you get the pastries I sent?

MARGARET

They were Eugene's favorite. So thoughtful and so good to see you.

Helen sees something over Rose's shoulder.

HELEN

Oh dear, who is that?

Ginger sweeps into the room dressed in FULL PLANTATION GARB, including a HOOP SKIRT and a PARASOL. She spots Margaret and Rose. Ginger waves and drops into a slight curtsy.

MARGARET

An acquaintance. Excuse me.

Heads turn as Ginger's dress creates a space problem. Margaret and Rose quickly intercept her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You should feel stupid right now because I certainly don't.

Margaret greets and nods to folks on their way to their table. Ginger's huge dress knocks over a few Champagne flutes on the way.

ROSE

Where did you get that outfit on such short notice?

GINGER

A friend sent it overnight.

They sit. Ginger looks at a couple of VERY PROPER LADIES who gawk. Ginger gives a perfect pageant wave.

GINGER (CONT'D)

Hey, y'all. How y'all doin'?

Rose lives vicariously as Margaret fumes.

MARGARET

I understand that you have resentments, Ginger. And I have the deepest sympathy for you. I even have sympathy for your mother.

This hits Ginger like a knife in the gut.

GINGER

Do not speak of my mother. Got it?

MARGARET

But she's part of this, sweetie.

A waiter arrives with three Cobb salads and places them in front of the woman.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Ginger, would you say grace for us?

GINGER

(bowing her head)

Please don't let this women choke
on her Cobb salad unless of course
you want her to.

Rose cracks up. Margaret gives Rose a stern look.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB - BANQUET ROOM - LATER

Guests mingle and have cocktails, but Margaret isn't done here -- she's at a podium, switches on the mic as a diverse group of TEN-YEAR- OLD GIRLS, are seated up front.

MARGARET

Good afternoon, ladies, and welcome
to our annual girls club luncheon.
This year, our focus is on the
city's mentoring program for at-
risk girls, or as we prefer to call
them: businesswomen of the future.

She smiles at the girls seated in front of the podium.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Needless to say, it's been a sad
time at the network. So although
I'd previously agreed to speak
today, I hope you'll understand and
forgive me if I do not. But in my
place, I'd like to introduce an
entrepreneur I've recently become
acquainted with. A woman with a
successful company that she built
from the ground up. The lovely lady
in that charming hoop skirt, Miss
Ginger Sweet.

Applause. Ginger's stunned. Margaret beckons, or is she taunting? Ginger stubbornly makes her way to the podium. Which isn't easy. Finally makes it to the mic:

GINGER

Thank you...

Ginger looks out, struck by the group of AWE-STRUCK-GIRLS before her. Margaret leans into the mic.

MARGARET

Why don't you start by telling
these young girls what you do for a
living, sweetie? Inspire them!

Ginger looks into their young, hopeful faces. CLOSE ON GINGER as we PUNCH IN SEVERAL OF THE GIRLS, all waiting to hear what they can become when they grow up. Ginger stands there, paralyzed by something she hadn't anticipated -- shame. After a long beat, Margaret steps in, breaks the spell.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I do apologize, we seem to be
having a problem with Miss Sweet's
Powerpoint presentation. Why don't
we bring up the next speaker until
we can get it squared away.

Margaret walks a shaken Ginger away from the podium as Helen takes over in the b.g. Ladies snicker quietly.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

(softly to Ginger)

There's no place for you in civil
society, much less in our business.
Two million dollars now. Take what
you've been offered and go home.

A rattled Ginger walks off the stage.

INT. NEW ORLEANS COUNTRY CLUB - LATER

With her hoop skirt discarded, Ginger stands on a chair in a hall behind the stage. She holds a lit match to the head of a sprinkler system. It goes out before the desired result.

TREY (O.C.)

Think fast.

Ginger turns just as Trey has thrown a lighter in her direction. Ginger catches it, smiling at her accomplice.

TREY (CONT'D)

I guess you owe me a drink now,
huh?

GINGER

I guess I do.

Trey walks out a back door. Ginger holds the flaming lighter up to the sprinkler head. Heads all around her drop from the ceiling and begin dispersing water.

BACK ON STAGE:

Margaret and all the attendees are showered with water. Margaret and the ladies rush toward the door. Rose stays behind watching the mayhem with a big smile on her face.

INT. MONROE MANSION - MARGARET'S ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret is alone in bed, watching A FINANCIAL NEWS CHANNEL on TV. Where FOOTAGE OF THE LAUNCH plays out over:

MALE COMMENTATOR (O.S.)
 -- It's becoming increasingly clear
 the Monroes had no plan in place.
 And you have to wonder, without
 Eugene and the launching of very
 expensive retail division, if
 Reverend Thomas will go along for
 the ride.

Just then, Margaret picks up the phone and dials.

MARGARET
 Hello, son.

INT. MONROE ESTATE - KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Margaret is making breakfast for Eric. She puts pancakes on a plate and lifts up a bottle of syrup.

ERIC
 None for me, mom. I'm off sugar.

MARGARET
 It's pure Vermont Maple. So, it's
 sucrose and it's good for you. It's
 full of magnesium, zinc and
 calcium.

Margaret pours it on the pancakes anyway.

ERIC
 Okay... So, what's up? What did you
 want to talk about.

MARGARET

Well, I've thought about it and I've prayed about it and well, I don't think you're ready to take your father's place in the company.

ERIC

You don't huh?

MARAGARET

No, son. The world is watching and I think we need to take things very slowly for a beat. I have your best interests in mind here.

Eric rises.

ERIC

Maple syrup is still sugar, momma. You can dress it up all you like but it's still gonna kill you. Taking your anger out on me will prove a big mistake. Dad told the Reverend he wanted me to take over and that's what we're ready to do.

Eric storms off.

INT. THE MONROE COMPANY - FRANKLIN'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING

Franklin and Margaret study an e-mail on his computer.

FRANKLIN

It appears rumors are starting to fly about our hotel guests.

MARGARET

And everyone wants to know why Margaret Monroe invited Scarlett O'hara to a business luncheon. That was a big mistake. I can't have eyes on me. Might be best keep them out of public view until deals are signed and they're gone.

FRANKLIN

And how do you propose we do that?

Margaret considers this for a beat, then --

MARGARET

Bring them here. Well lock them up
in our own Trojan Horse.

FRANKLIN

Smart. You're an amazing woman.

Franklin places his hand on Margaret's back. She looks to
Franklin. He smiles a little to long. She doesn't look away.

MARGARET

Let's go ahead with the
announcement, too.

INT. ERIC'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Eric's got a spring in his step as he dresses for work. TV
NEWS on in the b.g. Becky enters and plant a kiss.

BECKY

You look great.

Eric cinches his tie and turns his attention to FOOTAGE of
MARGARET ONSTAGE AT THE ONLINE SHOPPING LAUNCH:

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

...while widely known as the
"heart" of the Network, Margaret
Monroe had no official title there,
leaving industry insiders surprised
that she'd appoint herself as her
husband's successor...

INT. SWANKY HOTEL - ANTONIO'S ROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

Ginger sits with Antonio and Jason, who has returned.

GINGER

They're doing everything they can
to make sure we're not family --

JASON

We're *not* family and it's two
million dollars.

ANTONIO

I can see a loss when it's coming.
They'll keep us in court for years.
Why you pushing back so hard?

GINGER

Because I have something to offer the network. I want to start fresh with what I already know how to do. Eugene was my father and I think he would want this for me.

A knock at the door. Antonio opens it to a BELLMAN.

BELLMAN

Morning. Miss Monroe has invited you all to stay at the Estate. I'm here to help move you over.

ANTONIO

Excuse me?

BELLMAN

Miss Sweet? Mr. Conley? Should I get your things from your room?

JASON

I guess so. Never been to an estate before.

ANTONIO

(to Ginger)

We're going whether you do or not.

EXT. MONROE COUNTRY ESTATE - GRAND DRIVEWAY - DAY

Eric pulls up in his BMW and beelines for Margaret, Franklin and Rose, awaiting the arrival of the others.

ERIC

I can't believe my own mother would take a job right underneath me.

FRANKLIN

To assuage financial fears --

ERIC

I'm the one who went to Wharton.

MARGARET

And you almost didn't graduate.

ERIC

You think the Reverend is going to be reassured with you at the helm?

MARGARET

I created the network. I developed all the programming and I have the most watched lifestyle show on TV, which brings all of the sponsors who which gave me the idea to create Sunnyshop. You think you're ready to step into Eugene's loafers but really it's a pair of my Manolo Blahniks. I am the Zenith. I am the brand and America needs me.

Just then, a helicopter begins to lower in the front yard.

ERIC

What the hell is this?

ROSE

Our siblings. They're coming to stay with us.

Eric holds his mother's gaze.

ERIC

Have you lost your goddamn mind?

Before she can stop herself, Margaret has SLAPPED HIM.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. MONROE MANSION - FOYER - DAY

Margaret and Rose show an astounded Antonio and Jason inside. Even Ginger can't help but be struck by the wealth here.

MARGARET

Wander around. I'm making us a traditional creole dinner tonight.

Inconceivable to them, Antonio and Jason gaze at the wealth around them. Rose walks right up to Jason.

ROSE

(flustered)

Let me show you around.

JASON

Sure.

Antonio picks up on the flirtation between Rose and Jason. *Uh...weird.* Rose looks to Antonio.

ANTONIO

You two go on ahead. I'll catch up.

Rose leads him inside. Margaret stops Ginger to say:

MARGARET

About lunch. What I did was wrong. I just think we're both strong-willed women working through a lot of emotions. I'd very much like it if we could start over.

She extends her hand. Ginger doesn't take her hand.

GINGER

You think I'm this stupid?

INT. MONROE MANSION - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Ginger enters the beautifully detailed room. Sees the pristine grounds out the window-- A knock.

FRANKLIN

May I come in?

GINGER

Sure.

FRANKLIN

You may not have known it, but your father cared deeply about you.

(MORE)

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Kept an eye on you your whole life.
Despite what you may think, he kept
up with your business. He didn't
like it but he couldn't help but a
see a bit of himself in you.

Franklin hands Ginger a letter from his coat pocket.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

He wrote this recently, knowing he
wasn't getting any younger.

Ginger takes the letter, curious.

INT. MONROE MANSION - GUEST ROOM - LATER

A SERIES OF TIME CUTS as Ginger reads the letter, first
pacing, then standing, finally sitting as she takes it in:

EUGENE (O.S.)

Dear Ginger. I want you to know
that I've thought of you every day.
I'm proud of who you are because
you're not afraid to be who you
are. I've always loved you. I wish
I had been the father you deserved.

Off Ginger, moved by words she never knew she wanted to hear.

INT. MONROE ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY

An elegant kitchen. Margaret is behind the counter cooking
and sipping Champagne while talking to Antonio. She holds
Earl as she stirs. Jesús is running around the kitchen.

ANTONIO

Smells great, Miss Monroe.

MARGARET

Duck and sausage gumbo, turtle soup
blackened redfish, barbecue shrimp,
fresh lady peas out of my garden,
jalapeño cornbread and something
green but I haven't decided what
yet. And please, call me Margaret.

ANTONIO

You really cooking a turtle?

MARGARET

I promise, you'll love it.

Jesús approaches a bowl of decorative glass fruit resting on a table. He takes a glass apple.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
You like apples, honey?

Margaret kneels down as Jesús attempts to bite the apple.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
No. No. No. It's a pretend apple.
I'm abuela. Can you say abuela?

ANTONIO
He hasn't started talking yet. He should be talking by now.

MARGARET
It took Eric a long time too.

Jesús throws the glass apple to the floor. It shatters.

ANTONIO
Jesús!

MARGARET
It's okay. I'll go grab a broom.
Keep him away from the glass.

As Margaret rises Franklin enters and shows her a tube.

FRANKLIN
I'm headed back to the office, want to get this over to the lab right away -- new DNA sample from Jason.

EXT. MONROE ESTATE - GROUNDS - DAY

Plush and gorgeous. Jason and Rose relax, enjoy the view.

JASON
(re: her outfit)
Did you design this?

ROSE
I did. You would've liked our dad.
He encouraged my creative side.

Jason's eyes linger on Rose a little too long.

JASON
How are you still single?

Jason quickly looks up to her realizing the momentary slip his crush has caused. Rose blushes.

ROSE

I was in love once. Dad loved him. Mom hated him. Said he was after our money. He was Jewish so you get the picture. What about you?

JASON

Shit, I'm so wrapped up in business I can barely take care of myself.

Off Rose, smitten with her "half-brother"?

JASON (CONT'D)

Do you mind if I smoke some weed out here. Helps me with stress.

ROSE

I prefer edibles. If you have a gummy bear on you, I wouldn't mind.

Rose just gets more attractive by the minute.

JASON

Wow. No, but I can get you some.

ROSE

Oh, I have some.

INT. THE MONROE COMPANY - EXECUTIVE LOBBY - DAY

Franklin emerges from the elevator, pushes through the glass doors and strides toward reception. Franklin becomes aware of Eric stepping into an elevator -- with Reverend Thomas.

FRANKLIN

The Reverend was here to see him?

RECEPTIONIST

Arrived about an hour ago.

INT. MONROE MANSION - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A huge table with Margaret at the head. Everyone all seated around it. Heads bowed as Margaret says grace.

MARGARET

Bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies, Lord.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Help each member of this family use
these gifts to your glory. Amen.

INT. MONROE MANSION - DINING ROOM - LATER

Laughter. Good food is enjoyed and defenses are dropped.

ANTONIO
This fish is delicious.

MARGARET
You can thank my great-grandmother
and her cast-iron skillet. She
taught me everything.

ANTONIO
Jesús really loves his turtle.

MARGARET
That's Boudin. Not turtle. It was
Eugene's favorite.

GINGER
So where's Eric tonight?

Silence falls over the table.

ROSE
He went out to an all-you-can-eat
buffet of denial.

MARGARET
Rose, darling, let's save our
grapes for dessert. I want to clear
the air and apologize to you three
for how I've conducted myself.
After much prayer and reflection,
I've decided to give each of you
one percent of the company. After
all, you've provided biological
proof and that has to be honored in
an appropriate way.

Looks are exchanged between the three kids

MARGARET (CONT'D)
All I ask is that you sign NDA's.
Protecting the reputation of the
company and our interests in it.

GINGER

I've already run the numbers. One percent comes out to -- five million. Correct?

MARGARET

More if our online shopping division is successful.

ANTONIO

Seems pretty fair.

The siblings exchange looks of approval. Then --

GINGER

Given there are five of us including Rose and Eric. I think five percent is a better number.

Although seething, Margaret forces a smile.

GINGER (CONT'D)

And biblically speaking, the number 5 symbolizes God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans. It's mentioned 318 times in Scripture. The Ten Commandments contains two sets of 5 commandments. The first five commandments are related to our treatment and relationship with God, and the last five concern our relationship with others humans. Like me, Antonio and Jason. Think about it, will you?

Margaret is quiet impressed by Ginger.

MARGARET

I certainly will.

EXT. MONROE RANCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

Ginger is walking along a pond on the ranch. Rose approaches with two glasses of wine.

ROSE

There you are.

She hands Ginger a glass of wine.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to say you really impressed me in there.

(MORE)

ROSE (CONT'D)

You took mom's secret weapon and put it right back in her face. More effective than a sprinkler system.

Ginger notices Rose's white minidress and scarf.

GINGER

I'd love to get my hands on you.

ROSE

Excuse me?

GINGER

I know what it's like not to be taken seriously. I make and sell fantasy but you're the real deal. You could be like a Christian Kardashian. You've got style but also class and grace. There's never been anyone like you. What you could be with my help.

ROSE

I've waited a long time to hear that from someone.

GINGER

And I've waited a long time to have a sister. I'd like to see your studio sometime.

Rose accepts the offer with an elated nod.

INT. MONROE MANSION - FOYER - NIGHT

A SERVANT lets Franklin in. Margaret meets him. Sounds of the on-going celebration filtering in from the dining room.

FRANKLIN

Eric met with Reverend Thomas, so I called the Reverend myself to find out why. He plans to pull support if Eric isn't named number one. He has concerns about your qualifications to run the network and the launch of Sunnyshop.

MARGARET

I'm so tired of his sexist crap.

FRANKLIN

Not as a woman, Margaret. But as a conservative.

MARGARET

No. He thinks he can tell Eric what to do. That's what's going on.

INT. BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Reverend Thomas sings a hymn with a congregation of sixteen thousand in huge stadium. A camera system captures the service which is beamed live via the Sunshine Network satellite. Margaret and Rose sit close together. Eric and Becky sit a notable distance from them.

Reverend Thomas catches eyes with Margaret as he sings. His friendly smile turns sinister, his gaze relays a warning.

REVEREND THOMAS

Ladies and gentleman won't you please help me welcome the Monroe family. Let them know how much our hearts and prayers are with them.

The crowd applauds. Eric looks to the reverend and nods.

REVEREND THOMAS (CONT'D)

Today I want to talk to you about family and about trust. You see, Eugene Monroe was a family man.

Margaret is on to him. She steps into the aisle and collapses. The crowd gasps.

MARGARET

I miss Eugene so much, Reverend!
Please help me, Lord!

The Reverend has no choice but to rush to Margaret's side. Eric and Rose don't move. As the Reverend tries to help her up, Margaret grabs him tightly and whispers in his ear.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You will lose. You hear me?

Reverend Thomas stares at her intensely. Everyone on the edge of their seats. He then raises a hand in the air, shouting.

REVEREND THOMAS

The lord has sent Margaret a message. A message through me.

Reverend Thomas now whispers in Margaret's ear.

REVEREND THOMAS (CONT'D)
Eugene turned his back on us and
the Lord. And that's why the Lord
brought his plane down. Put Eric in
charge or I let the world know.

MARGARET
(shouting out)
Thank you Jesus. Thank you
Reverend!

Margaret again whispers in the Reverend's ear.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
You were preaching inside a double-
wide when I found you. I created
you, not God. But as the Lord gives
he also takes away. Kiss your
ministry goodbye, preacher 'cause
I'm pulling the plug.

REVEREND THOMAS
Get rid of me and you get rid of
all your customers. Who'll buy your
energy bars and toilet paper then?

INT. MONROE MANSION - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Ginger's back in her room, feeling surprisingly content.
She's re-reading Eugene's letter when her CELL RINGS.

GINGER
Hello?

INT. TINA'S APARTMENT - LAS VEGAS - SAME TIME/INTERCUT

Tina's on the other end. Rachel waits for her turn to talk.

TINA
Hey, Rachel and I were just talking
about how much we missed you. How's
it going down there?

GINGER
Well, you're not going to believe
it, but I'm staying at their
mansion.

TINA
Really...

GINGER
Yeah, it's pretty nice, actually.

TINA
'Course it is...

Rachel excitedly gestures for the phone. Tina relinquishes it, not sure she can handle hearing much more.

TINA (CONT'D)
Hold on. Rachel needs to tell you something.

As the phone changes hands, Ginger picks up Eugene's handwritten letter again. A smile fluttering across her face.

RACHEL
Did you not get my texts?

Ginger can't help but be drawn back in by her father's words.

GINGER
Yeah, I just haven't had time --

RACHEL
We lost two girls to a competitor in Arizona. I started recruiting.

But by now, Ginger is completely absorbed in the letter.

GINGER
Yeah, I'm listening.

So clearly, she's not really listening.

RACHEL
Let's just talk about it later. Obviously, you're busy there.

Rachel hands the phone back to Tina.

GINGER
Sorry, Rach. It's just... I never expected to feel. I mean, don't tell my mom, but I'm starting to like these people.

Tina takes the phone from her ear, worst fears are realized. This as Ginger's eyes drift back down to the TIDY, HANDWRITTEN LETTER that's helped open her heart.

GINGER (CONT'D)
I think they're...

But then she remembers something.

INT. APARTMENT - CLOSET/BEDROOM DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Ginger rapt as she reads a HANDWRITTEN LOVE LETTER from the shoebox. PUNCH IN on A SERIES OF LOVE-RELATED SENTENCES - ALL OF WHICH SLANT LEFT.

EXT. MONROE MANSION - GRAND DRIVEWAY - DUSK

Ginger's sitting on the steps, coiled as the Rolls pulls up. Margaret climbs out, a post-smackdown smile on her face.

MARGARET

Ginger, why are you sitting outside?

GINGER

Just waiting for you, actually. I'm a lefty. I'm just curious, was Eugene a lefty like me?

MARGARET

Why, yes he was.

GINGER

(shows letter)

And a right-handed person wrote this. You didn't even have the courage to hand this lie to me yourself. Eugene didn't feel this way about me -- You faked it, faked it just to get me to sign off on this deal. Well, I don't want your money. And I don't want to be part of this disgusting family either. By the way, Eugene spent a helluva lot longer than ten minutes with my mother. Lady, they were together for a year.

With that, Ginger heads back inside. Off Margaret, destroyed.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. MONROE MANSION - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Ginger in her room, packing to go when Antonio steps in.

ANTONIO

Me and Jason are agreeing to all of Margaret's terms.

GINGER

Fine, take their money. But make sure to get it while they have it because I'm taking these sanctimonious assholes down.

ANTONIO

Why does another family have to be destroyed?

Antonio goes. Ginger's stung but determined, digs into her purse, pulls out a business card -- Trey's. Dials her cell:

INT. MONROE MANSION - LIBRARY - DAY

Margaret is quietly devastated, turns to Franklin.

MARGARET

Maybe it was a mistake, having you write that letter.

FRANKLIN

Maybe. But what I wrote were things Eugene said to me about her, things I felt she should know.

A beat, then a painful question --

MARGARET

Did Eugene love Ginger's mother?

Franklin can't make himself answer. It's a blow to Margaret's faith, and her heart.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

No one could touch what we had. I always believed that. Believed that God brought us together for a reason. Maybe I was wrong.

INT. DUMPY MOTEL ROOM/GINGER'S APARTMENT - INTERCUT - NIGHT

Ginger's rejected all things Monroe and moved into a dive motel. She paces, on the phone with Rachel. Tina is sloshed in the b.g., empty bottle of vodka on the coffee table.

GINGER

Damn it, Rach, she should've been on the plane by now.

RACHEL

Trust me, she's in no condition to talk at a press conference --

But just then, Tina grabs the phone from Rachel. She is absolutely shit-faced, barely coherent.

TINA

If Eugene had have left Margaret for me... he would end up resent-- re...resenting us... you... It never would have lasted either. So, I had to push him away...

INT. APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - FLASHBACK

Tina opens the door to Eugene, who gets down on one knee, extends an open velvet box that houses the same EMERALD RING the Margaret wears. Just then, a HALF-DRESSED MAN emerges from the bedroom. Off a betrayed Eugene.

TINA (O.S.)

...had to make him hate me so he'd stop loving me...

RESUME. Ginger's too frustrated by Tina to really hear what she's saying anymore.

TINA (CONT'D)

...and I never told you because I didn't want you to hate me...

Ginger hangs up. Disappointed but determined.

INT. MONROE ESTATE - MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret on her knees, praying like she never has before.

MARGARET

I'm losing my way, losing everything I love...

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Help me understand why all this has
 happened, what it means...

JESÚS (O.S.)
 Abuela.

She turns to see Jesús there, smiling. Margaret's struck by
 the moment. Moved. After a beat, Antonio rushes in.

ANTONIO
 Sorry, he got away from me.

Margaret scoops up his son and kisses him.

ANTONIO (CONT'D)
 I just want to say thanks. For
 everything. You're going to change
 this little guy's life.

MARGARET
 It's been so long since we had a
 baby in our lives... Have you
 thought about education? You have
 to get on that now.

ANTONIO
 Look, I don't even know where we're
 going to be in six months, much
 less where he is going to school.

MARGARET
 There are some amazing schools here
 in New Orleans.

Off Margaret, for whom the path forward is becoming clear...

INT. THE MONROE COMPANY - EUGENE'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Franklin pushes into the office, surprised to find Margaret
 sitting at the expansive desk.

MARGARET
 Tell Eric and the Reverend I have
 an announcement to make.

INT. DUMPY MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Ginger puts the finishing touches on her outfit -- the sharp
 business suit. Checks her look in the crappy mirror. Steels
 herself for what she's about to do.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Ginger heads down the hall, is intercepted by Trey.

TREY

Hey, we got a problem.

GINGER

I've gave you the exclusive for
print and promised our long-overdue
drink. We have a deal.

TREY

We did. But my boss made a
different one.

But it's too late, because Ginger has stepped into the --

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where dozens are gathered to hear an announcement -- just not
from Ginger. She's stunned to see Margaret at the podium.
Rose, Antonio, Jason, Eric and Reverend Thomas beside her.

MARGARET

There she is -- come on up, honey.

As a confused Ginger makes her way to the podium. Smiling
warmly, Margaret gives her a hug and whispers in her ear:

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Did you really think you'd have the
upper hand with the press in my
town?

As they pull apart, the Reverend leans into Eric.

REVEREND THOMAS

Franklin says your mom has come to
her senses. Congratulations, Mister
CEO.

Eric looks across the room to Franklin who nods with a smile.
Margaret takes charge at the mic.

MARGARET

Thank you all for coming. It's
been a difficult time at the
network. With the passing of
Eugene, we lost our C.E.O. I lost
my husband. And Rose and Eric lost
their father. But we've gained as
well.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Unbeknownst to us, Eugene had
 fathered three other children. They
 are with us today.

CAMERAS FLASH. Jason quickly avoids the lenses.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Eugene obviously had his demons,
 his flaws... but in keeping with
 his Christian faith, he didn't deny
 his paternity. And he knew, that no
 innocent child should suffer for
 his transgressions or his sins, no
 matter what the consequences or
 shame. Honesty brings us closer to
 the Lord. Eugene kept an eye on
 these young ones from afar, often
 helping without my knowledge
 because he didn't want to upset me.
 And I forgive him.

(beat)

And Reverend Thomas has forgiven
 him. That's true Christianity.
 "Judge not lest ye be judged", the
 Reverend told me. He got us
 through this, got us all to a place
 of forgiveness. Thank you, Paul.

Reverend forces a smile over his and Eric's shock.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 God decides who comes into your
 life, but your heart must decide
 who stays. So with the Lord's
 guidance, I welcome Ginger Sweet,
 Antonio Rivera and Jason Conley to
 ours. Thank you.

CAMERA FLASHES. This move has made Margaret even more beloved
 by her fans. ANOTHER ANGLE as CAMERA FLASHES die down, Eric
 peels away from the family, steps up to Franklin.

ERIC
 This ain't over. Tell her that.

With that, Eric goes with the Reverend. Off Franklin, sensing
 a coup d'tat...

Ginger throws her arms around Margaret. Reporters hurl more
 questions as Ginger leans into Margaret's ear.

GINGER
 I can't wait to redecorate your
 office.