

OUR PEOPLE

"Pilot"

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ACT ONE

1 EXT. STREET - DAY (DAY 1)

1

An upper-middle-class neighborhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Swings hanging from oak trees, dogs sleeping on porches, flags. This place looks like an ad for The Real America.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I've always wondered, how are those cold-pressed juices?

CAMERA FINDS the source of this voice, ABEL (25, black). His face is pressed against a police car window, causing him to stare at a Caribou Coffee brand cold pressed juice bottle in the passenger seat. A WHITE COP frisks him.

ABEL

I've heard cold pressing keeps more of the nutrients. But does that mean hot-pressing is bad? Because I really love a hot-pressed sandwich.

The White Cop slaps handcuffs on Abel.

ABEL (CONT'D)

Come on. There's no way you found anything on me.

WHITE COP

I've never seen anyone like you around here before.

ABEL

I just moved to the neighborhood. Great school district by the way, if you're looking.

The Cop opens the back door of the squad car.

ABEL (CONT'D)

I'm telling you, man -- in a minute, my girlfriend is going to come out of that house and she's going to raise hell. It'll be better for you if you just let this go.

WHITE COP

Are you threatening me?!

Across the street, a NEIGHBOR peers out her front window.

1 CONTINUED:

1

ABEL

No, no, no, no. And please don't yell. I don't want this to be my first impression to the new neighbors. You're seriously hurting my chances of getting zucchini bread.

Before Abel can finish, JENNY (25, white, a mid-western firecracker) BURSTS out of a nearby house.

JENNY

Abel, what's going on?!

ABEL

(to Cop)

Oh boy. You're screwed now.

The Cop tries to lower Abel into the back of the car.

JENNY

What the hell do you think you're doing to my fiancé?!

ABEL

(to Cop)

That word still sounds weird to me.

Jenny pulls out her phone and records video of herself.

JENNY

Saturday. A quiet afternoon. My fiancé was getting shopping bags from the car...

ABEL

(to Cop)

This is your chance. Run. She's fast when she's angry so I'll throw myself in her path to buy you extra time.

Jenny turns the Camera on the White Cop.

JENNY

Luckily Officer--

(zooming in on badge)

--Anderson was able to get to the scene quickly.

WHITE COP

I noticed suspicious behavior.

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

JENNY
"Suspicious?" You mean like how
Barack Obama was the first
"suspicious" president or how February
is "suspicious" history month?

The Cop tries to hide his face from Jenny's camera.

JENNY (CONT'D)
And who is it that Officer Anderson
captured...?

Jenny turns her phone towards a still cuffed Abel. He gives
the camera a big smile. Jenny GASPS with feigned surprise.

JENNY (CONT'D)
It's the notorious "Minneapolis
Jackal" -- serial Netflix password-
sharer.

The Cop hurriedly uncuffs Abel and climbs into his car.

WHITE COP
Next time, have your ID on you, okay?

ABEL
(genuine)
Thank you for your service.

JENNY
Good luck holding your [BLEEP] in
your hands for the rest of the day!

The Cop drives off. Jenny LAUGHS. Abel looks up to see his
new neighbor peering through her window again.

MAIN TITLES

2 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

2

NICK (50s, a flannel and Carharts guy) unboxes a gadget.
Nearby, LISA (50s, a fleece and Birkenstocks hippie) reads
aloud from a recipe, adding items to a blender as she goes:

LISA
...half-cup coconut yogurt... one
teaspoon turmeric... six activated
cashews... two namastes of almond
milk--
(pouring almond milk)
--namaste, namaste--
(stops pouring)
--And a pinch of bee pollen.

2 CONTINUED:

2

She pulses the blender then pours her smoothie.

NICK
(re: gadget)
Honey, meet Hank. The first smart
speaker designed by a Minnesotan
Company -- Anywhoo Technologies --
with a Minnesotan household in mind.
Watch this.
(to Speaker)
Hank, what's the weather today?

HANK (O.S.)
(on speaker)
The weather today is perfect for
fishing.

Nick chuckles, amazed. Lisa, nervous about something, downs
her smoothie like a shot, steels herself, then:

LISA
I'm getting a neck job today.

NICK
What? But I like your neck.

LISA
And I'd like to keep it that way.
(then)
Obviously, a--

Not wanting to say the phrase again, she makes a "scissors"
sign near her neck.

LISA (CONT'D)
--Isn't exactly on brand for me. As
you know, I don't care about external
appearances, only what's inside.

NICK
This feels like how you're anti-
sweatshop but still buy those soft
pajamas from that company that uses
child labor.

LISA
Hey, that video on the news wasn't
clear! Those workers could have
been very short and sad adults!
(then)
But just like that, we have to keep
this a secret from family and friends.

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

NICK

Ugh. You know I hate lying. I don't even like using a birdcall when I'm duck hunting.

LISA

I already took care of it. I told Jenny I'm going to a spa and ancient grains symposium in Chicago.

She peers out a nearby window.

LISA (CONT'D)

I love that she and Abel have moved down the street, but that's going to make this week harder.

NICK

I have to keep this up for a week?

LISA

That's how long I'll have to rest in bed to allow my stitches to heal. Can you even remember the last time you had that much time to yourself?

A huge, almost beatific smile breaks across Nick's face.

3 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MONTHS AGO (FLASHBACK)

3

Nick opens a beer, and navigates his DVR to a program simply titled "Fireplace." It's just footage of a roaring fire.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Next up, redwood.

4 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - BACK TO PRESENT

4

NICK

This is going to be amazing.

(then)

Hank, what's the longest Ken Burns documentary?

HANK (O.S.)

Ken Burns' "The Vietnam War" is eighteen hours long. However, you may also be interested in "The National Parks," which is shorter but widely considered more boring.

4 CONTINUED:

4

NICK
(beaming)
Let's do both.

5 INT. BEKELE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

5

A house marked by a mix of immigrant pride (e.g.: colorful *mesob* baskets) and immigrant cheapness (e.g.: remote controls still have plastic wrap on them so they "last" longer.)

GIGI (50s, a Jewish mother in an Ethiopian woman's body) puts out breakfast. AISHA (16) enters.

Gigi watches as Aisha, HER TEENAGE EYES NEVER GLANCING AWAY FROM HER PHONE, navigates her way through the kitchen then grabs a plate out of a cabinet and a fork out of the drawer.

STILL STARING AT HER SCREEN, Aisha heads to the dining table. Gigi nudges a counter stool into Aisha's path. Aisha runs into it then, like a human Roomba, "bumps" her way around.

Aisha, somehow, gets to the dining table, sits down in a chair and spoons breakfast onto her plate. She eats the first bite, which jolts her into reality.

AISHA
(re: breakfast,
disappointed)
Injiera fir-fir?

GIGI
Maybe it'll be better if you Instagram it.

AISHA
I can't Insta this. Our food is weird.

GIGI
It is not. Millions of people eat it every day and love it.

AISHA
Ugh. And now I'll have to change because our kitchen's weird smell got into my clothes.

GIGI
Stop saying we're weird, Aisha!
Sometimes I think you actually believe the stereotypes about Ethiopians.

5 CONTINUED:

5

The back door swings open, revealing ZOHAR (50s, always enthusiastic), carrying a LIVE GOAT.

GIGI (CONT'D)
Seriously, Zohar?!

ZOHAR
Anybody in my position would have
done the same thing.

6 EXT. ROADSIDE PETTING ZOO - EARLIER THAT MORNING (FLASHBACK)

6

Zohar jogs. He pulls up, noticing a petting zoo liquidation sale. He spots the goat next to a PONYTAILED MALE WORKER.

ZOHAR
(in Amharic, subtitled)
The meat is going to be so tender
after a lifetime of getting massaged
by tiny hands!

7 INT. BEKELE'S HOUSE - BACK TO PRESENT

7

Zohar pours cereal into a bowl on the floor. The goat sniffs it and responds by SCREAMING LIKE A HUMAN (this is real):

GOAT
AHHHHHH!

ZOHAR
Hmmm. Do we have anything with more
whole grains?

GIGI
It sounds like a person!

ZOHAR
It sounds delicious. As soon as I
saw--
(re: Goat)
--Samuel I knew we had to do a
traditional goat roast this weekend
to celebrate the Ethiopian New Year.

Zohar crosses to the pantry and, throughout the following,
offers various foods to the Goat.

AISHA
What? We've never done that before.
(realizing)
Oh my God.
(MORE)

7 CONTINUED:

7

AISHA (CONT'D)

Is this because you're annoyed at Abel for moving down the street from Jenny's parents?

ZOHAR

Why would I be annoyed? Just because, in Ethiopian culture, the bride moves into the groom's house with the groom's parents?

GIGI

Or because it feels like this is Abel's way of telling the world that Jenny is the more important woman in his life now?

ZOHAR

Or because his actions feel like a slight towards Ethiopia herself, the land where scientists believe humans originated, where coffee was discovered, where over seventy percent of Africa's mountains can be found?!

GIGI

No, I'm not upset.

ZOHAR

That doesn't bother me.

AISHA

Well, I'm convinced.

ZOHAR

Look, I understand that things are different in America. More modern, better in many ways.

GIGI

This country saved our family when nobody else would take us.

ZOHAR

I just wish our children appreciated our culture more. Aisha and Abel think meat comes from a grocery store and that Ethiopian traditions are a distraction from watching the Real Housewives or eating poke bowls at the mall.

Gigi looks at Aisha, who has already resumed staring at her phone. She watches a VIDEO CLIP OF TWO REAL HOUSEWIVES FIGHTING BY THROWING POKE BOWLS AT EACH OTHER.

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

REAL HOUSEWIFE (O.S.)
(ON PHONE)
I'm not a disgrace, you're a disgrace!

GIGI
I'm in. Let's show them how special
our culture is.
(pulling cabbage out
of goat's mouth)
But, unlike you, I don't come from
farm people. So this filthy animal
can't live in our house.

8 EXT. HOUSE - LATER

8

Zohar holds the goat and knocks on a door, flanked by Aisha
and Gigi. Nick answers.

DOWN THE STREET we see Abel and Jenny get into their car.

JENNY
Why is your Dad bringing a goat to
my parents' place?

ABEL
Pretty sure we don't want to know.

9 INT. IKEA - LATER

9

Abel and Jenny walk through the room setups. Jenny watches
the video she recorded on her phone earlier.

JENNY
Sweetie, we have to upload this to
Facebook. It'll go viral. People
will take to the streets!

ABEL
That sounds bad for traffic. Plus--
(re video)
--are my arms really that skinny?
Let's wait for a video where I'm
flexing during the wrongful arrest.

JENNY
Injustice is always going to be ugly.

ABEL
I guess you're passing on that
opportunity to say my arms look good.
(MORE)

9 CONTINUED:

9

ABEL (CONT'D)

(then)

I don't want to be the spokesperson
for a campaign, okay? I don't want
to make waves. I just want to finish
setting up our house so we never
have to go furniture shopping again.

JENNY

Well, if I can't post the video, can
I at least send it to Benny?

ABEL

Who's Benny?

JENNY

Benny. Our friend from BLM.
(off his look)
Black Lives Matter? Remember -- we
met at one of the rallies Benny
organized two years ago?

Off Abel's guilty face...

10 EXT. SAINT PAUL STREET - TWO YEARS AGO (FLASHBACK)

10

A Black Lives Matter Rally. PROTESTERS CHANT, Jenny among
them. Abel exits a takeout restaurant, surprised to find
himself in a crowd. He tries to talk to a passing protester:

ABEL

What's this about? Whales or
something?

Abel spots Jenny. She spots him. Sparks. Then:

ABEL (CONT'D)

(chanting, trying to
fit in)

I'M MAD TOO! I'M MAD TOO!

11 INT. IKEA - BACK TO PRESENT

11

ABEL

Don't be upset. Us first locking
eyes outside Flander's Meatballs is
still a pretty romantic story.

JENNY

It's just that meeting at a protest
was a sexy memory for me.
(MORE)

11 CONTINUED:

11

JENNY (CONT'D)
I liked being with a man who fights
for what he believes in.

ABEL
You still are! I'm a fighter.
Occasionally... If all diplomatic
options are exhausted...

Jenny just stares at him.

ABEL (CONT'D)
Look, I'm never going to be as
confrontational as you, okay? I
wouldn't have sued to force my high
school to change its Redskins mascot.

12 EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - TEN YEARS AGO (FLASHBACK)

12

Jenny on the sideline of a high school football game. She
and a bunch of CHEERLEADERS wear ankle-length black frocks.

JENNY
Go Suffragettes!

13 INT. IKEA - BACK TO PRESENT

13

JENNY
What are we doing? Why are we arguing
like every couple who comes to Ikea?

Behind them, ANOTHER COUPLE shops for furniture.

HUSBAND
I like this couch.

His WIFE grabs a nearby pillow, presses it to her mouth and:

WIFE
(screaming)
I hate you!

ABEL
Oh God. We're acting like clichés.

JENNY
But we're not. We're a modern couple
who truly views each other as equals.

ABEL
I don't want to use the phrase "better
than other couples..."

13 CONTINUED:

13

JENNY

But "more evolved" doesn't seem like a stretch.

ABEL

Not at all. We're probably just worn down from the stress of moving. Let's just finish shopping, go home and have a nice night together.

JENNY

Agreed.

(then, noticing)

Oooh, wouldn't that TV stand be perfect for our bedroom?

ABEL

Oh. I thought we'd keep the TV above the mantle in the living room.

JENNY

But I love watching TV in bed.

ABEL

But I think the bedroom should be reserved for sleeping and storing garbage bags of clothes you claim you're going to donate to Goodwill one day but never do.

JENNY

(forced calm and sweet)

I'm not raising my voice, because we're not having a fight. In fact, I am getting quieter to underscore how much of a not-fight this is. But--

(whispering)

--Why are you trying to ruin my life?!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

14 EXT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - BACK DECK - LATER

14

Nick watches, aghast, as Zohar and an unenthusiastic Aisha tie the goat to a tree in the backyard. Lisa approaches from inside with a suitcase.

NICK
Where are you going?

LISA
(indicating neck)
To "Chicago." My "flight" is at one but they told me to arrive early to "get through security." That last part isn't code. My surgeon thinks his ex-wife is trying to kill him.

NICK
You can't leave me with--
(re: Zohar)
--Coming to America. This is supposed to be my week.

Nearby, Gigi rearranges a few things on the deck.

GIGI
Lisa, I think if we push these tables together I'll have all the room I need for the New Years feast!

LISA
Fantastic!
(then, to Nick)
Unfortunately, I agreed to this.

15 INT. EVENT SPACE - MONTHS EARLIER (FLASHBACK)

15

Abel and Jenny's engagement party. A tipsy Lisa is mid-toast.

LISA
Ethiopians! I want to know more about your culture! You're celebrating your next big holiday at our place. It's done.
(then)
Also, in middle school I used to date Prince. So--
(re Abel and Jenny)
--I get what's going on here.

16 EXT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - BACK DECK - BACK TO PRESENT

16

LISA

You know, spending some time with people who aren't exactly like you isn't such a bad idea. It might even open your mind up a bit.

NICK

Are you kidding? An open mind is how new ideas slip in!

He calls out to Zohar and Gigi, who approach.

NICK (CONT'D)

Guys, maybe this isn't a good time to do an event all together. Lisa has to go to Chicago for a week.

GIGI

Then we definitely can't leave Nick alone. He'll be so lonely.

NICK

Oh no. That's not possible. And worst case scenario, I have Hank.
(demonstrating)
Hank, I'm having a heart attack.

HANK (O.S.)

(on device)

Calling ambulance.

(then)

In case it doesn't get here in time, is there a song you want to die to?

ZOHAR

You bought a robot you can talk to?

GIGI

(to Zohar, subtitled,
in Amharic)

I saw an article about these. They do this in cultures where children have become too selfish to care for their elders.

LISA

(somehow, both genuine
and patronizing)
Such a beautiful language.

(MORE)

16 CONTINUED:

16

LISA (CONT'D)

(then)

Anyway, I don't want to miss my flight. Delta 244 -- Minneapolis to Chicago. It's a real flight you can look up so why would anything else I say be suspicious? Happy New Year!

Lisa grabs her obviously too light suitcase and heads for the door. Nick tries to stop her.

NICK

Lisa... Lisa! Don't leave me!

She exits. Zohar and Gigi share a concerned look.

ZOHAR

Don't worry Nick. We'll get through this week together.

Nick opens his mouth to respond, but before he can:

GOAT

(human-esque scream)

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

17 INT. ABEL AND JENNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

17

Abel sits, surrounded by IKEA components. He looks at the instructions, trying to imitate the smiley face and ripple-mouthed worried face of the cartoon assemblyman. As he does, Abel notices the Neighbor across the street come home.

18 EXT. CHARMING HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

18

Abel knocks. The Neighbor, Maggie, answers, carrying her eighteen-month-old son, LIAM.

ABEL

Hi. I'm Abel. I just moved--

MAGGIE

--I'm sorry. I saw everything that happened this morning.

ABEL

Yeah.. that was a misunderstanding that happens to me sometimes.

MAGGIE

It was disgusting.
(MORE)

18 CONTINUED:

18

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I wanted to tell the Officer you
were new to the neighborhood, but
Liam was overtired and freaking out
so I couldn't leave the house.

ABEL

Whew. I was really worried I was
going to have to explain to you that
all black men aren't criminals.

LIAM

Not clim-in-al. Not climin-al.

ABEL

I like this guy! Very woke, Liam!
(then)
I think we're going to like living
here. Plus it's nice to have Jenny's
parents down the street.

Abel gestures towards the Swanson's house. Maggie steps
onto the porch to see where he's pointing.

ABEL (CONT'D)

It's that one. With the oaks--

SLAM. Abel and Maggie turn around to see the front door has
closed. Maggie grabs the knob. It's locked. Through the
door-adjacent sidelight windows, we see LIAM inside.

MAGGIE

Oh no oh no oh no. He can't reach
the handle!

ABEL

Can he get a stool?

MAGGIE

No! He's a moron, Abel. Is that
what you want me to admit?! This is
like talking to my sister!
(remembering)
Oh God oh God oh God! I have a pot
on the stove! We need to get inside!

Feeding off his Mother's panic, LIAM BURSTS INTO TEARS.

ABEL

Give me your hairpins.

Before Maggie can think, Abel pulls the pins out of her hair
and starts picking the lock.

18 CONTINUED: (2)

18

MAGGIE
Is it working? Is it working?!

Liam wails harder.

ABEL
It's hard to concentrate with all
the chaos!

MAGGIE
You're yelling just as much as us!

ABEL
I'm not blaming, just describing!

Finally, the door swings open. Maggie rushes and, overwhelmed with emotion, showers Liam with kisses. Then she looks back at Abel, the vaguest amount of suspicion in her eyes.

MAGGIE
How did you know how to do that?

19 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

19

Nick sits and opens a book titled "Fireplace." (The cover also has a "Now a television show!" badge.) Before he can read a page, Lisa enters, gauze around her neck.

LISA
It's done. When this bandage comes
off, it'll look like someone put my
neck in a time machine and sent it
back ten years.

NICK
Wouldn't that mean you have no neck
now and two necks ten years ago?

Before Lisa can respond she spots something and SUDDENLY
DROPS TO THE FLOOR.

NICK (CONT'D)
Wow. The surgery really did make
you more youthful.

LISA
Zohar and Aisha are in the backyard.

NICK
What? Those maniacs must have come
back to feed the goat lunch.

19 CONTINUED:

19

LISA
I'm supposed to be out of town. I
can't risk them seeing me.

She crawls away from the window and stands up just in time
for: DING-DONG. LISA WHIPS HER HEAD towards the front door.

LISA (CONT'D)
(touching neck bandage)
Dammit. The doctor said my love of
dramatic swivels is how I got into
this situation in the first place.

Nick checks the peephole.

NICK
It's Jenny.

Lisa looks around searching for someplace to go.

LISA
I'll hide in the pantry. Get her
out of here quickly.

Lisa slips into the closet. Nick opens the door.

NICK
Hey, honey!

JENNY
Hey! I brought you some food since
Mom is out of town.

She tries to enter the house. Nick, awkwardly, doesn't move.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Can I come in?

NICK
Oh... why? We've spent a lot of
time together in our lives already.

Before Nick can respond, Nick spots Gigi approaching.

GIGI
Hello, Nicholas!
(less enthusiastic)
Hello, Jenny.

Jenny slips past Nick, into the house. Nick ineffectively
tries to stop her and, in doing so, allows Gigi in too.

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

GIGI (CONT'D)
I brought you some Ethiopian food.

JENNY
I already got lunch for Dad.

GIGI
(skeptical)
You cooked?

JENNY
I got takeout. Abel and I have been busy. Because, you know, we're moving in together down the street.

Gigi emits an irritated, high-pitched, MMM-HMMM.

GIGI
Does this mean Abel is eating a lot of takeout now too?

NICK
(sotto, to Jenny)
I don't want to get involved here. But the only time I've ever seen a look like that was while bear hunting.

Gigi finds a plastic container in a nearby cabinet and starts dividing up the food she brought for Nick into two parcels.

GIGI
Take some fir-fir to Abel. It's his favorite.

JENNY
Really? He's never mentioned it.

Gigi flashes a lightning-quick look at Jenny, then:

GIGI
I'm sorry, Jenny. It's not your fault. Who would have interest in home cooking after growing up eating Lisa's tasteless vegetarian sawdust?

Nick's mouth drops open.

20 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - PANTRY - SAME TIME

20

Lisa grinds her jaw, angry. She touches her neck bandages, remembering her need to stay calm.

21 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

21

Nick walks close to the pantry where Lisa is hiding.

NICK
(too loud)
Enough jokes, guys. We all know
Lisa's food is healthy and delicious.

JENNY
What are you talking about? At
Thanksgiving you said her main dish
looked and tasted like a birds' nest.

NICK
What?! That didn't happen! And if
it did it was a compliment!

GIGI
The first time I had Lisa's cooking
I turned to Zohar and said, "I think
they accidentally served us the--

Nick switches on the STOVE EXHAUST to muffle the conversation.

GIGI (CONT'D)
[Barely audible] [barely audible]

Jenny switches off the exhaust.

GIGI (CONT'D)
...Dogfood.

Nick's phone DINGS with a text. He looks at it.

NICK
Um, I need to check on something in
the pantry.

22 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - PANTRY - CONTINUOUS

22

Nick slips in to find an angry Lisa.

LISA
Do you have any idea how much I try
to accommodate you people? Being
vegetarian didn't used to be for
skinny actresses like it is today.
Vegetarians used to be hardcore! We
used to take pride in ruining a dinner
party just by showing up!

22 CONTINUED:

22

NICK
Try and calm down, honey. Your neck
and me not-having-to-talk-to-anyone
for a week depend on it. Please.

Outside the bathroom door, we hear a GOAT BLEAT.

NICK (CONT'D)
It's inside now?!

23 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

23

Nick emerges from the pantry to find Zohar, Aisha and the Goat now there.

ZOHAR
The goat refuses to eat.
(to Aisha, in Amharic)
Balefewi saminiti misa lemi.

Aisha stares at him, blank, no idea what he just said.

ZOHAR (CONT'D)
(translating)
Let's try that horrible grain salad
Lisa made for lunch last week.

NICK
Alright, everybody get out!

ZOHAR
Nick, I know you are too proud to
admit your loneliness to us. But if
you want to escape your despair--

NICK
--No. I don't know how things work
in Ethiopia, but sometimes a
Minnesotan man needs to be alone
with his thoughts!

Nick trails off, noticing something in Zohar's hand.

NICK (CONT'D)
Is that a ticket to tonight's Vikings-
Packers game?

Zohar nods. Nick looks back and forth between the ticket
and his reading chair. He makes a decision.

NICK (CONT'D)
On the other hand, Minnesotans also
always put community above themselves.

24 INT. ABEL AND JENNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

24

Abel paces. Jenny bursts in, carrying Gigi's food.

JENNY

We have to celebrate Ethiopian New
years at my parents' place tomorrow.
I think your mom is hoping you'll
use the occasion to propose to her.

ABEL

My mom is crazy. What can I do about
it?

(then, noticing)

Is that her fir-fir?!

Jenny sighs and hands him Gigi's food.

JENNY

How come more of your precious non-
TV-stand furniture isn't assembled?

ABEL

I took a break to speak to our
neighbor. It went... okay. At some
point we were outside and her baby
got locked in the house and I had to
pick the lock to save the day.

JENNY

You know how to pick locks?

ABEL

I thought it was a universal skill!
All my friends growing up could do
it!

JENNY

Wait, I think I do know someone who
knows how.

(then, remembering)

No, I'm thinking of a sex criminal I
saw on a TV show.

ABEL

If you can't pick locks, how would
you break into the supply building
to get another canister of cooking
gas after your ration ran out?

(off Jenny's look)

This is a refugee-camp specific
situation, isn't it?

24 CONTINUED:

24

JENNY

Yup.

(then)

So it looks like your "don't make waves" strategy didn't work so great with the neighbor. Makes you wonder what else I might be right about...

She picks a nearby painting up and places it on the mantle.

ABEL

What are you doing? You know that's where our TV should go.

JENNY

Abel, being able to watch---

(noticing something out window)

--those sons of bitches.

Abel turns to see out the window, where A LOCKSMITH'S VAN is parked in front of the Neighbor's house.

25 EXT. ABEL AND JENNY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

25

Jenny storms towards the neighbor's house. Abel follows.

ABEL

Please don't make a scene, please don't make a scene.

They arrive at the Neighbor's porch where a LOCKSMITH works on the door. Maggie and her husband, DONALD watch.

DONALD

Oh, you must be Abel.

JENNY

How could you tell? Is it because he's the only black man in your lily white neighborhood?! He saved your kid! He has a college degree. You people are not just what's wrong with this country. You're what's wrong with this world.

ABEL

You know, other than being suspicious of those who are different, I'm sure we all have a lot in common. How about we have some coffee and cake and get to know each other?

25 CONTINUED:

25

JENNY

Stop giving these Nazis the benefit of the doubt, Abel!

MAGGIE

Um... we're not... this isn't...

DONALD

Earlier, when Abel broke-- When he saved Liam. Part of the hairpin got stuck in the lock. We couldn't put our key in anymore.

ABEL

So you called the locksmith so you could use your door again?

DONALD

And have an extra key made that we could leave with you in case Maggie gets locked out again.

Abel shoots daggers at Jenny.

JENNY

(small)

We don't need the key. Abel can always break in again if necessary.

26 EXT. VIKING'S STADIUM - NIGHT

26

Mid-football game. Nick sits with Zohar and some ETHIOPIAN DADS. A play ends. The Ethiopians try to rally the Vikings:

ZOHAR / ETHIOPIAN DADS

Come, on! / Fourth down! Let's bring the force of the mighty Omo!

Nick just sips his beer, silent. Another play. It's a big one. Everyone watches with bated breath then... EXPLODES.

NICK / ZOHAR

Touchdown! / We did it!

Caught up in the moment, Nick high-fives Zohar. As the crowd celebrates, Nick looks at the Ethiopians and realizes he's having a good time. He makes a decision:

NICK

Packers fans have the virility of donkeys!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

27 EXT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - SATURDAY AFTERNOON (DAY 2) 27

Gigi sets up for the New Years party. Nearby, Aisha feeds the Goat. In the yard, Nick and Zohar dig a roasting pit. Abel and Jenny enter, carrying a table.

GIGI

Could you put that on the deck?

Gigi heads inside. Abel and Jenny, try to step in opposite directions, each going towards a different set of deck stairs.

ABEL

Is this worth making a scene over too? I vote no. But, apparently, my vote doesn't count.

JENNY

You know, just because we're living together now, it doesn't mean we have to spend every second with each other.

She crosses off. Abel calls after:

ABEL

I thought we were a "more evolved couple" but maybe we're really one of those weird old couples that sleeps in separate twin beds with a lamp between them and can only express happiness by throwing a hat into the air!

Jenny stomps inside, just as Gigi emerges from the house. Gigi turns to Abel, instantly outraged on his behalf.

GIGI

What did she do to you?

ABEL

Mom.

GIGI

Whatever it was, you didn't deserve it. Have you lost weight? It must be because you hate all that takeout food she buys.

ABEL

I've actually gained a bit.

27 CONTINUED:

27

GIGI

Of course. Because that takeout food she buys is so unhealthy. Is that why you're fighting or is Jenny failing you in other ways too?

ABEL

Mom, stop! Jenny is great. We're not fighting.

GIGI

Are you sure? I worry because you're not good at standing up for yourself.

ABEL

Yes, I am! I'm a grown man.

GIGI

Fine. How was the fir-fir?

ABEL

(annoyed)

I loved it!

Abel crosses away. As he goes he notices Zohar and Nick LAUGHING as they dig the pit. He stops to listen, surprised.

NICK

...I'm telling you, you haven't lived until you've bow and arrow fished. It's hunting and fishing combined into one!

ZOHAR

Sounds amazing. I tried to take Abel fishing once. But like they say in my village, "You can force a giraffe into a militia but you can't make him shoot."

NICK

Yeah... I noticed Abel isn't really into manly things.

Abel turns to a nearby Aisha.

ABEL

What's with everyone today? Just because I'm nice doesn't mean I'm not manly. Dad knows that.

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

ZOHAR
(calling over)
Aisha! I've chosen you to slaughter
the goat for today's roast.

ABEL
Really?!

AISHA
(to Zohar)
No way! I love this goat.

NICK
Aisha, this is a big deal. This
role is an honor in your culture.

ABEL
(re Nick and Zohar)
Why are these two friends? It's
creeping me out.

AISHA
This is not my culture. My culture
is going to the mall and hate-watching
YouTube channels on my phone.

GIGI
Aisha, there is purpose behind these
traditions. This is how we stay
close to the land and our food.
Part of this festival is appreciating
what eating meat means.

AISHA
Fine. Then I'm a vegetarian now.

Zohar GASPS, shocked. Gigi GASPS, hurt.

28 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

28

Lisa, ear to the window, GASPS, happy.

29 EXT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - DECK - MOMENTS LATER

29

Jenny emerges and calls out:

JENNY
Dad, could you help me open this
salsa?

Nick starts towards her from pit. But Abel gets to her first.

29 CONTINUED:

29

ABEL

(angry but smiling)

Why did you call your father instead
of me? Is it because you don't think
I'm a man? Is that why you think
you have to stand up for me?!

He grabs the jar from Jenny and tries to open it.

JENNY

What's going on with your face?

ABEL

(still smiling)

I don't want to give my mother the
satisfaction of knowing we're having
a fight.

JENNY

(through forced smile)

Ugh. She's out of her mind.

Nick finally reaches them. He notices Abel still struggling
with the jar, reaches over and opens it with one hand.

NICK

The trick is having hand-strength.

He exits as Abel smiles wider, reflecting his growing anger.

JENNY

You wanna smile-fight? Let's smile-
fight.

(then)

Abel, you always take the easy way
out and that drives me crazy. You
can't be nice all the time.

ABEL

(huge smile)

I'm not nice!

JENNY

You're annoyingly nice. And people
take advantage of that. That makes
me have to fight for you. Do you
think I like being a self-righteous
pain!

ABEL

Yes! It's one of your favorite things
about yourself.

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

JENNY

Fair. But I don't want to be another couple where the wife is mean and the husband is nice!

ABEL

Then don't be mean!

JENNY

Here's another idea: why don't you stand up and fight every once in a while. Yes, it's hard. Yes, it means some people won't like you some of the time. But it's right and it's also sexy!

ACROSS THE YARD Zohar and Gigi hang the goat upside down from a tree. Gigi spots Abel and Jenny "smiling" at each other.

GIGI

I guess they really aren't fighting.

Nearby, Nick spots Lisa beckoning him from a window.

30 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

30

Nick enters to find an agitated Lisa.

LISA

They're going to murder that goat in our backyard?!

NICK

What did you think was going to happen?

LISA

I don't know, I thought it would be a beautiful ceremony where they put flowers around its neck and worship it or something.

NICK

They're Ethiopians, not Californians.

LISA

You have to stop them!

NICK

That doesn't seem culturally sensitive.

30 CONTINUED:

30

LISA

"Culturally sensitive?" You made us switch grocery stores because Festival Foods started selling sushi! Please help me, Nick.

NICK

Alright, alright. I'll talk to Zohar. Maybe he has some Ethiopian trick to get the goat to take his own life.

31 INT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

31

Nick exits the bedroom and rounds the corner to find Zohar, holding a butcher's knife, standing with Gigi, absorbed by a wall of Swanson family photos.

GIGI

It would be nice if we had photos like this to show our grandchildren someday.

ZOHAR

Instead, they'll roll their eyes when they hear our same stories for the thousandth time -- how we traded our car to get into the refugee camp.

GIGI

Or how we celebrated your birthday two months late because that's when the Red Cross worker was able to sneak us a cake.

They look outside where Abel and Jenny still smile-fight.

GIGI (CONT'D)

Eh, what will our grandchildren know anyway? They'll probably have strange names like "Jerry" or "Charles."

Zohar turns over the goat slaughtering knife in his hands.

ZOHAR

Our family is losing its Ethiopian culture. Soon you and I will just be remembered as African weirdoes.

NICK (O.S.)

You know, this is actually a photo of my lost culture.

31 CONTINUED:

31

Zohar and Gigi turn to see Nick, who points to a photo of himself in a graduation cap, next to his father on a tractor.

NICK

My dad was mad at me that day because
I told him I didn't want to take
over the family farm.

FEEL-GOOD MUSIC starts playing.

NICK (CONT'D)

He and his daddy spent their whole
lives running that place. But I
wanted to be part of something bigger.
(then)
Enough with the sappy music, Hank!

HANK (O.S.)

Sorry. I thought I sensed a moment.

NICK

I didn't keep this photo because it
was a nice memory or for nostalgia.
I kept it because it captures moment
I became an adult. That day was the
first time I went against my dad and
did what I wanted.

Zohar and Gigi look at each other.

32 INT. ZOHAR'S CHILDHOOD HOME - ETHIOPIA - 1980 (FLASHBACK)

32

ZOHAR'S FATHER and UNCLES, all with afros, sit around drinking
tea. YOUNG ZOHAR enters with "modern" straightened hair.

ZOHAR'S FATHER

Who is going to give you a job with
that haircut?!

33 INT. GIGI'S CHILDHOOD HOME - ETHIOPIA - 1980 (FLASHBACK)

33

A YOUNG GIGI argues with her MOTHER and GRANDMOTHER, both of
whom have traditional Ethiopian tattoos on their forehead.

GIGI'S MOTHER

What will people think if my daughter
doesn't have a tattoo?

YOUNG GIGI

I. Don't. Want one!

34 INT. SWANSON HOUSE - BACK TO PRESENT

34

ZOHAR
I suppose all this -- Minnesota,
Abel having a white fiance, Aisha
becoming--
(heartbroken)
--vegetarian...

NICK
I'm so sorry for your loss.

ZOHAR
...it's all just our children becoming
their own unique people.

Out the window we see the smiles drop off Abel and Jenny's
faces. Abel storms away. But Gigi and Zohar are oblivious.

GIGI
It feels horrible, but it's probably
a good thing.

ZOHAR
Maybe it's even okay that--

Abel enters, upset, having heard nothing before.

ZOHAR (CONT'D)
--Abel isn't a tough Ethiopian man.

ABEL
That's it!

Abel grabs the butcher's knife out of Zohar's hands.

ABEL (CONT'D)
I am a man who can do manly things
and I am going to slaughter this
goat!

Abel runs outside. Lisa bursts out of the bedroom.

LISA
Nobody is slaughtering anything!

She sprints as fast as she can after Abel.

35 EXT. SWANSON'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

35

Abel runs towards the screaming goat. He passes a perplexed
Jenny and a not-paying attention Aisha. Lisa gains on him.

35 CONTINUED:

35

JENNY

Mom?

Lisa grabs the top off a birdbath and whips it at Abel, causing him to fall. The action causes her stitches to rip. Aisha, still oblivious, Facetimes with a friend.

AISHA'S FRIEND (O.S.)

(on Facetime)

What are you doing?

AISHA

Nothing. My family is so boring.

Nick, Zohar and Gigi come out to see Lisa hustle past Abel and free the goat. Blood starts to dot her neck bandages.

LISA

(to Aisha)

This is what being a vegetarian means!

Abel jumps to his feet. Lisa gets the goat to its feet.

ABEL

That's my goat!

The Goat runs. Abel chases. Lisa runs after, trying to get between Abel and the goat.

NICK

(to Zohar)

It would help me out with the Missus if you could claim that, before all this happened, I convinced you not to kill the goat.

ZOHAR

I got your back.

36 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

36

The Goat runs down the street. Lisa follows, BLOOD NOW DRIPPING FROM HER NECK. Abel follows her, BRANDISHING A BUTCHER'S KNIFE.

The Neighbors take in the tableau from their porch.

MAGGIE

Let's go ahead and change those locks now.

37 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATER - NIGHT

37

Abel, once again, leans, handcuffed, against a police car.
The White Cop eyes Jenny as he picks up his radio.

WHITE COP
(into walkie)
I've apprehended the perpetrator of
the violent public nuisance. We'll
be in soon.

ABEL
(to Jenny)
I'm willing to admit the possibility
that we're not more evolved than
other couples.

JENNY
Yeah, maybe not. I hate to admit it
but watching you chase that goat
with a knife was a turn on.
(then)
Maybe we need to accept that if we're
going to build a life together, we're
going to have to allow room to
disagree about stuff.

ABEL
That seems right.
(then)
Do you think moments like this, where
we accept each other's flaws is what
really makes us "more evolved" than
other couples?

JENNY
I think that's, like, the most basic
thing about being a couple.

ABEL
Dammit.

JENNY
I think, like it or not, we're going
to have to make all the same
relationship mistakes everyone else
makes and see if we survive.

ABEL
Well I guess there's nobody I'd rather
do that with than you.

ACROSS THE YARD:

37 CONTINUED:

37

Nick watches as PARAMEDICS load Lisa, neck still bleeding, onto an ambulance gurney. She looks over at Abel and Jenny.

LISA
Ugh. I'm so jealous of them. That's another thing that isn't "on brand" for me, but it's how I feel.

NICK
Why? They had a terrible day.

LISA
Because they're young! Watching them move into the neighborhood reminded me of when we moved in.

NICK
Almost thirty years ago now.

LISA
Back then, life was so clear: be a good wife, raise a family. Now that Jenny is all grown up, I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do. And it's making me feel old!

NICK
Hence the unnecessary neck job?

Lisa nods.

NICK (CONT'D)
Well, maybe you haven't changed as much as you think. Your vegetarianism still ruined tonight's dinner party.

This lands with Lisa.

LISA
You're right. Maybe I have a little more youth in me yet.
(then)
I'm still mad at Jenny for making fun of my food though.

BACK ON ABEL AND JENNY:

The Cop loads Abel in the police car. Jenny is about to let him go, then looks up to see Lisa calling out to her:

LISA (CONT'D)
Jenny! Jenny!

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

Not far from her, Gigi and Zohar repeatedly try and fail to capture the goat. Jenny mulls the scene for a moment then:

JENNY
(to Abel)
Scoot over.

Abel does. She joins him in the back of the car. The White Cop shrugs, closes the door, gets in the passenger seat.

As the Cop drives off, we WIDEN To take in all our families at the same time -- one in a police car, one in an ambulance, one chasing around a screaming goat. For better or worse, these are our people.

JENNY (O.S.)
You know, now that we're accepting
each other's differences, that means
you should be okay with the TV in
the bedroom.

ABEL (O.S.)
No! You have to accept my desire
for it to be in the living room!

END OF EPISODE