

Malcolm In The Middle
Outline

2/18/00

Act One

Scene 1

Malcolm is on the kitchen phone with Francis reminding him that it's their dad's birthday tomorrow. Francis assures him that he didn't forget and mailed him a pair of slippers. He hangs up and talks to the camera about his philosophy on birthdays. How they suck and how to avoid the pain of them sucking. "Birthday's are strange. You basically have however many you have in your lifetime and before or after your last one... you die. Some gift there. What's that, a reward?" He then thinks about a birthday that truly blew and we FLASHBACK to younger versions of Malcolm, Reese, Dewey and Francis playing with toys. Discarded wrapping paper, ribbon and cake and ice cream are in evidence. Young Malcolm suddenly looks in his new glass cage. "Where's the python?!" They start searching the room. WE FIND Lois in the bathroom sitting on the throne. Suddenly she gets a terrified look on her face and starts a scream... Back to REAL TIME, we FOLLOW him into the living room where Hal, Reese and Dewey are watching television. Dewey asks his father what his favorite birthday ever was. He tells them about the day a six year old Hal got a baseball signed by Tug Powell a utility infielder for the World Champion 1963 Dodgers. He cherished that prize, even slept with it -- until one morning he woke up to see that his dog had eaten it. The boys feel awkward about this bitter sweet moment. Lois enters, notices the silence and gleans that Hal must have just finished his baseball story. "The boy's were just asking about my favorite birthday." "Get over it." Hal starts hinting at the fact that Lois has about fifteen hundred dollars in her mad money account, the boys have about five hundred collectively in their Christmas Clubs... "If you were to pool your resources" ...he wants a big screen television. He exits. The boys rush to mom... "So are we going to Circuit City?" "Are you out of your minds?" She hands them a ten dollar bill. "Here go buy your father something nice for his birthday. And don't short change him. Spend every penny. Your father deserves the best."

Scene 2

The three boys are at the Lucky Aide Pharmacy. Craig is displaying the items or combination of items the three boys can buy for Hal with their ten dollars. Shoe laces, soap on a rope, exploding golf balls, a crucifix/corkscrew, 'King of the Hill' salt and pepper shakers, etc. "See all the terrific things you can buy for a sawbuck." Dewey likes everything. Reese likes the salt and pepper shakers. Nothing is good enough for Malcolm... We've got to get him something more meaningful, something he'd value..."... until he spots a baseball. The plan begins...

Scene 3

Malcolm, is with Stevie at a school computer. Caroline stands over them. WE SEE the screen full with Civil War information. Caroline explains why the Battle of Shilo was lost and commends the boys for staying after school for extra credit. When she walks away, Stevie immediately clears the screen and switches to a search engine. He types in 'Tug Powell'. A short biography comes up and as they scroll down to, "Currently living in Van Nuys, California." Stevie quickly goes to another engine and finds all the Powells in the Valley. Bingo, only one Tug.

Scene 4

Malcolm, baseball in hand and Reese are stepping off a bus, somewhere in the Valley. A short WALK AND TALK takes them to the front of a house that's rundown even for a rundown neighborhood. They approach the front gate. The yard overgrown, strewn with debris. Very evident are furry remnants of small animals. The boy's attention turns to what looks like some shredded postman's shorts. The cause of the scene comes running around the corner of house. A huge Rottweiler. Reese uses the philosophy of, "Don't act frightened. They can sense fear." The hound from hell checks them out and makes his move. Malcolm panics and throws the ball at the mutt. The guys take off towards the door and start pounding on it. The dog's eyes rivet on the ball, he pounces on it and starts tearing it to shreds. Memories of Hal's childhood trauma come into play. "That soap on a rope is looking pretty good." The door opens and Malcolm and Reese are yanked into...

Scene 5

The HOUSE. A woman in her mid-forties, fairly together for her surroundings and holding an assault rifle, stands before them. "I thought you were the marshal. I see you met my Muffin." Malcolm chimes in, "They're so cute at that age." He turns to the camera... "What was I going to say? Your dog looked at me like I had pork chop underwear on and we were all going to be on the evening news with bite marks in my head and a stupid neighbor saying, 'He was always a quiet dog. Kept to himself.' I want this autograph." "Is your father, Tug at home?" "You mean my ex-husband." She tells the fellows that she hasn't seen him in years. She heard he had medical problems and is now in a home. She also tells them where the home is and then imparts some heart felt advise. "All he left me was Muffin and that Maverick in the driveway. I gave him the best six months of my life. These old coots tell you they have money - they don't. I spent time with him. He told me he had all this retirement. If you kids ever marry a younger woman... make sure you have dough."

Scene 6

Malcolm and Reese make their way DOWN A HALL in the convalescent home. They find the door they are looking for with the names Powell and Burwell. The guys walk in. It's a typical room in one of these places, two beds, some medical equipment, but a little

homier. In the corner sits a man in his mid to late seventies. He wears a sweater, slippers and rests his chin on the top of his cane as he stares out the window. The boys are right into it, overlapping each other with enthusiasm... "Mr. Powell, a great honor." "You see, it's about our father." "See, along time ago when our dad was five, big fan of yours -- you signed a baseball for him on his birthday." "Best day ever." "Until a dog ate the ball." "We can't get him a special gift so we were wondering..." "If you could come over for the day and hang out with him." "It would mean a lot to him and you'd get a great home cooked meal -- well, a meal out of it." Powell stares for a long beat then -- "I think I remember that. Short fellow, right?" "Yeah, he was five." "I was never that good a ball player. So, I remember every autograph. You know, damn it, I'd love to come to your home." "But aren't you kinda stuck here?" "Naw, I'm ambulatory. I'll go get signed out -- you kids meet me out front." Tug exits. Reese is worried. "Wow, he's ambulatory. We better stop and get some big diapers."

Scene 7

The dinner table is set for Hal's birthday. Lois is bringing in the last of the serving dishes. "I have no idea where Malcolm and Reese could be, they knew about this." Dewey offers his suggestions. "And I thought Francis was suppose to send you a gift. I can't wait any longer." She hands a small gift box to Hal who takes it and gives it a shake. "Doesn't sound like a big screen." "Just open it." "Maybe it's just the remote and it's a two part gift." "Open it!" He does. It's soap on a rope. "Not just any soap on a rope. It's soap on a rope of the month." She hands Hal the brochure. "Twelve soaps, one rope." "Yeah, it's going to be this season's Furbie. Next month you get Huckleberry Mist." "In August I get to smell like a Sequoia Pine. I'll have to invite the neighbors over to watch me shower." He genuinely thanks her as Dewey is concerned that his bothers made the same choice for their gift. The sliding glass door opens and Malcolm and Reese enter. Lois chides them for not having a gift in their hands. Malcolm says it's right outside. "Happy birthday, Dad." Tug Powell limps in. Hal is stunned. "You got me an old man for my birthday? Are you boys on the weed right now?" "Dad, this is Tug Powell." Hal, tears up. So does Lois. Not because of the moment but because the boys out did her in the gift department.

Scene 8

The remnants of dinner. Everyone is avidly listening to Tug who finishes up a baseball story. Hal asks Tug to tell them about his favorite time in his career. Tug says he didn't have much of a career but his favorite time had to be when... "My dad, never wanted me to be a ballplayer. He wanted me to join him in his insurance business. So he never came to any games. Ignored my whole career. I left a ticket for him but I'd look over at an empty seat every time. Except for that last game of the World Series. He showed up and saw me get a hit. Oh, he was proud of me -- but he passed way in his sleep that night. Never saw me play again. Nobody did. I got cut in the off season." The group reacts. "Well, I've got to be getting back. The home's not so bad. It'd be better if I got a visitor or two. You just have to ignore the urine smell." Tug looks at his watch. "I guess it's safe to go back. By now the attendant is drunk enough so he won't abuse my roommate."

Tug gets up to leave. Hal immediately asks him to stay the weekend. Lois is not sure about this. Malcolm, into the camera, is positive that his dad's birthday is going to be the greatest one again. "I thought it would suck as bad as... FLASHBACK to fairly recently. Hal leads a blindfolded Lois into the living room. She's followed by the boys. He has the curtains drawn. He removes her blindfold and Reese pulls open the curtains. In the driveway WE SEE a new car. Well, it still has the gigantic ribbon around it but...it's up on blocks. The doors, stereo, seats, outside mirrors are missing and the hood and trunk are open.

Scene 9

Hal and Lois are in bed. "It's really great having Tug here." "All I can say is that I'm so proud of the boys. They went to a lot of trouble and really came through for you." "Yeah, even as a kid I knew there was something special about Tug and tonight's dinner proved it. There's only one more thing I want." They exchange a look and Hal rolls on top of Lois and starts the juices flowing. We see that the bedroom door is open a crack. Someone is watching the scene. From the OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR - it's Tug holding himself up with his cane, naked except for boxer shorts.

Act Two

Scene 1

Malcolm turns to the camera and has another birthday that went bad FLASHBACK. WE SEE what is a young Dewey trying to blow out a candle. Hal picks up a small fish bowl and presents it to him. The fish bowl is empty. CUT TO - Lois in the kitchen emptying Chinese take out cartons into a roaring garbage disposal. As everyone runs into the kitchen, WE'RE BACK... Malcolm finishes with... "But this one seems to be working out righteously." He PASSES THROUGH the living room where Tug is with Dewey. "Dewey you want to learn a great magic trick? All we'll need is some money. Real money. Do you have a piggy bank?" "No." "Do your mom and dad have any money around the house for emergencies?" "Yeah." Well, this is an emergency. This magic trick can be used in emergencies. Like when you're broke someday and you need to eat or have a drink or companionship or a carton of smokes." Dewey goes to a book in the bookcase and takes out an envelope. We FLIP TO: A few minutes later. Dewey is trying to follow the queen which Tug is expertly hiding in a Three-Card-Monte game. It's obvious that Dewey hasn't found the queen - ever. His stack of money is almost depleted. Tug gives him a five dollar bill and tells him to keep it. "Don't want you to get discouraged... but you're getting the hang of it, right?" Dewey just stares at him.

Scene 2

Lois in the laundry room of the house removing stuff from the dryer and folding it. Tug walks in and watches her for a beat then rubs past her. Lois is startled. "I'm just trying to get by here." "But this doesn't lead anywhere. There's no place to get by to."

"Well, here, let me try again." He rubs up against her again. Lois checks him out. After a beat he grabs at the towels in her arms. "Let me get those towels for you." Now she's stunned. "You touched my breast!" "I did not." "You most certainly did." "Didn't." Just then he changes the subject. "I've got to soak my bunions in salt water. Can I use a stew pot?" He starts to leave, then – "You know, one of your breasts is larger than the other. Not disgustingly so. That's a good trait." He exits with a look to Lois.

Scene 3

Hal is at a baseball card and memorabilia shop. He's there to buy some baseballs and Tug Powell rookie cards. He asks the clerk for them and gets a funny look. "Why would you want a Tug Powell rookie? They're worth squat." "Well it's sentimental really... I want him to sign them." "I thought he was dead. You know where he is?" "Yes." The clerk goes to a file cabinet and pulls out a picture. "That's the 1963 World Champion Dodgers. It's worth about twenty bucks. Only one of it's kind. Absolutely perfect except for one thing. The only signature missing from this photograph is Tug Powell's. If I had that, it'd be worth a lot more." "About how much would it be worth to me to get it for you?" "Oh, I'd say... maybe... fifteen hundred." In Hals' pupils WE SEE the big screen tv.

Scene 4

Francis is in the Marlin Academy common room. He gets a phone call. "Francis. It's Davis Hollander... (covering the mouthpiece) Isn't he the dude you sent that dog crap to?" Francis rushes to the phone surrounded by anxious cadets. Davis thanks him for the slippers. Strange because he thought he was pissed that he was taking out his girlfriend. Francis hangs up immediately. "Oh, my God! I sent my dad dog crap for his birthday." He furiously dials the phone. A lot of laughter from his friends. "Don't expect a thank you card for that one."

Scene 5

Back at home Tug is on the phone and looking at Lois' Visa card. "...Seven eight five two... Expires eleven two thousand three... and I want to speak to Little Red Throbbinghood... That's right. Wait a second." He clicks over to another call waiting. It's Francis in a panic. Tug is impatient to get back to Little Red. "This is a friend... I'm staying here... Nobody's home... Sure I know what you're talking about. It's in my room. I signed for the package this morning." "You've got to throw the package away. It's an emergency. Do you understand?" "Yeah, sure thing." He clicks back over – "Hell-ooo, Throbbinghood... (he starts fidgeting) Hold on a second. I've got to go... No not what you think." Tug runs out obviously having to go to the bathroom. He leaves the phone off the hook. Malcolm walks in, sees it and picks it up along with his mom's credit card. "Hello." Judging by the widening of his eyes, Little Red has started right in on 'what's in her basket.' As Malcolm continues to listen, Lois walks in with the mobile phone in her hand and snatches her card out of Malcolm's hand.

Scene 6

The kids and Lois are in the kitchen having a family meeting. The subject is Tug. Everyone is talking at once. "I wasn't asking anyone for a sponge bath and I wasn't using your credit card." "He made me play with real money, mom." "He's crazy." "It was all Tug." Based on Lois' recent experiences with the Tugster, she's inclined to believe the boys. This is amazing to them since this is a first. She wants the asshole out right now. Malcolm reasons with her. "Do we destroy Dad's birthday weekend and ruin his image of his boyhood hero." Lois thinks for a bit. "You boys are responsible for him being here – you have to tell your father I want him out." Hal walks in. Everyone is on him at once complaining about Tug, Lois leading the charge. "Your birthday present tried to cop a feel." "What?" "I know when a feel is being copped and when it's not." Hal doesn't want to upset anything before he gets the signature. "Chances are you misread what happened. The guy doesn't have enough hormones left to get a cricket excited. Even if he did, at his age, consider it a mercy feel." After some more arguments, Hal finally tells them about the autograph he needs and tells them all a big screen and maybe a few other things are in their future. "We just have to wait until the right time to approach him. I don't want him to get offended." "You don't want him to get offended?!" Tug enters with a bat -- "Which one of you boys wants to say they struck out the great Tug Powell?" They all shrug -- "I guess." The troupe reluctantly head --

Scene 7

OUTSIDE, Reese is pitching to Tug using a wiffle ball. Tug tells him to use a hard ball. "Mom wont let us." He embarrasses them enough that Reese gets the ball and resumes pitching. Malcolm and Dewey are trying to field his errant hits. After a few foul balls and strikes... He hits a line drive, by some miracle, right into the side of the family dog who yelps and heads for cover. After some horrible swings he sends one right into Malcolm's stomach. He doubles over in pain. WE CUT:

INSIDE, Lois approaches Hal. "One more thing goes wrong and I'm going to kick his ass." Just then, the sliding door shatters and a baseball rolls to Lois' feet. CUT:

OUTSIDE, Tug hands the bat to Reese. "Here, hold this." He heads toward the house with the boys in tow. CUT:

INSIDE, Lois picks up the ball and... "Tug!!" She heads toward the scene as Tug walks in through what used to be the sliding door. "You've got some potential ballplayers out there. Strong kids. The oldest boy's got some power." Tug exits to the guest room. Lois is in Hal's face. "Do it now." "Okay, but it might sound better coming from a kid." Everybody turns to Malcolm.

Scene 8

"So you see, Mr. Powell, it would mean a lot to all of us." "Wow! I've only had three people ask for my autograph in my life. Hal, you're now two of them and my stepdaughter was the other." Malcolm chimes in again. "And there's money involved." "No kidding? Somebody would pay money for my autograph?" Behind Tug, Hal holds up two fingers to Malcolm. "Two dollars." Hal shakes his head. "Two thousand." No. "Two... hun... dred. Two hundred dollars." "I'll do it."

Scene 9

At the baseball card shop Tug is signing the photograph as the clerk studies his driver's license to make sure he's the real deal. Hal and the clerk STEP INTO the back room for the exchange of the big money... BACK in the main shop Hal gives Tug the small money. The clerk and Hal exchange a knowing look.

ON THE MOVE out to the car Tug speaks to Hal... "Are you taking care of your wife?" "We get along fine." "No, no, no. Are you taking care of your wife?" "I think so." "She touched me you know." "What?" "I can tell when someone just brushes up against you by accident... but when the fingers are in massage mode - well." That's it. Hal tells Tug that he'll have to take the bus the rest of the way to the home. Just before they part, Tug takes the package from Francis out of his suitcase and gives it to Hal. "This came for you yesterday. It's from your son. Open it in the car."

Scene 10

At the home, Tug walks into his room with his suitcase. He takes his wallet from his pocket and puts it in the night stand of the bed next to his. After a beat, an old man, hooked up to IV's, oxygen, catheter, and plastic tent is wheeled in by two attendants. One of the attendants talks to the old man. "Back to your bed, Mr. Powell. Would you like some jell-o?" The other attendant address the man we thought was Tug. "Hey, Hank. How'ya doin'?" "Great. Had another terrific weekend. How's the baseball player?" "The closest thing he's seen to a baseball is the growth on his kidney."

Scene 11

A FEW DAYS LATER. Big party for the new big screen television prominently displayed in the living room. Hal is bar-b-queing. The Bar-b-que is also new. A few neighbors are over. Reese is on the phone with Francis. "There's not enough air fresheners in the world. I wish the front seat smelled like gas again." Everyone is talking about the quality of the picture. The game is on. It's half time and the screen switches to Sports Center. The announcers give a few scores, a few highlights, then... "A sad note in the world of baseball. Utility infielder with the 63' Dodgers, Tug Powell, died today after a long illness. He was seventy eight" The scene switches to a LIVE INTERVIEW at the home with our impostor. Under his picture is supered 'Hank Burwell, roommate'.

"Yeah, he was a great guy. Real quiet. Kept to himself. I guess with all those tubes, I wouldn't say much either." The family stares at the screen in shock. We SMASH CUT to the card shop and SEE that the clerk is watching the same thing on his television.

Scene 12

We're CLOSE ON Malcolm who is furiously playing a video game. We PULL BACK as he's walking with the control pad hooked up to the big screen. It is being lifted by two big movers. He gives his last thoughts on birthdays and the episode. "At least this one didn't turn out as bad as the one three years ago." Another FLASHBACK: Hal is putting used wrapping paper and boxes into the fireplace where the flames are heating the hearth and home. He puts in a rather large empty toy box, watches for a beat and walks away. From OUTSIDE we have a VIEW of the chimney. Ashes are being sent into the air. One particularly large piece of the burning box flies out and WE FOLLOW it until it lands in a field. CUT TO: FOOTAGE of the Malibu fires and their aftermath. BACK TO Malcolm as he tries to move with the repossessed appliance being carried toward the front door. The plug final comes out of the socket and the screen goes black as does the episode.

THE END