

how i met your mother

"Return of the Shirt"

Episode # 1ALH03

Written by

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Directed by

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FINAL DRAFT (PINK) - 8/24/05

BLUE REVISED TABLE DRAFT - 8/23/05

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ACT ONE

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FADE IN:

1 INT. STUDY - YEAR 2035 - DAY
 (NARRATOR (V.O.), SON, DAUGHTER)

1

DAUGHTER AND SON ARE SITTING ON THE COUCH.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Kids, when you're single, all you're
looking for is happily ever after.
But only one of your stories can end
that way. The rest end with someone
getting hurt. This is one of those
stories. And it starts... with a shirt.

*

*

*

*

DAUGHTER

Sounds riveting.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Just listen...

2 INT. TED'S CLOSET - DAY (DAY 1)
 (;NARRATOR (V.O.), TED)

2

TED RIFLES THROUGH HIS CLOSET.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Because none of this would have happened
if it hadn't been for that shirt.

TED FINDS A SHIRT. A REALLY NICE LONG-SLEEVE BUTTON
DOWN. HE LOOKS IT OVER, SORT OF AMAZED.

3 INT. BAR - NIGHT (NIGHT 1)
 (TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, ROBIN, EXTRAS)

3

BARNEY, ROBIN, LILY AND MARSHALL SIT IN A BOOTH.
TED WALKS IN WEARING THE SHIRT HE FOUND IN HIS
CLOSET. HE APPROACHES THE TABLE.

ROBIN

Nice shirt!

TED

Right? Right?

LILY

I love the color!

MARSHALL

Hot top, bro. Is it new?

TED

That's the crazy part-- I've had this
shirt for six years. Until this
morning, I wasn't into it at all. But
now... it's like my tastes have changed.

BARNEY

Booger!

TED

Yes, hello, Barney.

ROBIN

Barney's offered me fifty bucks to say
some stupid word on a live news report.

BARNEY

Not a stupid word. Booger.

ROBIN

But I'm not doing it. I'm a journalist.

BARNEY

You do the little fluff pieces at the
end of the news-- old people, babies,
monkeys... that's not journalism, that's
"things in a diaper."

ROBIN

For your information, my boss is about
to bump me up to the City Hall beat.
I'm not gonna jeopardize a promotion
by saying "booger" for fifty bucks.

BARNEY

Of course not. 'Cuz you're saying
"nipple." And now it's a hundred.
(WHISPERS) Step into my web...

TED GRABS THE GLASS NEAREST HIM AND TAKES A SIP.

TED

Is this bourbon?

LILY

I don't know. It was here when we sat
down.

TED

Disgusting. But the point is, I like
bourbon now! I could've sworn I hated
bourbon! First the shirt, now
bourbon... It makes a guy think.

MARSHALL

Dude, are you about to drop some
philosophical on us?

TED

Look out below. I have spent 27 years
making up my mind about things. The
movie I saw once and hated, the city
I'll never go back to because it was
raining the day I visited. Maybe it's
time to start forming some second
impressions.

*

*

*

MARSHALL

(EXCITED) You're finally going to watch
Goonies again? Goonies never say die!

TED

Not Goonies. Girls. What if there's
someone from my past who at the time I
thought was wrong for me, when in fact
she, like this shirt, is actually a
perfect fit?

BARNEY

Okay, hold up. There's only two reasons
to date a girl you've already dated:
Breast implants.

LILY

No, this is a good idea. Let's think -
Ted's greatest hits. (BEAT) What about
that girl, Steph?

4 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (FB/NIGHT 1)
 (TED, STEPH, EXTRAS)

4

*

TED SITS AT A TABLE WITH STEPH, AN ATTRACTIVE BLONDE.

STEPH

Okay, this is difficult to say. Back
when I lived in LA, I was pretty broke,
so I spent a month... making adult films.

TED

Wow. Okay. How many did you make?

STEPH

A hundred and seventy-five.

5 INT. BAR - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT 1)
 (TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, ROBIN, EXTRAS)

5

PRESENT DAY GANG AT THE BAR.

LILY

Say what you will about the porn
industry, they're hard workers.

MARSHALL

What about Jackie?

6 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (FB/NIGHT 2)
 (TED, JACKIE, EXTRAS)

6

TED AND JACKIE HAVE DINNER. TED IS MID-STORY.

TED

(LAUGHING) ...I looked down, and my
bathing suit had fallen off.

JACKIE

(LAUGHING) I know the feeling! Once,
when I was sixteen, I was driving, and
I hit this hitchhiker. Don't know
what happened to him, just kept drivin'.
Embarrassing, right?

7 INT. BAR - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT 1)
 (NARRATOR (V.O.), TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY,
 ROBIN, EXTRAS)

7

PRESENT DAY GANG AT THE BAR.

TED

Uh, no.

LILY

What about Natalie?

MARSHALL AND TED

(INTRIGUED) Natalie...

ROBIN

Who's Natalie?

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Natalie. We only spent two months
together, but I had so many fond
memories of her.

8 QUICK MONTAGE OF SHOTS
 (;NARRATOR (V.O.), NATALIE)

8

A HAND LIGHTING TEA CANDLES, A COLLECTION OF SOCK
MONKEYS ON A BED, THE COVER ART FROM A BELLE AND
SEBASTIAN ALBUM. AN EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF A SMILE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The tea candles on her dresser. The
sock monkey collection on her bed.
That one Belle and Sebastian song she
always listened to. Her crooked smile.

9 INT. BAR - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT 1)
 (TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, ROBIN, EXTRAS)

9

THE GANG IN PRESENT TIME.

TED

Man, I haven't seen her in three years.

*

ROBIN

Why'd you guys break up?

TED

I just wasn't looking for a big
commitment. Of course, now a big
commitment doesn't sound so bad. Maybe
I should call her. What do you think?

BARNEY

(BEAT) You dumped a porn actress?!

*

Friendship over. Friendship over!

BARNEY EXITS IN A HUFF.

10 INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY (DAY 2)
 (;ROBIN, JOEL ADAMS)

10

ROBIN'S BOSS, JOEL ADAMS, SITS AT HIS DESK. THERE'S
A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

*
*

JOEL ADAMS

*

 Come in.

*

ROBIN ENTERS.

*

ROBIN

 Hey, you wanted to see me, Mr. Adams?

JOEL ADAMS

 Please, call me Joel Adams.

ROBIN

 You wanted to see me... Joel Adams?

JOEL ADAMS

 Yes, I did. I need you to cover a
 story. It's down at City Hall.

ROBIN

 (EXCITED) City Hall? Oh my God!

*

 Thank you! I won't let you down!

*

11 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY (DAY 2)
 (ROBIN, FAHIM, EXTRAS)

11

*

ROBIN IS WITH FAHIM, AN OLDER GENTLEMAN WHO STANDS
PROUDLY BEHIND HIS HOT DOG CART. ROBIN LOOKS
MISERABLE.

ROBIN

...so next time you're passing City
Hall, make sure to visit New York's
oldest hot dog cart. Today, a delicious
hot dog'll cost you \$2.50. But when
the stand first opened in 1955, you
could get one for only a nipple.

*

*

*

*

FAHIM LOOKS PUZZLED. DID SHE JUST SAY NIPPLE??

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Reporting live, Robin Scherbatsky,
Metro News One.

12 INT. APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING (NIGHT 2)
 (TED, BARNEY, LILY, ROBIN)

12

ROBIN AND LILY SIT ON THE COUCH. ROBIN IS STUNNED
AT HER OWN BEHAVIOR.

ROBIN

I said nipple on the news.

*

LILY

*

You were just pissed off at your boss
Joel Adams!

*

*

ROBIN

I know, but that was so unprofessional!

I said nipple on the news!

LILY

At least it's better than booger.

(SHE LAUGHS) Booger.

BARNEY KNOCKS, THEN ENTERS.

BARNEY

Is it cold in here? I can kind of see

Robin's nickels. Just kidding, little

bit of a cheat, but I'll give it to

ya.

HE HANDS ROBIN A HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

And for your next challenge--

ROBIN

There's not gonna be a next challenge.

I don't care how much you offer me.

BARNEY STARTS CIRCLING ROBIN, IAGO-LIKE.

BARNEY

Oh, search your soul, Robin. You and

I both know this isn't about the money.

Sure, Metro News One pays you jack,

and hey, (HOLDS UP MONEY) a little

green salad on the side's good for

you, me, and Mr. McGee...

LILY

Seriously, who talks like that?

BARNEY

(IGNORING HER) But what baby really
likes is the thrill of pulling one
over on those bean-counters who
underappreciate you and still haven't
promoted you. And for two more hundy-
sticks... baby's gonna do it again.

*

ROBIN

Baby's gonna think about it.

*

ROBIN EXITS. TED ENTERS HOLDING A SCRAP OF PAPER.

TED

Found it! I found Natalie's number!

LILY

Nice shirt! Is it yesterday already?

*

TED

All right, yes, same shirt two days in
a row. I'll gladly take it off, if
you can look me in the eye and tell me
I don't look awesome in it.

*

LILY

You win this round, Mosby.

HE GRABS THE PHONE AND STARTS TO DIAL.

TED

I'm calling her! This is crazy, I
haven't talked to her in three years.
I wonder if she even remembers me.

*

*

*

13 INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT/INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT (NIGHT 2) 13
 (TED, NATALIE)

INTERCUT.

NATALIE WATERS HER PLANTS. HER PHONE RINGS.

NATALIE

(ANSWERING) Hello?

TED

Natalie, it's Ted Mosby--

NATALIE

Go to hell.

NATALIE HANGS UP. TED TURNS TO THE OTHER TWO. *

TED *

She remembers me. *

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

14 INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 2)
 (TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY)

14

TED IS PACING. LILY AND BARNEY ARE THERE.

LILY

Why would she hang up on you?

MARSHALL ENTERS.

TED

I don't know.

MARSHALL

Natalie hung up on you? Why would she
hang up on you?

TED

I don't know.

BARNEY

Did you sleep with her sister?

TED

No.

BARNEY

Sleep with her mom?

TED

No.

BARNEY

I'm losing interest in your story.

*

LILY

*

Well, you must have done something.

Why'd you guys break up?

MARSHALL

He wasn't ready for a commitment.

LILY

Uh huh.

BEAT.

TED

And her birthday might have been coming
up...

LILY

(GROWING ANGRY WITH TED) Uh huh...

TED

Okay, I didn't want to get a boyfriend-
level present for a girl I was about
to break up with. You know me, I'm
not cheap. Throw in dinner, flowers,
cab fare... that adds up.

LILY

(AGHAST) So you dumped her right before
her birthday?

TED

I didn't dump her right before her birthday.

MARSHALL

(A BEAT, THEN REALIZING) Uh-oh.

FLASHBACK TO:

15 INT. APARTMENT - DAY - THREE YEARS EARLIER (FB/DAY 4) 15
 (TED)

CHYRON: "THREE YEARS EARLIER..."

TED STANDS IN THE KITCHEN, DIALING THE PHONE. HE
LOOKS MISERABLE, LIKE HOW AN EXECUTIONER MUST FEEL
BEFORE THROWING THE SWITCH. HE HOLDS THE PHONE UP
TO HIS EAR.

TED

Natalie. Happy birthday! (THEN,
SIGHING) Listen...

16 INT. APARTMENT - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT 2) 16
 (TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY)

LILY IMMEDIATELY STARTS BEATING TED.

LILY

Never! Break! Up! With! A! Girl!
On! Her! Birthday!

TED

Lily, please! The shirt! I know, it
was a mistake.

LILY

Well did she cry her eyes out? *

TED

I don't know.

LILY

How do you not-- (GETTING IT) Oh you
didn't...

FLASHBACK TO:

17 SPLIT SCREEN: INT. APARTMENT/INT. NATALIE'S
 APARTMENT - THREE YEARS EARLIER (FB/DAY 4)
 (TED)

17

CHYRON: THREE YEARS EARLIER...

TED IS ON THE PHONE. AS HE SPEAKS A SHOT OF
NATALIE'S ANSWERING MACHINE SLOWLY PUSHES THE SHOT
OF TED UNTIL IT IS A SPLIT SCREEN BY THE END.

TED

Natalie. Happy Birthday. Listen...

You're awesome. You really are.

Awesome. I'm just, like, super busy
right now. So maybe we should just...

call it a day. But you're awesome.

18 INT. APARTMENT - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT 2)
 (TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY)

18

LILY STARTS BEATING TED ALL OVER AGAIN.

LILY

On her answering machine?! On her
birthday?! Who breaks up with someone
on an answering machine on their
birthday?! *

MARSHALL

Yeah, dude. E-mail.

LILY

Don't take his side, Marshall, that's
a terrible way to break up with someone. *

MARSHALL

In my client's defense, is there an un-
terrible way to break up with someone?
Personally, I'd rather hear the bad
news on an answering machine than face
the humiliation in person. That's the
least painful way to do it. (THEN, TO
LILY) Who are you calling?

LILY

(ON PHONE) Hey Marshall, it's Lily.
We won't be having sex for about a
month. Hope you're well, bye bye.

SHE HANGS UP.

MARSHALL

See? I'm sad, but not crushed. (THEN)
You're not serious, are you?

BARNEY

No, that was a big mistake, Ted. You
should've done it in person.

LILY

Thank you.

BARNEY

Desperate, please-don't-leave-me sex
is amazing.

LILY

I don't know who to hit any more.

TED

Okay, it was childish and stupid! I
just didn't want to see her cry.

*

*

LILY

Well, guess what? She cried. You
just didn't have the sack to face those
tears.

TED

That was me then. This is the new-old-
shirt wearing, sack-having Ted. I'm
gonna go make this right.

HE EXITS.

*

BARNEY

*

You know what else? I-can't-believe-
we-just-buried-Nana sex. Fantastic.

*

*

19 INT. OLD AGE HOME - DAY (DAY 3)
(ROBIN, WORKER, PRODUCER)

19

ROBIN STANDS IN FRONT OF TWO EMPTY ROCKING CHAIRS.
BEHIND HER A WORKER TAKES DOWN A SIGN THAT SAYS
"HAPPY BIRTHDAY."

ROBIN

An occasion that was supposed to be
joyous turned tragic when Ethel and
Sadie Margolis, New York's oldest twins,
suddenly passed away on this, the eve
of their 100th birthday. Me so horny.

*

(MORE)

ROBIN (CONT'D)

Me love you long time. Reporting live,

Robin Scherbatsky. Metro News One.

HER PRODUCER APPROACHES, LISTENING TO HER HEADSET.

PRODUCER

Joel Adams wants to see you in his
office.

ROBIN REACTS. "OH CRAP."

20 INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)
(TED, NATALIE)

20

NATALIE TAKES OFF HER EARRINGS.

SFX: DOORBELL

SHE GOES OVER TO THE DOOR AND LOOKS THROUGH THE
PEEPHOLE... WHERE SHE SEES A SOCK MONKEY HEAD STARING
BACK AT HER.

PUZZLED, SHE OPENS THE DOOR, AND THERE'S TED, STILL
IN HIS SHIRT, HOLDING A GIANT SOCK MONKEY.

TED

Hi.

SHE SLAMS THE DOOR IN HIS FACE.

21 INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 3) 21
 (;;TED, NATALIE)

TED IS IN THE HALLWAY, KNOCKING ON THE DOOR.

TED

Natalie, please, I just wanna say I'm
sorry. I only came down here because
you wouldn't take my call!

NATALIE (O.S.)

So why don't you leave me a message?!

*

TED

Okay. Fine. I'm just going to leave
this sock monkey here. Goodbye.

HE LAYS THE SOCK MONKEY DOWN AND WALKS OUT OF EYESHOT
OF THE PEEPHOLE, MAKING EXAGGERATED STEP SOUNDS.
HE HIDES, HIS BACK AGAINST THE WALL NEXT TO HER
DOOR. AFTER A BEAT, NATALIE OPENS THE DOOR.

TED (CONT'D)

Natalie--

NATALIE

AAAAAH!

TED

Okay look, I know you're mad at me,
but--

HE HANDS NATALIE THE GIANT SOCK MONKEY.

TED (CONT'D)

--Happy birthday... Three years ago.

NATALIE

Yeah? Up yours three years ago.

SHE STARTS TO TURN AWAY.

TED

I was such an idiot leaving that
message. I realize now how much that
sucked.

NATALIE

No you don't.

FLASHBACK TO:

22 INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT - THREE YEARS EARLIER
 (FB/DAY 4)
 (TED, NATALIE, WOMAN, ONE GUEST, EXTRAS)

22

WE START ON NATALIE'S ANSWERING MACHINE. WE WIDEN
TO REVEAL A WOMAN HUNCHED DOWN NEXT TO THE ANSWERING
MACHINE. SHE LOOKS CONCERNED.

TED (O.S.)

(ON MACHINE) ...I'm just, like, super
busy right now. So maybe we should
just... call it a day. But you're
awesome.

WE WIDEN OUT REVEALING THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH PEOPLE
AND BIRTHDAY DECORATIONS. IT'S A SURPRISE PARTY.

THE DOOR OPENS AND NATALIE ENTERS.

ONE GUEST

(MEEK) Surprise?

23 INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT 3) 23
 (TED, NATALIE)

TED AND NATALIE AS THEY WERE.

TED

(HORRIFIED) There was a surprise party
that night? How come nobody told me?
People think I can't keep a secret,
but I can! (OFF HER LOOK) Sorry, not
the issue. Look, Natalie, I was just
a stupid kid terrified of commitment.

NATALIE

And I suppose now you're suddenly
looking to get married and settle down? *

TED

Well, yeah. I'm a different guy than
I was back then. I mean, back then, I
wouldn't have worn this shirt, but the
other day I'm going through my closet--
Sorry, not the issue.

NATALIE

It is a nice shirt.

TED

Right? Right? Give me another chance. *

NATALIE *

(NOT A CHANCE) Yeah, okay. *

TED

Come on, just a cup of coffee.

TED HOLDS UP THE MONKEY LIKE A PUPPET.

TED (CONT'D)

(HI-PITCHED MONKEY VOICE) Give him a
chance, Natalie. The guy seems sincere.

NATALIE

You honestly think this is a good idea?

TED

(BEAT) I like bananas!

NATALIE CAN'T HELP BUT LAUGH.

24 INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)
(ROBIN, JOEL)

24

ROBIN'S BOSS, JOEL ADAMS, SITS AT HIS DESK READING.
ROBIN STANDS BEFORE HIM.

ROBIN

Listen, Joel... Adams, before you say
anything, I really like working here
at Metro News One.

JOEL

That's great. So my dog's got this
crusty stuff around his eyes.

ROBIN

What?

JOEL

You have five dogs, right? What do you
think that means?

ROBIN

(BEAT) He could have allergies. You
might want to get an air filter.

JOEL

Thanks a lot. I'll try that.

HE GOES BACK TO HIS WORK. ROBIN STARTS TO LEAVE,
BUT STOPS AND TURNS AROUND.

ROBIN

Was that all? .

JOEL

Yep.

ROBIN

So nothing about the twins story?

JOEL

(NOT LOOKING UP) Oh yeah, great job.

New York loves you. Bye bye.

ROBIN, DEFEATED, HEADS OUT OF THE OFFICE.

MUSIC CUE: BELLE AND SEBASTIAN, WHICH LEADS US TO...

25 INT. NATALIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)
(TED, NATALIE)

25 *

TWO EMPTY CARDBOARD COFFEE CUPS LIE ON THE FLOOR.
TED AND NATALIE SPOON IN THE BED, POST-COITAL.

NATALIE

Wow. Maybe it was the caffeine, but
you really brought your game up to a
whole new level.

TED

Thanks. I did just start subscribing
to Esquire. They have some helpful
columns. The following is from the
October issue.

THEY KISS AND ROLL OUT OF FRAME.

26 QUICK MONTAGE
(;NARRATOR (V.O.), NATALIE)

26

NATALIE'S HAND LIGHTING SOME TEA CANDLES. SOCK
MONKEYS ARRANGED ON THE BED. THE COVER ART OF "THE
BOY WITH THE ARAB STRAP" BY BELLE AND SEBASTIAN.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So Natalie and I started dating again.
And just like that, it all came back.
The tea candles, the sock monkeys, Belle
and Sebastian, all of it.

27 INT. BAR - NIGHT (NIGHT 4) 27
(NARRATOR (V.O.), TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, NATALIE,
EXTRAS)

*

TED SITS WITH HIS ARM AROUND NATALIE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It seemed like happily ever after wasn't
far off.

THEY ARE WITH MARSHALL, BARNEY, AND LILY, SHARING A LAUGH.

NATALIE

Well, I better run. I have my Krav
Maga class in half an hour.

TED

Krav Maga. How cool is it that she
does Krav Maga?

NATALIE

Thanks, honey. Bye guys.

NATALIE GIVES TED A KISS, AND CROSSES OFF.

MARSHALL

Dude, what's Krav Maga?

TED

I have no idea, some kind of yoga. *

BARNEY

You know, that Natalie, she's okay.

MARSHALL

She's like the best girl you've dated
in years. *

LILY

Hold on to that one, Ted.

TED

Yeah, I have to break up with her.

OFF THE GANG STUNNED WE...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

28 INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 4)
(TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, ROBIN, EXTRAS)

28

MARSHALL, BARNEY, AND LILY ARE STILL IN TOTAL SHOCK.

MARSHALL

I don't get it. Natalie's great.

TED

She is. She's terrific. But I have
to break up with her.

A BEAT. LILY STARTS BEATING TED.

LILY

Why! Couldn't! You! Leave! That!

Poor! Girl! A! Lone!

*

TED

I know, I hate this. These past three
weeks have been great! I should be in
love with her, but I'm just not feeling
that thing. It's... ineffable.

*

*

*

*

MARSHALL

Ineffable. Good word. So when are
you gonna break up with her?

*

BARNEY

Hey, I bet she's on the subway by now.
You can get her voicemail. (PANTOMIMING
PHONE CALL) Beep. "Dumped." Click.
Done.

*

TED

No. I have to do this face to face.

I just don't know what I'm gonna say.

*

MARSHALL

How about, "I'm not ready for a
commitment?"

LILY

*

I think Natalie deserves better than
some cliché.

*

*

MARSHALL

*

"Better?" There's no "better" in
breaking up. There's only "less
godawful." A cliché is a cliché for a
reason. It's comforting.

*

*

*

*

TED

*

It doesn't matter. I already told her I
am ready for a commitment, so... oh God.
There's no way out. I'm gonna have to
marry her.

*

*

*

MARSHALL

*

No, we're gonna get you out of this.

*

"It's not you, it's me..."

*

BARNEY

(THEN, THINKING) Six words. "You look
fat in those jeans."

*

LILY

Have you considered telling her the
truth?

TED, MARSHALL, AND BARNEY LAUGH.

BARNEY

Seriously, honey. Men are working
here.

LILY

Ted, what's the truth? Why do you
want to break up with her?

TED

The truth? (BEAT) She's not the one.

LILY

So tell her that!

MARSHALL

He can't tell her that, that's horrible!

LILY

Why? What's so horrible about it?

TED

Yeah, what is so horrible about it?

She's not the one. Why is that such a
heartbreaking thing to hear? I mean,
the chances of a person being another
person's "the one" are like six billion
to one.

LILY

*

You have a better chance of winning
the lottery.

TED

You wouldn't take it personally if you
lost the lottery.

*

*

MARSHALL

Okay, tell her the truth. But she's
gonna cry.

*

LILY

And he's gonna sit there and take it
like a man.

*

ROBIN ENTERS.

TED

I have to do the mature thing.

*

ROBIN

Wanna talk mature? I just wrapped up
a live report by slapping my own ass.

*

BARNEY

And it was great TV. You've clearly
slapped your own ass before.

*

*

HE SLAPS THE MONEY INTO HER PALM.

*

BARNEY (CONT'D)

New challenge. This one's big. But
so is the cash reward. All you have
to do is get up there on the news and
do... one of these.

*

*

*

*

BARNEY DOES THE ICKEY SHUFFLE.

ROBIN

What the hell is that?

BARNEY LOOKS AT TED AND MARSHALL.

MARSHALL AND TED

The Ickey Shuffle.

BARNEY

And as you're doing it, you say, "Elbert
'Ickey' Woods, the Bengals were fools
to cut you in '91. Your 1,525 yards
rushed and 27 touchdowns will not be
forgotten. So coach Dave Shula, screw
you and your crappy steakhouse." And
your prize? One thousand dollars.

ROBIN

My pleasure.

BARNEY

Your pleasure? Would you do it for
five hundred?

29 INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING (NIGHT 5)
 (NARRATOR (V.O.), TED, NATALIE, EXTRAS)

29

TED AND NATALIE ENTER AND ARE SEATED AT A TABLE.
TED WEARS HIS NEW SHIRT. THIS IS IT. D-DAY.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The next night, I took Natalie out to
dinner. To do the mature thing.

TED

Natalie, there's something I have to say.

NATALIE

Wait, I have to say something first.

Today at work I had not one, not two,
but three birthday cakes. So... is it
okay if we just skip the cake tonight?

TON OF BRICKS TIME FOR TED.

TED

Today's your birthday.

NATALIE

It's okay. I wasn't telling anyone
about it.

TED

It's your birthday. I... didn't get
you anything.

*

NATALIE

Aw Ted, you've already given me the
best present of all. I can trust again.

TED

You're welcome.

HE TURNS TO A WAITER BEHIND HIM AND HOLDS UP HIS
EMPTY GLASS.

*

*

TED (CONT'D)

Oh so much more wine.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

30 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT (NIGHT 5)
 (ROBIN, HENRY, EXTRAS)

30

ROBIN, BORED AND IN MID-REPORT, SITS ATOP A HANSOM
CAB WITH HENRY, AN ELDERLY HANSOM CAB DRIVER.

ROBIN

Henry, as New York's oldest Hansom Cab
driver, you've seen quite a lot. In
your sixty years on the job, what's
your most exciting memory?

HENRY

Well, back in '58 I had Mickey Mantle
in my cab, God rest him.

*

31 INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 5)
 (MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, EXTRAS)

31

BARNEY GETS UP ON THE CHAIR.

BARNEY

Everybody, if I can direct your eyes
to the TV, you're about to see something
amazing.

32 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 5)
 (ROBIN, HENRY, EXTRAS)

32

ROBIN SITS ON THE HANSOM CAB WITH HENRY. AS HE
TALKS SHE GROWS VISIBLY ANXIOUS.

HENRY

And then in '72 Mickey Mantle rode in
my cab for the fourth time!

33 INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 5)
 (MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, EXTRAS)

33

THE WHOLE BAR WAITS IN ANTICIPATION.

MARSHALL

Wow! Four times... That is amazing!

BARNEY

(TO LILY) Does she have room to do
the shuffle up there?

LILY

There's plenty of room. She can do it.

BARNEY

Come on, baby. Bring it home.

34 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 5)
 (NARRATOR (V.O.), ROBIN, HENRY, EXTRAS)

34

ROBIN IS VERY NERVOUS FOR HER BIG MOMENT.

HENRY

But the most exciting moment? That
would have to be this one right now.

ROBIN

(CAUGHT OFF-GUARD) What?

HENRY

No one has ever told my story before.

Thank you, Miss Robin Scherbatsky.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And right then Aunt Robin realized how
important her job truly was.

ROBIN

It's an honor to tell your story, Henry.

You know, Metro News One may not be
number one in viewership, but this
reporter takes pride in...

ROBIN STARTS TO DISMOUNT THE HANSOM CAB. HER FOOT
GETS CAUGHT ON SOMETHING AND SHE AWKWARDLY CAREENS
OUT OF FRAME WITH A THUD! WE HOLD ON THE EMPTY
FRAME AND FROM OFF SCREEN WE HEAR...

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

AGGHH!! Ow! Ow! Ow! Oh, God, I'm
covered in horse crap! It's all over
me! My knee! Ow! Ow! Oh my God,
it's in my hair!

THE CAMERA MOVES UP AND DOWN AS THE CAMERAMAN LAUGHS.

35 INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS (NIGHT 5)
 (MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, EXTRAS)

35

THE BAR IS SHOCKED AND AMAZED.

MARSHALL

You planned that?

BARNEY

No, Marshall. That was beyond my
wildest dreams.

36 OMITTED

36

37 OMITTED

37

38 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (NIGHT 5)
 (;NARRATOR (V.O.), TED, NATALIE, EXTRAS)

38

TED AND NATALIE ARE HAVING DINNER.

NATALIE

If you ever come down to Louisiana, my
mom throws these amazing shrimp boils.
She's dying to meet you, by the way.

*
*
*

TED

Okay, Natalie, there's something I
have to say, and there's no good way
to say it. I want to break up. I
don't think you're the one for me. I
don't want to waste your time because
I really like you. I want to do right
by you and the best way to do that is
just to be honest. I'm sorry.

A LONG BEAT AS SHE COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS.

TED (CONT'D)

Just let it out. They're only tears...

INSTEAD, NATALIE PICKS UP A FISTFUL OF SPAGHETTI
AND HURLS IT AT TED, HITTING HIS BELOVED SHIRT.

NATALIE

(ANGRY) I'm not the one for you?

TED

I'm sorry, I just thought the mature
thing to--

NATALIE

It's my birthday!

TED

I know! I didn't realize that--

NATALIE

It's my birthday and you're telling
me, that I'm not the one for you?

TED

It's really not such a big deal when
you think about it! I mean, the odds...
It's just like... You lost the lottery.

NATALIE

Oh, so being with you is like winning
the lottery?!

TED

No no no! It's not that!

NATALIE

So what's the problem?

*

TED

I can't explain it.

*

NATALIE

*

Try!

*

TED

It's... ineffable.

*

NATALIE

I'm not effable??

*

TED

No, no, ineffable. Ineffable means
that it can't be explained.

NATALIE

Oh! So I'm stupid?!

TED

(PANICKED) Oh God. What's going on?

NATALIE

What's going on is, you broke my heart,
over my answering machine, on my
birthday, waited three years for me to
get over you, then begged me to go out
with you again, only to dump me three
weeks later, again on my birthday!!

THE WHOLE RESTAURANT GLARES AT TED.

TED

No, it's not like that. I'm just...

I... Just... It's... I--

NATALIE

What?

TED

(GIVING UP) I'm just like, super busy
right now...

*

NATALIE'S EYES GO WIDE WITH SUPER ANGER.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Remember when Natalie said--

39 INSERT FOOTAGE FROM SCENE 27

39

WE RE-PLAY THE MOMENT OF NATALIE LEAVING THE GANG
AT THE BAR.

NATALIE

I have my Krav Maga class.

40 INT. RESTAURANT - BACK TO PRESENT (NIGHT 5)
(NARRATOR (V.O.), TED, NATALIE, EXTRAS)

40

FREEZE FRAME: TED AND NATALIE AS WE LAST LEFT THEM.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Krav Maga is not a kind of yoga. It's
a form of guerrilla street-fighting
developed by the Israeli army.

UNFREEZE. NATALIE LEAPS ACROSS THE TABLE, KICKING
TED IN THE CHEST. THEY FALL OUT OF FRAME.

41 INT. BAR - NIGHT (NIGHT 5) 41
 (NARRATOR (V.O.), TED, MARSHALL, BARNEY, LILY, ROBIN,
 WAITRESS, TRUCKER-HAT GUY #1, TRUCKER-HAT GUY #2,
 EXTRAS)

ROBIN SULKS AT THE TABLE WITH MARSHALL, LILY AND
BARNEY. A WAITRESS BRINGS ROBIN A DRINK.

WAITRESS

This is compliments of those two
gentlemen at the bar.

TWO TRUCKER-HAT GUYS STAND AT THE BAR, WAVING.

TRUCKER-HAT GUY #1

"My knee!"

TRUCKER-HAT GUY #2

"It's in my hair!"

THEY LAUGH. ROBIN BURIES HER HEAD ON THE TABLE.

BARNEY

But isn't it nice to know people are
watching?

TED ENTERS, ONE OF THE SLEEVES OF HIS SHIRT HALF
RIPPED OFF. HE SULKS DOWN NEXT TO ROBIN.

MARSHALL

Oh my God! Are you alright?

LILY

What happened to you?

TED

I told the truth. And it turns out
the truth has a mean roundhouse kick.

*
*
*
*
*
*

MARSHALL

I told you this would happen. "It's
not you, it's me" would've saved you
one awesome shirt.

LILY

Forget the shirt! You did the right
thing. I'm proud of you.

TED

I'm bleeding internally.

BARNEY

Ted, you know what always picks me up
when I'm down? Other people's pain.
You missed something so amazing--

ROBIN

Please, can I just have one person in
this whole bar who didn't see it?

BARNEY

Fine.

LILY PUTS HER ARM AROUND TED.

LILY

Are you okay?

TED

I really thought I was doing it the
good way this time. I guess there
isn't a good way. Sometimes, no matter
how hard you try to do the right thing,
you just end up flat on your back,
flailing around in a big pile of horse
crap.

*

*

ROBIN, SHOCKED TED KNOWS ABOUT IT, SMACKS HIM.

ROBIN

You saw it?!

TED

My phone gets the internet now.

WE PULL OUT AS THE GROUP DRINKS AND LAUGHS.

MUSIC CUE: BELLE AND SEBASTIAN.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And that's how it ended with Natalie.
No happily ever after. Just a whole
lot of hurt.

DISSOLVE TO:

42 SERIES OF SHOTS:
(NARRATOR (V.O.), NATALIE)

42

THE TEA CANDLES ON HER DRESSER DISAPPEARING.

THE SOCK MONKEYS ON HER BED DISAPPEARING.

NATALIE'S DIMPLE GOING BLURRY AND FADING AWAY.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And just like that, all those wonderful
memories were replaced... by this one.

*

*

43 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (NIGHT 5)
 (NARRATOR (V.O.), NATALIE)

43

TED'S POV: BEING PUMMELED IN SLOW MOTION BY NATALIE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But you know, bad as that night was,
within a year Natalie was married. And
now she has three beautiful children.
So that's the upside of hurt. Sometimes
it happens for a reason.

44 INT. STUDY - YEAR 2035 - DAY
 (NARRATOR (V.O.), SON, DAUGHTER)

44

THE DAUGHTER AND SON TAKE THIS IN.

SON

Wow. So you got beat up by a girl?

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Is that all you're taking away from
this story?

SON

You got beat up by a girl.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She knew Krav Maga!

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT FOUR