

"The Mother"

FADE IN:

1

1 INT. LAW FIRM - DAY

A LAWYER is addressing a couple, KAREN and JOHN HENDERSON.

LAWYER

This being your second divorce, Mr. Henderson, I'm sure you're familiar with the procedure, but your wife or X-wife should know that it would be wise to not leave the state for a few weeks until this is finalized.

KAREN

I'm not planning to leave the state.

JOHN

No, she just left me, she didn't have anything against the land.

LAWYER

Well I'll tell you something, if you two could have made all your decisions with as much cooperation as you made this one, I think you probably would have had a happy marriage.

JOHN

Yeah well, go figure.

LAWYER

So that's basically it. I hate to bring up business, who do I bill?

Before John can say anything, Karen says...

KAREN

Him.

JOHN

I thought we were going to split this.

KAREN

You said you were paying for the divorce.

JOHN

I just said that to get it started. I thought we'd wind up splitting it.

KAREN

You offered. You said you'd pay for it.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

JOHN
(turning to the lawyer)
See, this is why it doesn't work.

LAWYER
I don't know.

JOHN
We were always good on the surface,
weren't we honey?

Karen glares at him. She gets up.

KAREN
Are we through?

LAWYER
Yes.

KAREN
Thank you. (to John) I'll talk to you.

CUT TO:

2 INT. LOBBY - DAY

2

The elevator arrives, the door opens. Karen gets in. John doesn't know it's her.

JOHN
Hold the elevator.

WE SEE her HAND holding the elevator. John approaches the door. He looks her in the eye.

JOHN
Never mind.

She lets the elevator go. She goes down and out of his life.

CREDITS BEGIN:

CUT TO:

3 EXT./INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

3

We see John go home to his house, which now has 80% of the furniture taken out. It feels empty and somehow like it never will be replenished. John looks around. He sees a chair and a small table. He moves the chair to the other wall and looks at it. He likes that better.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

As John continues to rearrange the two pieces of furniture,
CREDITS continue.

Finally he puts the chair near the window, sits in it, picks
up the phone and dials a friend. As he is dialing,

CREDITS END

CUT TO:

4 INT. CARL'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

CARL picks up the phone.

CARL

Hello?

JOHN

I need a designated driver.

CUT TO:

5 A CROWDED BAR - LATER THAT EVENING

John is sitting at a table with Carl. John is drinking.

JOHN

I don't know what I really feel. I guess
I'm not going to feel it for days.

CARL

Maybe I shouldn't say this. You
probably don't want to hear it, but I
thought she was nice.

JOHN

You know ten years ago that would have
killed me, but you're right she was nice.
She just wasn't for me. She's a nice
person who'll make some nice man very
happy, but I'm not that man.

CARL

Maybe you shouldn't get married anymore.

JOHN

I want kids.

CARL

Adopt.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

I want to pass down my seed.

CARL

Masturbate in the garden.

JOHN

Fine, you joke and I'll talk to someone else.

CARL

I'm listening. I'm listening.

A WAITRESS comes over.

JOHN

I'll have another double.

Carl waves her off, suggesting he's fine.

CARL

The thing is you have to know what to look for. You don't have a clue.

JOHN

I guess I don't.

CARL

Do you think every girl you've ever gone out with, including your wives, do you think they're all the same woman?

JOHN

Well, the two wives were the same, that's for sure. I'd say out of the five serious relationships, three women were exactly the same, one woman was a little weird unlike anybody else, and one might have been a man.

CARL

Really?

JOHN

Really? Now if you were a woman and you said that, I would never want to see you again. See, and yet I'm still going to be your friend. Why is that?

CARL

Did you see that movie?

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

What movie?

CARL

You know where the guy lived with a Chinese woman for twenty years and it turned out to be man.

JOHN

M Butterfly.

CARL

Yeah. Do you think that's possible?

JOHN

How could it be possible? Doesn't the wife go for a physical? I mean the husband may not know, but is she gonna fool the doctor? And doesn't the doctor tell the spouse? "How's my wife?" "She's in very good health, especially her balls."

CARL

Okay if all the women are the same, what kind of woman is that? Once you figure that out then go for the opposite.

JOHN

The one thing they all shared...they didn't believe in me.

CARL

Really?

JOHN

Yeah.

CARL

Well Jesus, that's weird. You like women who don't believe in you?

JOHN

I guess I do.

CARL

God, if a woman doesn't support me, I'm out of there. So why does that happen? Do you like men who don't believe in you?

JOHN

No I don't.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

CARL

So what in God's name would you like a woman who doesn't believe in you for? I don't get it.

Carl looks at John. John stares at him. There's no answer. After a moment of staring we...

CUT TO:

6 INT. BEATRICE'S HOUSE - DAY

6

BEATRICE is John's mother. She is in her mid sixties: vital and worried, well-off and cheap. She is talking to two REPAIRMEN. They are young Hispanics who are trying to install a built-in television. Beatrice is going out of her way to make sure that they don't think for a minute that she is prejudiced against Hispanics. Unfortunately, she is speaking to them as if they were three years old.

BEATRICE

Would you fellows like a sandwich?
Do you want a sandwich? (to herself)
How do you say "sandwich?"

REPAIRMAN #1

We don't want a sandwich. Thank you
Ma'am, we're gonna finish this up and
run.

She stands there smiling. Her smile says, "It's so nice to watch young men do good work." And her smile also says, "I'm going to stay here because if I leave the room, you'll steal the china."

BEATRICE

Are either of you fellows married?

One shakes his head, "no." The other doesn't understand enough English.

BEATRICE

One of my sons just got a divorce. They
just can't seem to stay married anymore.

One of the repairmen turns on the television to make sure it's working. He checks the cable and the picture comes on.

REPAIRMAN #1

All right, Ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

Does it look a little green to you?

Repairman #1 takes a look at it.

REPAIRMAN #1

I don't think so.

BEATRICE

Gee, that's a little green to me.

REPAIRMAN #1

No Ma'am, that's normal.

She turns to the other man.

BEATRICE

Does that look green to you?

Repairman #2 looks at her, looks at the television and nods, "yes."

BEATRICE

Gee, I think there's something wrong.
There's something wrong with this.

REPAIRMAN #1

No, Ma'am, there's nothing wrong. My
friend didn't understand you.

BEATRICE

I don't know, this doesn't look right.
Turn it to another channel.

He presses the remote. It's a soccer game.

BEATRICE

Oh my God, that's too green.

REPAIRMAN #1

That's the grass, Ma'am. That's supposed
to be green.

BEATRICE

No, but this is...there's something
wrong. I don't think I should sign for
this.

The repairmen say something to each other in Spanish.
Beatrice looks at them suspiciously.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

BEATRICE

I just remember in the store it was such a perfect picture.

REPAIRMAN #1

Ma'am, I think the picture's fine. My friend misunderstood you.

BEATRICE

He what?

REPAIRMAN #1

My friend thought you asked if he liked the color green. He doesn't speak English very well.

BEATRICE

(to the other man speaking extra slowly)

You misunderstood me?

REPAIRMAN #2

Picture looks good.

BEATRICE

Well gee, I don't know.

REPAIRMAN #1

I'll tell you what. You watch it. If you don't like it after a couple of weeks, we'll come and take it back.

BEATRICE

Maybe I shouldn't sign anything until then.

REPAIRMAN #1

Ma'am please, I can't leave it here unless you sign this. I install these a lot. This picture is perfect. When it first comes on, green is the color that comes on the most. And then after a few minutes, it goes away.

BEATRICE

But the television in the store looked perfect.

REPAIRMAN #1

Well, the televisions in the store have been turned on for a long time before you get there.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3)

BEATRICE

I don't think so. I was there at 9:15,
right when they opened.

REPAIRMAN #1

I know, Ma'am, but the televisions are
turned on in the middle of the night
automatically so the colors are perfect
by nine o'clock.

BEATRICE

Really? You're sure of that?

She reluctantly signs the paper and walks them to the door.

BEATRICE

All right, I will let you know.

REPAIRMAN #1

I'll be waiting for that call Ma'am,
thank you.

All of a sudden the PHONE RINGS. She walks over and picks it
up.

BEATRICE

Hello?

JOHN (V.O.)

Mom?

BEATRICE

Hello, dear. I was just talking
about you.

INTERCUT WITH JOHN

7 INT. JOHN'S EMPTY HOUSE - DAY

7

John is on the phone.

JOHN

To who?

BEATRICE

To these repairmen.

JOHN

Repairmen?

BEATRICE

Yes. We were just talking about you.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

JOHN

About my bock?

BEATRICE

No, no, no, I told them you had just gotten a divorce.

JOHN

You what?

BEATRICE

I told them you got a divorce.

JOHN

They know me?

BEATRICE

Of course not.

JOHN

Then why would you tell them that?

BEATRICE

Well, I don't know, we were talking about marriage. I asked them if they were married and I mentioned that you weren't.

JOHN

Great, give me their number mom, I can call them directly and fill them in. How's it going? Are you okay?

BEATRICE

I'm fine dear and you?

JOHN

I'm fine. I just called to say hello.

BEATRICE

Well, I'm happy to hear from you. Is everything out of the house?

JOHN

Yes.

BEATRICE

Honey, you should go and get new furniture tomorrow.

JOHN

Well I got stuff to do before I get new furniture, don't worry.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

You don't want to sit in a big empty house. It's bad for you.

JOHN

I know, I'll take care of it.

BEATRICE

And also, buy yourself some new clothes.

JOHN

Why?

BEATRICE

The last time I saw you I just, well, I just think you could look better now.

JOHN

Look better than what?

BEATRICE

Just look better. You want to meet somebody.

JOHN

I don't want to trick anybody into liking me.

BEATRICE

What do you mean?

JOHN

Why do you always think it has to do with these things? Don't you think I could meet somebody wearing crappie shoes and they'd still like me?

BEATRICE

Honey, wear whatever you want. I think if you were wearing crappie shoes, they'd ask, "why are you wearing crappie shoes?" That's what I think, but you do what you want.

JOHN

Well maybe there's somebody out there who wouldn't say that.

BEATRICE

Whatever dear. You look for them. How's the book?

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

I don't know. I'm blocked right now.

BEATRICE

You know your father always said you got yourself into trouble because it helped you write. Do you think that's true?

JOHN

What do you mean "trouble?"

BEATRICE

Just the messes that you get into. Maybe it's how you get your books done.

JOHN

Well I'm pretty successful. I don't chalk it up to getting into messes. Can't I just have the ability to write?

BEATRICE

Honey, you said you were dried up.

JOHN

I didn't say "dried up."

BEATRICE

I'm not going to argue with you. What are you working on?

JOHN

Well, a lot of people think I should write a sequel.

After a bit of a pause.

BEATRICE

To what?

JOHN

The last book.

BEATRICE

The space thing?

JOHN

Yeah.

Now there is a very long pause. Finally, after ten seconds John gives in.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (4)

JOHN

Hello?

BEATRICE

Yes, honey.

JOHN

You don't think so, huh?

BEATRICE

Dear listen, I'm not smart like the people you know, but they really do think that? That's what they advise you?

JOHN

Yes, many of them do.

BEATRICE

Well look they know a lot more than me. I don't know honey.

JOHN

But you didn't like the book, right? You don't think it deserves a sequel?

BEATRICE

Of course I liked the book. But I don't know...do you really want to bring back all those characters?

JOHN

Forget it. I'll talk to you later mom.

BEATRICE

Honey, I love you.

JOHN

I know you think you do. Bye.

He hangs up.

CUT TO:

8 INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

8

Two GIRLS, roommates, both very cute, are talking. LINDA'S getting ready to go out. DONNA is in workout clothes, standing behind the kitchen counter, having a drink, and looking through a book.

DONNA

He wrote this?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

LINDA

Yeah.

DONNA

How did you meet him?

LINDA

In the market.

DONNA

He had his book with him?

LINDA

He had it in the trunk.

DONNA

Did you read it?

LINDA

No, but it's a real book.

DONNA

Is he rich?

LINDA

I don't know. He just got a divorce.

DONNA

When?

LINDA

Two weeks ago.

DONNA

Gee that's a little soon to go out with somebody.

LINDA

I'm just having dinner with him. I'm not having sex.

DONNA

Does he know that?

LINDA

He will by dessert.

The BUZZER sounds.

LINDA

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

JOHN (V.O.)

It's John.

LINDA

Come on in.

She BUZZES him in.

LINDA

(to her roommate)

How do I look?

DONNA

Gorgeous.

The doorbell RINGS. Linda opens the door.

LINDA

Hi, John.

JOHN

Hi. (enters) You look beautiful.

LINDA

This is my roommate, Donna.

JOHN

Hi, Donna.

LINDA

So you all ready?

JOHN

I came here to get you, I'd have to be all ready.

LINDA

What do you mean?

JOHN

Nothing.

9 INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

9

John and Linda are eating dinner. It's pretty silent.

LINDA

Have you always wanted to be a writer?

JOHN

Yeah, I think so. Do you have any favorite authors?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks at him like this is the last question she ever wanted to hear.

LINDA
Well...I like you.

JOHN
(very excited)
You've read my books?

LINDA
No, I mean as a person.

JOHN
Oh. So did you read my book?

LINDA
No, I couldn't. I had a really busy week.

JOHN
Did you read the flap?

LINDA
No, actually I didn't. Why, what's on the flap?

JOHN
Nothing. Just wondering if you looked at anything..

LINDA
I saw your picture on the back. I thought it was cute.

JOHN
So who are your other favorite authors, besides me?

LINDA
Oh gee, I didn't know I was going to be taking a test.

JOHN
It's not a test. We're just talking.

LINDA
Let me see. Who wrote that book about Hollywood?

JOHN
I don't know. What book?

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

LINDA

You know, where they took all those pills?

JOHN

Julia Phillips?

LINDA

Oh no, I know that's not it. Let's see...Jacqueline...Jacqueline...

JOHN

Jacqueline Suzanne?

LINDA

Yes! I love her. Valley of the Dolls, that was it.

JOHN

That book was written like thirty years ago.

LINDA

Well so what, you can't like somebody who wrote a book a long time ago? Don't people like Charlie Chaplin? When did he write?

JOHN

Charlie Chaplin was a comedian.

LINDA

No he wasn't, he was a writer.

JOHN

Let's get the check.

CUT TO:

10 THE BEACH - NIGHT

10

John is alone, howling like a madman, trying to purge this feeling...

JOHN

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!

CUT TO:

11 INT. JEFF HENDERSON'S BRENTWOOD HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

11

We are in the house of John's younger brother, Jeff. Jeff is a highly successful sports agent. Seated at the dinner table

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

are JEFF, JOHN, Jeff's wife, CHERYL, an attractive woman in her mid thirties, and their two children, JASON (13) and JOSH (11).

JEFF

I'm thinking of branching out and handling entertainers.

JOHN

Really?

JEFF

Well Mike Ovitz handles sports figures. Why not?

JOHN

Yeah, I guess so.

CHERYL

Have you finished your new book?

JOHN

No, I haven't even started it. I've got a block.

JASON

What's a block?

CHERYL

It's when he can't write.

JOHN

I can write. It's just when I'm not sure what the idea's gonna be.

JOSH

Why don't you write about a monster?

JEFF

(to Josh)

He already did that.

JOHN

(glaring at his brother)

I can't do it again? Doesn't Stephen King write about the same thing over and over and over?

CHERYL

Oh come on, that's Stephen King.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

JOHN

What does that mean?

JEFF

She just means that, you know, he's a big seller.

JOHN

Oh I see, so that gives him the right to repeat? I don't have that right?

CHERYL

Let's forget it. Listen don't compare yourself to anybody, let alone Stephen King.

JOHN

Thanks for the advice.

JOSH

Misery was cool!

JOHN

Misery loves company.

CUT TO:

12 INT. JEFF'S DEN - LATER THAT EVENING

12

John and Jeff are talking. Jeff's den is the picture perfect room of a sports agent. Awards, sculptures, autograph pictures, magazines covers, etc. He's pointing something out to John.

JEFF

This is an autograph picture of Babe Ruth.

JOHN

To you?

JEFF

Of course not, I wasn't even born then.

JOHN

I'm kidding for God's sake. I know when you were born.

(he reads the inscription)

"To Harry. Good luck. The Babe." You know what you ought to do? Have another kid and name him Harry, so this picture has more meaning.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

JEFF
(not hearing him)
Look at this.

Jeff picks up a baseball card.

JEFF
Do you know how much this is worth?

JOHN
No.

JEFF
Fifty thousand dollars!

JOHN
Who would pay fifty thousand dollars for this? The market is eleven year olds. You'd be lucky to get ten dollars for anything, wouldn't you?

JEFF
You have no idea about this stuff.

JOHN
Whatever.

Jeff sits down. He motions for John to sit down. He looks at his older brother. After a moment...

JEFF
So what's wrong?

JOHN
Why is something wrong?

JEFF
Well you're here, something's wrong. You don't come if something isn't wrong.

JOHN
Please don't get on my case about all this stuff.

JEFF
What's the problem?

JOHN
How often do you talk to mom?

JEFF
Every day.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Really?

JEFF

Look what I sent her.

He points to a PICTURE PHONE on his desk.

JOHN

What is that?

JEFF

It's a picture phone.

JOHN

She's not gonna be able to work that.

JEFF

Why not?

JOHN

No person over sixty can operate anything like this. Don't you know that? Have you ever seen what she does with call waiting?

JEFF

This is easy. You just look into the camera.

JOHN

You watch. She'll never take the lens cap off. You'll see.

JEFF

Do you want one? I thought the whole family could look at each other when we talk.

JOHN

Well I moved out of my place so I don't know where I'll put it.

JEFF

You moved out of your place?

JOHN

Yes, I'm trying to tell you something.

JEFF

Okay, well take the picture phone and you can, you know...just keep it in the box, don't unwrap it and then where ever you go you'll plug it in.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Great idea. Listen...do you feel that mother likes you.

JEFF

Of course she like me, she loves me.

JOHN

But I mean, do you feel that you get her approval? Are you having the kind of life she thinks you should have? she ever suggest that maybe you shouldn't be an agent, because, you know, you're not a great one?

JEFF

Not a great one? I was making a hundred thousand dollars out of the gate! We were all blown away, including her.

JOHN

So if I sold five million books, you think she'd like me more?

JEFF

She likes you.

JOHN

All right, she likes me, but do you think she'd be proud of me? Do you think she would bond with me the way she does you?

JEFF

Well...you're a complicated guy.

JOHN

Oh so that's it then, you're a simpleton?

JEFF

I'm in more of a black and white business. You know when I have a good year everyone sees it. Four years aren't that visible.

JOHN

You don't ask her approval of anything? I mean she doesn't criticize you, everything's perfect?

JEFF

Of course not. She criticizes the way I raise the kids. She has opinions. It just doesn't get to me.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

So why does it get to me?

JEFF

I don't know. We're different.

JOHN

Maybe the relationship with dad somehow had something to do with this. Maybe dad was different with you?

JEFF

Maybe he was.

JOHN

Well let me tell you, this is...it's driving me crazy. I feel estranged from my own mother, and I don't like it. It's affecting my whole life, especially with women.

JEFF

You got to just forget about it. You're grown up now. There's nothing you can do.

JOHN

I don't think that's true. I've been thinking about this a lot. I'm gonna move back in with mom.

JEFF

No you're not.

JOHN

Yes I am.

JEFF

That's the worst thing I've ever heard. That's stupid.

JOHN

Why?

JEFF

You're grown up. What are you gonna do? Why are you doing that?

JOHN

Gee you sound jealous.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (5)

12

JOHN

I don't need to see a doctor. I wasn't raised by a doctor, I was raised by my mother and that's who I need to see.

Jeff just stares at him. He now sees that his brother is serious.

CUT TO:

13 INT./EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - DAY

13

THE LANDLORD, PHIL, is watching John as he's packing his remaining furniture. We see an older ALFA ROMEO being loaded up with John's stuff. The landlord reaches into his pocket and gives John back his deposit.

PHIL

Here you go.

JOHN

(incredulous)

That's fifty dollars. I gave you five hundred.

PHIL

Well you did some damage.

JOHN

No I didn't.

PHIL

Everyone does. Don't take it personally.

JOHN

I didn't do anything. I'm an anal retentive man. I damage nothing.

PHIL

Let me tell you what happens. You're well outta here and I find some hole some place and I don't know where to reach you.

JOHN

But that's the whole point of the deposit. This is when you're suppose to look, say okay, and give it back. That's the deposit rule.

PHIL

There's no clear rules on a deposit.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

JOHN

Yes there is, Goddamn it.

PHIL

I'll give you another fifty, but I'm keeping four hundred. That's it. I'm not gonna argue with you.

JOHN

Keep your money. I don't give a shit.

PHIL

Where ya heading?

JOHN

I'm moving back in with my mother.

PHIL

Oh, I'm sorry. She's ill?

JOHN

No, I'm ill.

PHIL

Oh.

He feels guilty. He reaches into his pocket.

PHIL

Take another twenty.

John takes the money and puts it in his pocket.

CUT TO:

14 PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

14

Same scene as in "The Graduate." It's even the same car. The ALFA convertible, loaded up with John's stuff, is heading up the coast. We now HEAR Simon and Garfunkel singing "Mrs. Robinson", but it's not "Mrs. Robinson", it's different lyrics, it's "Mrs. Henderson."

"Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, Mrs. Henderson, you have raised two boys who are screwed up - woh, woh, woh..."

15 EXT. REST STOP - DAY

15

The song continues and along the way John pulls off the 101 into a rest stop to fill up with gas. A GUY in a car next to him yells out...

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

GUY
Where ya heading?

JOHN
Going up north.

GUY
Big Sur?

JOHN
No, big mama.

The song continues.

"ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, Mrs. Henderson,
have you no shame with what you've done...to
your son woh, woh, woh"

16 GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - EARLY EVENING

16

Traditional shot - Alfa moving across the bridge.

Song continues.

We see the car pulling into SAUSALITO.

CUT TO:

17 QUIET SAUSALITO STREET - EVENING

17

John pulls into...

18 EXT. BEATRICE'S DRIVEWAY - EVENING

18

Finally as the song ends, the car comes to a stop. John
HONKS excitedly. The door opens. BEATRICE'S HEAD sticks
out.

BEATRICE
Honey, I'm on the picture phone, just a
minute.

JOHN
(mumbles)
I just drove four hundred miles. She
won't even come out.

CUT TO:

19 INT. BEATRICE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

19

John is bringing in his bags. Beatrice is on the PICTURE
PHONE talking to Jeff, however she's not using it correctly.
We only see half of her face.

20 INT. JEFF'S OFFICE - EVENING

20

INTERCUT

JEFF

More to the left mom, I can't see you.

BEATRICE

I can see you.

JEFF

Yes, but that doesn't mean I can see you.

BEATRICE

Honey, why don't they put the camera right where you are? That way I don't have to move all over the place.

JEFF

Just move to the left.

BEATRICE

Let me call you back, John is here.

JEFF

Well we haven't even talked. Just move to the left so I can see you.

BEATRICE

I'll call you back honey. John is here now.

JEFF

All right. Call me back soon.

BEATRICE

Do you want to say hi to John? Do you want to try to see him?

JEFF

That's all right mom. I'll talk to you later.

BEATRICE

All right dear, you'll explain how to work it next time.

Beatrice hangs up the phone. There's still a picture on it. She presses all the buttons trying to erase the picture. Finally she forces the picture back down into the phone.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

23

BEATRICE

I told him I liked this, but it's driving me crazy. Honey, you look tired.

JOHN

I just drove all the way from Los Angeles. Why don't you start out with hello and then go to a criticism?

She gives him a big hug.

BEATRICE

You know I am happy to see you. Now why didn't you want to stay in a hotel?

JOHN

Mother, I told you what's going on.

BEATRICE

I don't really understand what you mean by the experiment dear, but listen...

She points to a couch that's made up as a bed.

BEATRICE

I'm sure this will do for a few nights.

JOHN

I don't want the couch, I want to stay longer than a few nights. I thought I could get my old room back.

BEATRICE

Oh no dear, that's a sewing room now.

JOHN

You sew?

BEATRICE

No...but...you know...it's just...I mean I have things in that room. I don't want to start going through them.

JOHN

Well I'd really like my room back.

BEATRICE

Why?

JOHN

Just so I could see what it would feel like. It's part of the experiment. Let me just clear everything out, and when I leave I'll put it all back.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Oh, honey you don't want to clear anything out of there. Now listen, sleep on it tonight. Tomorrow we'll talk about it.

JOHN

All right, but I'm telling you, I know what I want.

BEATRICE

Do you want something to eat?

JOHN

No.

BEATRICE

I made some salad and I have some meat loaf.

JOHN

I don't eat meat.

BEATRICE

Oh my, that's right. It's Jeff who loves it.

JOHN

I guess I'll have some salad.

BEATRICE

Don't have salad just for my sake.

JOHN

No I really want some.

BEATRICE

Are you just saying that?

JOHN

No, let's not get into this food stuff. I just want a little bit of salad.

BEATRICE

You know what I could do, I could scrape the top off the meat loaf.

JOHN

What would that do?

BEATRICE

Well it wouldn't be as much meat then.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (3)

20

JOHN

But you're still going to have a meat loaf. What difference does it make how much it is?

BEATRICE

You really don't like meat, huh?

JOHN

No I don't. I don't like eating cows.

BEATRICE

Honey, everything comes from a cow. Everything.

She walks into the kitchen.

21 INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

21

Beatrice takes out a salad from the freezer. She looks at her other food to see what she might have that a non-meat-eater can eat.

BEATRICE

Let's see, honey, what can I give you? I have some cold spaghetti, but it has meat sauce on it.

JOHN

Listen, you know what, I don't think I want anything. I'm not hungry.

BEATRICE

Can you eat lamb chops?

JOHN

Mother, what the hell is a lamb? It's meat.

BEATRICE

Well it's not a cow. I didn't know if it was the animal you were siding with or the whole thing. Do you want some cheese?

JOHN

No, why don't you just give me the salad.

BEATRICE

Why don't I give you some cheese?

From the freezer she takes out a huge hunk of Swiss cheese. It must weigh at least ten pounds. John glances at it.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

That's a lot of cheese.

BEATRICE

They had a sale. So I bought it in hunks.

John looks at the cheese, there's a date on it. He's stunned.

JOHN

Mother, this is three years old.

BEATRICE

It's been in the freezer.

JOHN

But it's three years old, what...what are you doing? How cheap was this that you wanted to buy this much of it?

BEATRICE

Honey, this is wonderful cheese from Switzerland. It's very hard to get.

JOHN

It's not that hard to get, it's all here. Jesus mom, I don't want any of the cheese.

BEATRICE

You didn't even try it.

JOHN

I can see by the gross weight that I'm not going to enjoy it. I like my cheeses to be in the ounces. When they weigh as much as a Fiat, I get worried.

BEATRICE

Whatever.

She goes back to the cupboard and looks for more food he can eat.

BEATRICE

Can you eat saltines?

JOHN

Yes, I can eat saltines. Can't anybody? That's what they give people who can't eat anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEATRICE
I just didn't know if they make it with
some sort of meat. I don't know what
they use in it.

She starts to read the ingredients.

JOHN
I'll tell you what. Tomorrow, just
clear out a little portion of the
refrigerator, I'll go shopping and get
stuff that I like.

BEATRICE
Oh no honey, you don't have to do that.

JOHN
Yes I do. I'm gonna be here. I want to
have things to eat.

BEATRICE
You think you'll be here long enough that
you need to go shopping?

JOHN
Yes. Why won't you understand what I'm
trying to do and support it?

John takes a bite of salad. He spits it back out. He
actually does a lettuce spit take.

JOHN
Oh my God!

He's wiping his mouth clean.

BEATRICE
What's wrong? There can't be meat in
that.

JOHN
Mother, there is no crunch to this
lettuce. This lettuce is sixty years
old.

BEATRICE
Lettuce doesn't get old.

JOHN
Lettuce doesn't get old? Where did you
read that? You've never seen wilted
lettuce?

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Honey, I just took it out of the freezer.

JOHN

You're freezing everything. It was a great invention, but it wasn't meant for everything.

BEATRICE

I make my salads on Monday and I keep them frozen all week. I think I know what I'm doing.

JOHN

Well fine, but it doesn't taste good to me.

BEATRICE

Well you're not use to it.

JOHN

I don't want to get use to it. I want to go to the market.

BEATRICE

Do you want some sherbert?

JOHN

(suspiciously)

What kind of sherbert?

BEATRICE

What do you mean? It's delicious.

John looks at the package. Sure enough it's a brand he's never heard of, "Sweet Tooth."

JOHN

Mother, where do you find Sweet Tooth? There's a Baskin-Robbins right down the street.

BEATRICE

Oh I would never go there. That's a waste of money. I'm not going to fall for that.

JOHN

Fall for what? They have ice cream in there. What are you falling for?

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

There's no difference. Why should I pay triple the amount when they probably go to the supermarket and buy the same kind?

John opens up the top. He looks at the sherbert. It's that sherbert that a long time ago lost it's color. Now it's got an ice glaze over the top.

JOHN

Mother, the ice cream is colorless.

BEATRICE

Look under the protective ice.

JOHN

The protective ice? You've given a name to this clear hard thing that sits on the top?

BEATRICE

If you don't want it, don't eat it.

JOHN

Mother, when I'm down, and you give me these words of wisdom, you tell me I don't need to see a shrink, I should just enjoy my life, and stop being hard on myself. How can I do that when I come from you? You're running a food museum here. I don't understand it. Why can't you just go and buy fresh ice cream?

BEATRICE

You haven't even tried it. You're making fun of the ice cream, you haven't even tasted it. It's wonderful sherbert.

JOHN

I don't care. Forget it.

BEATRICE

No, I want you to tell me. Now you tell me.

John looks at it. She's cleared a path to the actual product. He reluctantly takes a spoon and goes past the protective layer, down into the orange part. He puts it in his mouth. He spits it out.

JOHN

Oh my God mother, this is horribly old! This tastes like an orange foot. This is horrible.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (5)

21

BEATRICE

You're the first one who didn't like it.

JOHN

I bet.

BEATRICE

Honey, buy your own then. Listen, I'm exhausted. I'm going to bed. Whatever you want to eat, just put the dishes in the sink and I'll see you in the morning. Then we'll talk about the couch.

She gives him a big hug.

BEATRICE

It's such a surprise to have you here.

Beatrice goes off to her bedroom. John walks down the hall. He opens the door to his old room and peeks in. It's dark. He turns on the light.

CUT TO:

22 INT. JOHN'S OLD ROOM - EVENING

22

There's a musty smell. No one's been in here for years. It's got a sewing machine, an old T.V., books and papers, a couch, and another older couch that's covered. Basically, Beatrice has saved everything and put it here. It has kitchen chairs stacked up. John starts to move some things. As he's moving the chairs, his mother comes in. She has her robe on.

BEATRICE

Honey, what are you doing?

JOHN

I just wanted to see how maybe I could clear this.

BEATRICE

Dear, we were going to talk about that tomorrow. I don't think it's a good idea.

JOHN

But this is very important to me, I want to stay in this room.

BEATRICE

What are you trying to do? Remind me.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

I want to see if we can recapture a feeling.

BEATRICE

You want to stay in here to recapture something?

JOHN

I want to see what feelings it would bring up.

BEATRICE

But honey, what am I going to do with all of this? Just leave it.

JOHN

Well let's put it in the garage temporarily.

BEATRICE

Oh no no dear, you can't do that.

JOHN

Of course you can, why not?

BEATRICE

Because you don't want to...you know the garage isn't made for storage.

JOHN

What?

BEATRICE

It's not like a garage that they make for storage. I just have the car in there and we don't want to fool around.

JOHN

Mom, garages don't come in different styles. You can put whatever you want in them. I'll take care of it. Don't worry.

BEATRICE

I don't want to get everything dusty.

JOHN

You don't want to get everything dusty? Look at these chairs, they're all piled on top of each other. What difference does it make if they get dusty?

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

I plan to use these chairs.

JOHN

In what? A vaudeville act? They go all the way to the ceiling.

BEATRICE

Honey, this furniture is very heavy, you're not strong enough to do this, and I can't help you.

JOHN

I'll pick up a worker at Sears, somebody will help me.

BEATRICE

Do you know how to do that?

JOHN

How to do what?

BEATRICE

How to choose those men on the corner.

JOHN

Mother, it's not an art form. You just point to one of them and they get in the car.

BEATRICE

Don't overpay them. That's insulting. I read where they don't like that.

JOHN

You're absolutely right. I remember reading that myself. When they come and get their paycheck, when it's huge, they get furious.

BEATRICE

Well they're different than us.

JOHN

You're different than them. Good night mother.

100001

DISSOLVE TO:

23 INT. JOHN'S ROOM, EXT. GARAGE - MONTAGE - NEXT MORNING

23

Over the appropriate music, we SEE the sewing room slowly being turned back into John's old boyhood room. John, the HELPER he's gotten from the street, and Beatrice, who is watching the helper to make sure he doesn't take the money, move furniture from one room to the other. As the montage ends, John pays the helper over Beatrice's ever watchful eye.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

24 EXT. BEATRICE'S HOUSE - DAY

24

Beatrice follows the helper out the door, down the steps, to the street, waves him good-bye like a steamboat heading off to London never to return.

CUT TO:

25 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - DAY

25

Beatrice is looking around.

BEATRICE

Well this is something. Look what you've done. It looks exactly like it use to look. You covered all my stuff?

JOHN

Yes.

BEATRICE

And the exhaust from the car won't hurt anything?

JOHN

Mother, only humans lose their lives from carbon monoxide, inanimate objects really aren't affected.

BEATRICE

You know this?

JOHN

Yes, I was gonna write about it.

CUT TO:

26 INT. JEFF HENDERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

26

It's large and opulent. Exactly like a successful sports agent would have.

Jeff is on the PICTURE PHONE with his mother. Only one-quarter of Beatrice's face is visible on his screen.

27 INTERCUT WITH BEATRICE

27

JEFF

Mom, you have to sit right in front of the camera. I can't see you.

BEATRICE

Honey, I'm not sure where the camera is.

JEFF

It's the little hole right above the screen.

BEATRICE

I don't think I have the same one you do.

JEFF

Yes, of course you do. It's the same phone, just move to your right.

Beatrice moves to her left. Now she is completely off camera.

JEFF

That's your left.

BEATRICE

Honey I can't hear you.

JEFF

(yelling)

MOTHER.

A face reappears, but only a half of one.

BEATRICE

Honey...

JEFF

Stay right there. That's fine. Don't move.

They now have a conversation with half of Beatrice's face and all of Jeff's.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

I think he wants to see what he can do about your relationship.

BEATRICE

Well what's wrong with our relationship? Maybe we don't see as much of each other as you and I, but it's fine.

JEFF

Well go with it for a little while. I'm sure he'll get sick of it.

BEATRICE

But isn't there something wrong when a grown man puts his high school awards back on the shelf?

JEFF

Well look, he's a writer. Chalk it up to that.

BEATRICE

Oh I don't think that has anything to do with writing. He's not that famous a writer that he can afford to go nuts.

JEFF

Well he might be famous one day mom, you never know.

BEATRICE

Really? You really think that's possible? Do your people think so?

JEFF

Well my people are athletes. I don't even think they know him.

BEATRICE

That's my point.

JEFF

Don't worry mother, I'm sure he'll get tired of it soon. I'll call you later. Love you.

BEATRICE

Love you Jeffy.

CUT TO:

28 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - DAY

28

John is at his computer. He's staring. He can't think of a word. Beatrice pokes her head in.

BEATRICE
Still blocked?

John glares at her.

BEATRICE
Honey, I'm going to the market. I'll be back in an hour.

JOHN
I'd like to go with you.

BEATRICE
No...Really? Well...

CUT TO:

29 EXT. SAFEWAY MARKET - DAY

29

A car pulls into the market in Sausalito. It's John and his mother. She is driving. She goes past a space that's empty. We just see John POINT to that space. She circles the lot and drives past it again. John POINTS to it again. She circles for the third time. He GRABS THE WHEEL and forces the car into the space.

30 INT. CAR - DAY

30

BEATRICE
Honey don't do that. If you want to drive, drive, but don't take the wheel.

JOHN
We were going to lose the space. I had to take some action.

31 INT. SAFEWAY MARKET - DAY

31

John and Beatrice walk inside and stop near the baskets.

BEATRICE
Would you like a separate basket?

JOHN
Why?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

Well you know, if I have some meat products, I didn't...

JOHN

I don't care if meat's in the basket. I just don't want to eat it.

BEATRICE

I didn't know how far you take this.

JOHN

Let's use the same basket. I think it's appropriate.

They start shopping. On the first aisle, they get to the peanut butters.

BEATRICE

Would you like some peanut butter?

JOHN

Yes.

She goes past the Skippy and the Jiff and the Laura Scudders. She gets New Taste. John gives her her first real test.

JOHN

I'd like Skippy Premium.

BEATRICE

Honey, there's no difference.

JOHN

I'd like Skippy Premium.

BEATRICE

Dear, there's no reason to pay the extra. This all comes from the same place. The man told me it's just the label.

JOHN

I'm buying my food. I want the Skippy.

BEATRICE

Do whatever you want. I just don't know why you'd want to throw away the money.

JOHN

Because that's exactly what I want to do, I want to throw away the fifty-one cent difference. I know the food is the same, but I want an experience where we throw away fifty-one cents together.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

You throw it away. New Taste is as good as any of this, and I won't be fooled.

JOHN

Come on mom, do it for me, splurge.

He takes the Skippy Premium and puts it in the basket. She looks at him as if to say, "it's never going to work with you."

JOHN

(continuing the tease)

You know what I'd like to do, mom? I'd like to buy the most expensive jelly in the market.

BEATRICE

Oh honey, you're something!

JOHN

What do you think the most expensive jelly is?

BEATRICE

I don't buy jelly. I don't know.

They stop at the jellies. There's Smucker's, Welch's, and all the standard brands. Then there's one luxury brand for \$10.95. It's wrapped up in tissue paper and has a ribbon on it. John takes that. Beatrice almost has a heart attack.

BEATRICE

Oh, don't buy that.

JOHN

Why?

BEATRICE

Because that's a waste of money. You can get a whole jar here for \$2.50. Why do you want to spend \$10.95?

JOHN

Cause this looks like good jelly and thank God we can afford it. Let's experience this together.

BEATRICE

I don't want this experience. You're fooled by these names and all that fancy wrapping.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

I'm not fooled by anything. This is not what the experiment's about. It's not about being fooled. It's about splurging. See, I realized something. I think you treat yourself very cheaply, and I think that therefore you have instilled that into me.

BEATRICE

Honey, I don't treat myself cheaply at all. I lived through a Depression. You didn't.

JOHN

Things aren't so great right now.

BEATRICE

Well it's not like it was in the thirties. You don't have to wait in line to buy bread.

John looks to his left. There's a huge line out by the bakery. The camera sees it. No one says anything.

JOHN

Fine, so it's sixty years later. I've heard this Depression story.

BEATRICE

Well, it's true.

JOHN

Okay, but what does that have to do with splurging for jam now? We're in the nineties, mom, it's fancy jam time. You see, we don't like ourselves enough. This is the problem, you don't give yourself anything, I don't give myself anything. It's so clear.

BEATRICE

(looking around)

Shh, honey, I don't want to have this discussion now. I like myself very much. Because I don't want to spend \$10.00 for bullshit jam has nothing to do with what I feel about myself.

JOHN

I never heard you use the word "bullshit."

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

You never heard me use a lot of words.

JOHN

All right, would you pick up the jam and put it in the basket?

BEATRICE

No, if you want it, you pick it up.

JOHN

You're closer to it. Would you please pick it up?

She reacts as if touching it means she's already given in. She picks it up like a delicate nuclear object.

BEATRICE

What a waste. Looks like a toy for God's sake. I'm sure the checker's going to have a good laugh over this.

JOHN

Mother it's hand packed. It might be very good.

BEATRICE

It doesn't matter.

JOHN

Can't you just laugh about it? Can't you throw caution to the wind?

BEATRICE

Caution I can throw all day long, money's another matter.

They walk past the dairy case. He goes for some Haven Dazs. She looks at him, then picks up a brand of ice cream no one's ever heard of. She next stops at the dry cereal and picks up some Grape Nuts.

JOHN

I'm surprised. A brand. Don't they make "New Nuts?"

BEATRICE

I enjoy Grape Nuts.

JOHN

I know you do.

(CONTINUED)

She picks up a small package of Safeway sugar. He picks up the C&H.

BEATRICE

If you tell me there's a difference between sugar, I'm really going to get upset. You don't know how to market.

He puts the C&H back.

JOHN

I know there's no difference. I know sugar is the same.

BEATRICE

It's all the same.

JOHN

It's not all the same.

They round the corner and run into two OLDER WOMEN, HELEN and ALICE, who obviously know John's mother.

HELEN

Beatrice! Hello. This is my sister. Sis, this is Beatrice.

ALICE

How do you do?

BEATRICE

Oh, I forget your name.

ALICE

Alice.

BEATRICE

Yes, that's right.

HELEN

Well Beatrice, it's so good to see you. Alice is going to be here for a week and then she's going to take a cruise down to Mexico.

BEATRICE

Oh, my, a cruise!

Meanwhile, John is standing there embarrassed at not being introduced.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (6)

JOHN

I'm John.

BEATRICE

This is my son, the other one.

HELEN

Oh.

Beatrice feels she has to apologize for what's in the basket.

BEATRICE

John is staying with me for awhile and
he likes this jelly.

HELEN

Oh, look at that.

ALICE

Oh I've heard of that. It's hand packed!

Beatrice is shocked that anyone near her age would even
reasonably approve of this purchase.

BEATRICE

You've heard of it?

ALICE

Oh, yes. They're very big in the
catalog business.

JOHN

(smiling)

Really?

ALICE

Yes. I hear their jelly is wonderful.
You know what else, they have a peanut
butter for \$12.00 that's out of this
world.

John smiles at his mother.

BEATRICE

Well what do you think of that, leave it
to my son.

HELEN

You're the writer?

JOHN

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

He hasn't written anything for awhile,
but he's working on a new book.

JOHN

Thanks for the intro.

ALICE

What are you writing?

JOHN

Well I'm working on a science fiction
novel.

BEATRICE

Like Stephen King.

ALICE AND HELEN

(impressed)

Ohhhhhhh.

BEATRICE

Now Stephen King could afford this jelly.
My son, I'm not so sure.

JOHN

Mom, let's go. We have a lot of
shopping.

HELEN

Beatrice, I will speak to you. Nice to
see you, and nice to see you John.

JOHN

Thank you, it was nice to meet you.

ALICE

Nice to meet you, John.

John pushes the cart away.

JOHN

You see how you treat me? All you do is
apologize. You just apologize for me.

BEATRICE

Honey, I don't apologize for you at all.
Maybe I am a little embarrassed about the
jelly, so what?

JOHN

Why would you be embarrassed about the
jelly? Didn't your friends like it? You
should be impressed.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Her sister doesn't know anything. You want to know something about her?

JOHN

No, I really don't.

BEATRICE

Well, she was in some sort of an institution for a few years. Nobody knows what really happened.

JOHN

Well I'm sure she went insane for spending a few dollars more for her food.

Meanwhile, as John and Beatrice are talking, the two women accidentally come around the same aisle. They all bump into each other again, and now they begin this endless round of new introductions.

HELEN

Oh my goodness.

They all laugh.

ALICE

What did we do?

Now they want to talk about this for a long time.

HELEN

I must have come around the same way!

BEATRICE

No we came around the opposite way! We really didn't...we were going to go to another aisle, but we didn't.

JOHN

(under his breath)

Maybe moving up here is a mistake. If I don't stop this, we'll all turn into skeletons with this conversation.

A CLERK walks by. Beatrice wants to explain it.

BEATRICE

Do you know what we just did? We just said good-bye up there...

As Beatrice continues her story, John hides his head. He doesn't mind hearing this if the women are talking about it,

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (9)

31

but not when the clerk's involved. Everyone enjoys the laugh again. As they finish the story, Beatrice turns to her son...

BEATRICE

Come on honey, let's get your non-meat things.

CUT TO:

32 INT. BEATRICE'S KITCHEN - DAY

32

John is bringing in the shopping bags.

BEATRICE

Honey, I cleared out the refrigerator and I gave you the right-hand side. So I'll put your stuff there.

JOHN

This is like "It Happened One Night" for food.

BEATRICE

I loved that movie. Clark Gable was wonderful.

JOHN

You really want to separate the refrigerator?

BEATRICE

Yes dear, it's easier. That way you won't accidentally eat some meat.

JOHN

Good idea mother. That's interesting that you know that. It happens to me a lot, I accidentally eat things all day long.

Beatrice takes a chicken out from her bag and puts it in the refrigerator. She finds that it crosses over a little bit into John's space. She tries to squeeze it into hers. John watches this.

JOHN

What are you doing?

BEATRICE

I can't fit this completely on my side, the chicken is going to have to stick over a little.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Would you forget the separation? Just put it in there. I can pick out my own food.

BEATRICE

I just wanted to make it easier for you.

JOHN

Then don't manage the food. My eyes are connected to my brain, like in a real person. I know what it is that I want to eat.

BEATRICE

Fine.

She closes the refrigerator door.

BEATRICE

If you'd rather not divide it up, we don't divide it up. Would you like some of your food now?

JOHN

I'm a little hungry.

BEATRICE

Let me make you something. Sit down.

John goes to the table and sits down. Beatrice begins to prepare some of his food.

BEATRICE

Honey, tell me again because people will start asking, you're here, why?

JOHN

Why? Well, it's complicated mother, but you know why.

BEATRICE

Well you're having problems and you're blaming me, is that it?

JOHN

I'm not blaming you. I'm just failing with these relationships with women and maybe something has to be fixed here, before I can do that correctly. There, I think that's a good way to say it.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Oh no, I wasn't listening. Tell them what?

JOHN

You know this is one of the problems. What are you so worried about? Don't say anything.

BEATRICE

I can pretend you're here for just a regular reason.

JOHN

Yeah, like a visit. I'm your son.

BEATRICE

Of course, you could be here for any number of reasons. For example, you could have injured yourself and you need me to take care of you.

JOHN

I'm not going to limp for you mother.

BEATRICE

Oh no, no, no, some internal injury.

Beatrice starts bringing him food.

BEATRICE

You're really not making it work with the women though, huh, dear?

JOHN

Yeah, it's not going that great.

BEATRICE

Well Karen was lovely. What was the problem there again?

JOHN

She didn't support me.

BEATRICE

Did you support her?

JOHN

Yes, I supported her.

BEATRICE

Did you really dear? I remember when she wanted to...oh I forget...what was it

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE (cont'd)

that she wanted to do that you didn't want?

JOHN

Leave me.

BEATRICE

Oh, of course, why would you support that? Well the hell with her honey. She wasn't that cute anyway.

JOHN

Mom I'm fine with her. Don't trash her looks.

Beatrice goes back to the counter bringing him more food. Now John has a salad, he has some cheese, he has some bread that's cut up, he has a plate of saltines, he has some fruit.

JOHN

Mother, stop this. It's like "Fantasia." Don't bring me anything else.

BEATRICE

You said you were hungry.

JOHN

Let me explain something to you. I don't know how to answer the food questions. I never have. When I say I'm hungry you bring me food, when I say I'm not hungry you bring me food. You ask the questions, but you don't listen to the answers, so I always know you're going to bring me food. I just have to adjust to how seriously I say I'm not hungry to know how much food I'm gonna get. So don't ask anymore. Just bring what you want, I'll eat what I want, and that will be that.

BEATRICE

Honey, I never knew it was this much of a problem. I won't ask you about the food anymore.

JOHN

No, you can ask about it, but you know what I'm saying.

Beatrice sits down. She eats a little piece of cheese, she makes a noise that says, "this is delicious."

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (4)

BEATRICE

I wish your father were alive so he could take a little of this blame.

JOHN

Is that a joke?

BEATRICE

Yes it is honey.

JOHN

Every time you say something funny I'm so shocked.

BEATRICE

I know. You must think of me as some sort of moron.

JOHN

No, not a moron, just someone who thinks I'm a moron.

BEATRICE

Well it takes one to know one, doesn't it dear?

They both laugh.

JOHN

You know the son gets more from his mother anyway, doesn't he, than his father?

BEATRICE

Well in your case, yes, but not all the time.

JOHN

Who instilled the cheapness and self-loathing? You, right?

Beatrice wipes her mouth off with her napkin, gets up with a half smile...

BEATRICE

Dear, I'm tired, we can berate me tomorrow.

JOHN

I love you mother.

Beatrice turns around.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

You know honey, if you talk to the women the way you talk to me sometimes, I can see why they all leave you. You should examine more closely what you say.

JOHN

They didn't all leave me. I left some of them.

BEATRICE

Really? I didn't know that.

CUT TO:

33 COMPUTER SCREEN - MORNING

33

The following words are being typed out:

"It is morning on this strange planet.
We do not know where we are, but we're
safe, at least for the moment. What is
outside, no one knows."

The words stop there. The cursor backspaces, erasing "no one knows," and adding:

"we might never know."

34 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - MORNING

34

John is sitting in the room he grew up in, staring at his computer. He has a glass of orange juice and some coffee and a half-eaten bagel. He looks disgusted. Beatrice calls him.

BEATRICE (V.O.)

Honey!

JOHN

I'm in my room.

She walks to the door and peeks in.

BEATRICE

Honey, I'm going out, I'll be back later. Are you all right?

JOHN

Where are you going?

BEATRICE

Oh, I have shopping and things to do.

(CONTINUED)

Beatrice notices the computer. She walks over.

BEATRICE

Oh, look at this. This is beautiful!

JOHN

Have you ever seen one before?

BEATRICE

Well only in the store. My goodness look what they've done.

JOHN

Did you ever use one?

BEATRICE

No.

JOHN

Do you know how to type?

BEATRICE

Do I know how to type? I was the fastest typist in my class. Number one. And they were manual then. They didn't do all these things.

JOHN

Well try this. You'll love this keyboard.

BEATRICE

No, I couldn't.

JOHN

Just do it. It feels great, you'll love it.

Beatrice sits down. She's intrigued. She starts to type.

JOHN

See that, and the keys never stick.

She types faster and faster the longer she does it. She's typing standard phrases perfectly.

"The sly brown fox quickly jumped over the lazy dog."

JOHN

Hey, that's good.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

You just return, it returns
automatically?

JOHN

It does everything automatically.

BEATRICE

My goodness.

JOHN

You're good.

BEATRICE

(getting up)

Well your mother does a lot of things
you don't know about.

JOHN

Well I'm here, tell me. That's what I
came for.

BEATRICE

You came here to find out what I do? I
thought you came here because of the
problems with the women.

JOHN

Both. And more, let's find out
everything about you.

BEATRICE

No, no, not now dear, I have to go.

JOHN

I'm taking you to dinner tonight.

BEATRICE

What?

JOHN

We have a date tonight. I'll pick you up
at your room at eight o'clock. We're
going out to dinner.

BEATRICE

Honey, you don't have to do that. I can
make something.

JOHN

No, I don't want anymore house cheese.
I'm buying us a nice dinner tonight.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

You don't have to do that dear.

JOHN

Don't keep saying that. I don't have to do anything. You be in your room at eight, sharp.

CUT TO:

35 INT. JEFF'S OFFICE - DAY

35

Sitting there are a BASEBALL PLAYER AND HIS WIFE. Jeff is on the phone. He's smiling at them. He's just accomplished something wonderful.

JEFF

Two and a half million? That's three years guaranteed. That's eight hundred thousand to sign. I'll run it by them and we will get back to you.

He gives a thumbs up to the athlete. The baseball player looks at his wife and smiles. Everybody is thrilled.

JEFF

Fine. What if he hits over three hundred? I think that would be fair.

(he puts his hand over the phone and whispers)

You hit over three hundred, you get an extra million.

(back into the phone)

Okay. We'll get back to you shortly.

Jeff hangs up the phone. He stands up.

JEFF

Congratulations, this is a terrific deal, if I say so myself.

BALLPLAYER

Oh man, you're unbelievable Jeff. I'm getting two and a half million now?

JEFF

By Friday, if we say yes today.

WIFE

Well we do want to talk it over, but I'm sure that we're going to take it.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

Go home, talk it over. You'll call me later. Hey how come you guys don't use the picture phone?

WIFE

(making excuses)

I think it's broken. The camera doesn't photograph anything.

Jeff leans over and speaks into the intercom.

JEFF

Nora, get Bob another picture phone quickly, will you? If you got one in the closet, let him take it home with him.

WIFE

You don't have to do that.

JEFF

It's no problem. I'll call you at five o'clock. Congratulations, you're right at the top!

The ball player gives him a big hand shake. He can't believe that he's now a millionaire. As they leave, Jeff goes back to his desk. He presses the intercom button.

JEFF

Get my wife, will you?

Jeff sits there. He's got a big smile on his face. He leans back. A man king of his world. He's dying to tell somebody. Nora BUZZES him.

NORA(V.O.)

Nobody's home.

JEFF

Call my mom, will you?

36 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - DAY

36

John's staring again at the computer, going over that same sentence, putting back the original "no one knows." The phone's RINGING. He gets up. He walks to the kitchen.

37 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

37

John walks in and picks up the phone.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

JOHN

Hello?

38 INTERCUT WITH NORA

38

NORA

Is Mrs. Henderson there?

JOHN

Who's calling?

NORA

It's Jeff, her son.

JOHN

Oh, hi. I'm John, his brother.

NORA

Oh, hi. How are you? Is your mother there?

JOHN

No, my mother's not here.

NORA

Well hold on, let me tell him you're on.

39 INT. JEFF'S OFFICE - DAY

39

Jeff comes on the phone, disappointed that his mother isn't home and also disappointed that John didn't use the picture phone.

JEFF

Hey, John, how are you?

JOHN

Fine. How's it going?

JEFF

How come you're not using the picture phone?

JOHN

I don't like using it. I don't look good right now. What's up?

JEFF

When's mom gonna be back?

JOHN

I don't know, later.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

I have something to tell her. I want to talk to her. I'll call her tonight.

JOHN

We're going out tonight.

JEFF

What do you mean?

JOHN

What could I mean? I'm taking her out.

JEFF

What time will you be home?

JOHN

I don't know Jeff. We haven't left yet.

JEFF

Well tell her I called.

JOHN

I'll give her the message.

JEFF

Don't forget. By the way, these picture phones aren't cheap. It would be nice if people would use them.

JOHN

Call Mitsubishi, I didn't invent them.

CUT TO:

40 INT. BEATRICE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

40

It's eight o'clock. We hear the FOOTSTEPS of John walking down the hall. He approaches the door. He knocks.

From inside...

BEATRICE

One minute.

JOHN

It's eight.

BEATRICE

I'm almost ready.

John waits outside. All of a sudden the door opens. There's his mother. Actually looking...radiant. She actually looks as if she might have a sex life.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

JOHN
(his eyes open)
Mother!

BEATRICE
Something wrong?

JOHN
Quite to the contrary. You look
beautiful.

BEATRICE
Would you zip me up?

JOHN
Of course.

Beatrice turns around. John zips up the zipper. He whispers
into her ear...

JOHN
I like this mother, you know why?

BEATRICE
I'm afraid to ask.

JOHN
This is the closest we've ever been
without you giving me a criticism.

BEATRICE
(she starts sniffing the air)
Who's wearing that awful smell? That's
not your after-shave is it?

CLOSE UP of JOHN'S FACE. He's lost again.

CUT TO:

41 INT. QUAIN, LITTLE SAN FRANCISCO CAFE 100001 EVENING

41

In the background there is soft guitar music. The restaurant
is elegant, expensive, obviously a type of restaurant
Beatrice hasn't been to in years. She and John are seated.
Beatrice is looking around marveling at everything.

BEATRICE
Oh honey, this is gorgeous. How
expensive are they? I'm just curious.

JOHN
Don't worry about that tonight. I want
to take that pressure off of you.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

That's not why I asked, dear. I was just wondering. But you know you don't have to take me to expensive places. I'm happy anywhere.

JOHN

It shows.

A WAITER walks over.

WAITER

Good evening. Would you like something to drink?

JOHN

Mom, you want something to drink?

BEATRICE

Well, you know...I just...I'll tell you ... do you have any...like a red wine?

WAITER

We have many nice red wines, Ma'am.

BEATRICE

I'll have a martini.

JOHN

Make that two.

WAITER

Olives?

They both nod, "yes."

The waiter walks away.

BEATRICE

Honey, you have to be careful because you know you're driving.

JOHN

We'll each have one martini. But I wouldn't worry, if any two people could bring each other down from being drunk, I'm sure it's us.

BEATRICE

Well, I don't really like to get drunk anyway. I mean you know, a glass of wine, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

You're not having a glass of wine, you're having hard liquor. Admit it. Say the word martini.

BEATRICE

(looking around)

Shh, shh, shh, honey please.

JOHN

It's just funny, that's all. You wanted a martini, but you asked for wine.

BEATRICE

Well I wasn't sure I didn't want wine. I was thinking. I think out loud.

JOHN

Fine.

The waiter brings the drinks. He hands them the menus. Beatrice looks at hers. She looks at the price first, then the entree, just like reading Hebrew.

BEATRICE

(as she scans down the price list)

My goodness, everything looks delicious.

JOHN

It's all good.

Her eyes go to the least expensive item, "Chicken Stew." We cut to her face. She doesn't want to eat this, but yet she's torn. She doesn't want John to spend more than he has to.

JOHN

So what looks good to you?

BEATRICE

Well, the chicken stew looks wonderful.

John's eyes go right to the price. He understands. He starts to play with her. He finds the most expensive item on the menu, "The Giant Lobster" at \$31.50.

JOHN

Mom, why don't you have the giant lobster?

Beatrice's eyes go right to the price. She almost passes out.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Oh my God, no, no, I don't even like lobster.

JOHN

Yes you do.

BEATRICE

Well I don't like...not tonight. The chicken is fine.

JOHN

Well I think I'm gonna have two of the giant lobsters.

BEATRICE

Two?

JOHN

Yeah.

BEATRICE

Well why would you want to do that?

JOHN

Just to loosen you up.

BEATRICE

Oh honey, I'm plenty loose. Don't order the two giant lobsters. Really. Now I'm going to have the chicken stew.

JOHN

All right, if that's what you want.

BEATRICE

Maybe I'll also have a salad.

She looks at the salads. They're also priced high.

BEATRICE

You know what? I'll have the chicken first. Then if I'm still hungry, I'll have the salad.

JOHN

Mother, it's not Persia. You eat the salad first in this country. You want the salad? Have the salad.

Now the waiter arrives.

(CONTINUED)

WAITER

Are you ready to order?

BEATRICE

Yes, I will have the chicken stew.

WAITER

Really?

BEATRICE

And I'll start with...what's the smallest salad you have?

WAITER

We have a house salad, Ma'am.

BEATRICE

But you know, just a very small portion. As a matter of fact, if any lettuce at all is included with the stew, that would be enough.

WAITER

There's no lettuce with the stew. I'll bring you a small salad.

JOHN

I'll have the giant lobster and get another one ready. I might have two.

WAITER

Actually sir they're small, if you're hungry that might not be a bad idea.

BEATRICE

They're small! My goodness and they call them "giant."

JOHN

And I will start with a cobb salad.

WAITER

Large?

JOHN

Yes.

BEATRICE

That's a lot of food honey.

JOHN

I think I can handle it.

(CONTINUED)

WAITER
Will that be all?

JOHN
Yes.

He walks away.

BEATRICE
Wait.

He turns around.

BEATRICE
I'll have the lamb.

The waiter comes back. He's now confused.

WAITER
You want the stew and the lamb?

BEATRICE
No, I don't want the stew. I'm just
going to have the lamb.

JOHN
Go mom.

WAITER
Do you want the salad too?

BEATRICE
No, I don't think so.

JOHN
Yes she does.

BEATRICE
I'll have the salad too.

WAITER
Large?

Beatrice can't get any words out. She doesn't know what to do. It feels like she's taken a hallucinogenic drug, finally she bursts out...

BEATRICE
Yes...large! With everything on it. Put
all the extras on it.

The waiter nods and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Congratulations! Lamb and a big salad,
I'm proud of you.

BEATRICE

Honey you don't understand something
about me.

JOHN

You don't like to order anything over
five dollars?

BEATRICE

Let's just have a toast. To this
nonsense. To the experiment, whatever it
is.

They clink glasses. Beatrice downs almost half of her drink.

JOHN

Be careful mom, you're a passenger.

Beatrice smiles. She leans back. She stares at John. After
a moment...

BEATRICE

Honey, you look good.

JOHN

But?

BEATRICE

But what, dear?

JOHN

I'm wondering when the "but" is coming?

BEATRICE

Is that what you think I do?

JOHN

Well you do do it. I don't think you do
it. You do it.

BEATRICE

Honey, I don't mean anything by it. It's
just something that a mother does.

JOHN

Oh I don't know if every mother does
that. I don't think every mother says,
"you look good, but your hair's
thinning."

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

I never told you your hair was thinning.

JOHN

Yes you did. The last time I was at the house, as I was walking out you told me I had a bald spot. Remember you said, "take care of your bald spot."

BEATRICE

Well honey, someone has to say that. And by the way, whatever you did, it looks wonderful. You could barely tell.

JOHN

Yeah, well I tried that minoxidil stuff. I was a lucky one.

BEATRICE

But it doesn't work up here? Huh?

She points to his temples.

JOHN

No, it works mostly in the back.

BEATRICE

It's a miracle. Just think.

JOHN

You know it was blood pressure medicine.

BEATRICE

It was?

JOHN

Yes, they accidentally found out that it grew hair.

BEATRICE

Isn't that the way it always works? They always accidentally find something. Do you know how the cane was invented?

JOHN

No.

Beatrice doesn't say anything.

JOHN

How? .

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

I don't know dear. I just can't imagine that was it's original purpose.

At this moment the waiter arrives with the two salads.

BEATRICE

Oh my goodness. This looks lovely.

She takes a small bite.

BEATRICE

Delicious.

She finishes her martini.

WAITER

Would you like another martini?

BEATRICE

Oh no I...yes. Two olives.

JOHN

I'm fine. Thank you.

The waiter walks away.

JOHN

Well, well, well, look who's drinking.

BEATRICE

Actually honey, I love the olives. I never get a chance to have those particular kind.

JOHN

What? The kind soaked in liquor for forty hours? I understand. I think you've done very well so far mom. You're having the lamb, you're having two martinis and you ordered the salad.

BEATRICE

Let's change the subject dear. No more food talk.

She takes a sip of her drink.

BEATRICE

You don't really speak to your brother very much, do you?

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

No I don't.

BEATRICE

I wonder why? Maybe the age difference.

JOHN

Well, we're different. We're just different. Age difference, every difference.

BEATRICE

He's very successful, isn't he honey? He does very well.

JOHN

Yeah, he does. By the way, he called you today.

BEATRICE

Today? What time?

JOHN

Three.

BEATRICE

Oh my, he'll be upset, I didn't call him back.

JOHN

I told him we were going out. You can call him back later.

BEATRICE

I know, but he likes me to call him back right away.

JOHN

How often do you talk to him?

BEATRICE

Almost every day. You know he wants me to come down there and stay for good.

JOHN

Like in a cemetery?

BEATRICE

No honey, in his house.

JOHN

I know what you meant. You don't want to do that, do you?

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (10)

BEATRICE

You know I love it here. I don't know what I would do down there. I mean I love the children, but after a while what's there to do in Los Angeles?

JOHN

Well the fact that I'm sitting here with my mother, nothing...nothing.

BEATRICE

I just wish you could find a girl like Cheryl. She's a wonderful girl, don't you think honey?

JOHN

Yeah, I like her.

BEATRICE

So what happened? You just had some bad luck?

JOHN

(prepared now for the
traditional conversation)

What do you mean?

BEATRICE

No, I just mean that he seemed to hit it off right away and they have children and they're happy and you haven't found it.

JOHN

Well mom, I can't help that. I can't help who I am.

BEATRICE

Of course not dear, I know that. I'm just saying it's interesting how someone has good luck and someone has bad luck.

JOHN

Well I'm not looking at my life as bad luck. I'm on a quest, mother. I'm a writer. I'm searching. He's an agent. We're different people.

BEATRICE

You know something? Maybe you should write about that.

This is the first time that his mother has actually talked to him about his work in this fashion.

100001

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

What? What did you say?

BEATRICE

Well, I just think that you should think about writing about real things. You know people, instead of the science fiction all the time.

JOHN

Science fiction has people in it. What kind of comment is that?

BEATRICE

It's not a bad comment, honey. It's just my opinion. Sometimes I think it would be interesting to write about what's really right here, instead of all the made-up stuff. You know the large heads and what was that one character you had with just a big hand?

JOHN

Well, mother everything's made-up. All stories are made-up. Even if I wrote about here, I'd have to make it up. Isn't it more visionary to make up a world that doesn't exist?

BEATRICE

Maybe. Maybe you're right. I guess you're right.

JOHN

Look you don't have to like science fiction. That's allowed. I'm not going to bully you into liking a genre.

BEATRICE

Oh no, honey, I love science fiction.

JOHN

You don't love science fiction.

BEATRICE

Oh yes I do. I think it's very creative.

JOHN

But not as creative as a story about what, brothers?

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (12)

41

BEATRICE
You misunderstand me.

JOHN
I know. Vice versa.

BEATRICE
Honey, let's change the subject.

She picks up her martini, feeling a little bit tipsy.

BEATRICE
To a new subject.

JOHN
To a new subject.

They clink glasses. Beatrice stares at him for a moment.

BEATRICE
Maybe when you stopped eating meat, your
writing became a little thinner.

CUT TO:

42 INT. BEATRICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

42

The door opens and John and Beatrice walk in. The PHONE IS
RINGING. Beatrice walks fast towards the ringing phone.

JOHN
Why don't you get an answering machine?

BEATRICE
I had one, but it broke. I never got it
fixed.

JOHN
You don't get them fixed. You throw them
away.

BEATRICE
(picks up phone)
Hello?

43 INT. JEFF'S DEN - NIGHT

43

INTERCUT

Jeff's on the PICTURE PHONE, except there's no picture on his
screen.

(CONTINUED)

JEFF

Hi, mom.

BEATRICE

Hi, honey.

JEFF

Sit down in front of the camera.

BEATRICE

Oh, honey, I just walked in. I'm exhausted, let me use this phone.

JEFF

Where were you?

BEATRICE

We went to the most beautiful restaurant. I...

JEFF

(interrupts)

Listen, I closed a giant deal today!

BEATRICE

Really, honey?

JEFF

It was phenomenal.

BEATRICE

Well dear, let me call you later, and you'll tell me all about it.

JEFF

Well let me tell you now. You can't talk now?

BEATRICE

I just got in honey. I just...you know...I want to be able to concentrate.

JEFF

(sounding a bit hurt)

It's okay. Forget it. I'll tell you about it later.

BEATRICE

All right, dear. Sleep well.

JEFF

Yeah. Say "hi" to John.

(CONTINUED)

Beatrice and Jeff hang up.

BEATRICE
Your brother says "hi."

JOHN
Thanks.

BEATRICE
Honey, do you want something to eat?

JOHN
Something to eat? Aren't you full?

BEATRICE
What a lovely time that was tonight.
Thank you dear.

JOHN
Well, I guess I'll try to work a bit now.
I'll see you in the morning.

BEATRICE
All right, dear. You don't feel silly in
that room, huh?

JOHN
Yes, of course I feel silly.

BEATRICE
And yet you want to be in there. Well,
you know what you're doing.

JOHN
Tomorrow we're gonna spend the day
together, okay?

BEATRICE
Oh honey, I can't tomorrow.

JOHN
Why?

BEATRICE
I have to take my car in.

JOHN
What time is that?

BEATRICE
Nine o'clock.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN

So how does it ruin the whole day?

BEATRICE

Well you know, if there's something wrong they might want me to leave it. I don't know, you never know what they're going to say.

JOHN

Well why let that ruin your day? What is wrong with the car?

BEATRICE

There's some sort of rattle.

JOHN

I'll take a look at it. Maybe I can fix it.

BEATRICE

Oh no, I can't do that.

JOHN

You can't do what?

BEATRICE

You could void the warranty.

JOHN

What are you talking about?

BEATRICE

They told me that if I took the car to some place other than the dealer, it could void the warranty.

JOHN

But I'm not a place mom, I'm your kid. I don't have a shop. They're not gonna see you driving in, I have no waiting room, no magazines, no nothing.

BEATRICE

Honey look, just forget it. You could make it worse.

JOHN

Ah ha! There's the real reason! My making it worse, I accept. This whole dealer concept I can't buy.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. DELTA 88 - DAY
chugging along into town.

44

45 INT. DELTA 88 - DAY
Beatrice is driving. John's in the passenger seat.

45

BEATRICE
I can't get over that you know so much
about cars.

JOHN
Well your air cleaner was loose. That's
all. Believe me, you don't need any
knowledge. You just tighten the bolt and
that's it.

BEATRICE
Well, it's wonderful, dear. I'm sure
they would have found something to charge
me a fortune for. It's nice having a man
around the house.

JOHN
Dad use to fix stuff?

BEATRICE
Oh God no, I just always liked that
expression.

CUT TO:

46 PARKING GATE - MALL - DAY
The car stops.

46

JOHN
Take the ticket.

BEATRICE
Well honey, I just wonder maybe I don't
know...we could park...

JOHN
Mom, it's free. You just...don't even
have to have it validated. Just take the
ticket.

BEATRICE
You don't have to have it validated?

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

JOHN
Take the Goddamn ticket!

She takes the ticket, the gate opens, the car moves on.

As they're looking for a parking space, Beatrice can't stop talking about this.

BEATRICE
So they don't care whether you buy something or not?

JOHN
No, not in the big places.

BEATRICE
You're sure? Because you know sometimes honey, they tell you that and then on the way out...

JOHN
You have to pay two bucks. I know.
Don't worry, I'll take care of it either way.

CUT TO:

47 INT. MALL - DAY

47

John and Beatrice are walking inside the mall. Beatrice has never been here. She is looking around like an excited child.

BEATRICE
My goodness. Look what they do with these places.

JOHN
You've never been here?

BEATRICE
Well, you know, it's far from the house.
What am I going to do? I'm not going to come here.

JOHN
It's ten minutes from the house.

BEATRICE
Oh well, it felt far.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

John passes a men's store like THE GAP.

JOHN

Come in here for a minute. Let me get what I need.

48 INT. THE GAP - DAY

48

Beatrice walks in. A SALESMAN, a kid, comes up.

SALESMAN

Yeah, may I help you?

JOHN

I need underwear.

SALESMAN

Okay.

The Salesman glances at John and then his mother, then back to John. John sees him looking.

JOHN

That's my mother.

BEATRICE

I didn't come here to pick out underwear for him. He's just staying with me for awhile.

JOHN

(in front of the salesman)

See, mom, this is a fellow that we don't have to tell that to. I know you have to tell your friends, but...

(to the kid)

What's your name?

SALESMAN

Steve.

JOHN

Steve, other than selling us things, you don't give a shit about us, do you?

SALESMAN

No, not really.

JOHN

(to Beatrice)

See.

49 INT. MALL - DAY

49

John and Beatrice continue shopping. Walking along, he now has his package of underwear under his arm.

BEATRICE
I don't tell everyone.

JOHN
You do. You don't even realize it.
You're trying to justify everything to
strangers.

BEATRICE
No, dear, that's not it at all. People
are just curious why a grown man and his
mother would be in an underwear store.

JOHN
That's my point. Who cares if they're
curious? You see, you want their
approval, I want your approval. It's all
about approval. We've got an approval
problem in this family.

Beatrice is looking around.

BEATRICE
We don't have any problem in this family
and lower your voice. You're making this
all too serious. Now where do you want
to go next?

JOHN
There's a little store down here called
Tell-All. Let's go in. It's where you
dump out all your personal things.

BEATRICE
This is...you're joking?

JOHN
Yes.

BEATRICE
If only your writing were that real.

CUT TO:

50 INT. PET STORE - DAY

50

John and Beatrice walk into the pet store. John leans down
and picks up a little puppy and starts to play with it.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

Beatrice, just like when she was in the restaurant, glances at the price before she even looks at the dog. This dog is \$3,200.

BEATRICE

Oh honey, put that down...don't play with that. Do you know how much this dog is?

JOHN

I'm not gonna kill it. What am I Lenny in Of Mice and Men? I'm petting the dog mother.

BEATRICE

Honey, it's almost four thousand dollars, you don't want to...

JOHN

Don't want to what?

BEATRICE

All right, do what you want.

Beatrice wanders away. She makes her way to the front of the store. She's looking at the various parakeets, rabbits, etc.

All of a sudden John looks up. He sees his mother. She's talking to the pet salesman.

The camera focuses in on her lips. Just like HAL reading the lips of the astronauts in "2001", he can see what his mother is saying. Her lips say...

CLOSE UP BEATRICE'S LIPS

BEATRICE

My son is home for awhile. That's why we're shopping today. Normally he doesn't live with me. He's divorced.

CUT TO:

JOHN'S EYES

They curl up like Clint Eastwood. He's angry. He wants to shoot them both.

CUT TO:

51 INT. MALL - DAY

They're walking.

JOHN

You told him I was divorced.

BEATRICE

Honey, he asked.

JOHN

Oh, I'm sure he did mother. That's what they do in these stores. Before they can sell you a bird, they need to know your marital status. I mean what difference does it make? What if we were Man and Wife?

John says this a little too loudly. Beatrice looks around.

BEATRICE

Shh, honey, please...

John is now getting upset that she's falling back into her old ways. Every time she makes an improvement, she takes this huge step backwards. He decides to teach her a little lesson.

They approach VICTORIA'S SECRET.

JOHN

Mother, come in here for a second. I need to get this woman something very quickly.

BEATRICE

What? You're buying a woman something in here?

JOHN

Yes.

BEATRICE

Who?

They walk into the store.

52 INT. VICTORIA'S SECRET - DAY

A SALESLADY comes up to John.

(CONTINUED)

SALESLADY

May I help you?

JOHN

Yes, I'm buying my mother a teddy.

(turns to Beatrice)

What size are you mother?

Beatrice cannot speak. She can't even get air up. She's heard the word teddy and mother in the same sentence. The saleslady asks her again.

SALESLADY

Do you know what size you are, Ma'am?

Beatrice finally blurts out the denial.

BEATRICE

No, no, no, he's kidding. He's not...he's a writer and this is all made-up...no we're not getting anything.

She pulls at John's arm.

BEATRICE

Honey let's get out of here.

JOHN

(to Saleslady)

She does this every time. She's shy.

Sexy, but shy. Come on mother darling.

He takes her by the arm and leads her out. She turns around and yells to the saleslady.

BEATRICE

It's an experiment. I wish you'd make him tell you. I...it's...I'm part of an experiment where we're things that we're not.

CUT TO:

53 INT. MALL - DAY

53

John and Beatrice are seated at one of the many little cafes. They're having some coffee.

BEATRICE

It's not humorous to me, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

JOHN

But I wasn't trying to be humorous. I was trying to show you how you don't bond with me. You bond with the rest of the world.

BEATRICE

I'm not bonding with anyone. We're in a mall, stop this. Honey, let's get our ticket validated here, because we did have coffee and I don't want to go back to those other stores.

John looks at her. He puts his head in his hands.

CUT TO:

54 INT. DELTA 88 - MOVING - DAY

54

The Delta 88 is heading home. John is sitting in the passenger seat. Beatrice is driving.

BEATRICE

Remind me to call Jeff when I get home.

JOHN

This is the thirtieth time you've said it.

BEATRICE

I just don't want to forget.

JOHN

Why are you so worried? What's the big deal? What if you forgot?

BEATRICE

It has nothing to do with that. They just want me to come down there and I guess they need to know, you know with the room and everything.

JOHN

You're gonna go down there? When?

BEATRICE

Well, I was going to go this weekend.

JOHN

But I'm here.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

BEATRICE

Well, do you want to come with me?

JOHN

No, I came from there. Mother, we need time alone.

BEATRICE

We do?

JOHN

Yes. Look, I don't want to upset your life. You do what you want.

BEATRICE

You don't want to upset my life? I thought that was part of the experiment.

JOHN

No it wasn't. Go visit Jeff.

BEATRICE

I'll stay here with you.

JOHN

Are you sure that's what you want?

BEATRICE

No dear, I'm not. But I'll stay.

CUT TO:

55 INT. JEFF'S DEN - LATE AFTERNOON

55

Jeff is talking into the PICTURE PHONE.

JEFF

Christ, mom. We're all expecting you. You can't do that.

56 INTERCUT WITH BEATRICE

56

BEATRICE

(she's frustrated)

It's just that John is here and let me get through with him and then I'll come down there.

JEFF

How long will that be?

1000001

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

I don't know honey, he doesn't tell me.

JEFF

Great, you know somebody could have told us before, you know mom, we had plans.

John hears this argument and walks over and leans down into the screen to talk to his brother.

JOHN

What's the problem?

JEFF

I should be asking you that. We had a plan, now she's not coming.

JOHN

Jesus man, you talk to her every Goddamn day of your life, can I have this little time?

JEFF

I don't talk to her every Goddamn day of anybody's life and do whatever you want.

JOHN

Get some help buddy.

He folds the picture down into the phone, hanging up on Jeff.

BEATRICE

Oh honey, don't hang up on him, he hates that.

JOHN

I didn't hang up on him. It's expensive. I'm trying to save you some money.

BEATRICE

(getting very worried)

He told me that it didn't cost anything different, that it was the one line, because I asked that. I knew that we have to pay for this photo. Oh my, I'm taking this out now.

She reaches over and unplugs the picture phone.

57 INT. JEFF'S DEN, - LATE AFTERNOON

57

Jeff is angry. This is a new side to him. He turns off the picture phone, gets up, and walks into the kitchen.

58 INT. JEFF'S KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

He opens the refrigerator, and gets a beer. As he's walking out of the kitchen, Cheryl is coming in. They bump into each other.

JEFF

Hey, watch it, will you?

CHERYL

What's wrong with you?

JEFF

Nothing. My mother's not coming here this weekend.

CHERYL

Where's she going?

JEFF

She's staying up there with John.

CHERYL

So, that's all right, isn't it?

JEFF

Well, we made a plan, didn't we? She was going to come down, we were going to do something with the kids.

CHERYL

We can't do something with the kids?

JEFF

That's not the point.

CHERYL

That is the point. It's almost like you're not going to live unless your mother comes here.

JEFF

I like to be with my mother. Is there something wrong with that? Just because I get along with mine.

CHERYL

Go to hell. I'm tired of this. And there's a big difference between getting along with and not being able to live without!

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

58

She storms out of the kitchen. Jeff follows.

JEFF

What does that mean?

CHERYL

You're a mama's boy.

JEFF

Fuck you!

They look at each other. This is a new level of anger. He's scared of it, she's scared of it. She walks into the living room. He follows.

59 INT. JEFF'S LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

.59

JEFF

I'm not a mama's boy. I love my mother.
So what's wrong with that?

CHERYL

(turning around, yelling)

How do you think it makes me feel? You
find out your mother doesn't want to come
down here and your world ends. I don't
mean anything. The kids don't mean
anything. Don't you think that's a
little odd at your age?

Jeff stares at her.

CHERYL (CON'T)

What are you afraid of?

JEFF

I'm not afraid of anything. What does
that mean?

CHERYL

Your brother went up there to figure out
his relationship with his mother, and I
think you better do the same thing.

JEFF

My relationship with my mother is
perfect. I don't have his problem.

CHERYL

Don't be too sure. I don't think you
know your mother anymore than he does.
You just cling more.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

JEFF

You don't know what you're talking about.

CUT TO:

60 INT. BEATRICE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

60

CLOSE UP of a Graham Cracker box, a brand no one has ever heard of, GOOD CRACKER.

The camera slowly pulls out. We see John and Beatrice sitting at the table. They're now starting to look like a married couple. John is sitting in his bathrobe. Beatrice is in hers. She's drinking a cup of tea eating these Graham crackers making noises like they're so good.

JOHN

Tomorrow, I want to go to the zoo with you.

BEATRICE

What?

JOHN

Let's go to the zoo. I want to do something that we did exactly like when I was young. It's the only thing left here.

BEATRICE

Oh honey, I don't think the zoo's even there anymore.

JOHN

Mother, I could see it from the freeway. It's there.

BEATRICE

You're sure that's the zoo?

JOHN

Maybe you're right. It may have been a mall where the large animals shop.

BEATRICE

Well, all right, if you're sure. And then what would this do?

JOHN

What?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

To recapture something like this, will this do the trick?

JOHN

The trick? I don't know. Let's find out.

BEATRICE

I'm beginning to understand.

JOHN

Really? Just as I was beginning not to.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. SAN FRANCISCO ZOO - DAY

They're strolling along. They stop in front of the ELEPHANTS.

BEATRICE

They say that these animals have a better memory than even us.

JOHN

Well we don't have that great of a memory. I don't think animals get Alzheimer's.

BEATRICE

You know I once read about that. What did I read?...I'm trying to think...it was...no it wasn't about...I'm not sure.

JOHN

I think you proved the point. Okay let's try something. We'll see if the elephant has memory. That's the same elephant when I was a kid.

BEATRICE

How do you know?

JOHN

Look at his rear.

Beatrice looks. Sure enough there's a white diamond on his rear.

JOHN

Remember?

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

The white diamond! My goodness, it's the same animal!

JOHN

All right, let's see if he remembers me. We came here a lot, didn't we?

BEATRICE

At least a dozen times. Call him.

JOHN

What's his name?

BEATRICE

I don't remember. Let me think...oh my, it was something...not Simba. What do they call the animals, these animals?

JOHN

Bimbo.

BEATRICE

No...um...oh, it was a man's name.

JOHN

Ted.

BEATRICE

Try that.

John yells out...

JOHN

Ted!

The elephant looks. He starts to walk over.

BEATRICE

Oh my God, it's true.

JOHN

Well he's just walking here, this is not memory. We could look like a big peanut. You know they have very bad eyesight.

BEATRICE

Now see that I never heard. They have a lot of history behind them, don't they?

The elephant has made his way over now. He and John look at each other. All of a sudden the elephant makes some sort of a spitting noise and turns and walks away.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

He doesn't remember me.

BEATRICE

Well he might remember you, he might not like you.

JOHN

No that's you. He has no opinion.

CUT TO:

62 INT. ZOO GIFT SHOP - DAY

Letters spelling out "BEATRICE" are being ironed onto the back of a tee-shirt that reads "San Francisco Zoo" on the front. We see John and Beatrice standing there with some other people behind them. Beatrice is trying to learn her lesson, but is still feeling a little embarrassed.

BEATRICE

Honey, I don't need this.

JOHN

Nobody needs this. Nobody gets a tee-shirt with their own name on it because they need it. We're just getting it for fun.

BEATRICE

I know, dear, but these people...

JOHN

(waving his finger at her)

Uh-uh-uh...

BEATRICE

You're right, honey. You're right.

The guy finishes putting on the letters. He hands the tee-shirt to John. John holds it up to his mother.

JOHN

Looks good.

Beatrice starts to say something. John looks at her. She remains silent. John pays the man and they walk out.

JOHN

I am very proud of you.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

Why?

JOHN

You know why. This was a big step. You didn't apologize, you didn't make an explanation. Now I think we should graduate and go to something far more embarrassing.

BEATRICE

Well, there's a nude beach nearby, but it's not very nice out.

JOHN

Is that a joke?

BEATRICE

Honey, you think I'd go to a nude beach?

JOHN

Very good mother.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. BEATRICE'S STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

63

We see the Delta 88 coming around the corner. It's 5:30 in the afternoon. In front of Beatrice's house is a CAR. Inside the car is sitting a man. As the 88 approaches the house, the man gets out. It's JEFF. The Oldsmobile pulls into the garage. Beatrice and John walk out.

BEATRICE

Jeff! Honey!

She's got a big toy animal and is wearing her tee-shirt that reads "BEATRICE." John's still got this big box of popcorn. John is somewhat cold, but cordial.

JOHN

Hey, Jeff.

Jeff gives him a bullshit hug.

BEATRICE

What's wrong, honey?

JEFF

Nothing I was up here on business so I thought I'd come by and say hello.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

Come on in.

They enter the house, and walk into the kitchen.

64 INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

64

JOHN

Business, you came here on business?

Jeff glares at him.

JOHN

Who's up here?

JEFF

What does that mean?

JOHN

I mean who do you represent that lives in the Bay Area?

JEFF

Well if you know anything about sports, there's about six teams here, so, I don't want to talk about it, okay.

Beatrice senses there might be some trouble between the boys and tries to break it up.

BEATRICE

What should I make to eat?

Jeff, completely different from John, loves this generic food and responds to it immediately.

JEFF

Do you still have that sherbert?

BEATRICE

Absolutely.

JEFF

Just give me a bowl of that, and some of that cheese if you have it too.

JOHN

You like her food?

JEFF

Huh?

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

JOHN

Nothing.

BEATRICE

So Jeff, everything's all right with you?

JEFF

Yeah, things are okay. Could I talk to John alone for a second?

BEATRICE

Of course honey. John, show him your room.

JEFF

(sarcastically)

Oh yeah, show me your room. Let's see that room of yours.

CUT TO:

65 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

65

Jeff is sitting on the bed looking around all of John's high school stuff.

JEFF

Don't take this the wrong way, but I think this is tragic.

JOHN

Nobody asked you.

JEFF

I don't think mother has anything to do with your problem.

JOHN

Hey, who should examine what? Who flew immediately on an airplane cause mommy couldn't listen to the good news? What the hell are you doing here?

JEFF

I'm here on business. I told you. I just dropped by on the way to the airport.

JOHN

Don't give me this bullshit. You don't have any business here. You missed mommy.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

JEFF

Hey I don't sit in a room all day for a living like you. I travel all the time. Don't tell me what my business consists of.

JOHN

I think you're bullshitting yourself. You should examine this.

JEFF

Don't tell me what to examine. I've got a very nice family. I think I'm pretty well adjusted.

JOHN

Whatever.

JEFF

Anyway, I'd like mom to come down this weekend and see the kids, so that's not a big deal really, is it?

JOHN

Yes it's a big deal. She's staying here. She told you that.

JEFF

Whose choice was that? Yours or hers?

JOHN

Oh yeah, like I'm telling her what to say now.

JEFF

I have kids and they're gonna be real disappointed. They want to see their grandmother. Whatever it is you're doing here, can't you hold off for two days? She'll be back.

JOHN

Get this through your head, she's not going with you. I don't want to be the one to break it to you, but mommy's staying here.

Jeff gets up and walks out of John's room. He stops at the door. He turns around.

JEFF

Let's see whose idea it was.

CUT TO:

66 INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Jeff enters.

JEFF

Mother, if you can get away for three days, the kids would really be...you know they would love to see you.

John comes in immediately afterwards.

JOHN

You already made the decision mom, it's done. You don't have to make that decision again. Don't let him intimidate you.

BEATRICE

Oh, honey, nobody intimidates me. Jeff dear, I'm going to stay up here for a little while and as I said, when I'm through, I'll come down and see everybody.

JEFF

Fine mother, I'll just tell the kids you're not coming.

BEATRICE

Oh, I forgot about the kids.

JOHN

Stop it. Listen to what he's doing. What makes you think the kids want to see you anyway? They want to be outside, don't they?

BEATRICE

You know I always thought that. I always thought they were staying indoors for me. Are they Jeff?

JEFF

Mother, they love you. Don't be silly.

JOHN

Right, don't be silly. That's what I liked to do when I was their age, stay inside in a darkened room with my grandmother.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

JEFF

I don't need this sarcastic shit. If you don't want to come, don't come. It's okay, mom.

He walks out to his car. Beatrice follows him.

BEATRICE

I feel terrible.

JOHN

See what he did? He succeeded.

CUT TO:

67

EXT. BEATRICE'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

67

Jeff walks outside. He gets in his car. John follows him. Beatrice follows John. She stands in the doorway yelling to Jeff...

BEATRICE

Don't leave like this honey. It's really nothing.

JEFF

Then come with me.

JOHN

My God, you know this sounds like you're lovers, "then come with me."

JEFF

Sounds like we're lovers? You're the one that's living with her.

One the NEIGHBORS, who's gardening, overhears this conversation and looks over the fence. Beatrice does not notice her.

JOHN

Well if you can take it, I got some news for you. We are lovers.

Jeff stops, he looks at him. He doesn't know whether to believe it or not.

JEFF

A joke?

JOHN

No joke. Okay, I didn't want to tell you. I thought it would upset you.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

Beatrice now notices her neighbor. Even though she did well at the gift shop, she can't pass this test.

BEATRICE

Oh my God!

She's looking over the hedges at the neighbor.

BEATRICE

Boys...

She tries to get them to look and see, but John is too engrossed. He's got Jeff in the palm of his hand.

JEFF

Why are you talking like this? Why do you even say this? It's disgusting.

JOHN

It's not disgusting. It's the truth. Don't you read history? It didn't start with me. I love my mother and I love having sex with her.

Beatrice now turns to the woman as if she were the judge of all judges.

BEATRICE

This is all made-up...I swear to you. Boys, tell her, please, I live next door to her. Tell her, please.

Jeff gets in the car and starts to pull out of the driveway. He yells to John...

JEFF

You ought to examine yourself that you could even make a joke like that.

JOHN

You ought to examine yourself that you take it seriously.

JEFF

By the way, you seem to make fun of those picture phones, why don't you send the one I gave you back, okay?

JOHN

It's still in the box, take it back, who gives a crap.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: (2)

JEFF

Oh keep it. I get them for free anyway.

CUT TO BEATRICE'S FACE.

She didn't know this. She thought her son actually bought her something.

CUT TO:

68 INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

68

Beatrice is on the phone with Cheryl. The real phone, not the picture phone. Cheryl doesn't like to use it either.

BEATRICE

But nothing happened out of the ordinary?
I mean he was so upset, you...just...

JOHN

(whispering)

Who is that?

Beatrice covers the mouth piece.

BEATRICE

It's Cheryl. I just want to see what happened.

JOHN

What did happen?

BEATRICE

They had a little argument.

JOHN

Don't you think that's interesting, mother?

BEATRICE

What dear?

JOHN

Go ahead and hang up. I got a theory.

BEATRICE

Cheryl honey I'm going to go now. If you want to, call me later, but don't worry, everybody goes through this. Good-bye dear.

She hangs up the phone.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

JOHN

You want to hear my theory?

BEATRICE

What is it?

JOHN

The so called adjusted one is the real sick and the one who people think is sick is maybe pretty healthy to begin with.

BEATRICE

Which one are you?

JOHN

Very good mother. Now listen, tomorrow I want to...

Beatrice interrupts him.

BEATRICE

I can't do anything with you tomorrow.

JOHN

Why?

BEATRICE

Just don't ask me any questions. I have something to do.

JOHN

You work for the CIA, what, what are you doing?

BEATRICE

Oh honey, I don't want to talk about every single thing.

JOHN

Well what are you doing? Are you secretly going down to Jeff's?

BEATRICE

I have a friend who I see every three or four weeks when he comes through Sausalito. And he's coming and you know we spend normally a couple of days together, but I told him cause you were here, just one day.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Well first of all I'm really upset that you altered your life. I told you not to do that.

BEATRICE

Honey, I'm not having somebody stay at the house when you're here.

JOHN

Oh, he stays over?

BEATRICE

Well...not really.

JOHN

Not really like the martini? Do you want me to go to a hotel?

BEATRICE

Oh dear, that's a waste of money. Which hotel?

JOHN

I don't want to go to a hotel. I want to stay in my room.

BEATRICE

I know honey, that's why he won't stay over this time. But I do have to go out with him.

JOHN

What's his name?

BEATRICE

Ralph.

JOHN

How come I've never heard of him?

BEATRICE

Well I don't tell you everything. It's not that important.

JOHN

Well I would think a man that you're intimate with is important.

BEATRICE

Oh dear we're not intimate, we just have sex occasionally.

CUT TO:

69 RINGING DOOR BELL - NEXT DAY - EARLY EVENING

John approaches it. He opens it up. There's RALPH, Beatrice's boyfriend. Ralph is in his late sixties. He looks a little bit like a tattered version of the guy who ran community chest in Monopoly: well dressed, mustache, sort of English looking.

JOHN
You must be Ralph.

RALPH
And you must be the other son. Still blocked?

JOHN
Well not a minute ago, but as of now, yes I'm re-blocked.

Ralph enters.

INT. FOYER - EARLY EVENING

RALPH
I've heard a lot about you. Your mother's very proud of you.

JOHN
You know I thought you had the wrong address, now I'm positive.

RALPH
You should hear her talk about you.

JOHN
I have. That's why I'm here.

RALPH
Well when you're not here, she brags her head off.

JOHN
What does she brag about? That she marvels that I can get all of my fat into my clothes?

RALPH
No, I never heard that one. How do you do that?

Beatrice enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

Well I see you've met. What are you two talking about?

JOHN

Just the whole damn thing, that's all.

Beatrice takes John aside. She's whispering, but Ralph can still hear because everyone can hear Beatrice's whispers.

BEATRICE

Honey, don't bother him with the whole experiment. You know he's not like us.

She turns around.

BEATRICE

All right, I'm ready to go.
(to John)
There's food if you...

JOHN

(interrupts)

Hold it, you promised, no more food talk for the rest of our lives. I'll handle my own food.

BEATRICE

All right, I just...

JOHN

Stop. No food talk. You promised.

BEATRICE

All right dear. Be asleep when we get home.

RALPH

(to John)

You have that food problem too, huh?

CUT TO:

70 INT. RALPH'S AUTOMOBILE - EVENING

79

Beatrice is remaining silent, staring out the window.

RALPH

He didn't want to stay in a hotel? Oh well, let's not let it ruin our evening.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

BEATRICE

It's not ruining anything.

RALPH

Hey, later, I brought that magazine.

BEATRICE

Oh, no we're not doing any... no, no
you'll drop me off.

RALPH

What?

BEATRICE

This is not a time for those magazines
now. When he goes back to Los Angeles,
save it and you'll show me.

RALPH

Well I don't want to wait that long.
When's he going back?

BEATRICE

I don't know, but no magazines tonight.
Now please!

RALPH

Well I just don't understand.

BEATRICE

Well think about it. I have a forty year
old man twenty feet away. I don't feel
very private.

RALPH

(smiling)

Wasn't that one of your fantasies? Forty
year old man, twenty feet away.

He grins.

BEATRICE

No, that was a sixty year old man, six
feet under. Now I'm warning you, he's my
son, and I don't want to talk about it.

RALPH

All right, well let's have a nice dinner.
Maybe later you'll change your mind.

BEATRICE

I am not changing my mind. No magazines,
no nothing, until he goes home.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

RALPH

Well we can talk about it in the car,
can't we?

BEATRICE

Oh that's a silly place to talk about it.
God forbid, what if we got pulled over?

RALPH

Well I think you're thinking of dirty
underwear. They don't know what you're
talking about.

BEATRICE

Don't be too sure. When they point those
things at you, I just wonder what they
really know.

CUT TO:

71 INT. BEATRICE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

71

John's in the kitchen. He's run out of his own food and now
he's having to make an omelette with some of his mother's
stuff. We see six generic products that no one's ever heard
of. He looks at the vegetables that have ice around them.
He doesn't know whether to just throw them in the frying pan
or the garbage. He makes his meal. He goes into...

72 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - EVENING

72

He turns on the TV, sits, and watches. After a minute or so,
he turns off the television and gets up and goes to the
closet. He takes out a bathrobe. He takes off his pants and
shirt and puts on the robe. Before he closes the closet, he
glances up. There's a number of BOXES. They look like
they've been there for ages. He looks at one. He reaches
up. He takes it down. He opens it up.

In front of him is his mother's life story. He's fascinated.
He takes down all three boxes and looks through them. Inside
are chotchkes and souvenirs and pictures, but there's one
book that looks like a large diary. It has no title on it.
John opens it up and page after page he sees his mother's
handwriting.

He starts to read. He sees that it's not a diary. It's a
book of prose. His mother is actually writing fiction. He's
fascinated. He's turning page after page. He can't believe
it. Some of it's actually good.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - TWO HOURS LATER

73

Now John has his mother's stuff all spread out on the floor. He's reading one manuscript. He's got a bowl of old sherbert trying to pick at the good parts. He's engrossed in what he's reading and he does not hear his mother come home.

CUT TO:

74 EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

74

Ralph and Beatrice are walking up to the house.

RALPH

Please.

BEATRICE

Shh.

RALPH

I'm just saying, please.

BEATRICE

Don't beg, not here.

RALPH

Well what if he's asleep already? You said he's a sound sleeper.

BEATRICE

That's Jeff. I don't think this one ever sleeps.

RALPH

Well let's just go in and if he's up I'll leave.

BEATRICE

Well, all right.

CUT TO:

75 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

75

John is engrossed in what he's reading. All of a sudden the door opens.

BEATRICE

John?

John looks around startled.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

JOHN

Oh my God, I didn't hear you.

Beatrice, looking at what's on the floor, is completely shocked.

BEATRICE

What are you doing?

JOHN

What do you mean?

BEATRICE

Why do you have all of that out?

JOHN

I was just looking at what was in these boxes.

BEATRICE

Who told you you could do that? That's mine. Who told you to do that?

Beatrice starts to get very angry.

BEATRICE

What right have you got to touch my stuff?

JOHN

Take it easy. I didn't do anything. I just saw the boxes up on the shelf.

Beatrice realizes that Ralph is still in the house and wants to get rid of him. She turns around.

CUT TO:

76 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

76

She walks to him sternly.

BEATRICE

I will call you later. I need to talk to John.

RALPH

Are you sure? Maybe...?

BEATRICE

(firm)

That's it.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

She gives him a fast kiss on the cheek.

BEATRICE

Good night.

Ralph reluctantly leaves. Beatrice now walks back into the room.

CUT TO:

77 INT. JOHN'S ROOM - NIGHT

BEATRICE

I'm very upset with you. Really, this is mine. I don't rummage through your stuff.

JOHN

Mother what have you got to hide? What's the matter with you?

BEATRICE

I have nothing to hide. These boxes are put away for a reason.

JOHN

What reason?

BEATRICE

My reason!

She turns around and walks hastily out of the room.

CUT TO:

78 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

She walks into the kitchen and starts to make herself a cup of tea. She's mumbling to herself. She's upset. John walks in. He wants to continue this conversation, Beatrice doesn't.

JOHN

Did you write all that stuff?

BEATRICE

No, a little elf wrote it. Of course I wrote it.

JOHN

Mother, the children's story was beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

BEATRICE

I'm not sure what you're talking about. I've written many of those and that was a long time ago. And I'll tell you something, if I thought people would be rummaging through this, I don't think I would have saved anything.

JOHN

People? People? I'm your Goddamn son!

BEATRICE

Shh, please!

JOHN

Oh mother, we're seven walls away from another ear.

BEATRICE

What else did you look at?

JOHN

Just, I don't know, I was reading and looking at pictures.

BEATRICE

That was another part of me. That's the past. And you know I don't like to look back. Your father always said, "Never look back. They might be gaining on you."

JOHN

Satchel Paige said that.

BEATRICE

Are you sure? I think it was your father.

JOHN

When did you do this stuff?

BEATRICE

A long time ago. You were a baby.

Beatrice is now nervous. She looks around for something. She finds a cigarette. She lights it.

JOHN

Mother, you smoke?

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (2)

BEATRICE

I'll have one once a year, when I'm feeling this way. Do you want something to eat?

JOHN

No, no, a thousand times no. Concentrate on your cigarette.

BEATRICE

I'm going to take all of the boxes out of the room. You can have that entire closet. We'll do it in the morning.

JOHN

If you tell me not to look at it, I won't look at it. You don't have to take it out of the room.

BEATRICE

Oh, I just think it's safer.

JOHN

Whatever, safer, take them all out.

BEATRICE

Honey, do you remember once when I looked at your high school yearbook and how you were so upset because of the pictures that you didn't like?

JOHN

No no wait, you weren't looking at it. You were showing it to everybody. "Look, look how big his head is" that's what I remember about the yearbook. Hey, maybe that's why I write about big heads? just occurred to me.

BEATRICE

Oh blame something else on me.

JOHN

I'm not blaming that on you. I still think he's a good character.

BEATRICE

He's not a good character. May I tell you why? Because you make someone with a head that big, but he's stupider than everyone else.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN

Well I was trying to be different. Why does a guy have to be smart just cause he has a big head?

BEATRICE

Why's his head that big then?

JOHN

Well why not? Part of it's empty.

BEATRICE

Honey, no God's going to create a head that big that has nothing in it.

JOHN

What about the dinosaurs?

BEATRICE

Their heads were full. They just had small heads. You never saw a dinosaur with a huge head and a little brain. That brain was the size of their head.

JOHN

I don't know how the hell we got on this subject, but look how interested you get when you talk to me about this. Boy mother, you must have really stuffed something down.

BEATRICE

Oh you're not going to analyze me at midnight.

Beatrice walks out of the kitchen. John sits there alone. After a beat, she re-enters.

BEATRICE

Which children's story did you read?

JOHN

The one about the flight around the world.

BEATRICE

That was about Amelia Earhart. Do you remember her?

JOHN

Of course, I thought it was really sort of clever what you did. You took a real character, but you made it fiction. That

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (4)

JOHN (cont'd)
was way ahead of your time, mother.
That's like Woodward and Bernstein.

BEATRICE
I'm trying to think who that is?

JOHN
It doesn't matter. It's a compliment.

BEATRICE
Dear, have you ever had any serious talk
about structure with anyone? I mean does
your editor do that or publisher?

JOHN
What's wrong with my structure? My
structure is fine.

BEATRICE
I don't know that it's fine. You know,
as a reader I like to know where a story
is heading, at least part of the time.
And sometimes when I was reading your
last book I really forgot where we were
going.

JOHN
My goodness. Isn't this funny? The
last thing I thought was going to happen
right now is criticism about my writing,
but that's okay. I can take it.

BEATRICE
Honey, this isn't criticism. I'm just
interested in it that's all. I just
wondered if you ever had a professor or
anyone who talked to you about structure.

JOHN
Where did you learn all this stuff?

BEATRICE
Well what do you think dear, I was born
yesterday? You know every child thinks
their mother just came to life when they
were born. I was around a long time
before you.

JOHN
Well, fine, that's the part I don't know.
That's what I've been trying to ask.
You've seemed to not want to talk about
it.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (5)

BEATRICE
It's in the past.

JOHN
Stop saying that. It's not in the past.
All that past is plopped all over our
lives. Tell me. How much have you
written? Did you ever get anything
published?

BEATRICE
No, I never published. Your father
talked me out of it.

JOHN
Why would he do that?

BEATRICE
Well in those days a woman didn't really
have a career, you know, she just...

JOHN
(interrupts)
Raised children who she hated for ruining
her life and killing her chances at doing
something.

Beatrice just stares at him. She finally speaks.

BEATRICE
Well I never heard it put exactly like
that, but yes, I guess that's true.

JOHN
Mother, this is exciting! We did it! We
found it! You see? Now we know, we know
why you hate me!

John starts jumping up and down singing like a child...

JOHN
We know why she hates me...we know why
she hates me.

Beatrice looks around. Maybe someone can hear this.

BEATRICE
Honey, stop that. You're acting silly.
I don't hate you. Now stop it.

JOHN
Mother, this is wonderful. This is
amazing. Tell me everything, when did
you start writing?

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (6)

BEATRICE

In high school, I got a scholarship to Rutgers.

JOHN

Because of the writing?

BEATRICE

Yes. That's where I met your father, at Rutgers. You know that.

JOHN

Well I never knew how you got the
Nobody knows what their parents majored
in. I didn't know this.

BEATRICE

I never told you, huh?

JOHN

So no wonder you like Jeff better.
There's no threat there. I just must be
a big threat to you.

BEATRICE

I don't like Jeff better.

JOHN

Okay, but he doesn't represent the
writer. I represent what you had to
stop.

BEATRICE

Maybe you're right. How do you like
that!

JOHN

Mother I'm sorry. I really am. I wish I
could have done something to change
everything, but as you can see I had
nothing to do with it. But thank God for
tonight. For the first time mother, for
the first time I don't see you as my mom,
I see you as a failure.

Beatrice stares at him. He gives her a big hug.

JOHN

Do you see how exciting this is?

BEATRICE

I'm a failure and that's exciting? All
right honey, if that's what you need.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (7)

She gives him a hug back.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Beatrice is outside working on some dying tulips. She's got garden gloves on. John pokes his head out.

JOHN

Mother, I'm going into town. I'll be back a little later.

BEATRICE

Honey, listen I was thinking this morning, as long as you have your computer in there I don't think one phone line is enough. Go ahead, get the other phone line you wanted just for the computer.

JOHN

I don't need it.

BEATRICE

Why?

JOHN

Because I'm through. I think I'm done. We did it.

BEATRICE

We did?

JOHN

Yes. I came here not understanding any of this and now I understand all of it. Mother, live your life, okay? Live your life and do what you want to do and I'll do the best I can. It's not your fault anymore. I see you as a real person.

BEATRICE

You do?

JOHN

Yes, and it's okay. It really is.

BEATRICE

Well, my goodness. I didn't get that moment that you did.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

JOHN

You will, don't worry.

BEATRICE

So you don't need to stay then?

JOHN

No, go down to L.A. Spend some time with the kids, sleep with Ralph, do whatever you want.

BEATRICE

I'm not going to go down to L.A. for awhile. You know I'll tell you something honey, the room they give me is so uncomfortable. I'm still sleeping on one of those bunk beds.

JOHN

Well mother, you're in luck. I just read about a brand new thing in a science magazine. It's called Hotel. H-o dash t-e-l. Amazing concept, you get a room with no relatives. The only people there are strangers, they pay, you pay, nobody bothers you.

BEATRICE

Oh Jeff wouldn't let me stay in a hotel. You know I've got to do everything he wants. That's the way he is.

JOHN

Yeah well maybe it's his turn now. Maybe he should move back in next.

BEATRICE

Oh God no, I'm moving the stuff right away. Nobody is moving back in.

JOHN

But mother, just think, from now on when we talk on the phone, we can talk like two writers. We're not mother and son, we're two writers, one stifled and angry, one blocked and insecure.

BEATRICE

What am I dear, I forget?

John smiles.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED: (2)

BEATRICE

So are you going to go back to work now?

JOHN

I don't know. Maybe I'll just take off a little bit, enjoy this realization and maybe I'll buy some new clothes.

BEATRICE

That's what I like to hear! I'm very proud of you. Honey do, get some new clothes.

JOHN

Okay, but I'm gonna make a deal with you. For every piece of clothing I buy, you buy an ounce of brand new expensive cheese.

BEATRICE

Does Kraft count?

John looks at her. He takes her in his arms and gives her a huge hug.

JOHN

Yes mother, Kraft counts.

CUT TO:

80 EXT BEATRICE'S HOUSE - DAY

80

John is in the Alfa. He's pulling out of the driveway. Beatrice is waving good-bye.

CUT TO:

81 EXT. ALFA - DAY

81

coming back down Pacific Coast Highway. Simon and Garfunkel are singing. John pulls into a GAS STATION. He starts to fill up his tank. A rather ATTRACTIVE WOMAN is filling up her tank. She looks at him. All of a sudden she says...

WOMAN

Oh my God, John Henderson!

JOHN

Yes?

WOMAN

Planet Seven was the best book I've ever read.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

JOHN
You're kidding me?

WOMAN
Why would I kid you? How about Planet
Eight? I loved that too.

She starts naming off John's titles.

WOMAN
I read The Day There Was No Earth twice.
John has his mouth open. He can't believe it.

JOHN
Are you married?

WOMAN
No, I'm not married.

JOHN
Where do you live?

WOMAN
In Los Angeles.

JOHN
Why don't you follow me? We can stop
along the way and eat and talk and by the
time we get to LA we'll know each other.
It'll be like five dates.

WOMAN
God, that's so creative. Sounds
wonderful.

JOHN
Great. But I have to ask you something?
Be honest. This is not a practical joke?
No one sent you? Like my brother, for
example?

WOMAN
(smiling)
What are you talking about?

JOHN
Forget it. I'm just checking. This
liking me stuff is all virgin territory.

CUT TO:

82 COMPUTER SCREEN - DAY

We see the beginning of a story being typed.

"It was a very bold experiment. Who would have ever thought of a grown man moving back into his mother's house? Everyone laughed and said it wouldn't work, but both the mother and the son didn't care.

The camera begins to DOLLY back. We see Beatrice in John's old room. She's just bought a COMPUTER. Sure we've never heard of the brand, but it's still a computer. She got her reading glasses on. She's typing away. She's doing her first creative writing in forty years.

As Beatrice continues to type and change her life we

FADE OUT: