



"24 Hour Propane People"

Episode #TBA

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. JUGSTORE COWBOYS - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Stripper music pulses dimly from this modest, suburban strip club.

INT. JUGSTORE COWBOYS - NIGHT

Buck is sitting close to the action, happily watching a stripper ply her craft (we see only her legs), drumming his hands on the stage.

BUCK

You'll have to keep the beat without
me, Charisse. I'm gonna put some food
in my tum-tum.

CHARISSE (O.S.)

Okay, Buck.

Buck walks to the skimpy buffet table, where there are a few plates and some picked-over serving trays.

BUCK

Dang, the hyenas got here first.

He spots a stray eggroll and grabs it with tongs, just as another pair of tongs reach for it. They're held by a TRUCKER-TYPE GUY.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Drop those tongs if you want to keep
that arm.

The two tongs compete briefly for the better grip with the trucker victorious. He holds the eggroll aloft.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Dang it, that's not right! Keith!

KEITH, Jugstore Cowboys proprietor (50, wiry, thinning gray hair pulled into a stubby pony tail) hustles over.

KEITH

Pipe down, Buck. You're ruining everyone's good time.

BUCK

You call this a smorgasbord, Keith?
It's pans and hot water!

KEITH

Maybe if you didn't make five trips, there'd be some food left for the other patrons.

BUCK

Hold on -- Suddenly there's a limit for old Buck?

KEITH

We need to get something straight.
The free buffet is a courtesy, not a right.

BUCK

Don't get attitudey with me, Keith!
We got history. I was here back when all you had was an old tetherball pole and Suzette.

He references Suzette, an aging stripper demoted to bartender, listlessly cleaning a glass. On the wall next to her, an old one-dollar bill is taped.

BUCK (CONT'D)

(POINTS) I tipped the first dollar this bar ever saw!

KEITH

History doesn't pay my tassle bill.

BUCK

(SPUTTERS) Why, you -- ungrateful,
snotty-faced...!

KEITH

Don't say anything you'll regret.

BUCK

Pock-marked... (GRASPING) silly...

KEITH

Buck, you're no longer welcome in this
establishment!

BUCK

(ENRAGED SPUTTERING)

Buck rips his single off the wall and storms out.

INT. HILL HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Hank and Peggy are reading in bed, each with an itty-bitty
book light. The phone RINGS. Hank answers.

HANK

(ON PHONE) Hill residence.... Mr.
Strickland?... That's pretty good,
sir... Um, no, Keith would have had
no answer to that one.

Hank covers the phone with his hand.

HANK (CONT'D)

(TO PEGGY) Buck had another fight with Keith and he's telling me things he wished he'd said to him.

PEGGY

Why does Buck need to spend so much time at that strip bar? For goodness sake, he's been married to a stripper for thirty years.

HANK

(ON PHONE) ...Uh, I don't know. Let me ask Peggy. (TO PEGGY) What would you call a guy who's balding but not yet bald?

PEGGY

(THINKS) Half an egghead!

Hank considers this and shakes his head.

HANK

(ON PHONE) Sorry, we're both stumped.

Peggy gives Hank a dirty look and flicks off her booklight.

INT. STRICKLAND PROPANE - DAY

Hank is at his desk. Buck crosses behind him, seemingly enraptured by something.

BUCK

Hank, you gotta see something.

Buck points to a fly on the filing cabinet.

BUCK (CONT'D)

This fly started off at Donna's desk,
then he buzzed off to the copier room,
now he's out here. He is a busy
little fella, Hank.

HANK

Uh, do you want me to kill it?

BUCK

Hell no! If you killed my fly, what
would I do the rest of the day?

(LOOKS AT WATCH) Only 10:35. Right
about now, "Firefighter" Trixie's
taking off her hip boots. Funny,
thinking that whole world's going on
without me.

He slumps into a chair.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Hank, you ever feel a tremendous
emptiness inside of you?

HANK

I'd have to think.

BUCK

It's like a void. I got a hole in my
heart where strippers used to be! How
do I go on?

HANK

Sir, maybe getting kicked out of
Jugstore Cowboys is a blessing in
disguise.

BUCK

No, it's just bad news wearing regular
clothes.

HANK

Now that your schedule is freed-up,
you could spend more time in the
office. When's the last time you put
in a good, hard eight-hour work day?
Fill that void with work!

Buck shrugs, unenthused.

BUCK

Hell, the fly will probably be dead by
tomorrow anyway.

HANK

Exactly! How are you fixed on office
supplies? Nevermind, I'll give you
five of everything.

INT. ARLEN BYSTANDER OFFICE - DAY

Peggy is working. Bob Jenkins is perched on her desk.

BOB JENKINS

...And then the spa's manicurist went
to work on my hands.

(MORE)

BOB JENKINS (CONT'D)

It's like she was the sheriff and my
cuticles were outlaws. She really
cleaned up the town.

PEGGY

Bob, I'm on deadline. What's another
word for "potato?" Not "tuber" --
I've already used that twice.

Peggy starts flipping through a dictionary.

BOB JENKINS

(OBLIVIOUS) Seaweed wrap, oxygen
facial. (RE: PEGGY'S DICTIONARY)
Look up the word "pampered." You'll
find a picture of me.

PEGGY

The fact that you spend your money on
trivial indulgences and I do not
speaks volumes about you -- and me.

BOB JENKINS

Didn't cost me a dime.

PEGGY

(SUDDENLY) How's that?

BOB JENKINS

I just flashed my Arlen Bystander
press pass and "Open Sesame."

Peggy takes a card out of her pocket.

PEGGY

Press pass? This thing we swipe to
get into the parking garage?

BOB JENKINS

With a little chutzpah, it's your
golden ticket to the best of Arlen.

Bob glides off. Peggy studies her press pass.

PEGGY

(REVERENT) Ho-yeah.

INT. STRICKLAND PROPANE - BREAKROOM - MORNING

The staff, including Buck, sits around a lunchtable.

HANK

Before we get started I'd like to
welcome Mr. Strickland to our morning
roundtable of new and ongoing
projects.

Buck slugs some coffee back. Hank checks his agenda.

HANK (CONT'D)

OK... Last time Enrique proposed
moving the barbecue mitts from
accessories over to apparel. Let's
kick it around.

ENRIQUE

I mean, you wear 'em, right?

Buck, fidgety, rolls his head around.

DONNA

But not as a fashion statement!

HANK

Both good points.

ENRIQUE

I think what Donna doesn't like is
that it's my idea!

DONNA

Actually--

BUCK

(GROANS WITH TEDIUM)

HANK

Hang on, Donna. Mr. Strickland is
trying to get a word in edgewise.

BUCK

Yeah. Hank, I've been in better
comas. Now, if you'll excuse me, I
have pressing business elsewhere.

Buck exits abruptly.

JOE JACK

I think he's headed for the can.

HANK

No, he's going straight to Jugstore
Cowboys. Dang it, he didn't even give
work a chance!

Hank stands.

HANK (CONT'D)

I've got to stop him. Keep going.
There's no time for nominations so,
Donna, you're interim chair.

ENRIQUE

Oh, no.

EXT. JUGSTORE COWBOYS - MOMENTS LATER

As Buck starts to enter, Hank grabs his shoulders.

HANK

Mr. Strickland, if you go in there
you'll just be giving in to Keith.

BUCK

It's beyond my control. I'm
physically addicted to good times!

Buck starts to open the door again. Hank, in desperation,
points out Frozen Cow Creamery next door.

HANK

Instead of a nudie bar, let's "cool
off" with some ice cream.

BUCK

Frozen Cow Creamery?

HANK

It's a huge chain. So you know
they've got to be good.

Buck looks at Jugstore Cowboys and sighs.

BUCK

Okay, one rum ripple...

INT. FROZEN COW - DAY

A noisy, ultra-bright assault on the senses. Banks of TVs show images of people of all ethnicities wolfing down ice cream. Three clerks -- young, earnest, hip -- are singing, as they scoop, to the tune of "London Bridge."

CLERKS

We sell ice cream all day long. All
day long, all day long. We sell ice
cream all day long -- here at Frozen
Cow.

HANK

Hmm.

A white clerk with dreadlocks, TROY, welcomes Hank.

TROY

Hi! Welcome to Frozen Cow! What's
your name?

HANK

Um, Hank Hill. Cup of strawberry,
please.

TROY

We don't have strawberry. We do have
the Strawberry-That-Broke-The-Camel's-
Back.

Troy smiles and waits for a reaction.

HANK

Okay. That sounds pretty close.

TROY

What size do you want, Hank? Pay
Dirt, Gold Mine, or Mother Lode?

HANK

What's the smallest?

TROY

Junior Pay Dirt. And what mix-ins you
want with that? You get four.

HANK

Mix-ins? I just want the ice cream.

TROY

Sure, Hank, but if you don't want mix-
ins, you have to wear this "I Like
Nude Ice Cream" button.

HANK

All right. I'll have mix-ins.

Hank rubs his eyes, stressed.

TROY

While you're looking them over, I'll
get you signed up for our birthday
club. Hank, what's your Social?

CLERKS

(TUNE OF "BINGO") *There was a man who
liked mix-ins and put them in his ice
cream. M. I. X. I. N. M--*

HANK

Mr. Strickland, maybe we want to get
away from all this hooplah.

Hank turns and sees Buck at the mix-in station, happy as a child. He's watching a clerk, armed with silver paddles, mix ice-cream and M&Ms with "Cocktail"-like flourishes.

BUCK

Go man, go! Hank, you've got to see
this son of a gun! Oh -- how's he
gonna mix-in all them Oreos?

The clerk tosses the ice cream and catches it.

BUCK (CONT'D)

That's how! Now do the gummy worms!

Buck pulls up a chair shaped like a big spoon and sits right in front.

HANK

You know we've got yogurt in the
fridge at work... Sir?

Ignoring Hank, Buck hums along happily.

EXT. COMMON ALLEY - DAY

Dale, Bill, and Boomhauer are in the alley, drinking beer.

BILL

The cashier was pretty, so I said, "Do
you want to hear a food riddle?
What's the one cracker you'll never
find in the cracker section?"

No one responds.

BILL (CONT'D)

That's pretty much what she said.

(SOTTO) Graham cracker.

Hank approaches.

HANK

Sorry I'm late, guys. I got hung up with Buck at that horrible new ice cream place.

DALE

You mean Frozen Cow Creamery? Their commercials say they make ice cream fun. ("FARMER IN THE DELL") *O we make ice cream fun! O we make ice cream fun!*

HANK

Dang it, Dale. Ice cream was already fun. What's with these perfectly good businesses trying to cram extra "fun" into places it doesn't belong?

BOOMHAUER

Yeah, man, talkin' 'bout that Southwest Air, 30,000 feet, pilot's tellin' knock-knock jokes. Dang ol' fly the plane, man!

BILL

(CHECKS WATCH) This is interesting
but I have to get dressed. I'm going
to a party at Arlen Ford.

HANK

That's what I'm talking about, Bill.
Those aren't real parties, those are
sales!

BILL

Sounds like someone didn't get
invited. Tomorrow's the Toyota-thon.
Maybe I can sneak you in!

INT. STRICKLAND PROPANE - DAY

Hank enters from the back room.

JOE JACK

Buck just called for you, Honey. He's
down at Frozen Cow.

HANK

Again? That's every day this week!
He's just trading one vice for
another.

JOE JACK

All I know is, he wants you to bring
him some pants.

INT. FROZEN COW - DAY

Hank enters holding a shopping bag. The clerks are now
singing to the tune of "I'm A Little Teapot."

CLERKS

*I'm a scoop of ice cream, round and
sweet. Who's in the mood for a frozen
treat?*

BUCK

Over here, Old Top.

Buck, looking a bit heavier, waves from a tiny table.

HANK

Here are your new pants, sir. I got
the "extremely relaxed" fit.

BUCK

Thanks, Hank. All my trousers seem to
be wearing out at once. (CALLS OUT)
Jo-Jo, same again for me and a Choc-
Therapy for my guest.

JO-JO (O.S.)

Right away, Buck.

Buck starts changing his pants under the table.

HANK

(UNCOMFORTABLE) I brought some
paperwork for you to look over if you
have the time.

BUCK

Here's the deal. I can win a gift
certificate by naming the new cherry
ice cream. How do you like "Cherried
Alive?" Too creepy?

HANK

Sir, look at yourself. Sitting here
all day, changing pants in public.
There's a spoon stuck to your elbow --
do you even know that?

Buck looks down, sheepish.

HANK (CONT'D)

Dang it, ice cream doesn't run through
your veins -- propane does!

BUCK

I tried to buckle down, Hank. But
work just wasn't fun.

HANK

It's not supposed to be. Fun is over
in a flash but the satisfaction you
get from a job well done lasts. I'm
still buzzing from last week's scratch-
and-dent sale.

BUCK

Well, these spoon chairs aren't doing
my sciatica any favors. Maybe there
is a way to get what I need at the
office.

HANK

I do, and you can too. Let's go!

Buck determinedly snaps his spoon in half.

INT. STRICKLAND PROPANE - BREAKROOM - MORNING

Hank conducts another morning meeting. Buck is present.

HANK

Okay. Our first order of business is a special hello to Mr. Strickland who is with us once more.

BUCK

I'll take it from here. How do we make Strickland Propane fun? (POINTS)
Do you know? You? You?

HANK

Sir, this sounds like new business. Ordinarily, we start with old business.

Buck flops a heavy manual on the table.

BUCK

This is the Frozen Cow operations manual, which I stole from that white kid with dreadlocks. It's all here -- songs, contests, little dances. We are gonna use this book to turn Strickland into the happiest propane retailer on earth.

Buck starts handing out sheet music.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Here's the first number we're gonna
learn. Joe Jack, lemme hear your big
pipes.

JOE JACK

(SINGING TENTATIVELY) *I've been
working at the propanerie...*

The others gradually join in.

EVERYBODY

...all the live-long day...

HANK

Sir, I really don't think that--

BUCK

Shut up and take the tenor, Hank.

Hank sees that resistance is futile.

HANK

*Can't you hear the nozzle whistling?
Rise up and sell lots of propane!*

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. STRICKLAND - DAY

The place is starting to look like Frozen Cow. The staff is wearing loud Hawaiian shirts. Donna, Enrique, and Hector are awkwardly practicing a kick line. Joe Jack, panting, ties off a balloon and tries to twist it into a dog shape. Hank is with a customer.

HANK

Sorry. We don't sell 10, 20, and 30
gallon tanks anymore. Our new sizes
are "Like it," "Love it," and "Don't
Come Any Closer -- I'm Insane for
Propane!"

CUSTOMER

I'll take the big one, I guess.

Hank **sighs** and cranks a siren mounted on the counter.

HANK

Someone's insane! Look out --
someone's insane!

Buck approaches.

BUCK

(TO CUSTOMER) I got my eye on you,
nutcase!

The confused customer takes the tank and walks off.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Ain't this great, Old Top? Good
times, laughs, propane. How come no
one's ever thought of this before?

HANK

There are lots of things no one's ever
thought of, sir.

BUCK

Hey, did you know Frozen Cow pumps
their ice cream full of air? They can
sell twice as much for half the cost.
We need to do the same thing.

HANK

But don't we want to sell a quality
propane product?

BUCK

We are not selling propane. We are
selling a fun environment to buy
propane in! Speaking of which--

Buck picks up two spray misters and squirts them.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Which flavor propane you like better --
coconut or bubblegum?

HANK

Bubblegum scented propane? Kids will
turn it on just to smell it!

BUCK

Now you're getting it! Hank, I'm
counting on you being my pointman.
Make sure all the castmembers
implement my funovations.

HANK

Castmembers?

BUCK

Everyone who works here is part of the
show!

A giant bang! Hank sees Joe Jack holding the shreds of the
balloon. Hank sniffs the air.

HANK

Joe Jack, were you filling that thing
with propane?

JOE JACK

I ran out of breath, honey.

BUCK

(SNIFFING) Is that the natural scent?

That's pretty nice, too.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Peggy and Bobby are in line.

BOBBY

Is this ethical, Mom? Using your
press pass to get into a movie you're
not even going to review?

PEGGY

Bobby, by not writing anything, I am
making less work for my editor and
allowing him to spend more time with
his family.

They're at the ticket window. Peggy flashes her pass.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

One journalist and one child.

CASHIER

(BORED) Okay. Four dollars for the
kid.

PEGGY

(ELATED) Pay the lady, Bobby! I'm
going to "investigate" some Sno-Caps.

EXT. COMMON ALLEY - DAY

The guys look on as Hank tries to juggle cans of beer, with
Bobby "coaching" him.

BOBBY

(VERY FAST) Throw catch throw catch
throw catch throw catch--!

HANK

Bwagghhh!

All the cans drop and start spraying.

BOBBY

(PEDANTIC) Throw. Catch. Show him
again, Mr. Boomhauer.

Boomhauer takes three fresh cans out of the cooler and juggles
them expertly.

BILL

Hank, why do you want to learn to
juggle so bad?

HANK

Mr. Strickland ordered us all to develop a "fun skill" to entertain customers. And Donna got dibs on face painting. I tell you, I don't like what's going on down there.

BILL

Very unprofessional. Do you have to buy something to get your face painted?

DALE

I can teach you the most essential fun skill of all, Hank. Throwing your voice.

Dale looks around with mock bafflement.

DALE (CONT'D)

Who said that? "I did." Are you behind that tree over there? "No, I'm in the garbage can."

Everyone simply stares at Dale.

DALE (CONT'D)

Whoever you are, don't bother me while I sip my beer.

Dale drinks from his beer.

DALE (CONT'D)

Mmmmpmm harro dere, mmmppph!

Dale goes into a coughing fit.

DALE (CONT'D)

Okay. That last time was me.

INT. STRICKLAND PROPANE - DAY

Hank, looking miserable, rings up a CUSTOMER.

HANK

Thank you and come again.

The customer points at a sign.

CUSTOMER

Your sign says if you don't say
"Propane's not just a gas -- it's a
gas!" my order is free.

HANK

(EXASPERATED) You really need to hear
that? Fine. Propane's not just a gas-

CUSTOMER

Too late now!

Hank **sighs**, takes out his wallet, and gives the customer some cash. As the guy walks off triumphantly, Enrique, wearing a Groucho nose and glasses, approaches.

ENRIQUE

Hank! I can't breathe in this thing!

HANK

Don't come crying to me, Enrique. If
you'd learned a fun skill, someone
else would be would wearing the nose
and glasses.

Nearby, Joe Jack nervously sticks a long barbecue fork down his throat. He starts gagging and yanks it out. A couple of face-painted kids turn away disappointed.

JOE JACK

I can't really swallow this thing,
Honey. That was just talk.

HANK

Hang in there, guys. All this
nonsense can't be good for business
and sooner or later, Mr. Strickland
has to realize it.

Hank looks at a silly dog wall clock.

HANK (CONT'D)

As for now, the dog's little paw is
pointing at the bone -- that means
it's quitting time.

Enrique rips off the Groucho nose and breathes deeply.
Everyone makes a bee line for the door, passing Buck, who is
wheeling in a contraption.

BUCK

Good news, amigos! Finally put my
hands on a bubble machine. Whoa!
Where's everybody goin'?

HANK

Home, sir. And Joe Jack may be going
to the urgent care.

JOE JACK

I poked my esophagus, honey.

BUCK

(DISTRAUGHT) But the fun stops when everybody clears out. We need to keep the fun going!

HANK

We do have tomorrow, sir.

BUCK

Tomorrow ain't today! I know! Who wants to play putt-putt golf?

Everyone looks at Buck blankly.

HANK

Now?

BUCK

Teams don't stop being teams at five, Hank. We've still got lots of funization issues to brainstorm on. No excuses now.

HANK

So the putt-putt golf is mandatory?

BUCK

Mmm. It's fundatory. Let's hit the green, people!

Buck exits. The staff looks at Hank.

HANK

It's only 17 holes. Some high school kids stole the windmill.

INT. ART MUSEUM - EVENING

A fancy, black-tie gala. Peggy now has her press pass hanging ostentatiously from a chain around her neck. She sips from a glass of wine and studies a painting.

PEGGY

Mmm. Impressive technique.

She casually drags her hand across the painting. A nearby GUARD is alarmed.

GUARD

Hey!

Peggy blithely flashes her pass.

PEGGY

Calm down.

Peggy glances around and sees a sign for the ladies room.

INT. ART MUSEUM - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A long line of women are queued up. Peggy sizes up the situation and heads straight for the front.

PEGGY

Press. Let the reporter through.

Thank you.

She gets to the front. The WOMAN at the head of the line taps her on the shoulder.

WOMAN

What do you think you're doing?

PEGGY

I am a journalist doing a think piece
on restroom line conditions. How long
have you been waiting?

WOMAN

Twenty minutes.

PEGGY

Twenty! That's the kind of detail our readers love. (PULLS OUT A PAD) How do you spell your name?

WOMAN

(FLATTERED) M-A--

PEGGY

Uh-huh. To do this story properly, I really need to sit down.

Peggy goes into the restroom.

EXT. MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

It's raining. The staff is huddled miserably together at the last hole where Enrique is putting.

DONNA

I'm really cold, Hank.

HANK

If Enrique ever hits it through the got-danged clown's mouth, we can go home.

Enrique, poised over his ball, waddles his butt. Hank helps him time the giant clown mouth opening and closing.

HANK (CONT'D)

Now, Enrique!

Enrique shanks the putt. Everyone groans.

BUCK

(DELIGHTED) That clown's got your number, Trevino! Hank, what do you think about replacing our front door with a giant open and shut clown head?

HANK

I'll get some prices. Say, that lightning over McMaynerbury is sure pretty, isn't it?

As Buck looks away, Hank kicks the ball into the cup.

HANK (CONT'D)

Nice read, Enrique. Drive safely, everyone.

Everyone prepares to race to their cars.

BUCK

Wait, wait. We gotta add up the scores. (STUDIES SCORECARD) Let's see... penalty stroke... carry the one... Looks like Trevino's the loser. That means he pays for pizza. Just kidding -- I'm gonna pay!

The group slumps.

DONNA

(NEAR TEARS) Pizza?

INT. HILL HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Hank, exhausted, is buttoning up his pajamas.

HANK

Unfortunately, the pizza place had a karaoke machine. You never really notice that "American Pie" is seven minutes long until your boss makes you sing it.

PEGGY

How was their pizza? Big choice of toppings? Dessert bar? Is there a story for me there?

Hank crawls into bed.

HANK

(SIGHS) It's gonna be a big day of fun tomorrow. Buck said there's been way too little clowning around.

PEGGY

Maybe Buck has gone a little overboard, but I have always said that people enjoy fun. That is why when I substitute teach, I draw smiley faces on A's, frowny faces on F's, and neutral faces on C's.

Hank looks at her blankly.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Yes. Just like that.

INT. STRICKLAND PROPANE - DAY

The staff is lethargic. Enrique and Donna are listlessly singing to the tune of "Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater."

ENRIQUE/DONNA

*Peter Peter propane heater, cheap as
oil and it's neater, put it in a...*

They both trail off.

DONNA

Cocktail shell?

ENRIQUE

Sorry, Hank. I can only remember the
right words!

HANK

(WEARY) Dang it, guys. You were
supposed to have that song down cold
by today. From the top!

Buck enters with some computer printouts.

BUCK

Attention, lady and merrymen. I've
just been going over our fun-ancials.
And the news ain't good...

Hank smiles hopefully and elbows Enrique.

HANK

(SOTTO) Here it comes. He's gonna
pull the plug on this whole thing.

BUCK

It's great! In the first week of business, the new, fun Strickland made three hundred dollars more than the old, boring Strickland.

HANK

Business is up?

BUCK

And we're just starting! Once we get the kinks out, like replacing that cheap piece of crap bubble machine with something that really spits them out -- we won't be having fun, we'll be having super boffo fun.

HANK

Well, you've definitely given us something to shoot for on Monday. Everyone, go home and get plenty of sleep.

BUCK

Hank's right, except for the "home" part and the "sleep" part. Everybody check your desk drawers.

Hank and others go to their desks. Inside each drawer is a new pair of Strickland pajamas.

HANK

Pajamas!

BUCK

That's right, friends. We're gonna
have the best party of all - a pajama
party! Ain't nobody going home!

Hank and the rest have frozen smiles on their faces.

HANK

(SOTTO) Joe Jack. The door!

Joe Jack, still smiling, reaches behind himself and tries to
open the front door. He can't.

JOE JACK

It's locked, honey.

Buck brandishes a box set of videos.

BUCK

Let's get cracking! We got lots of
Freddy Kruger movies to get through.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. STRICKLAND - BREAKROOM - NIGHT

On a TV a teenage girl is SCREAMING, but no one is watching. Hank and the others, wearing pajamas, are sitting around the table, fighting to stay awake. Buck takes a plate from the microwave and slaps it down.

BUCK

I ran out of graham crackers, so some
of these smores are on rye bread.

Whose turn is it?

HANK

Joe Jack's. The word is
"pomegranate."

Joe Jack considers several hand-written scraps of paper.

JOE JACK

The definitions are: "What a
cheerleader cheers with"... "A fruit
with juicy seeds"... or "Sack of dirt
you hit yourself on the head with."

That one, I guess.

BUCK

Damn, Joe Jack, you stink at
Dictionary. A pomegranate's a fruit,
boy. A delicious fruit. That's your
new nickname -- Pomegranate.

Joe Jack hangs his head. Buck turns to Donna.

BUCK (CONT'D)

Pick a word, Betty Boop.

DONNA

Buck, can I call my husband? It's
12:30. I'm sure he's worried.

BUCK

Keep your mind on the game! You and
Pomegranate are getting your fannies
kicked.

DONNA

But it's his birthday, and we--

BUCK

Ah-ah! Hector, you're not the wet
blanket anymore. She is.

Hector, sitting in the corner with a wet blanket around his
shoulders, stands up. He puts the sopping thing around
Donna's shoulders as she recoils.

ENRIQUE

(SOTTO) Hank, there are still things I
need to teach my children. How long
will this last?

HANK

(SOTTO) I don't know, Enrique. We're
in uncharted territory here.

BUCK

You two better be whispering about
what "glockenspiel" means.

INT. STRICKLAND - BREAKROOM - LATER

The clock reads 4:30. The game is now RISK. Everyone is sagging. Buck pours some plastic army tokens on the board.

BUCK

Look alive, Trevino. Kamchatka is
calling Madagascar out!

Enrique can barely lift his dice. He rolls them and collapses onto the board, unconscious.

HANK

Maybe that should be our cue to call
it a night, sir.

BUCK

All right. Any sissy who needs a nap
can stretch out on one of the loading
platforms.

HANK

Sir, I think we'd all prefer to sleep
at home, surrounded by family, not
fumes.

BUCK

What's the matter with you people?
(MOCKING) Home and family, home and
family. It's like you got no lives!
Now I try to make working in a crummy
propanerie fun and all I expect is a
little love. Well, plainly I need to
soak a bunch more wet blankets!

Buck angrily gathers up some blankets and exits to the bathroom. Joe Jack clenches his fist.

JOE JACK

I won't wear the blanket again, honey.

I swear I won't!

HANK

I hate it, too, but you can't argue
with Mr. Strickland. Not when
business is up.

Hank picks up Buck's computer printout.

HANK (CONT'D)

40 bucks on Monday. 80 on Tuesday.
60 Wednesday. Funny, it's always
exact increments of 20 dollars....
Donna, does Buck know the combination
to the petty cash box?

DONNA

1-1-1-1? Sure. Every time Buck'd go
to Jugstore Cowboys, he'd help himself
to some twenties.

HANK

That's why business is "up." It's not
us singing songs with wrong words,
it's just money Buck isn't blowing at
a strip bar. There's no reason to do
any of this junk!

JOE JACK

When he comes back, we throw a blanket
over his head and do what feels right.

HANK

No, Buck has been using us to fill a
hole in his life. We've got to plug
that hole.

Buck's jacket is draped over a chair. Hank reaches into the
pocket and takes out his keys.

HANK (CONT'D)

Tell Buck I'm catching some z's in the
hosing area.

Hank puts his jacket over his pajamas, quietly punches out,
and lets himself out the door.

INT. JUGSTORE COWBOYS - DAWN

Hank enters and steps around a JANITOR mopping the entryway
with some powerful-looking disinfectant. (During the scene
the janitor's mopping in the b.g. will move from the floor to
the walls to the ceiling.) Keith appears.

KEITH

Sorry, buddy. The Pennysaver screwed
up our ad. We don't reopen until six
A.M.

HANK

I'm here to see you, Keith, not
strippers. I'm Hank Hill, Buck's
assistant manager.

KEITH

Buck, huh? Well, if he sent you to pick up his beer mug, tell him it's in my office full of pencils.

HANK

No, I came to make peace. Will you take Buck back? He misses this place.

KEITH

(SNORTS) He misses my free cheddar cubes, more like it.

HANK

Keith, do you have any experience with, uh, voids? Buck's got a bad one without the Jugstore. And I was hoping you felt the same way.

KEITH

(GRUDGING) Well, the girls are kinda thrown off. They're so used to Buck being in his usual seat, half the time they end up plopping down in an empty chair.

HANK

See? You need him too. Let him come home.

KEITH

I can't. Things were said. Things that can't be unsaid.

HANK

Well, it's a dang shame when a strip club owner and a strip club patron let their stupid pride stand in their way. Come on back and at least talk to him.

KEITH

Even if I agreed, Buck wouldn't let me come within fifty feet without screaming at me.

HANK

Hmm. Keith, are you claustrophobic?

INT. STRICKLAND - LATER

The gang is half-dozing, half playing a new game.

BUCK

Truth or dare, Enrique. Ever kill anyone?

ENRIQUE

(SHOCKED) No!

BUCK

Darn, I thought you were gonna take the "Dare." I was gonna make you eat a staple.

Hank enters.

HANK

Mr. Strickland, the gang and I want to thank you making the office such a fun place to work. So we got you this...

Hank wheels in a giant, battered, cardboard cake.

BUCK

Hey, I think I know that cake.

The top flops open and Keith stands up.

KEITH

How are ya, Buck?

BUCK

Crying in the bucket, Hank! All the pretty girls you coulda put in that cake and you went with this sadsack son-of-a-bitch?

KEITH

Guess I got into this cake for nothing.

BUCK

Get on out so I can kick your ass!

KEITH

I'm coming, Buck, but you're not gonna be happy when I get there.

As Keith starts to climb down, Buck rocks the giant cake back and forth. Hank pulls him off.

HANK

Knock it off! Mr. Strickland, despite all the fun and games, I know you're not happy here. And Keith, you had a lot of time to think while you were sitting inside that cake.

KEITH

(LOOKING DOWN) Come back to Jugstore
Cowboys, Buck. Everybody misses you.
Me included.

Buck is touched. He takes a wrinkled bill out of his pocket.

BUCK

Well, this dollar belongs back on your
wall. I didn't have the heart to
spend it.

KEITH

Why don't you tape it up yourself?

Buck and Keith smile at each other: rapprochement.

BUCK

I always wanted to get in one of those
things. Room for two in there?

KEITH

Sure is, Buck.

Buck starts climbing in.

BUCK

Hank, if you and the boys wheel us
back to Jugstore Cowboys, we can still
make the six A.M. show.

HANK

Will do, sir!

Hank and the guys start pushing the cake out the door.

INT. MCMAYNERBURY GALLERIA - DAY

A fashion show is in progress. A CHIC MODEL struts down the runway. At the door, Bob Jenkins flashes his pass to a PR woman.

BOB JENKINS

Bob Jenkins. I pen the "Eye on Arlen" column for the Arlen Bystander. The goodie bags are where, exactly?

PR WOMAN

The Bystander? We already have someone from that paper.

She points to Peggy, who is pawing through a goodie bag.

PEGGY

Do any of these bags have a different shade lipstick? Technically, I am an Autumn.

BOB JENKINS

Peggy!

PEGGY

Back off, Bob. This is my scoop.

BOB JENKINS

That SWAG bag is mine by rights.

Peggy clutches the bag tightly.

PEGGY

Cultivate your own sources, you hack.

BOB JENKINS

At least give me the bronzer!

They start tussling over the goodie bag.

ANGLE ON: The runway model glances over at the commotion.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Let go!

BOB JENKINS (O.S.)

I'll grind your bones to make my
bread!

There's a LOUD CRASH O.S. as Peggy and Bob Jenkins fall into
the goodie bag table.

BACK ON: Peggy and Bob are on the floor, surrounded by goodie
bags. They notice everyone staring at them.

BOB JENKINS (CONT'D)

We broke the first rule of journalism,
Peggy. We became the story.

PEGGY

Shut up. We each grab two bags and
run.

And they do.

INT. STRICKLAND - BREAKROOM - DAY

Hank and the rest are at the table for another morning
meeting. The Hawaiian shirts are gone.

HANK

It's good to see everyone in their
Strickland Blues again. Since Mr.
Strickland couldn't be here this
morning, we're going to try something
different.

Hank hits a button on a phone conferencing device. We hear
tinny strip club music.

HANK (CONT'D)

Mr. Strickland, can you hear us?

BUCK (O.S.)

Loud and clear! Let's get down to business! Not you, Charisse. I was talking to the office.

HANK

Okay. The rainy season is almost here and there's been a lot of talk about a new coat rack but not much action.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW