

RICKI AND THE FLASH

by

Diablo Cody

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY (VARIOUS) - NIGHT

City lights. Cloverleaf freeways. Palm trees. Cellular towers. A starless night sky. A liquor store lit up like Las Vegas-- or Reno at least.

Over these images: a spare, pounding DRUM BEAT.

We hear a WOMAN'S VOICE belting out the INTRO to Billy Squier's "The Stroke."

RICKI

Now everybody, have you heard?

If you're in the game Then the stroke's the word.

INT. THE SALT WELL - SAME

Black knee-high BOOTS planted firmly on a stage. Shapely LEGS in black stretch denim.

A feminine HAND grips the microphone stand. Said hand is adorned with rings of silver, turquoise and onyx. A studded leather cuff encircles the wrist.

RICKI

Don't take no rhythm, Don't take no style. Got a thirst for killin' Grab your vial!

A killer GUITAR kicks in.

Reveal the woman born LINDA BRUMMEL, now known as RICKI.

She's a 54 year-old rock star. A disciple of Stevie Nicks, Joan Jett and Roger Daltrey. A natural-born BAD ASS.

RICKI (CONT'D)

*Put your right hand out.
Give a firm hand-shake.
Talk to me about your one big break.*

Ricki can sing, strut, and work a crowd better than girls half...hell, a third of her age. Yes, the eyeliner has settled into a few creases, and the boots are cheap pleather from Payless. But she's the real deal.

Ricki's trusted guitarist (and occasional boyfriend), GREG, shreds on his '68 Gibson SG. His talent, like Ricki's, transcends the material.

Greg's put on a few pounds and his hair and beard could use a trim. But he's lovable at first sight.

The rest of the band looks about the same as Greg-- graying rock dudes. A couple of them are grandfathers. But man, they can play.

This is THE FLASH, the San Fernando Valley's #1 party band.

(Or so they say.)

Ricki is PACING like a leopard, singing her heart out. She LEAPS on top of the bass amp as Greg goes into a beast of a solo. Based on the level of showmanship happening on stage, you'd assume this was a packed house. A sold-out crowd. An important venue, at the very least...

Nope. Reveal that the Salt Well is a near-empty DIVE. The kind of place frequented by alcoholics, the elderly, and hipsters who think shitty bars are amusing. There are probably 5 people on the "show floor" and a few more huddled at the bar. One flannel-wearing KID whoops encouragement at the stage, but it could be sarcastic.

Ricki is not deterred. She JUMPS off the bass amp, then steps down off of the riser that passes for a stage at the Salt Well.

RICKI (CONT'D)

*Stroke me, stroke me.
Could be a winner girl, you move
quite well.*

Striding through the "crowd", RICKI hoists herself UP ONTO THE BAR and begins to strut the length of the bar, still singing. Somehow, she manages to avoid knocking over people's drinks; she's done this trick many times.

Her stiletto boots stomp past a row of VIDEO TRIVIA machines mounted on the bar. A MAN who is playing doesn't even bother to look up.

RICKI (CONT'D)

*Could be a winner, but man you're
just a sinner now.*

Ricki climbs down off the bar-- a HEAVYSET WOMAN kindly assists her with an outstretched hand.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Thanks, Sharon.

As her bandmates CHANT the coda ("Stroke! Stroke!"), Ricki makes her way back to the stage.

She triumphantly thrusts her fist into the air and falls to her knees. Her shoulders heave. She gave it her all.

A smattering of tepid applause. Actually, one person goes crazy; the bartender, DANIEL, a young Latino man. He shrieks from his post across the room.

DANIEL

Go Ricki! You're an icon!

RICKI

Thanks, everyone. Gracias, my sweet Daniel.

DANIEL

You're my queen!

If there's an element of camp at play, Ricki doesn't acknowledge it. She her job very seriously.

RICKI

Hello, Tarzana. That was Billy Squier's "The Stroke," a very truthful and brave song about the corrupt record business.

Ricki's facial expression indicates that this might be a sore subject.

RICKI (CONT'D)

I'm Ricki Rendazzo, and I'd like to take a moment to introduce my band, the Flash. We've been the house band here at the Salt Well since...

(to Greg)

When did we get together? 2008?

Greg nods earnestly.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Yeah. 2008. That was the year we elected you-know-who...

She rolls her eyes, clearly not a fan.

RICKI (CONT'D)

But that's okay. We've still got rock and roll, don't we? No offense, Billy.

BILLY, the Flash's black KEYBOARD PLAYER, shakes his head.

RICKI (CONT'D)

We joke around. Speaking of Billy, he's the man on keys. Billy Lambert, everybody.

Billy plays a MUSICAL STING on the keyboard.

RICKI (CONT'D)

And we've got Mark "Buster" Frye on the Rickenbacker bass.

"BUSTER," a skinny weirdo, fidgets and nods.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Joe Scaduto on drums. Newly single, ladies.

Balding JOE smiles sheepishly, the pain of the recent breakup evident in his eyes.

RICKI (CONT'D)

And finally, my right-hand man, Greg Sandoval on the Gibson SG.

Greg grins at Ricki and leans into his microphone.

GREG

(on mic)

You know, people say band mates shouldn't date, but I don't think it's hurting our sound.

RICKI

Well, we're not really dating, Greg.

Greg chuckles to save face, but he's clearly stung.

GREG

What?

Ricki smiles tightly: let's discuss this later.

GREG (CONT'D)

Is that not the terminology anymore? Are we, uh, "hooking up" like my kid says?

The other band members exchange uncomfortable glances.

RICKI

We've been spending some time together.

GREG

I "spend time" with Buster. I think
you and I are a little different.

Buster drags on a glowing-blue electronic cigarette and
exhales a cloud of vapor.

BUSTER

Shit, I hope so, man.

RICKI

Let's not have this conversation
onstage.

She turns back toward the mic, back in "on" mode.

RICKI (CONT'D)

So. We've learned a new tune since
our last gig here at the Salt Well.
You asked for more of today's hits
and, well...we aim to please.

Though she tries to sound enthusiastic about this, her tone
is resigned. She nods to Greg to prompt him.

Greg begins to strum a familiar pop riff. Ricki gamely
launches into her best Katy Perry whisper.

RICKI (CONT'D)

(singing)
*You think I'm pretty without any
makeup on...*

CUT TO:

INT. SALT WELL (BAR AREA) - POST-GIG

Ricki sits down at the bar, spent and sweating. Daniel is
ready with a glass of wine and plenty of praise.

DANIEL

Chardonnay for my flawless queen.

RICKI

Sorry I couldn't talk before the
gig. Vocal rest.

Greg takes the stool next to her, scoffing gently.

GREG

Vocal rest. She thinks this is Madison
Square Garden.

RICKI
I take things seriously.

GREG
I know. I love that about you.

Greg immediately begins to backpedal.

GREG (CONT'D)
Not to freak you out or anything--

RICKI
Greg, I'm sorry about ...

Greg pauses.

RICKI (CONT'D)
...what I said onstage. It was just
some fun banter. The crowd loves
that tension; it's why Fleetwood Mac
worked.

GREG
(dubious)
All right.

Daniel hoists Ricki's huge, fringed BLACK PURSE over the
bar.

DANIEL
Your purse is vibrating, mama.

GREG
If she'd move in with me, she wouldn't
need that kind of thing.

Corny. Ricki rolls her eyes and retrieves her cheap cell
phone from her purse.

RICKI
Who on earth would be calling me?

Ugh, probably my manager. He's 19.

She looks at the display. It's a 630 area code.

RICKI (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Six-three-zero.

GREG
What's that? Bufu, Egypt?

Ricki's reply is barely audible.

RICKI
Chicago suburbs.

GREG
Probably a telemarketer or something.
You know, I got an Old Navy credit
card like ten years ago and it haunts
me to this day. Messed up my credit,
got my name on some list all because
I needed some swim trunks...

Greg drones on, but Ricki is lost in thought. She sips her
Jack and ginger.

EXT. SALT WELL - CLOSING TIME

The Salt Well shares a parking lot with a strip mall. Ricki
and Greg linger outside, cuddling. After a couple of drinks,
Ricki is much more affectionate. Greg slides his jacket over
her shoulders.

RICKI
Brrrr. When I was a kid, I thought it
was always warm in California.

GREG
Aw, me too. I used to watch Gidget
on TV and it looked so great. And
like, Hawaii 5-0...

RICKI
Hawaii 5-0 was in Hawaii.

GREG
You don't say, smart-ass.

He gazes into her eyes with clear intent.

RICKI
I can't tonight. I have work in the
morning at nine.

GREG
You never go to sleep anyway.

RICKI
I've got some things to do.

INT. RICKI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MUSIC UP: Fleetwood Mac's "Never Going Back Again."

A small, crappy apartment in the deep Valley. Ricki cooks herself some Rice-a-Roni on an electric range. She adds the packet of radioactive-yellow "chicken" powder to the skillet.

Her rock-and-roll getup is gone, replaced with a conservative beige bathrobe and slippers.

Ricki transfers her dinner to a bowl and carries it ten feet to the "dining room." She sits down at a cheap dining room set, puts on her reading glasses, and begins to page through the Los Angeles Times.

INT. RICKI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ricki is removing her glittery black eye makeup with a cotton pad and cold cream. As she finishes, reveal a PILE of soiled pads-- it takes a lot to remove the rock star.

INT. RICKI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ricki's bedroom is small, with dirty beige wall-to-wall carpet and a glass vase full of found SEA SHELLS.

She climbs into bed and turns on an "Ocean Waves" white noise machine-- Ricki has done her best to turn the Valley apartment into the L.A. beach house she imagined as a child.

She turns off the light.

EXT. WHOLE FOODS (TO ESTABLISH) - MORNING

A busy Whole Foods in Los Angeles.

INT. WHOLE FOODS - SAME

Ricki wears a cashier's smock and rings up GROCERIES. She quickly scans item after item of overpriced organic stuff.

Her latest CUSTOMER is a dude in bike shorts. Total California douchebag, buying an insane amount of expensive supplements, snacks, etc.

Ricki holds up a mysterious FRUIT and examines it.

CUSTOMER

It's a star fruit.

Ricki deftly punches in the SKU code with her long, gold acrylic nails.

RICKI

Right.

CUSTOMER

I try to listen to my body, and today
my body was like, "Fruit!"

RICKI

It's funny how that works, isn't it?
Okay, that comes to \$447.74.

The man cringes-- jokingly-- as he pulls out his wallet.

CUSTOMER

Ouch. I guess there's a reason they
call this place...

Ricki wearily mouths the punch line along with him.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)

..."Whole Paycheck."

RICKI

Well that actually is, truly, my
whole paycheck.

The man suddenly looks guilty.

RICKI (CONT'D)

\$447...yep, that's about what I make
in a week.

The customer pulls out his debit card, wanting to end the
interaction as soon as possible.

CUSTOMER

Heh. How about that.

RICKI

Maybe if we get the Democrats out of
office, the economy will improve,
but until then, a lot of us are living
to hand-to-mouth.

(surprised)

Oh. And you'd like \$100 cash back.

Ricki's manager, TROY, 19, has been observing this
interaction. He walks over.

TROY

Have a great day, sir. Let me know
how you like those protein cookies.

CUSTOMER

Thanks.

Ricki hands the man his cash and he hurries out.

TROY
You just alienated the customer.

Ricki is apologetic.

RICKI
I was making small talk. I was
engaging, like you said.

TROY
Let's stick to talking about the
weather. Or the inventory.

RICKI
Sorry, Troy.

TROY
Remember. "Mindfulness."

Ricki nods with "enthusiasm."

INT. WHOLE FOODS (BREAK ROOM) - DAY

Ricki is sitting at a table, eating a sack lunch from home
(tuna sandwich, Yoplait, can of soda). Her PHONE rings again.

Ricki sighs, staring at the display. She finally picks up on
the third ring.

RICKI
Hello?

CROSS-CUT PHONE CALL

INT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME - DAY

A suburban COUNTRY KITCHEN, sprawling, with granite counters
and pristine cabinets. PETE BRUMMEL, 55, paces with a phone.

He looks like what he is: an accountant on his day off. A
little nerdy, a little tightly-wound, and definitely not
thrilled to be speaking with Ricki.

PETE
Linda?

Ricki sighs, hating the sound of her given name.

RICKI
Mm-hm?

PETE

You answered. I thought maybe you had another new number.

RICKI

Is this Pete?

PETE

Yes, this is Pete. I've been trying to call you.

RICKI

Really? I'm sorry.

PETE

I left you a voice mail. This is kind of time-sensitive matter?

RICKI

I haven't figured out how to check those messages yet. You know me.

PETE

Yes. I do.

RICKI

So what's the problem, Pete?

PETE

It's Julie. Max left her.

RICKI

Oh my goodness. Where did he go?

PETE

He didn't go anywhere. He's divorcing her. He met someone else.

RICKI

Well.

(pondering)

I suppose the heart wants what it wants...

PETE

What? Are you actually defending this ass who just abandoned our daughter? Wow. That is-- well, that is pretty consistent with...

RICKI

(interrupting)

I'm not defending him. I'm trying to be fair and balanced like always. How is Julie?

PETE

That's why I'm calling you. Julie's not well. She's absolutely unhinged. She showed up here a few nights ago, and she's acting...I mean, she's not showering or changing her clothes... she's... I'm worried, Linda.

RICKI

How's your wife taking all this?

PETE

Maureen is in Seattle with her father. His health is failing.

RICKI

Oh right, he has Alzheimers.

PETE

A.L.S.

RICKI

Isn't that short for Alzheimers?

PETE

No, it isn't.

RICKI

What can I do to help?

PETE

You could be there for your daughter.

This is a clearly a loaded topic. Ricki pauses.

RICKI

Physically, or like in song?

A long silence on the other end.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Physically. Okay.

INT. LAX AIRPORT TICKETING - DAY

Ricki passes through the automatic doors, fully made-up and dressed to kill in tight black jeans, boots, a fringed leather jacket, and all of her rock star accessories. Her GUITAR is slung over her shoulder.

She looks around, confused. She tries to walk to the ticketing counter, but a uniformed ATTENDANT stops her.

ATTENDANT

You need a boarding pass? You can get that right here.

She directs Ricki to the electronic TICKETING MACHINE.

RICKI

Here? This computer?

(then)

Sorry. I haven't flown in a long time.

ATTENDANT

That's fine. Just put in your confirmation number.

RICKI

Is that like my social?

ATTENDANT

No, ma'am.

Ricki is fumbling in her big purse, lost. A LIPSTICK rolls onto the floor.

INT. LAX SECURITY CHECKPOINT - DAY

Ricki takes off her high-heeled boots, looking short and vulnerable. She takes off her many RINGS and BRACELETS and drops them in a plastic bin.

Studs, turquoise, chains...it's a comical amount of jewelry.

She steps through the detector. BEEP!

A giant, ostentations BELT BUCKLE comes off. A silver TOE RING. Ricki tries again.

On the other end of the conveyer belt, an exasperated TSA EMPLOYEE opens Ricki's bag.

TSA EMPLOYEE

Excuse me, Ma'am? You can't have this.

The employee holds up a GIGANTIC CAN OF HAIR SPRAY.

RICKI

Sorry.

TSA EMPLOYEE

You can't have any of this stuff.

The employee is taking out all of Ricki's "necessary" stuff--mousse, gel, Oil of Olay, Poison perfume, a big bottle of CHEAP RED WINE.

A YOUNG BUSINESS TRAVELER behind Ricki sighs.

RICKI

For heaven's sake, the wine is just a hostess gift. I'm not going to drink it on the plane.

TSA EMPLOYEE #2

Ma'am, can you step over to this area, please?

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Ricki is stuffed into an economy class seat. She wears her READING GLASSES and reads a library copy of Tuesdays with Morrie.

EXT. HERTZ RENT-A-CAR LOT (CHICAGO) - NIGHT

It's FREEZING in Chicago. Receipt in hand, Ricki shivers and trots across a lot full of RENTAL CARS, dragging her suitcase and guitar. She clearly didn't pack any type of proper outerwear for this trip.

Ricki finds her car, a white PT Cruiser, and unlocks it, rubbing her hands together.

EXT. CHICAGO EXPRESSWAY (TO ESTABLISH) - NIGHT

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Ricki is listening to the classic rock station, of course.

She slows the car as her headlights illuminate the gated entrance to RUFFLED FEATHERS GOLF COMMUNITY.

She pulls into the gate and is stopped by the GUARD.

GUARD

Your name, please?

RICKI

Ricki.

GUARD

You're here to see...

RICKI

Peter Brummel.

GUARD
Can I see some ID?

Ricki fishes out her license and hands it over.

GUARD (CONT'D)
(examining)
This says "Linda."

RICKI
That's my given name. But Pete knows
I prefer to go by Ricki, so I think
he would probably...

The guard checks the log, interrupting.

GUARD
Here you are. Linda Brummel.

INT./EXT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME - SAME

Pete stands at the front door of his handsome brick home. He stares out into the night, impatient and nervous. There's a DRESSED-UP GOOSE STATUE on the front porch.

Ricki pulls up and parks crookedly in the driveway.

Pete takes a deep breath and walks out to stiffly greet his ex-wife. Ricki struggles with her suitcase and guitar.

PETE
Let me help you with that.

RICKI
Thanks.

PETE
You brought a guitar.

RICKI Just the one.

PETE
Um, how was your flight?

They walk into the house together. Pete carries Ricki's suitcase, but the mood is awkward and businesslike.

RICKI
It was fine. Travel has really changed
since we took the kids to Disney
World.

PETE
Yeah. That was 1988.

RICKI

I remember when flying was a treat.

People got a little dressed up, even. Now I see these young girls in exercise pants.

PETE

Well, I can see you're still putting in the effort.

Ricki's not sure if this is a compliment. Matter of fact, it definitely isn't. Still, she remains cordial.

RICKI

Gee, thanks, Pete. Wow, this is some house. This is like a mansion.

PETE

Thanks, yeah. We got this, uh, double-height entry, and Maureen had to have those Palladian windows.

RICKI

Very classical.

PETE

Yes, I feel like Jefferson at Monticello.

Silence. Ricki and Pete are out of small talk.

PETE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I'll tell Julie you're here.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ricki enters the huge kitchen. She looks very out of place amongst all the stainless-steel luxury. The decor is very crafty and "country". Lots of farm and chicken motifs. A handpainted sign that says "THIS IS NOT BURGER KING-- WE DO THINGS MY WAY." Another that says "HUG A NURSE." A hum as the space-age dishwasher begins to cycle. Ricki walks over.

There's a cute little SIGN hanging from the dishwasher that says DIRTY. Ricki turns it over. It says CLEAN.

There are some "classic"-looking paneled doors against the wall. Ricki pulls at them curiously, then reacts with surprise-- it's a REFRIGERATOR.

RICKI

Oh.

She opens the freezer side. Alongside the ice cream and frozen veggies, we see a few BAGGIES full of glistening, green MARIJUANA.

Ricki raises her eyebrows, surprised.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Peter.

As if on cue, Pete enters the kitchen. Ricki closes the freezer quickly.

PETE

So, Julie is pretty tired. She's glad you're here though and she's looking forward to having a conversation in the morning...

A thunder of FOOTSTEPS. Angry, bloodshot EYES appear over Pete's shoulder in the doorway.

JULIE

Julie is not glad you're here.

Julie's fucking pissed.

JULIE emerges in a rage. She's in her late 20s, beautiful, but unstable and disheveled. She wears an old Slayer T-shirt and red flannel pajama pants and looks like she hasn't showered in a week.

RICKI

Hi Ju-jee!

JULIE

Oh my God. Look who it is. Joanfucking-Jett has graced us with her presence.

Pete laughs nervously; he fears conflict.

PETE

Going through a separation...it can be a crazy time...

JULIE

I'm not crazy. I've actually never felt more clarity.

PETE

There's even a book about it called Crazy Time. Good read.

Julie opens the fridge and takes out a bottle of KOMBUCHA.

RICKI

Oh, kombucha. We sell that at Whole Foods.

Julie slams the fridge shut.

JULIE

You work at a grocery store? Ha, that's poetic, Mom. Because you've never prepared a proper meal for anyone, ever. So how did you wind up in the "packaged foods" industry? Record deal didn't work out? What happened to Tom Petty's cousin or whatever?

RICKI

(looking at Pete)

I was under the impression that you wanted me here.

JULIE

Do you think we're like, twins now, because I'm getting a divorce? Well, I'm nothing like you, thank Christ.

RICKI

This whole thing-- it's not a big deal, honey. Lots of young women your age are having starter marriages. I just read something about it in Parade.

JULIE

It wasn't a "starter marriage." I take things seriously, unlike you. I intended to stay with Max forever and have kids and actually raise them to adulthood.

PETE

Take it easy, Julie.

JULIE

Why would you defend her? She's your "Max", Dad.

Pete is rattled but tries to play it off with a laugh.

PETE

What? Heh, no.

JULIE

Yes, she is. She walked out on you.

RICKI
I was never unfaithful, Julie.

Julie reacts to this as though she's been slapped.

JULIE
Neither was Max!

RICKI
Dad told me Max is already living with someone new. Do you really think he waited until he left you to be intimate with her?

JULIE
(screaming)
Oh my God! He left me because he didn't want to cheat on me! He cared about me too much to do that!

RICKI
He's an absolute gem.

JULIE
Go fuck yourself!

Julie grabs her kombucha and storms out of the kitchen, seething with rage.

PETE
We'll try again in the morning.

RICKI
Of course.

PETE
You uh, heading to your hotel now?

Ricki looks at him quizzically.

INT. OFFICE/GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Pete opens the door to an OFFICE with a twin bed in it.

RICKI
It's a silly, silly mix-up. I'm so sorry. I could hardly afford the plane ticket, and I just thought that since you and Maureen built this big new house that it wouldn't be a problem...

PETE
Oh, it's not a problem space-wise.
(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)
It's really just, you know,
boundaries. But it's fine!

RICKI
I hope Maureen doesn't mind.

Pete chuckles nervously.

PETE
Oh, no. Mo is very chill. I'm the
one who gets worked up about things.

RICKI
Maybe Julie gets that from you.

Pete bites his tongue.

PETE
The bathroom is en suite, so...

RICKI
Mmm.

PETE
Good night, Linda.

Pete looks at Ricki-- resentment and longing in his eyes.

RICKI
Good night.

Ricki sits down on the bed and pulls off her boots.

INT. OFFICE/SPARE BEDROOM - MORNING

The room is flooded with light. Ricki has the covers pulled
over her head as she snores.

JULIE (O.S.)
Wake up, Linda.

Ricki stirs.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Wake up. You're late for Whole Foods.

Ricki wakes up, disoriented, and sees Julie standing in her
doorway. Julie still wears the Slayer T-shirt and plaid pajama
pants. She puts on a silly, babyish voice.

JULIE (CONT'D)
Just kidding.

RICKI

Hi.

JULIE

I was a huge bitch last night. I'm not sorry. But I acknowledge that I acted like a cunt bag.

RICKI

No, you didn't-- not that.

JULIE

My therapist started me on Effexor and I think we need to titrate down just a little. I've been volatile, anorgasmic...

RICKI

You're having orgasms?

JULIE

Anorgasmic. "An" means "not." It's Latin.

Linda sits up and swings her legs out of bed.

RICKI

I know that, sweetie. I couldn't hear you.

(then)

What time is it?

JULIE

It's almost 10. I thought I'd come and get you out of bed.

(pointed)

Just like old times.

Julie picks up Ricki's phone brazenly and looks at it.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You got a text here, Ma.

Who's Greg?

RICKI

Greg plays guitar in the Flash.

Julie smirks at the cheesy band name.

JULIE

The Flash?

RICKI

My band.

(MORE)

RICKI (CONT'D)

I sent you our Facebook website a long time ago, remember? Give me that phone, please.

Julie is reading the texts.

JULIE

He calls you "babe." Ricki takes the phone.

RICKI

That's an L.A. thing.

JULIE

That's a fuck thing.

Ricki looks at her belligerent, disheveled daughter.

RICKI

How about some Dunkin Donuts?

INT. DUNKIN DONUTS - DAY

Julie and Ricki sit in a booth by the window. Julie still wears her shut-in outfit and looks slightly insane. Ricki, of course, is in full hair and makeup.

RICKI

For some reason, we don't have Dunkin Donuts in California.

JULIE

Guess you have to leave a lot of things behind to become a rock star.

Ricki stares at her daughter, yearning to connect.

RICKI

The donuts were the least of it.

JULIE

Yeah, Mom. That was the subtext.

RICKI

You know, honey, I came out here to help. Because I know you're in shock right now. And you're not yourself.

Julie bites into a frosted donut with sprinkles, the kind of thing a 5 year-old would order.

JULIE

I tried to commit suicide.

Ricki blinks, stunned.

RICKI
Dad didn't mention that.

JULIE
Oh, really? Yeah, Max came home from work and told me he was in love with this girl who works in "Traffic." Which in advertising, just means that she like, e-mails documents to various people all day. It is a non-job.

RICKI
Traffic.

JULIE
Yes. Nicole from Traffic. So Nicole is 34. She has two kids. 10 and 12. She has fake boobs. Small fake boobs, which is like-- what is the point? And they're like, walleyed. One of them is looking over here and the other one is looking at homeboy over there.

She gestures to a DUNKIN DONUTS CASHIER across the room.

DUNKIN DONUTS CASHIER
Hey.

RICKI
How do you know so much about this woman's breasts?

JULIE
I found pictures on Max's phone.

RICKI
Oh, Julie.

JULIE
That night, I took a bunch of sleeping pills. I had them anyway because I have insomnia.

Ricki is pleased to find a similarity between her and Julie.

RICKI
Like me.

JULIE
And millions of other Americans, yes. I took like 25 of them.
(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

Everything went black. And then I woke up in the hospital with a pumped stomach, a Filipino nurse named Girly, and my husband of four years telling me that we were done.

Ricki looks at Julie. She BURSTS INTO TEARS.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Whoa.

Ricki lowers her head onto the table, sobbing.

JULIE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Ricki grabs Julie's hands.

RICKI

I can't believe you tried to kill yourself!

A SINGLE DAD having donuts with his TWO SMALL CHILDREN in a nearby booth looks disturbed.

RICKI (CONT'D)

What the hell were you thinking, Julie? You are precious!

JULIE

If it makes you feel any better, a lot of shitty things have happened to me since you left. This is just an incident that you know of.

Both of them are practically shouting now.

RICKI

Oh please don't...

JULIE

Yeah. Like one time, when I was a freshman at Marquette? I got drunk at a party and when I woke up there was semen all over my clothes.

Single Dad looks increasingly alarmed.

RICKI

Why would you do that to yourself?

JULIE

Oh, it's my fault?
(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

You would think that. Yeah, okay, Mom. I take responsibility for some guy jerking it over my unconscious body.

SINGLE DAD

Excuse me! Can you guys take this conversation outside?

Ricki turns to him condescendingly.

RICKI

Oh, that is so Midwestern. You can't raise children in a bubble.

The dad escorts his kids toward the door angrily.

SINGLE DAD

I can't do something special with my kids when it's my weekend with them?

JULIE

(to man)

Did you leave their mother? Because fuck you.

The man GIVES THEM THE FINGER and exits with his crying kids.

SINGLE DAD

(to little girl)

Come on, Journey.

Julie and Ricki look at each other, strangely proud of the scene they've made.

JULIE

"Journey."

RICKI

Oh, I like that.

JULIE

You would.

INT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME (MEDIA ROOM) - DAY

Pete sits in a big MEDIA ROOM watching golf on TV. Ricki and Julie enter. Pete's on the couch with his back to them. Julie approaches the couch, holding a large DONUT in her mouth like a dog.

JULIE

Hrrrrgh!

Pete turns around to see his ex-wife and daughter.

PETE

Oh. I was wondering where you guys went.

Julie shuffles off to the kitchen. Ricki takes this opportunity to quietly confront Pete.

RICKI

Our child attempted suicide?

Pete interrupts defensively.

PETE

"Suicide" is an extreme word.

Ricki stares at him.

PETE (CONT'D)

I didn't find out about it until a few days after the fact.

RICKI

Why didn't you call me?

PETE

I did.

RICKI

I thought she was just depressed about Max leaving!

PETE

I wouldn't have bothered calling you over something that simple.

RICKI

Well, why not?

PETE

Because historically, Linda, you don't really give a damn.

RICKI

Yes I do!

(lowering her voice)

You shut me out, let's not forget that...

PETE

I shut you out. That's rich. You voluntarily put two thousand miles between yourself and your children...

RICKI

...and you.

Pete reddens, flustered.

PETE

That's not germane to the conversation.

RICKI

Oh, I think it is.

Julie re-enters, loudly interrupting. She flops down on the couch next to Pete.

JULIE

Oh, you guys are fighting! It's like the Eighties all over again. I remember me and Adam and Josh used to sit and watch An American Tail on VHS like over and over while you guys went at each other.

Ricki sighs and sits down on a chair next to the couch.

PETE

We weren't fighting.

JULIE

Right, just recapping. How Mom's little "Hollywood experiment" shattered our perfect family...

RICKI

Good grief.

PETE

That's enough.

Pete resumes his usual cordial tone.

PETE (CONT'D)

So. Speaking of Adam and Josh, I let both of them know that you were in town--

JULIE

Just dropped in. Suicide visit.

RICKI

(hopeful)
Do they want to see me?

JULIE

Josh does. Adam doesn't.

Pete gives Julie an exasperated look.

PETE

They both said they're up for dinner tonight. Josh is bringing his girlfriend, Emily. They've gotten pretty serious.

RICKI

Is Adam bringing anyone?

Julie lets out a loud, derisive SNORT.

PETE

Julie.

RICKI

Well, I can't believe I'm going to have all my kids in the same room. What a treat.

PETE

It should be a real nice night.

EXT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (BACK YARD) - DAY

Phone in hand, Ricki pushes open a sliding glass door to the BACK YARD. For such a grand house, it's certainly on a small piece of land. The yard is a sad little patch of sod with a single cafe table and chairs. A fence barely obscures the other huge houses crowding Pete's.

Ricki sits down and dials her phone.

INT. THE SALT WELL - DAY

Greg is sitting at the bar at the Salt Well, drinking a bottle of Budweiser. Daniel the bartender looks on. Greg retrieves his phone from his jeans pocket.

GREG

Here's Ricki.

DANIEL

Tell her we love her.

Greg hops off his stool, heading outside.

GREG

I gotta be careful with the "L" word. She's gun shy.

DANIEL

You'll get there.

Greg answers the phone.

GREG
Hey, babe.

CROSS CUT PHONE CALL

RICKI
Hi there.

GREG
How's everything going?

RICKI It's been a bit hellish. I'm staying at Pete's.

GREG
Yeah? How's his pad?

RICKI
Suburban. Huge. There's so much granite. I'm nervous about the off-gassing.

Greg switches his phone to the other ear.

GREG
What's that? Sorry, tinnitus.

RICKI
Nothing. It's just something I read in the paper. So...my daughter, Julie-- she apparently tried to kill herself with sleeping pills.

GREG
Oh, man.

RICKI
Yeah.

GREG
I don't know what to say, Rick. I mean, you know my Derek freaked out on mushrooms that one time, but that was an accident.

RICKI
I had no idea she was so lost. I blame myself.

GREG
No way.

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

Blame that punk who cheated on her.
You hopped on the first plane to
Chicago to be by her side. You're a
great mom.

RICKI

You really think that?

GREG

Yes I do. A great mom, a great rock
vocalist, and a so-so guitarist.

RICKI

Ha. We can't all be virtuosos like
you.

GREG

Cover of Shredder Magazine, May 1988
and don't you forget it.

Ricki laughs and sighs.

RICKI

I'm seeing my sons tonight.

GREG

That's great. Enjoy.

RICKI

I'm scared. They're adults now, you
know?

GREG

Nah. You grow 'em, you know 'em.

They're the same kids whose diapers you changed way back
when.

Ricki seems reassured by this.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT (TO ESTABLISH) - NIGHT

A "Tuscan"-style restaurant on a busy Saturday night.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A HOSTESS leads Ricki, Julie and Pete to a large table in
the corner of the restaurant. Ricki is dressed to kill in
black pleather pants and a chain belt. Julie has a TRENCH
COAT over her Slayer/pajamas ensemble.

HOSTESS

Here you are.

Ricki and Pete's sons ADAM and JOSH BRUMMEL are already seated, along with Josh's girlfriend, EMILY.

Adam is 30, intense and attractive like his sister. Josh is 32, a friendly, approachable ex-jock.

Emily has a polished, sweater-and-pearls "old money" look. In other words, she's the opposite of Julie and Ricki.

ADAM
(mumbling)
Here she is...

Josh, like his father, is a positive guy who prefers to avoid conflict.

JOSH
(rising)
Hi, Mom.

RICKI
Hi Josh!

She and Josh hug warmly. Emily smiles politely.

JOSH
And this is my girlfriend Emily.

EMILY
It's wonderful to finally meet you,
Linda.

Adam, already a bit loud and drunk, rolls his eyes.

ADAM
Hey, that's "Ricki Rendazzo." You're
in the presence of greatness, Emily.
Don't forget.

He's kidding-- sort of. There's anger there.

RICKI
Adam. You look so handsome, sweetie.

She holds her arms out for a hug. Adam remains seated and pats one of her outstretched arms.

ADAM
Thanks, Mom. How are you?

The WAITER appears.

WAITER
Can I get you folks some drinks?
(MORE)

WAITER (CONT'D)

(to Adam)
Sir, would you like another martini?

ADAM

Why not? Keep 'em coming.

RICKI

Just water.

JULIE

I'll have water too.
(stage whisper)
With scotch.

Julie sits down next to her father and Adam and across from Josh and Emily.

EMILY

(to Pete)
So how's Maureen's dad doing?

PETE

Oof, not great. The disease is progressing rapidly and--Ricki interrupts curiously.

RICKI

(to Emily)
You've met Maureen?

EMILY

Yeah, of course. Lots of times.
Mo's great.

Ricki hides her jealousy behind a smile.

JOSH

Emily and I have been together for over a year now. She's met the whole family.

JULIE

Em, why aren't you wearing your ring?

A long, AWKWARD SILENCE. Josh glares at Julie.

JULIE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Your engagement ring.

Emily looks down, embarrassed.

RICKI

You two are engaged?

EMILY

Yes.

JULIE

Josh got Emily this huge conflict free diamond in an antique setting. He proposed at the lake. We were all there. It was beyond gay.

Josh fumes silently at Julie.

RICKI

I'm so happy for you, honey. Why didn't you tell me?

This question seems to be directed to everyone at the table, especially Pete.

JOSH

Well, we wanted to keep things quiet for a while. So we could enjoy our news privately.

RICKI

Julie said everyone was at the proposal. Did this just happen?

JULIE

No, it was the Fourth of July. So that was like...wow, eight, nine months ago?

ADAM

(to Julie)

Look, I know you've been through a lot lately, but you are acting craycray right now.

JOSH

(interrupting)

No, Adam. It's fine.

(to Ricki)

We were planning to tell you in person tonight.

Julie snickers.

JULIE

Right. While Emily's ring was coincidentally being cleaned. Josh, just be honest and say that you don't want Mom at the wedding.

The waiter reappears with a tray of drinks.

WAITER

Would you guys be interested in hearing our appetizer specials?

Adam claps his hands together in shock.

ADAM

Oh my God.

PETE

That's not true.

JOSH

No. We're practically eloping, Mom.

EMILY

We're doing something very small, very green...

JOSH

It's not like some huge, formal wedding like Julie had.

JULIE

Thanks for bringing that up!

JOSH

Well, thanks for this.

JULIE

I'm still having Ambien shits from my suicide attempt, and you're talking about my wedding.

The waiter vanishes.

RICKI

It's okay. Go ahead! My feelings aren't hurt if you elope. Your father and I eloped. It was wonderful.

Pete is unexpectedly pleased by this reminiscence.

PETE

Yes. It was.

RICKI

This is wonderful news. I would get a bottle of champagne for the table or something, but I recently filed for bankruptcy, so...

This makes everyone even more uncomfortable.

JOSH
That's OK. Thanks, Mom.

RICKI
Adam, when are you going to settle
down and get married?

This is a very sensitive subject.

PETE
Who wants calamari? How about some
calamari for the table? Julie, you
love that bruschetta...

ADAM
Well, Mom, as you know, I'm gay. So
I can't legally get married, thanks
to Republicans such as yourself who
continue to deny my humanity.

RICKI
I didn't mean a man, I just...

ADAM
Who would I marry then?

RICKI
I thought you were bisexual.

PETE
(to waiter)
Two calamaris, the bruschetta, and
some more bread for the table, please.

Julie mutters something to the waiter too, though we don't
hear it.

Adam takes a big swig of his martini.

ADAM
That was my cover story when I was
in college. Ten years ago. I'm sorry
you didn't stay updated on my sexual
identity. But then, you didn't stay
updated on much.
(to table)
Am I right?

RICKI
Oh. Okay. Now that I know you've
decided to be completely gay, I won't
ask about it anymore.

ADAM
Decided? You are so homophobic!

EMILY
It's not a choice.

Ricki shoots a surprisingly cold look at Emily.

RICKI
Don't twist my words. That is not fair, Adam. I am not homophobic. I have a wonderful little friend named Daniel who is a gay bartender.

ADAM
(to no one in particular)
She costumes herself as this "edgy" rocker who's cooler than all the PTA moms. When in fact, she voted for George W. Bush twice.

RICKI
(shrugging)
I support our troops.

Adam addresses the table.

ADAM
And I'm the misguided one, right? Meanwhile, she's running around California calling herself "Ricki."

RICKI
That's a name. Not a lifestyle.

ADAM
I can't help being gay!

Ricki's response is calm.

RICKI
Well, I can't help being Ricki.

Julie is very entertained at the moment.

JULIE
This shit-show is making my life right now. Seriously. It's amazing.

ADAM

(to Julie)

Is this "psycho bitch" act just like,
an extended plea for attention?

RICKI

Don't call your sister a bitch.

ADAM

Oh my God, she's parenting. Get the
camera.

Pete raises his voice-- a rare occurrence.

PETE

GUYS.

Everyone stops.

PETE (CONT'D)

It's a very rare occasion that we
all get together like this. Your
mother is here. I know we've always
had some issues and some personality
conflicts. But we are still blood.
Don't forget that. Let's try to put
some of this crap behind us and just
appreciate the proximity, OK? Right
now, the Brummels are proximal. That's--
that's special in itself.

He briefly places his hand on Ricki's shoulder in a surprising
show of solidarity.

Everyone looks briefly chastened.

The waiter appears with a FANCY CHOCOLATE ICE-CREAM DRINK.

WAITER

Did someone order a Mudslide?

Julie pats the table next to Adam's place-setting.

JULIE

Right here. For my brother, Adam!
He finally came out to Mom.

WAITER

(winking)

Welcome to the family.

INT. PETE'S CAR - NIGHT

Pete drives his high-end SUV. Julie is in the front seat.

Ricki is in the back.

RICKI
Thanks for dinner, Pete. I
appreciated...all of that.

PETE
The food there's pretty decent.
(then)
Last time we were all together like
that was, ah...

He suddenly stops himself.

JULIE
Just say it. My wedding.

RICKI
You'll have another wedding. Don't
worry about it.

JULIE
I don't want to have another wedding.
My heart is dead and rotten.

RICKI
Hearts never die. A heart isn't like
a steak that spoils. A heart is more
like...a Big Mac. It sits and sits
and it gets older but it doesn't
really change.

PETE
A Big Mac doesn't go bad?

RICKI
No, they last forever. I saw it on
60 Minutes.

PETE
Huh.

Julie is gnawing her nails, stressed out by the discussion
at hand. In fact, the entire night has been stressful.

PETE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
How about I put on the radio?

Ricki seems relieved by the idea of music.

RICKI
Oh, I'd love that.

Pete turns it on-- it's NEWS RADIO. He turns up the volume.

Ricki settles back into the back seat and stares out the window, miserable.

EXT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (MORNING) - TO ESTABLISH

The sound of a CELL PHONE BEEPING.

INT. OFFICE/SPARE BEDROOM - SAME

Again, the office is flooded with mid-morning light, and again, Ricki has the quilt pulled over her entire face.

Ricki's CELL PHONE ALARM is going off. She wakes up and turns it off.

INT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (UPSTAIRS HALLWAY) - SAME

Ricki, wearing her threadbare pajamas, shuffles cautiously down the hallway.

She peeks into a BEDROOM we can assume is temporarily Julie's. Julie's CLOTHES and worldly possessions are scattered tornado-style all over the floor, but-- no Julie.

RICKI

Julie?

No answer. Ricki keeps walking. Now she's officially snooping. She opens a door at the end of the hall, revealing PETE AND MAUREEN'S BEDROOM.

INT. MASTER SUITE - SAME

Ricki walks in and looks around. It's a huge MASTER SUITE, immaculately maintained, with shining wood floors. It couldn't be more different than Ricki's cramped bedroom with the dirty apartment carpet.

Ricki crosses the room and opens another door. A huge BATHROOM with a gigantic, free-standing SOAKING TUB.

RICKI

(to herself)

Seems like a waste.

She walks out of the bathroom and opens another door. Reveal A VERY LARGE WALK-IN CLOSET, complete with vanity. 3/4 of the closet is full of Maureen's clothes.

On the other side of the closet. Pete's BUSINESS SUITS are hanging. His shirts are organized by color.

Near the back of the closet, Ricki sees a WHITE SPA-STYLE BATHROBE hanging on a hook. It looks like it doesn't get a lot of use. She reaches for it.

INT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME (MEDIA ROOM) - AFTERNOON

Ricki enters the large, empty media room with a cup of COFFEE and sits down on one of the leather sectional sofas. She reaches for the REMOTE and turns on the 60-inch TV.

Scrolling through the menu, she clicks on "Movies." Ricki selects Life of Pi. A message flashes on the TV asking Ricki to confirm the \$6.99 purchase.

Ricki glances around the room. She selects "OK." She puts her feet up and begins to watch the movie.

INT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (KITCHEN) - AFTERNOON

Julie sits at the counter wearing the same Slayer T-shirt and PJ pants. She still hasn't washed her hair and looks like a greasy mess. The clock on the stove reads 1:00 PM.

Ricki enters. Julie barely glances up from her bowl of cereal.

JULIE

You're still here? Don't you have to go to work?

RICKI

I gave all of this weekend's shifts to my coworker, Florence.

JULIE

Florence must be P.O.'d.

RICKI

No, she was happy to pick up the hours. Most people need money.

It's implied that Julie, lounging in her dad's 500 square foot kitchen, is not one of those people.

RICKI (CONT'D)

What are you eating?

JULIE

Whole-grain fart flakes. I'm done.

Julie chucks her spoon and stoneware bowl into the sink. We hear a BREAKING sound.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Whoops.

RICKI

Last night, why did you announce
that Josh and Emily got engaged?

JULIE

Because I thought you had a right to
know. And because I'm kind of a shit-
disturber.

RICKI

It was a little embarrassing. And
then your brother started in on me...

JULIE

...But then Dad was all, "It's so
magical having Mommy here; everyone
needs to calm down and feel the love."
What's it like being white-knighted
by your ex-husband?

RICKI

What--

(realizing)

You think he was defending me?

JULIE

Yeah. He always does.

(then)

I mean, you do come up from time to
time. People say "How's Linda doing?"
and instead of being like "Who gives
a fuck, fuck her," Dad's always like,
"Oh, she loves California, she's a
free spirit, she's still doing her
music," whatever. He never says
anything bad about you. I think he
still has a crush.

This pleases Ricki, though she doesn't let on.

RICKI

Don't be silly. It's just that when
you have a child...that's a lasting
bond.

JULIE

With the father or the child?

RICKI

Both.

She attempts to tousle Julie's hair. Julie dodges it.

RICKI (CONT'D)
So where is your father?

JULIE
(duh)
Work.

RICKI
He still goes in every day?

JULIE
How do you think he paid for this
ten-of-a-kind architectural
statement?

She smirks and gestures to the kitchen.

RICKI
He certainly has done well for
himself.

Julie glances at the clock on the microwave.

JULIE
I have therapy at noon. I'd better
go wash my dick or I'll get another
lecture on "personal care." It's
evident that Julie does not enjoy
her therapy sessions.

RICKI
Wait. You could skip therapy today.
Call in sick.

JULIE
I am sick. Hence, therapy.

RICKI
I mean, how often am I here?

JULIE
Never...

RICKI
Exactly. We can go to the old
neighborhood, maybe do some of the
things we used to do...

JULIE
Like a Civil War reenactment.

RICKI
Or just, you know, old times sake.

JULIE

And then I don't have to talk to Dr.
Paul and his giant veneers.

RICKI

Right.

Julie considers the proposition.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Ricki drives. Julie rides shotgun in her disheveled "uniform."
The radio is tuned to Ricki's favorite station.

JULIE

Where are we going?

RICKI

Do you have credit cards?

JULIE

Yeah, but they're still linked to
Max's account.

RICKI

I think I'll fill up the car.

Ricki pulls off into a SHELL STATION.

INT. FANTASTIC SAM'S - DAY

Julie leans her head back into a SINK at one of those cheap
walk-in HAIR SALONS. The STYLIST gingerly touches Julie's
limp, greasy hair as she fills the basin.

JULIE

Why does this feel like I'm being
tricked?

Ricki stands nearby, drinking a GAS STATION FRAPPUCCINO. She
made good use of Max's credit card.

RICKI

It's just a shampoo and style.

STYLIST

You've got to condition this gorgeous
hair. There are people with cancer
that pray for this hair.

JULIE

I bet they pray for less cancer.

RICKI

She has my hair.

INT. FANTASTIC SAM'S - SAME

Scissors SLICE through the bottom half-inch of Julie's hair.

Julie sits wearing a SMOCK in the busy salon.

JULIE

Not more than a half-inch. I can
feel what you're cutting.

RICKI

Why are you so attached to this hair?

Julie doesn't answer.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Because it's the one thing that hasn't
changed?

Julie rolls her eyes, even though her mother is right.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Lots of things are going to change
in your life. Someday you're going
to find a gray hair, and I don't
mean on your head...

STYLIST

(to herself)

Jesus.

JULIE

No one wants to hear about your steel
wool, Mom.

RICKI

I'm just saying, you might as well
look pretty. While you still can.

INT. NAIL SALON - DAY

A NAIL TECH is gluing super long PLASTIC TIPS onto Julie's
short, bitten nails.

JULIE

I look like Nosferatu.

Ricki is at the next STATION getting her LONG ACRYLIC NAILS
filled. The TECH wields a Dremel hand drill.

RICKI

They'll file them down, don't worry.

JULIE

How am I going to wipe?

RICKI
 You'll manage. I play guitar and
 work a cash register without any
 problems.

JULIE
 Hey, do you ever steal from the
 register?

RICKI
 Julie, of course not!

A CLERK brings over the tab and Max's credit card on a tray.

CLERK
 That's \$65 on the card and you can
 add whatever tip.

(NOTE FOR MALES WHO ARE READING THIS SCRIPT: YOU ALWAYS PAY
 FOR YOUR NAILS BEFORE THEY'RE DONE SO YOU DON'T MESS UP YOUR
 NAILS. XO DC)

RICKI
 (scribbling)
 I'll leave a nice big one.

Julie watches mother, a reluctant half-smile creeping onto
 her face.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Ricki and Julie stand on the sidewalk outside of the salon.

They hold out their hands to examine them in the daylight.

Ricki has the same long, squared-off acrylics she's been
 rocking for 25 years. Julie is rocking Rihanna-esque pointy
 nails with rhinestones and glitter. Pretty rad.

JULIE
 Wow.

Staring at her hand, she subtly does the "hand job" gesture.

RICKI
 What are you doing?

JULIE
 Just seeing how something would look.
 (beat)
 Are we going home now?

RICKI

No, we're going to get you out of that get-up and into something more flattering.

She leads Julie in the direction of a Gap.

JULIE

Oh no. I allowed you to treat me like your Barbie makeup head all day. I'm done.

She heads off toward the car.

RICKI

Ju-jee.

Julie stops.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Let me have this.

The look on Ricki's face is so pitiful that Julie relents.

INT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (KITCHEN) - DAY

Pete is in the kitchen, home from work. His BRIEFCASE sits on the kitchen island. Julie and Ricki enter. Ricki has a look of satisfaction on her face.

JULIE

Hi, Dad.

PETE

Hey...Hey.

He's startled by Julie's TRANSFORMATION. She may have just switched to skinny jeans and a fresh gray T-shirt, but combined with the clean hair and polished nails, it's quite a change. She's lovely.

PETE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You look very nice.

Even though Julie would never admit it, she does feel a little better now that she's cleaned up. It shows.

JULIE

Bah.

She turns around and heads off before any more compliments can be paid. Pete looks at Ricki.

PETE

How?

Ricki plays it off like it was no big deal.

RICKI
I just made a suggestion. She listens
to me, you know?

PETE
I guess she does.

Pete's expression is deeply grateful. Admiring, even.

PETE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm sorry if I was a bit of an
asshole yesterday afternoon. Things
have been a little stressful at the
company.

RICKI
Well, you work very hard. And I admire
that.

PETE
You do? You used to call me an uptight
workaholic.

RICKI
I "used to" a lot of things. But
I've changed, Pete. I have.

PETE
I can see that.

Ricki is pleased.

PETE (CONT'D)
I've been trying to get her out of
that T-shirt for ten days.

RICKI
Well, sometimes a girl just needs
her mother.

PETE
Do you-- do you want to go grab a
bite somewhere? Maybe Julie would
want to come.

RICKI
Yes. That sounds great.
(dry)
Just don't invite any of our other
children.

PETE
I won't. That was...

RICKI

Rough.

The two of them have to chuckle at the memory.

PETE

Yes. That was rough.

Their eyes meet as they laugh. It's a temporary truce.

INT. PETE'S CAR - EVENING

Pete drives his SUV down the highway. Ricki is in the front seat. Julie rides in the back seat, looking very much like a child. Their child.

They drive pass a LARGE SUBURBAN PUB, the kind of place that has live music and darts and lots of guys in baseball caps.

The parking lot is overflowing with cars. It's hard to miss.

RICKI

That place looks busy.

Julie looks unimpressed.

JULIE

Ugh, yeah. Friday happy hour at Pat Flanagan's. What a cesspool...

(suddenly)

HOLY SHIT!

Julie screams so loud that Pete practically loses control of the car.

PETE

What?

There's an orange HONDA FIT parked near the edge of Pat Flanagan's parking lot.

JULIE

That is Nicole from Traffic. That is her car.

PETE

How do you know?

JULIE

Dad, flip a bitch!

PETE

What?

RICKI

A U-turn Pete, make a U-turn.

Pete obliges quickly.

JULIE

I know that's Nicole's car because she has those stupid "stick figures" on the back window. Both of her kids and even their fucking dog.

They pull into the parking lot. Julie gets out of the car and gets a closer look at Nicole's Honda. As she walks closer, her jaw drops.

PETE

Julie...don't vandalize that car.

JULIE

Oh my God, Oh my God...

Ricki sees what Julie is freaking out over. Sure enough, there is a family of "stick figure" decals on the back window of Nicole's car. But there's a NEW FIGURE added to the end of the line-up.

RICKI

(to Pete)

She added Max.

Yup. A new DAD STICKER labeled "Max" stands next to figures labeled "Nicole" "Kenzie" "Kash" and the DOG, "Scooter." Julie loses her shit.

JULIE

He's a sticker now? He's got sticker status? They've been dating for like 45 minutes. What kind of insane person allows himself to be stuck, in effigy, to the rear window of a Honda Fit just because he's getting some new pussy?

RICKI

Ugh, I hate that word.

PETE

It's awful. You know, we didn't even curse around her when she was little...

RICKI

Honestly. I th--

Suddenly, Julie turns around and looks at her parents. A huge, lone TEAR rolls down her cheek. Her bravado is gone, replaced by pure PAIN.

Something about this pitiful sight galvanizes Pete and Ricki.

Their expressions change. Their baby is crying.

INT. BAR - HAPPY HOUR

It's a big place, and crowded. Darts, pool tables, people eating, drinking, SUBURBANITES dressed up for a night "on the town." A young crowd. There's a small BAND on stage tuning up.

The front door swings open and Ricki enters. Julie and Pete are close behind her. Julie suddenly seems nervous.

JULIE

Mom? Mom? What are we doing?

RICKI

Why did you want to stop here if we weren't going to do anything?

JULIE

Well, I was just doing a standard "scorned ex" drive-by, I didn't want to go full revenge-porn on them.

RICKI

They need to come face to face with what they've done.

PETE

But that won't help Julie to forgive them.

It's clear to both of them that they're not talking about Julie.

RICKI

What is she supposed to do, Pete? Kill them with kindness?

PETE

She won't be able to move on with her life until she lets go of her resentment and tries to forgive them.

JULIE

Okay, "Jesus."

RICKI

Do you think she could ever let go
of something that big?

PETE

Yes. Because she'll move on. And she
knows who Max really is. And she'll
always care about that person.

Pete and Ricki are locked in to each other.

There's a DISCORDANT, TWANGING SOUND from the stage. A YOUNG
GUITARIST, maybe 20 years old, is tuning up with an AUTOMATIC
GUITAR TUNER. Ricki rolls her eyes.

RICKI

Look at this kid.

She marches over to the stage before
Peter or Julie can stop her.

RICKI (CONT'D)

What are you trying to do here?
Open D?

GUITARIST

Uh...yeah?

RICKI

First of all, you need get rid of
this chromatic tuner. This will make
you a lazy musician. You've got to
develop your ear.

GUITARIST

Um. Okay.

RICKI

May I?

GUITARIST

What?

RICKI

Let me tune that thing.
(then)

I'm a professional. I promise you I
can hear better than that thing.

She indicates the automatic tuner. Glancing at the rest of
the BAND and humoring this older woman, he slips the GUITAR
off her shoulders and hands it to her.

Ricki quickly tunes the guitar. She expertly launches into the opening riff of "Brown Sugar" by the Rolling Stones. It's amplified, and BAR PATRONS stare, impressed. Ricki feels the eyes on her and cheats her body towards the crowd. The woman loves an audience.

As Ricki strums, she scans the crowd and spots MAX and NICOLE, both in their early 30s. Max looks like a deer in headlights; he was not expecting to see his California-based mother-in-law here.

Ricki takes off the guitar-- reluctantly-- and hands it back to the now-impressed kid.

From across the room, we can see that Pete looks a little impressed himself.

GUITARIST

Cool. Actually, we're opening with the Stones.

RICKI

Well, obviously. Why else would you be in Open D? Just don't do "Satisfaction." I always lose the crowd on that one. I think it's overplayed.

Julie and Pete are watching Ricki with amusement. And pride.

GUITARIST

We're doing "Start Me Up." You know because it's like, the start of the set?

RICKI

Very creative. Break a leg, honey.

She gives him a quick SWAT on the butt, in full Ricki mode.

GUITARIST

Thanks!

As Ricki walks away, we hear the BAND laughing, shocked.

GUITARIST (CONT'D)

(to drummer)

I thought that was like, someone's mom...

Ricki walks over to the booth where Max and Nicole sit.

They're surrounded by a few of Nicole's FRIENDS. The conversation at the table screeches to a halt.

MAX

Hi?

RICKI

You walked out on Julie.

MAX

It's-- look it's personal. Okay?
It's my business.

RICKI

(calmly)

How could you be so selfish?

MAX

I don't know. I made a mistake? We
got married too young.

RICKI

I got married too young. I was 21.
You were a grown man.

Max has had a lot to drink.

MAX

Look, lady. You don't know me.
We've talked like, once. Julie doesn't
even like you. You're the reason
she's messed up.

Julie has emerged from the entryway and is watching this
interaction from afar. She gnaws her nails. Pete places a
protective arm around his daughter.

RICKI

Yes, and I have to live with the
consequences of my actions. And so
do you. But you're not a bad person
Max. You're just a human being.

NICOLE

(to Max)

She's right, baby.

Suddenly, Ricki's whole demeanor changes. She turns to Nicole,
ablaze.

RICKI

I was not speaking to you, you
wretched little whore.

NICOLE

Excuse me?

RICKI

It's one thing to have feelings for someone. Great. It's quite another to allow him to abandon his new bride and to slap a sticker of him on your rear window. That's tacky! He's next to the dog.

Nicole gets up in Ricki's face.

NICOLE

Hey, I love my dog.

RICKI

Well now you have two.

NICOLE

Get out of my face, you dried-up old hag.

RICKI

Listen, Nicole. My daughter is going to feel stupid about this for the rest of her life. The least you can do is feel stupid for a night.

She takes a PITCHER OF BEER off the table and pours it all over Nicole's breasts. People scream and POINT. Nicole is soaked to the bone, her infamous wonky boobs clearly visible.

NICOLE

Oh my God!

Ricki tilts her head and examines Nicole's breasts with a charitable eye.

RICKI

They're not that bad.

She turns around and walks out. The BAND begins playing "Start Me Up" as Ricki saunters to the exit.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Pete drives in silence, looking semi-mortified. Ricki is in the front seat, casually touching up her black eyeliner.

Julie is in the back. She gazes out the window. A huge GRIN creeps onto her face.

Ricki glances at her daughter in the rear view mirror and SMILES.

Julie reaches up and slaps something on the window. It's the stick-figure decal of MAX-- a bit battered from having been forcibly scraped off the car, but still intact.

INT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (GARAGE ENTRY) - NIGHT

Pete, Julie and Ricki enter the house.

PETE
Everybody hitting the hay?

JULIE
Dad, it's like nine.

RICKI
Pete, can I ask you a question?

PETE
Sure.

RICKI
Why is there pot in the freezer?

Julie smirks knowingly.

PETE
(embarrassed)
One of my coworkers gave it to me.

You know I still get those migraines from time to time. He said it would help.

JULIE
The freezer keeps it fresh.

PETE
I haven't even tried it yet.

RICKI
Why not?

PETE
You know I don't like to lose my cool.

Julie and Ricki giggle.

PETE (CONT'D)
What? You guys don't think I'm cool?

INT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (MEDIA ROOM) - NIGHT

Pete and Julie are sitting on the couch, very stoned.

Ricki plays her ACOUSTIC GUITAR. She sits on the floor, strumming and singing "Passenger Side" by Wilco.

This is the "real" Ricki-- none of the forced stage theatrics, just raw, stripped-down talent.

RICKI

Hey, wake up. Your eyes weren't open wide. For the last couple of miles. You've been swerving from side to side. You're gonna make me spill my beer If you don't learn how to steer passenger side. Passenger side I don't like riding on the passenger side.

Pete and Julie have heard Ricki sing and play before, but it's been a long time. They're AWESTRUCK by her voice.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Should've been the driver. Could've been the one. I should've been your lover. But I hadn't seen. Can you take me to the store, and then the bank? I've got five dollars we can put in the tank. I've got a court date coming this June. I'll be driving soon Julie lays her head on Pete's shoulder. Passenger side. I don't like riding. On the passenger side. I don't like riding. On the passenger side.

Ricki finishes and looks up, a little embarrassed.

RICKI (CONT'D)

That's it.

JULIE

(sincere)
Bra-fucking-vo.

PETE

Your voice has really held up, Linda.

RICKI

Glad something has.

JULIE

How come you didn't get famous?

Ricki's laugh is brittle.

RICKI

You know the story. Those wolves
took advantage of me. They told me
I could be the next Melissa Etheridge,
Emmylou Harris. But what they wanted
was a sex doll they could control.

Julie cringes at the unholy intersection of "mom" and "sex."

PETE

I still have your record.

RICKI

You do?

PETE

Yes. There's a big Rubbermaid out
in the garage with a lot of old stuff
from back then.

CUT TO:

INT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME (MEDIA ROOM) - TEN MINUTES LATER

Close on a big STORAGE CONTAINER. Ricki pulls off the lid,
revealing a lot of old photos, documents, etc. from Ricki
and Pete's failed marriage.

Julie grabs a framed 8 x 10 FAMILY PHOTO. It's a posed, corny
shot, like something you'd get from Sears Portrait Studio.

JULIE

Look at this!

"Young Mom" Ricki has COMICALLY BIG, TEASED HAIR. Pete looks
basically the same. Julie is about 5 and smiling in pigtails.

Josh, 9, wears his softball uniform. Adam, 7, wears a
turtleneck and a sweet expression.

JULIE (CONT'D)

And you think Adam wasn't born gay.

Ricki sees the aforementioned RECORD. She looks very glamorous
on the cover, pouting against a black backdrop.

The cover says: RICKI RENDAZZO - SILK NIGHT SKY

JULIE (CONT'D)

Ah, yes. "Silk Night Sky."

RICKI

My first and only single.

(MORE)

RICKI (CONT'D)

(dry)
It took five songwriters to make
that mess, can you imagine?

PETE

Why'd the label make you do that?

RICKI

That song "Black Velvet" was a big
hit. I guess they thought they could
rip it off.

JULIE

The stuff you wrote was better.

RICKI

No one's interested in originality.
Even at my gigs, we do mostly covers.
Party songs. People just want to
relive the past.

JULIE

Well, that's just pathetic.
(then)
Do you think I could still fit in
this?

She grabs a LITTLE GIRL'S T-SHIRT that says "I'm The Little
Sister" and holds it up to her chest, fully aware of the
irony.

JULIE (CONT'D)

I have to pee.

Julie drops the T-shirt and flounces off toward the bathroom.

Pete makes a very stoned attempt at humor.

PETE

Hey, don't kill yourself in there.

Ricki looks at him, horrified.

RICKI

Pete!

PETE

I can't believe I just said that.

Ricki covers her mouth and stifles a shocked squeal/moan of
anguish.

PETE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 I'm so stoned. I'm sorry. I just...I
 don't know how to talk about things.
 You know that.

RICKI
 I know. I know.

She pats Pete's hand. The brief hit of electricity registers
 on both of their faces.

PETE
 She was only 10, you know? She was
 only 10 when you left. The boys were
 a little older, and they understood...

RICKI
 No they didn't. They were babies,
 too.

PETE
 I understood.

RICKI
 But you didn't.

PETE
 I understand now, so now, I can
 understand in the past. I'm sending
 a message to me then, and saying:
 Understand.

RICKI
 You are very stoned.

They chuckle.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 I just have to say...I love this
 house.

PETE
 What?!

RICKI
 I do.

PETE
 I didn't think you would.

RICKI
 I do.

PETE
But it's so boring and conventional.
You usually like places with
"character."

RICKI
Fuck character.

INT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME (MEDIA ROOM) - AN HOUR LATER
Julie is SOUND ASLEEP on the couch.

RICKI
(PRELAP)
94844.

INT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (KITCHEN) - SAME

Pete stands in front of the fridge, holding up a bunch of
ARGULA. Both he and Ricki are still very stoned.

PETE
Wow. Wow. You know that off the top
of your head?

Ricki sits on the kitchen counter, giggling uncontrollably.
She eats a spoonful of COOKIE DOUGH from a package.

RICKI
Yes.

PETE
Arugula is 94844.

RICKI
I know all the PLU codes. I ring up
stuff all day. Go ahead, try me.

PETE
(mind blown)
But there are so many fruits and
vegetables.

RICKI
Yes, there are.

PETE
How about, um, bananas?

RICKI
Organic or regular? Organic is 94011.

PETE
You're like a memorizing genius.
(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)
You're like Forrest Gump.

RICKI
What?

PETE
I meant the other--

RICKI
Rain Man.

PETE
Yes. You know, they think like every kid has that now. Autism. I don't know.

RICKI
Remember when the pediatrician--what was his name? Dr. Fandango?

The shared memory and botched name cracks up both of them.

PETE
I know who you're talking about. Dr. Firouz Fandango. Whatever. That guy in Wheaton. Yes.

RICKI
That guy, that doctor, remember he said Joshy was hyperactive? It turned out he was just drinking too much pop.

PETE
They don't know anything.
(philosophical)
We don't know anything.

They both seem to suddenly think of their sleeping daughter in the next room.

PETE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
She's going to be fine.

RICKI
I don't know.

PETE
She is. She is.

He walks over and takes the spoon out of Ricki's hand, chucks it in the sink. He gently takes the package of cookie dough away from her.

RICKI
I'm still eating that.

It is a simple protective gesture from a very impaired Pete.

PETE
No.

Standing in front of Ricki, who is still sitting on the counter, he suddenly bows his head, laying it in her lap.

RICKI
Pete? Are you okay?

PETE
(muffled)
Yes.

RICKI
Are you sick?

PETE
No.

RICKI
Did you just want to touch me?

Pete doesn't answer. Ricki gently runs her hand through what's left of his hair. Her hand passes over his bald spot.

He's old and "square." But in this moment, he's somehow hers again.

INT. OFFICE/SPARE BEDROOM - MORNING

It's morning again. Ricki wakes up, rolls over, and looks at her phone. She has a MISSED CALL from Greg...and it's also

10:30 AM.

Ricki shakes her head and climbs out of bed. No wake-up call today. Still, she looks optimistic. Last night, however bizarre, felt like a healing experience. She's hopeful.

Happy, even.

She reaches for a HAIR BRUSH and her makeup case.

INT. PETE BRUMMELL'S HOME (STAIRS/KITCHEN) - MORNING

Ricki comes down the stairs wearing the PLUSH WHITE BATHROBE she found in Pete's closet.

As she descends the stairs, she hears BUSY BREAKFAST NOISES.

Sizzling, clinking; the sounds of a cozy domestic scene.

Ricki rounds the corner and enters the KITCHEN. Julie and Pete sit at the breakfast table, enjoying FRUIT and FRENCHPRESS COFFEE.

MAUREEN, 50, is at the stove making some restaurant-quality French toast. Maureen is African-American, fit and lovely for her age in designer jeans and a scoop-neck top.

Everyone turns and looks at Ricki.

MAUREEN

Oh, hi there.

RICKI

Hi Maureen.

PETE

There you are. Just in time for Maureen's famous brioche French toast.

Pete's blank impersonal smile is miles removed from the warmth and vulnerability he showed the night before.

RICKI

How's your dad? I thought you were in Seattle?

MAUREEN

Thanks for asking. Dad's kind of plateaued at the moment, so they told me I might as well come back here for the time being. I don't like to be away from my family.

She beams at Pete and Julie.

JULIE

Mo makes the best breakfast.

MAUREEN

(teasing)

That's all I'm good for, right?

She brings over a platter of golden French toast. She tousles Julie's hair.

JULIE

Nahh.

She leans up and sweetly gives Maureen a peck on the cheek.

Ricki is taken aback by this display of affection between stepdaughter and stepmother.

MAUREEN

I decided to take the red-eye last night. Got in at six this morning. I feel like a hot mess.

RICKI

You don't look like a hot mess.

She certainly doesn't.

MAUREEN

Aw, Linda, you're sweet. Do you want some coffee?

JULIE

Mo's coffee is the best.

RICKI

I thought the French toast was the best.

PETE

It's hard to decide what's best when Mo's cooking!

Ricki looks at Pete as though he's Judas.

MAUREEN

Sit down, have some breakfast.

RICKI

Thanks. I'm really not hungry.

MAUREEN

Suit yourself. By the way, you look good in my robe. Keep it.

Julie glances wryly at Ricki like: Seriously? You took her robe?

Mo dusts some powdered sugar off her jeans and sits down at the table. She holds out her hands.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Hands?

Pete, Julie and Ricki CLASP HANDS and lower their heads.

Maureen prays simply and eloquently.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, bless this food set before us.

(MORE)

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Please shepherd Julie through this time of adversity and bring peace to her heart and soul. In Jesus's name, Amen.

JULIE

Amen.

They tuck into their breakfast. Ricki stands there in her robe, outside of the circle, wordless.

EXT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME (BACK YARD) - DAY

Ricki dials her phone, pacing the tiny yard.

RICKI

(on phone)

Hello, Greg. This is Ricki. Sorry I missed your call last night. I...I miss you and I think I'm coming home soon. I don't know. Julie needs me. We'll see. Okay. Talk to you later.

INT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME (UPSTAIRS HALLWAY) - DAY

A freshly showered Ricki walks down the hallway, wrapped in a towel. She looks very plain and vulnerable with her bare face and wet hair.

INT. OFFICE/SPARE BEDROOM - DAY

Ricki walks into the spare bedroom and practically jumps out of her towel. Maureen is sitting on the swivel chair by Pete's computer desk.

MAUREEN

Hi. Can we talk?

RICKI

I'm practically naked right now.

MAUREEN

I have five sisters. I've seen a naked lady before.

RICKI

I had a brother.

She sits down on the bed, holding her towel closed protectively.

MAUREEN

So. As you know, we're very concerned about Miss Julie.

RICKI
She's going to be all right. She's
always been a fighter.

MAUREEN
(pointed)
She's had to be.

Ricki wants to say something, but hesitates.

MAUREEN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Right now we're working with her
doctor to stabilize her. She's on
some meds, and she's been going to
therapy as well.
(pointed)
I don't like her to miss a session.

RICKI
I don't think one's that big of a
deal...

MAUREEN
I also understand that you gave her
some marijuana last night?

RICKI
No. Pete did. I mean, it's Pete's
marijuana, for his headaches. Yes.
We did smoke some.
(beat)
It's just a plant.

MAUREEN
I know that. I've smoked a little in
my time. But when a person's body is
adjusting to new medications, and
they're emotionally labile...

RICKI
(interrupting)
Labile?

MAUREEN
Sorry. You know I've been a nurse
for 100 years. Erratic. Unstable.

RICKI
I don't think she's being erratic.

MAUREEN
Uh-huh. As I was saying...I just
think maybe it's not great for you
to be here right now.
(MORE)

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

You're always welcome in our home,
and I know Pete thought that it would
help for Julie to see you, but I
think what she needs right now is
normalcy.

RICKI

Well, I did get her out of those
pajamas. I got her hair styled. I'd
say she's doing much better since I
arrived.

MAUREEN

Hey, Linda, please don't be offended.
I'm just looking out for my kid.

This cuts deep.

RICKI

Your kid?

MAUREEN

She's your kid too, of course. But
Linda, let's be real. The last time
you lived with her, she was a little
girl. I was there for the teen years,
college...

RICKI

She went to college in Milwaukee.

MAUREEN

Who do you think drove her ass there?

Linda has no reply to this one.

MAUREEN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Who do you think helped her put
together her dorm furniture? Who
paid her bail when she got that DUI,
or went to the Mother-Daughter Tea
at that god-awful white sorority?

Ricki is silent.

MAUREEN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Huh? Who do you think has been doing
all the mom stuff all these years?
Kids aren't "done" once they leave
grade school. They need someone to
finish the job.

RICKI

I know that. I'm not a fool.

MAUREEN

Look, I respect you as the woman who gave her life, but once you went to L.A., those Christmas visits didn't cut it. There was a hole in this family. I filled it.

RICKI

No. You made it worse. I tried to come out here and see them more, but you always made it difficult. Yes, you did! You alienated my children from me, Maureen. You poisoned the relationship...

As Ricki grows more agitated, Maureen remains calm.

MAUREEN

Are you serious right now? You know all those birthday and Mother's Day gifts you got "from the kids"? I paid for those. I mailed them. I made sure the kids didn't forget about you even though they had good reason to. You should be kissing my feet right about now.

RICKI

Bullshit.

Maureen gets up, shaking her head.

MAUREEN

I didn't want it to go like this.
(then)
Do you need help paying for a flight back?

RICKI

You wish.

She tries to think of some way, any way, to retaliate.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Pete is still in love with me.

Unruffled, Maureen laughs.

MAUREEN

I'll let you have that.

Maureen walks out of the room.

EXT. PETE BRUMMEL'S HOME (DRIVEWAY) - EVENING

The AIRPORT SHUTTLE pulls up to the curb. Ricki is outside with her battered SUITCASE and GUITAR. Pete waits with her.

PETE

I can wake up Julie.

RICKI

No, it's fine, just let her nap.

PETE

These shuttles really aren't that bad. It's the same thing as sharing a cab.

RICKI

It's great. Thank you so much for calling.

(awkward)

And paying.

PETE

It was nice to see you. Ultimately, I think it was good that you came.

RICKI

Yes. It was a real pleasure.

PETE

Well, fly safe.

RICKI

I have no control over that.

PETE

I know.

He pats her stiffly on the shoulder. She walks to the shuttle.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Ricki is crammed into another COACH SEAT. She wears headphones and watches MTV on her seatback. Ricki hasn't watched MTV in years.

It's a KE\$HA VIDEO. Ricki watches miserably as the wild young woman contorts herself in torn fishnets and hot pants.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

An exhausted Ricki waits on the curb. A CAR pulls up-- a real beater. The trunk pops. Ricki tosses in her stuff and climbs into the passenger side.

Reveal a Greg behind the wheel, holding a CHEAP BOUQUET and a STUFFED ELEPHANT. Ricki can't help but smile.

INT. THE SALT WELL - NIGHT

Ricki and the Flash are onstage at the Salt Well, which is surprisingly CROWDED tonight. A perspiring Ricki sings "It's Only Rock n' Roll (But I Like It)" by the Rolling Stones.

Even though Ricki lives for the stage, there's a crack in her veneer tonight. She seems fatigued. Angry.

RICKI

*I know it's only rock n' roll But I
like it. I know it's only rock n'
roll But I like it, like it, yes I
do!*

With a flurry from the DRUMS, the song ends.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Yeah. Thanks. The amazing Rolling
Stones, of course.

She yanks the mic out of the stand and paces the stage.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Funny thing about Mick Jagger. The
man has seven children by four
different women, can you believe
that?

Someone in the audience WHISTLES loudly. Daniel adds supportive commentary from the bar.

DANIEL

Get it, Mick!

RICKI

Yeah. Busy guy. Of course, he didn't
raise all of them. He was a rock
star. And more importantly, he wasn't
a mother.

Greg and Billy glance nervously at each other.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

See, daddies are allowed to do what
they want. Make love to whomever
they want. Take risks. Get hooked on
dope. Leave. Who cares if other people
get hurt along the way? Doesn't
matter, if you get some great songs
out of it, right?

Greg tries to prompt her to move on.

GREG

And let's hear some of those great songs now...

RICKI

By the way, your kids will still respect and love you. Because you're "the man." But if you're a woman, God forbid. God forbid you miss one school concert, or you forget to be the tooth fairy one time out of 20 teeth. Congrats, you're a monster. Daddy can go to the South of France and have sex with a model, but Mommy...Mommy is why you're messed up.

The crowd has fallen silent. Behind the bar, Daniel's face falls.

Greg tries to lighten things up.

GREG

Ricki, that's enough. You're scaring some of the guys in here. Heh. I think I just felt my balls go up into my body.

RICKI

Well, you didn't need them anyway, Greg.

On Greg: pissed.

GREG

Oh but I do need them, Linda.

RICKI

Pardon me?

Buster impatiently slides his fingers up the bass.

BUSTER

Let's keep it tight, people.

RICKI

You're right, Buster. Whatta we got next?

Billy looks at the set list taped to his keyboard. We see everything from the Eagles to Pat Benetar to Lady Gaga.

BILLY

Pink.

RICKI

Pink. Yes.

(fake smile)

Let's get the party started!

The band begins to play "Get the Party Started" by Pink.

Ricki begins singing with forced enthusiasm. She's a pro.

Always.

RICKI (CONT'D)

I'm coming up, so you better get
this party started...

Billy echoes with background vocals.

BILLY

I'm coming up, you better!

EXT. SALT WELL (PARKING LOT) - NIGHT

Ricki is outside helping Buster, Billy and Joe load gear into a van. Chivalrously, they do most of the heavy lifting.

BILLY

"Comfortably Numb" needs work.
That's all I'm gonna say.

JOE

I think I need a bigger kit.

BUSTER

Man, you always say you need a bigger
kit.

JOE

You want me to play like Nick Mason?
I need Nick Mason's gear.

BUSTER

Greg sounds exactly like Gilmour and
he doesn't have Gilmour's gear.

BILLY

He's got the SG.

JOE

See? He sounds like Gilmour 'cause
he's got Gilmour's guitar.

BUSTER

No, Greg sounds like Gilmour 'cause
Greg's a fuckin' god.

Greg appears, draped in power cords and carrying some
equipment.

RICKI

Here he is, just in time for
compliments.

Greg angrily tosses an EFFECTS PEDAL into the van.

GREG

Or just in time to be berated.
Because I'm a man.

RICKI

Oh my goodness. It was just stage
banter. Like--

GREG

Yeah, Fleetwood Mac, whatever. That
wasn't about creating "dramatic
tension" or whatever. You've been
pissed off ever since you got back.

RICKI

I'm just jet-lagged.

GREG

You were in Chicago, not Iraq.

RICKI

What was that "Linda" crap on stage?
Don't ever call me that.

GREG

Oh, but it's okay for you to bully
me all the time. Right? Sorry I'm
not some rich suit like your old
man.

Joe, Billy and Buster have stopped loading gear and are
observing the fight like three wide-eyed kids.

RICKI

Let's talk about this privately.

She and Greg round the corner to another, even less
picturesque area of the parking lot. Dumpster-town.

GREG

Well, this is romantic.

Ricki is too emotionally spent to even laugh.

GREG (CONT'D)

Can I even say that? Can I say
"romantic"?

(then)

Do you love me?

RICKI

Of course I love you.

(then)

And I love Joe, and Buster and...

GREG

I didn't ask if you loved me like
Wendy loves the fucking Lost Boys!
I asked if you LOVE me.

RICKI

What is your interest in me? I'm
old. I'm broke. I can't cook a decent
meal. I'm getting fat. Why would you
even love a ruined person? A ruined
person who has ruined other people?

(breaking up)

Kids...

GREG

Is that it? You think you screwed up
once so you don't get another chance?
Rick, I cheated on my first wife
with a stripper from Seventh Veil
who was addicted to codeine cough
syrup. And by the way, I may be "just
a dad" but my kids didn't fucking
forgive me. They're still mad. I got
a calendar for Christmas. All right?
We're in our fifties, so who cares
if we've made some mistakes? We've
had long enough to get better.

RICKI

Did the stripper ever get better?

GREG

What?

RICKI

Her cough?

GREG

All right, smart ass.

Jokes like this are a classic Ricki avoidance tactic.

GREG (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 My point is-- this is gonna sound
 crazy, but it honestly doesn't matter
 if your kids love you or not.

Off Ricki's surprised expression.

GREG (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 No, listen, it doesn't. Because it's
 not their job to love you. It's your
 job to love them. That's why you
 were put here, and that's why you're
 their mom and why I'm my kids' dad.
 I love my kids so much. Do you?

RICKI
 Yes. More than my life.

GREG
 There you go. Just keep loving them
 and you've got it made.
 (then)
 So do you just want to be, like...
 friends?

RICKI
 (smiling)
 No.

Greg lights up, surprised.

GREG
 More?

RICKI
 (quickly)
 Now, I'm not ready for a serious
 relationship...

GREG
 'Course not. You've only been divorced
 for like 20 years.

Ricki laughs. Greg glances back toward the Salt Well.

GREG (CONT'D)
 Wanna go back in and get some chow?
 They're feeding us tonight.

Ricki grabs Greg by his stupid T-shirt and KISSES him
 passionately. Greg is in shock.

GREG (CONT'D)
 Okay.

INT. RICKI'S APARMENT - NIGHT

Greg and Ricki enter the apartment, MAKING OUT. As Ricki fumbles with her keys, Greg scoops her up into his arms. She wraps her legs around his waist.

GREG
(breathless)
This rules.

Greg stumbles toward the bedroom, cradling his "prize" as they kiss.

INT. RICKI'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Ricki and Greg are lying together, post-sex. Ricki's "Ocean Waves" WHITE NOISE MACHINE is on. Even though the bed is old and lumpy, they both look very comfortable.

The sound of electronic waves fills the tiny room.

GREG
I like that machine.

RICKI
I've had it forever. That's why the waves are starting to sound funny.

GREG
We should do a song about waves.

RICKI
I was in a band once that did "The Ocean" by Led Zeppelin.

GREG
Did you guys do it justice?

RICKI
I like to think I did.

GREG
Well yeah, of course you did. You're like the chick Robert Plant.

Ricki smiles in the darkness.

RICKI
I always imagined myself coming to L.A. and living near the water.

GREG
You gotta have a million dollars for that. Five million.

RICKI

I know. I thought my life here would be like the song "Gypsy." You know, Stevie Nicks?

Greg nods.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Bohemian, you know. Sleeping on the floor. Lace and paper flowers...I'd get away from everything I hated about marriage and real life and the suburbs.

GREG

And now?

RICKI

I'm 54 and filing for bankruptcy.
(pause)
And I'd love to have a big bathtub.

Greg nods, getting it. Then.

GREG

You could still sleep on the floor.

RICKI

With my back? Forget it.

GREG

My back's a mess too.
(getting up)
This is kind of embarrassing but I have to get up and pee a lot at night. I have an enlarged prostate.

RICKI

That's all right. I--

She pauses, debating whether or not she should confess something similar.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I have to put in an estrogen suppository before bed.

Greg doesn't seem put off in the least.

GREG

Huh. This stuff is fun, right?

He extends a hand to Ricki and helps her get out of bed.

RICKI
Oh yeah. It's a blast.

GREG
Rock and roll.

Greg heads off to the tiny bathroom as Ricki throws on her robe.

MUSIC UP: CLASSIC ROCK BEGIN MONTAGE

We see VARIOUS SCENES of Ricki returning to her usual life, building her relationship with Greg, working, playing...etc.

INT. WHOLE FOODS - MORNING

Ricki rings up a mountain of overpriced PRODUCE for a bored STAY-AT-HOME MOM. A THREE-YEAR-OLD GIRL grabs an expensive bar of "rainforest chocolate" off the conveyor and unwraps it.

Ricki smiles at the little girl, who stares back at her rudely. Ricki totals out the groceries...\$366.00.

Ricki's teenaged MANAGER walks by and gives her an approving nod.

INT. REHEARSAL - DAY

Ricki and the Flash rehearse in BUSTER'S GARAGE.

Ricki, in glasses and jeans, is playing RHYTHM GUITAR and singing her heart out. There's a hiccup and Joe stops playing drums.

The band convenes for a brief discussion. They're a welloiled machine. Joe counts off with his sticks again, and they're off...

INT. SHAKEY'S BUFFET - DAY

Date night at a cheap BUFFET RESTAURANT. Ricki carries her plate of food over to a booth.

Greg, who is already seated, has taken full advantage of the all-you-can-eat "snow crab" situation. His overflowing plate of TEENY-TINY CRAB LEGS is adorable.

Despite the terrible food and the cheap carnation in a vase, it's...romantic.

INT. SALT WELL - NIGHT

Ricki CLIMBS ON THE BAR, her signature move. She struts past the Trivia Touch machines mounted on the bar.

There's about 30 people in the bar, but the Flash is giving it their usual 110%. Onstage, Greg is a sweaty rock beast.

Daniel whips out his BAR RAG and discreetly mops Ricki's footprints off the bar. Gazing at his idol, he pretends to wring the rag into a GLASS and drink it.

INT. RICKI'S APARTMENT (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Ricki and Greg are lying in bed together. Ricki has her glasses on and is reading a BOOK. Greg, also wearing glasses reads the latest issue of Rolling Stone.

Greg suddenly flings the magazine aside and "attacks" her playfully. Their glasses knock together as they make out.

INT. RICKI'S APARTMENT (LIVING ROOM) - DAY

Alone, Ricki enters carrying a big pile of MAIL. She tosses aside the junk, the piles of collection notices and bills.

Then she notices a curiously large MANILA ENVELOPE. She immediately recognizes the return address: Feather Drive, Naperville, Illinois. Pete's house.

END SONG

Cautiously, Ricki opens the envelope. There's a slightly smaller, SQUARE ENVELOPE inside; it has an expensive, creamy look to it. There's also a HANDWRITTEN LETTER.

Ricki reads the letter first. We hear MAUREEN'S VOICE narrating as we read along.

MAUREEN (V.O.)

Dear Linda. I'm sorry about some of the words we exchanged during your visit. As you know, it's a loaded topic and we haven't had many chances to talk about it. Please accept this olive branch from me, and I hope we can try again on better terms.

Ricki reflects, then reads on:

MAUREEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Also, I heard that you poured beer on that bitch Nicole from Traffic. Respect. I wish I had been there.

Ricki grins at the memory.

MAUREEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Enclosed, please find something I feel you should have received a long time ago. You're entitled to it. Hope to see you in a few weeks. Maureen.

Ricki opens up the fancy envelope. It's an engraved INVITATION, with a rustic-yet-expensive look. It's tied together with a piece of GREEN TWINE.

The invite reads: **Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Schmitz request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter Emily Anne Schmitz to Joshua Hendrix Brummel.**

RICKI

Joshy.

She sifts through the different components of the fancy invite. There's a card that says: **Dinner Choice: Vegan/Gluten Free___ Vegetarian___**

And finally one last little SLIP OF PAPER included with the invitation. We hear EMILY'S girlish voice read it aloud.

EMILY (V.O.)

This invitation is embedded with wildflower seeds and can be planted! Please return it to the earth!

This gets an eye-roll from Ricki. But we can see that the invite, even coming from Maureen, means the world to her.

INT. SALT WELL - EVENING

The Salt Well is decorated for Valentine's Day. Ricki is sitting at the BAR, drinking a glass of wine. Daniel is reading the INVITATION, which Ricki has brought to show him.

The Flash is doing a routine SOUND CHECK on the stage as people filter into the bar.

DANIEL

(reading)

"In lieu of a gift, please make a donation to one of the following children's charities."

(aghast)

Ha! Oh my God, who gets married and doesn't want a bunch of *stuff*?

RICKI

My son.

On stage, Buster speaks into the mic.

BUSTER

Testes, one-two.

Daniel hands the invite back to Ricki.

DANIEL

Flower seeds. That is some bougie shit. How much do you think those invites cost per person?

RICKI

I have no idea. I just thought you'd get a kick out of it.

DANIEL

So are you excited about the wedding, then?

RICKI

I'm not going.

DANIEL

You have to! It won't be sexy without you. Buy something at Dress Barn, take your man, and go see your baby get married.

RICKI

I don't have any money. I discussed it with Greg and we simply don't have it. But it's fine. I don't think I'm necessarily wanted there.

DANIEL

Well, you're always wanted here.

RICKI

Thank you, sweetie.

Ricki pats Daniel's hand as she gets up and heads for the stage. She hops on to scattered applause.

RICKI (CONT'D)

Good evening, Tarzana! Happy Valentine's weekend to all you lovers out there. Any Janis fans out there? Janis Joplin?

No response, except CLAPPING from Daniel.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Good, because we're gonna start things off with a song that's very special to me...

She glances at Greg, who is wearing a DIFFERENT GUITAR than usual. It's not his beautiful sunburst Gibson SG. It's a cheaper YELLOW ELECTRIC GUITAR, '80s model.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Where's your guitar?

GREG
This is my guitar.

RICKI
No, your *guitar*.
(disbelief)
Your '68 SG Standard that you've
been besotted with since the day I
met you?

GREG
I felt like playing this one tonight.

This idea is so absurd that Ricki laughs.

RICKI
Yeah, right. The "Wet Banana"?
What's going on?

Billy, Buster and Joe exchange glances.

GREG
I sold it.

RICKI
Why?

Greg just looks at her. Over on bass, Buster shakes his head and takes a drag off his blue e-cigarette.

RICKI (CONT'D)
Oh, Greg.

INT. AIRPORT (SECURITY CHECKPOINT) - DAY

Ricki and Greg are the TSA's worst nightmare. Greg pulls off a GIANT BELT BUCKLE and unlaces a pair of 18-hole boots.

Ricki is removing her usual array of accessories.

GREG
How do we know that scanner isn't
some form of mind-control?

TSA AGENT
Sir, you cannot take this through.

An AGENT, digging through Greg's carry-on, holds up a bottle of CABO WABO TEQUILA.

GREG
Come on, man, that's Sammy Hagar's
tequila!

TSA AGENT #2
(to Ricki)
Ma'am, I need you to remove the toe
ring.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Ricki and Greg READ on the plane. Ricki is reading a library copy of *The Celestine Prophecy*. Greg enthusiastically flips through the Skymall catalog.

GREG
Look at this. It cooks the hot dog
and toasts the bun at the same time.

RICKI
That's useful.

GREG
Right?

RICKI
This book is very enlightening.

GREG
(musing)
I don't eat hot dogs much anymore.

Ricki pats Greg's arm affectionately.

EXT. DRESS BARN (TO ESTABLISH) - DAY

A strip mall in the Chicago suburbs.

INT. DRESS BARN - DAY

Ricki is in one of the "dressing rooms"-- a BOOTH hidden behind a curtain. Greg is sitting on a chair waiting for her to emerge.

GREG
Come out, babe.

RICKI (O.S.)
I look absurd.

GREG
I'm sure you look gorgeous.

RICKI (O.S.)
I look like my mother.

GREG
No way. Your mother's dead.

Ricki comes out wearing a CONSERVATIVE, UN-RICKI-LIKE PALE BLUE DRESS with the tags hanging off it. It looks very odd with her pleather boots.

GREG (CONT'D)
You look beautiful. That is like, the most amazing blue. Reminds me of Roger Daltrey's eyes in Tommy.

RICKI
(sincere)
Thank you.

GREG
Did the invitation say you had to be fancy?

RICKI
It said "Dress to Impress." Ricki rolls her eyes at the affected wording.

GREG
Well, I'm impressed.

RICKI
I haven't seen a lot of these people in years. Pete got "custody" of all our friends and most of the family. They're gonna see me and there's gonna say "Wow, there's Linda. I guess things didn't work out for her in Hollywood."

GREG
Um, are any of those "nosy rosies" in Tarzana's number one party band?

Ricki has to laugh at that.

GREG (CONT'D)
Yeah. I'd say things worked out pretty fucking well!

RICKI
Ha. I'll just tell them I'm collaborating with Greg Sandoval. That'll shut them up.

GREG

Collaborating? You're *doing* him.
You're the luckiest woman alive.

The SALES LADY walks over.

SALES LADY

Can I show you some other styles?

RICKI

Do you have anything black?

GREG

She'll take this one.

EXT. MORTON ARBORETUM (TO ESTABLISH) - DAY

It's a beautiful spring day at the OUTDOOR WEDDING VENUE, a tree-filled nature preserve.

EXT. MORTON ARBORETUM - DAY

A HARPIST plays as GUESTS filter into the WEDDING CEREMONY.

HIP-LOOKING WAITERS and WAITRESSES hold trays of signature COCKTAILS. The wedding looks perfectly rustic in a very expensive way.

Ricki enters the area with trepidation, wearing her new blue dress. A PERKY WAITRESS immediately solicits her.

WAITRESS

Would you like a cocktail before the ceremony?

RICKI

Sure. What is this?

WAITRESS

(gesturing)

This one is called "The Josh." It's ginger beer and small-batch whiskey with candied lemon peel. This is "The Emily"; it's kind of a playful take on a Kir Royale.

Ricki looks at the girl like she's speaking Cantonese.

RICKI

Which one do you recommend?

WAITRESS

Sorry, I'm in recovery.

RICKI

Me too.

Ricki scoots away from the cocktails, wrinkling her nose. She wanders self-consciously through the sea of assembled GUESTS.

Suddenly, a WIZENED HAND grips her arm.

OMA (O.S.)

Linda.

Linda turns to see a VERY OLD WOMAN of about 90.

RICKI

Hi, Oma. How are you?

Oma appears to be senile.

OMA

I like you. You know? Even though you ran off on my son.

RICKI

I always liked you too.

OMA

How is Las Vegas?

RICKI

Um...

(realizing)

Los Angeles. It's very nice. Warm.

OMA

I don't like Peter's new wife one bit. Don't trust her.

RICKI

Peter and Maureen seem happy.

OMA

Maybe now, but it's only been a few weeks.

RICKI

(gently)

It's been many years.

A YOUNG, MALE RELATIVE rushes to retrieve poor, confused Oma.

MALE RELATIVE

Oma, there you are! Come on. Let's have a seat.

MALE RELATIVE (CONT'D)
 (to Ricki, flat)
 Oh. Hi.

Oma is ushered away. Ricki looks at the COCKTAIL WAITRESS.

RICKI
 I'll take "the Emily."

EXT. MORTON ARBORETUM (CEREMONY AREA) - DAY

OFFICIANT (O.S.)
 Everyone, please take your seats.

The ceremony is about to start.

The ceremony area consists of about 100 chairs in a clearing.

Everything is festooned with wildflowers. Ricki is seated alone on an aisle seat near the back, reading the wedding program. The "better" seats are rapidly filling up.

As PEOPLE walk by and sit down, we hear a snippet of GOSSIP in hushes tones:

Is that?...It is. Wow...Not even sitting with family...

Ricki continues to look down at her program.

OFFICIANT (CONT'D)
 All rise.

Everyone complies. Ricki looks ahead and sees that JOSH and ADAM, the best man, have appeared at the altar in suits.

A CLASSICAL GUITARIST begins to play near the altar as the wedding procession begins.

A BRIDESMAID in a long dress walks down the aisle, escorted by a GROOMSMAN. Another PAIR follows. The bridesmaids wear elegant vintage dresses and carry "green" bouquets.

Then, Julie appears, looking radiant (and almost unrecognizable) with her hair and makeup done. She's so beautiful that there's a murmur through the crowd as she emerges on the arm of a GROOMSMAN Julie sees Ricki and pauses. Ricki smiles at Julie. Julie looks at the assembled crowd, remembering her last trip down the aisle. She looks frozen, disturbed.

Ricki realizes what's bothering Julie.

As the GROOMSMAN tries to nudge Julie down the aisle, Ricki leans over and whispers at her daughter.

RICKI
Don't run away.

Julie looks back at her mother.

RICKI (CONT'D)
Just keep walking.

She nods encouragingly. Julie looks ahead, squares her shoulders, continues to WALK.

As Ricki regards Julie's departing form, she notices with surprise-- and love-- that her daughter wears COMBAT BOOTS with her dress.

Finally, EMILY appears, escorted by both her MOTHER and FATHER. All three look rich, elegant and happy. Shutters click as everybody *oohs* and *ahhs* over the bride. Ricki looks at Josh: he wipes a tear away from his eye as he gazes at his soon-to-be wife.

Ricki looks at the bride and her parents as they stride past her: a perfect, intact TRIAD, seemingly untouched by dysfunction or pain.

From the front row, PETE and MAUREEN beam at their soon-to-be daughter-in-law. Pete's arm is around Maureen. He rubs her arm happily as the bride swishes past.

Ricki glances across the aisle at a LITTLE BOY who seems to be having an awful time. He pouts and kicks the chair in front of him. He meets Ricki's gaze. She WINKS.

INT. RECEPTION - DAY

Ricki makes her way through the RECEIVING LINE, where Josh and Emily greet their GUESTS.

Josh hugs Ricki warmly, overwhelmed by his big day.

JOSH
Mom. I'm so glad you're here. I didn't know if you would make it out.

RICKI
My boyfriend pawned his Gibson SG.

EMILY
Oh!

JOSH

Well, we got your RSVP so late that we couldn't really move things around with the hall so...

(awkward)

I hope you don't mind eating with some of Emily's cousins and like, our harpist...

RICKI

Not at all. I'd love to learn about harp theory. Well. I'll see you guys in there.

EMILY

Great.

JOSH

Really great to see you, Mom.

Ricki heads into the reception area and sees ADAM with his date, a GOOD-LOOKING ASIAN GUY. She waves in their direction.

RICKI

Adam!

She trots toward them and holds her arms out expectantly.

Adam puts on a brave face. So does Ricki.

ADAM

Hi, Mom. Um, Desmond, this is my mother, Linda.

DESMOND

What a pleasure. I see where Adam gets his cheekbones.

RICKI

You're Adam's friend?

DESMOND

(quickly)

Yes. We're friends.

ADAM

We're seeing each other.

RICKI

That's wonderful. Adam, I'm so glad you've met someone. Particularly someone so handsome! You may be too young for this, but have you ever heard of Bruce Lee?

Adam looks like he wants to die.

DESMOND
Of course I've heard of Bruce Lee;
he's the man!

RICKI
You look a lot like him.

ADAM
Not at all. Not even a little.

DESMOND
Thanks! I've been growing my hair
out lately, and I think I'm serving
up some "Bruce realness."

ADAM
You're not even Chinese.

DESMOND
Neither was Bruce; he was born in
San Francisco.
(to Ricki)
I did a research paper on him in
college.

RICKI
Where did you go to school?

DESMOND
Harvard.

RICKI
(enjoying herself)
Wow! Adam always dreamed of going to
Harvard, but to no avail...

ADAM
Thanks, Mom.

Ricki stops and looks Adam in the eyes.

RICKI
No. You're brilliant. If you'd had
more support from me, you could have
done it.

Adam seems to respect Ricki's willingness to "own" this.

ADAM
Thanks.

Desmond's eyes dart from Ricki to Adam. *Awkward.*

RICKI

Well. I just think you two are a beautiful couple and I hope you have a nice time and enjoy your vegan dinner.

She pronounces it vedge-in, like vegetable.

ADAM

Vegan.

RICKI

I don't know what it is.

She smiles and walks off. Adam's got that stun-gun look.

ADAM

(to Desmond)

OK, she must be *heavily* medicated.

DESMOND

I like her.

INT. RECEPTION - EVENING

The dinner portion of the RECEPTION is in full swing.

Everything is lovely, quirky, and just-so. Guests drink wine out of mason jars. A JAZZ COMBO plays dinner music onstage.

Near the front of the room, the BRIDAL PARTY holds court at the customary LONG TABLE. Pete is sitting there, chatting with the newlyweds. The seat next to him is empty; Maureen is circulating and saying hello to various people. The perfect hostess. Ricki watches her, as usual, with envy.

Near the back of the room, Ricki is sitting at a round table with SEVEN OTHER PEOPLE, none of whom she knows. A GIRL sitting across from her tries to strike up a conversation

GIRL AT TABLE

So, how did you meet Josh?

RICKI

Caesarean section.

Before the confused girl can reply. Ricki glances at her watch nervously.

RICKI (CONT'D)

I have to go.

She gets up and crosses the room to the bridal party's table.

She walks up to Pete.

RICKI (CONT'D)
Pete. I think it's time.

Pete seems surprised.

PETE
Already?

RICKI
It's nearly the end of dinner.

PETE
That's right, that's what you said.

Julie overhears this conversation and reacts with alarm.

JULIE
You're leaving, aren't you?

RICKI
Julie...

JULIE
Big surprise. You've been here for a hot minute. How about waiting until the ink dries in the guest book?

PETE
Calm down, honey. You don't know what this is about.

Ricki has already picked up a CHAMPAGNE GLASS. She begins hitting it with a fork: *ding ding ding*. She nods at the JAZZ COMBO, who hurriedly finish up their song.

A SERVER appears and hands RICKI a microphone. Ricki accepts it nervously. The entire crowd turns to face her.

RICKI
Hello everyone. Remember me?

Awkward chuckles from the crowd.

RICKI (CONT'D)
If you don't, I'm Linda Brummel, mother of the groom. I remember a lot of you, from years ago. It's nice to see your faces again.

Many of those FACES stare back at her. Blinking.

RICKI (CONT'D)
I wasn't really sure what to give Josh and Emily as a gift.
(MORE)

RICKI (CONT'D)

Not just because I don't have any money, but because there were too many possibilities. There's so much out there that I *haven't* given them. Where to begin? How to decide what to give my son, who deserves so much and has gotten so little?

Josh and Emily have nervous smiles on their faces.

RICKI (CONT'D)

I was never a traditional mom. And I won't be a traditional mother-in-law-- I hope.

More laughter, this time more genuine.

RICKI (CONT'D)

But I realized that the only thing I have to give Josh and Emily is the only thing I've ever had to give anyone. I'm not much of a housekeeper, a cook, or a nurse...

On Maureen, watching Ricki intently...

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

But I am a musician. That's what I have to give. That's what I am. That's all. And so I'd like to sing a song for my son and his beautiful wife right now.

(then)

Oh. I want to thank my children's "other mother" for helping me to arrange this surprise.

From across the room, Maureen nods at Ricki respectfully.

Josh mouths *What is she doing?* to Maureen; Mo waves him off.

RICKI (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Guys? You can come in.

Ricki gestures toward the back of the room. GREG, BUSTER, JOE and BILLY appear. Greg has the Wet Banana, Buster carries his bass; Joe has his sticks. They wear cheap SUITS. (Buster actually has a "tuxedo" T-shirt on.)

They head toward the stage as the crowd murmurs.

EMILY

(to Josh)

Who are they?

JOSH

I think that's the Flash.

The regular BAND steps aside, making room for Ricki and the Flash. They've discussed all of this in advance.

Greg plugs in his yellow guitar. Ricki adjusts her mic.

GREG

(into mic)

I usually have a way better guitar.

RICKI

Josh and Emily, here's some sage advice from .38 Special. I love you both very much.

Joe counts off with his sticks.

JOE

One-two-three-four!

The Flash launch into "HOLD ON LOOSELY."

RICKI

I see it all around me. Good lovin' gone bad. And usually it's too late when you Realize what you had...

On Emily's PAINED FACE...her reception has been hijacked.

Plus she hadn't planned on .38 Special at her perfect quirky/indie wedding.

Josh looks a little sheepish. But when he sees the expression on his bride's face, he realizes he has to embrace the situation to keep it from ruining the day.

Josh takes Emily's hand and leads her out into the middle of the floor.

EMILY

Josh! What about our first dance?

JOSH

I guess this is it.

He gives Ricki the thumbs up as he begins to SPIN and TWIRL Emily, who knows the steps well...

EMILY

What about our choreography?

JOSH

Just do what we rehearsed

EMILY

But it's not the right song!

JOSH

Just do it faster.

Emily can't help but laugh as Josh whips her around. The crowd begins to WHOOP and CHEER and Emily softens.

EMILY

Okay!

Other GUESTS begin to move to the floor. Ricki is committed to her performance, as always, but she notices everyone beginning to dance.

DESMOND leads a reluctant ADAM onto the floor. Ricki sees Adam staring at her. She flashes him a THUMBS UP. His gaze back is a little cynical, a little wounded-- as always. And yet he begins to DANCE.

RICKI

*Just hold on loosely, don't let go.
If you cling too tightly, you're
gonna lose control...*

Maureen and Peter dance. Julie dances by herself. Even GRANDPARENTS and KIDS hit the floor. The wedding kind of sucked until now. But Ricki is giving 'em blood, sweat and tears and it's THRILLING.

Julie, ever the shit-disturber, is enjoying this more than anyone. She smiles proudly at her mom.

When the SONG ENDS, Ricki shrugs humbly instead of her usual rock-star posturing. But Julie begins to CHANT, pumping her fist in the air.

JULIE

Ricki! Ricki! Ricki!

Peter joins in gamely. Soon everyone is chanting. Ricki looks over at Greg, who smiles at her.

CROWD

Ricki! Ricki! Ricki!

Ricki closes her eyes, ABSORBING it. In the temporary darkness she's created, the chanting and applause could be coming from anywhere. Is she imagining herself headlining a huge concert, as she's done so many times before?

She doesn't need to. Ricki opens her eyes.

THE END