

GUESS WHO DIED

Written by

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. LAS ESPERANZADO SENIOR COMMUNITY - PALM SPRINGS - DAY

Landscapers trim the bougainvillea that frames the front gate and stone fence that features large letters that read *Las Esperanzado*, then in smaller letters underneath, *A Community for Adults 55 and Over*. A Subaru passes by and turns into the main entrance, then comes to a stop at the guard gate.

EXT. GUARD GATE - CONTINUOUS

SYBIL ZISKIN - in the Subaru - is 40 and uptight. She rolls down her window to speak with LOPEZ, the guard on duty. Lopez is 25, Hispanic, and quite nearly round. He takes his position as the first line of defense here very seriously.

SYBIL
(the friendly approach)
Hello again. How are you this - ?

LOPEZ
(cutting her off)
License, please. Pop the trunk.

SYBIL
You *know* who I am. I'm here every day visiting my parents -

LOPEZ
License, pop the trunk.

SYBIL
Look, you're protecting a bunch of old people, *not* government secrets. Trust me, I'm not Al-Qaeda!

LOPEZ
- said every person who turned out to be Al-Qaeda. Pop it.

Sybil rolls her eyes and reaches for the trunk release. As she does this, *we hear water running*.

INT. ZISKIN HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

A man hums and sings in the shower, not a care in the world.

INT. ZISKIN HOME - BATHROOM - LATER

MURRAY ZISKIN, 77, positive and upbeat, eyes alive, steps up to the mirror, hair askew. When it comes to living, Murray Ziskin is still extremely interested.

INT. ZISKIN HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

Murray enters, wearing a robe, and catches sight of himself in the mirror. He takes the robe off and tosses it onto the bed. He looks himself up and down in the mirror, takes in what he's become. How did he ever get *this* old? He strikes a few quick poses for his own amusement, then breaks into a joyful little song and dance.

INT. ZISKIN HOME - KITCHEN - LATER

Murray enters to find PATRICIA RILEY - soon-to-be 71, former stewardess - drinking coffee, reading the *New York Times* and tapping away at her laptop, hard at work as a paid (Conservative) blogger. Murray and Patricia - Jew and Irishwoman - are an improbable couple - which might explain why they're not a couple (yet). They agree on nothing, but that would be half the fun, right?

MURRAY

(singing)

"Life can be so sweet, on the sunny
side of the street." Morning,
Patricia.

PATRICIA

(off the newspaper)

Guess who died?

MURRAY

If it's me, I'd rather not know.
How you doing, kid?

He picks up the coffee she's set out for him.

PATRICIA

Oh, just great. Can't sleep without
Xanax, can't get out of bed without
Celebrex, can't eat without
Prilosec. Other than that - aces.

MURRAY

But instead of thanking science for
all the help - or God, but go prove
it - she sits cursing her fate.

PATRICIA

At least I'm not kidding myself,
Golden Boy. Your wife's out in the
garden holding hands with the Grim
Reaper, you're in here singing -
poorly, I might add - how sweet
life is.

MURRAY

She's still with us, isn't she? And
there's *more* good news. I just took
the greatest dump of my life.

PATRICIA

Murray, please remember I've been
here the last nine months to help
look after my sister - *not* to
listen to your foolishness.

MURRAY

This is serious, Pat. If humankind
could experience one great
collective dump similar to the one
I just enjoyed, people the world
over would come together, join
hands -

PATRICIA

Hopefully after washing them.

MURRAY

- and there would be a peace even
Ghandi never dreamed of.

PATRICIA

Okay. I'm packing my things, I'm
going home to Columbus.

MURRAY

Why?

PATRICIA

Because you disgust me.

MURRAY

Yes, but I do it with panache, you
have to admit. Come on, there's no
way you're leaving now. Tonight's
Barbara's surprise birthday party.
The big luau!

PATRICIA

Her birthday's not for three months, and according to the doctor she hasn't got three months.

MURRAY

(softly)

More reason not to wait.

(trying to stay positive)

Barbara loves luaus. Our honeymoon in Hawaii - all she wanted every night was a luau.

PATRICIA

Most honeymooners want something *else* every night - but then again, she was with you.

MURRAY

See - you're funny. That's why I haven't thrown you out yet.

(excited again)

Wait until you see the surprise I've got cooked up for tonight. People are gonna flip!

PATRICIA

If anyone around here even *thinks* about flipping, it's a guaranteed trip to the ER.

Sybil enters, still annoyed, and slams her bag down on the kitchen island.

SYBIL

You have *got* to do something about that guard at the gate. Everybody else he waves right in. Me? I'm one visit away from a full cavity search. How's Mom?

PATRICIA

Same. Unresponsive. I checked her medicine this morning. She's low on Memantine.

MURRAY

I'll go get some from Lanie.

Sybil spots a babka out on the kitchen island, hacks a piece off (working out some frustration) and takes a bite.

SYBIL

You won't *believe* the conversation
I had with Dorothy this morning.

MURRAY

You talked to your sister? I like
when you girls stay in touch.

SYBIL

I told her if she wanted to see Mom
again, the doctor said it's - it
could be any day now - but no - she
can't *possibly* get away now. She's
in Stuttgart for a conference -

PATRICIA

Dorothy just emailed me a picture
of her daughter in a school play.

SYBIL

You mean Rebecca? The five-year-old
who calls me Uncle Sybil?

MURRAY

Dorothy swears she never told
Rebecca you were gay.

SYBIL

Oh, right. Five years old and she
guessed there was a lesbian in the
family? *That's* talent.

MURRAY

Don't be mad at your sister for not
being here. It's a long trip - and
her work's very demanding.

SYBIL

Unlike mine.

MURRAY

Did I say that?

SYBIL

Dad, I'm sorry I'm just a teacher.
Excuse me - a teacher of poetry -
at a *community* college - in the
desert! What a full, accomplished
life - spending the last fourteen
years coming up with rhymes for
cactus!

Sybil jams the last of the babka into her mouth and exits.

MURRAY

The bubbly disposition she gets
from me.

PATRICIA

Go check on your wife.

EXT. SIDE GARDEN OUTSIDE ZISKIN HOME - LATER

BARBARA ZISKIN, 75 and frail, sits in her wheelchair in the garden, a vacant smile on her face. A water feature bubbles peacefully nearby. Murray enters - reacts for a moment at the state of his beloved wife - then turns on the charm.

MURRAY

Mrs. Ziskin - at last we're alone.
As you know, I'm the perfect
gentleman, but I'm so struck by
your beauty, I have to ask - may I
cop a feel?

He moves to her, leans down and kisses her on the forehead.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

I love you, Mrs. Z.

He straightens her in the chair. Takes a chair from a small table nearby, puts it next to her and sits.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

I was thinking about my days in the
music business in the shower this
morning. Remember I had all those
clients at Capitol Records - and
Bob Weinrib - great guy - remember
I asked if I could get some free
studio time - and we went in, you
and I, and cut a demo of you
singing *Ain't Love Easy*. I'm biased
- but what a voice!

Murray leans down to remove a leaf from the water feature. Music begins playing softly under: a bare-bones version of *Ain't Love Easy* sung by Barbara in happier times.

BARBARA (O.C.)

I wasn't *that* good, Murray.

Murray turns to look at his wife. She's sitting up straight now, life dancing in her eyes. (*This is Murray's memory at work.*)

FEMALE VOCALIST (V.O.)

(singing)

Ain't love easy when it's you,
babe? Livin' easy 'cause of you,
babe...

MURRAY

(beaming)

That song. I love it.

BARBARA

Everyone loved it. Even my father.

MURRAY

And your father hated everything.

BARBARA

Not true.

MURRAY

Well, he hated me. I was some bum
working in the music business. No
way I could be good enough for his
princess.

BARBARA

My father loved you.
(off his reaction)
Okay, he liked you.

MURRAY

Then how come he called me "that
Jew hustler?"

BARBARA

He never said that, Murray.
(a beat, smiling again)
Not to your face.

Murray laughs - wipes his eyes. He turns back to look at his
wife. She's slumped and gone again. Sybil appears in the
doorway, worry on her face.

SYBIL

What happens when we lose her, Dad?

MURRAY

She's here now, kiddo. That's what
matters. And don't worry - you'll
still have me.

SYBIL

(a joke - perhaps)
Now I'm *really* scared.

She hugs her father, holding him close for a beat.

SYBIL (CONT'D)

I'll sit with her. Go get her
meds.

Murray takes Sybil's face in his hands, kisses her and exits.

EXT. LAS ESPERANZADO SENIOR COMMUNITY - STREET

Murray strolls down a sunny street where all the houses are nicely maintained and all look vaguely alike. Murray's full of good cheer - as are all the neighbors he comes into contact with. It's clear he's well-liked and considered the unofficial mayor of the community. CAROL WOODS, 84, African-American and sweet, is out watering the flowers in her yard. She spots Murray and gives him a friendly wave.

CAROL

Murray! Good morning!

MURRAY

Good morning, Carol. You ready for
the luau tonight?

CAROL

I'm watering my grass skirt as soon
as I finish with these flowers.

MURRAY

Save the second dance for me. First
one goes to my wife.

CAROL

Barbara's coming? How wonderful!

Murray keeps moving. DALE FRANKS, 70, lives across the street from Carol. He spots Murray and shouts to him.

DALE

Murray! Everything set for the big
shindig tonight?

MURRAY

Done and done, Dale. You might want
to rest up. It's gonna be the
blowout of the century.

DALE

Should I bring my drone?

MURRAY

Your wife's a sweetheart. Don't talk about her that way.

DALE

No, Murray - my *drone*.

Dale lifts controls he's been holding and presses down on a button. A buzzing drone quickly drops into view.

DALE (CONT'D)

I can photograph the party from way up.

MURRAY

I love it. Bring your drone, Dale!

Three women jog by - Bonnie (58), Claire (66) and JEAN (84).

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Ladies! Luau tonight!

The women laugh, charmed by Murray - and the attention.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

It won't be a party without you.

JEAN

Are you roasting a pig?

MURRAY

For the Gentiles. For the Jews, we're roasting matzoh in the *shape* of a pig. A little dry, but it'll get the job done.

JEAN

(laughing)

We'll be there!

The women laugh and jog away. Murray laughs and continues to walk along - until a golf cart comes to a screeching halt in front of him, blocking his path. So maybe Murray's not well-liked by everyone - because here's MORT RISKIN, 78, Las Esperanzado's resident crank. He pulls himself out of his cart with some effort, holding several pieces of mail in one hand.

MORT

You! I've had it with you!

MURRAY

What did I do this time, Mort?

Mort jams the mail into Murray's hands.

MORT

Here! I'm sick of getting your mail! No more!

MURRAY

It's an understandable mistake. Mort Riskin, Murray Ziskin. Our names are very similar.

MORT

So change yours. Enough!

Mort climbs back into his cart. Murray climbs into the passenger side.

MORT (CONT'D)

What the hell do you think you're doing?

MURRAY

I need a lift to Lanie's.

MORT

You need a kick in the shorts, is what you need. Get out!

Mort tries to push Murray out of the cart, but he's lacking in upper body strength and stamina. He quits after a few seconds of half-hearted pushing, wincing in pain.

MORT (CONT'D)

Ow! I think I pulled something. You're lucky, Ziskin, otherwise I'd be kicking your ass from here to next Tuesday.

MURRAY

Why don't you like me, Mort? I'm not that difficult.

MORT

That's why I don't like you! Always in a good mood - the happy face all the time. It's not natural, Ziskin! You're *old*. You're done. You've been cast aside by a society that only values youth.

MURRAY

So I should be a miserable putz like you?

MORT

Yes! I'm one of *millions* of miserable putzes all over the world. We could actually take over if we weren't so pissed off at each other! Get out of my cart.

MURRAY

No, this is nice. Let's just keep sitting here talking. People will think we're actually friends.

MORT

(horrified, but impressed
on some level)

A low blow, Ziskin. Well played -
but a low blow.

Mort turns the wheel and starts away with Murray.

INT. MORT'S CART - MOMENTS LATER

Mort slowly (very slowly) makes his way down the street with Murray riding shotgun. Another cart seems to whizz by (to give us some sense of how slow Mort is going).

MORT

(to the other driver)
Slow down, maniac!

MURRAY

These things *do* go faster, you know.
(pointing)
That pedal there. You push down on it harder -

MORT

One more complaint, you're getting out, I'm running you over.

MURRAY

Since I can still walk faster than you can drive, I don't see that happening.

MORT

What do you need from Lanie?
Penicillin? Got a little dose of the clap, do you?

MURRAY

What - it's 1948? Who gets the clap anymore?

MORT

Around here? *Everybody*. You put a bunch of old people together - they turn into rabbits. There's a senior community in Florida that has the highest incidence of STDs in the entire United States! What do you say to that?

MURRAY

I'm moving to Florida.

Mort stops the cart suddenly. He's looking at someone coming out of a nearby house.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

MORT

(a mix of loathing and
utter respect)

Hector Perez.

Murray follows Mort's gaze and sees HECTOR PEREZ, a sad-eyed diminutive Hispanic Don Knotts type, 72, somewhat furtively exiting a home. In the doorway, 78-year-old Edna Markey - a large lady - waves him off, looking very much like a blushing teen.

MORT (CONT'D)

He's at it again!

MURRAY

What's he doing with Edna Markey? I thought he was seeing Norma Miller.

MORT

Norma died.

MURRAY

When?

MORT

A week ago.

MURRAY

I saw her in the pool yesterday.

MORT

Face up or down?

Hector crosses over to the cart to join the guys.

HECTOR

Good morning, gentlemen. How are you doing this fine day?

MURRAY

Not as well as you, Hector.

HECTOR

I'm so looking forward to the party tonight, Murray.

(smiling, hungrily)

Lots of ladies, yes?

MORT

You just had a lot of lady. Don't you ever slow down?

HECTOR

What can I say? I enjoy making women happy.

MURRAY

You really think you're doing that, Hector?

HECTOR

I hope so. You'd have to ask them.

FOUR QUICK POPS of four different woman, all extolling the virtues of romance with Hector Perez. (These are not documentary-style interview shots; the women are talking with friends whom we do not see.)

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

VERA, 75, stands huddled with her friend at the net, racket in hand.

VERA

He's so gentle - so caring. I've never had a better lover.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER CAFE - ANOTHER DAY

MADGE, 81, sits sharing tea with a friend.

MADGE

He touches me in ways no man has touched me before.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - ANOTHER DAY

SHARI, 72, African-American, sits in her golf cart talking with a friend who's standing nearby.

SHARI

And he always tidies up before he leaves. I don't know where he gets the strength.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

MAE, 92, bird-like, on oxygen, whispers to her mah-jongg partners.

MAE

(a deep croak)
He's a freaking stallion.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOFADE IN:

EXT. LANIE'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - LATER

LANIE (V.O.)
Memantine, Memantine. I *should* have
some here.

INT. LANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Murray stands on one side of the kitchen island across from LANIE FONG, 71, Chinese, born in Hong Kong, raised in San Francisco. Lanie is squat, all business, the unofficial pharmacist for the community. She provides a serious service, which she considers a form of activism. She digs through pills in a jar, then pulls other jars and containers out of the cabinets during the following.

LANIE
It's one of my more popular
Alzheimer's medications. Can you
wait until next Thursday? We're
doing another drug run down to
Mexico. You ever come along?

MURRAY
No, but I've heard it's a great
time.

LANIE
It's a blast, Murray. We get a big
bus, there's food, people sing,
then we jump off south of the
border and pick up every
prescription drug known to man for
pennies on the dollar. Mexico's got
everything.

MURRAY
Sure. Kidnappings, executions, mass
graves. Just ask what's-his-name in
Washington.

Lanie uncovers another bottle. Success!

LANIE

Memantine! Here we go. How many you need?

MURRAY

Can you spare a week's worth?

LANIE

(handing him the bottle)
Take them all. I'll get fresh down south of the border. Since that's the last of the lot, I'll only charge you half price.

Murray lifts a large Tupperware juice container half-full of blue pills off the counter.

MURRAY

This must be a popular item.

LANIE

Viagra. My bread and butter. Isn't that a beautiful blue? I took one of the pills to an upholsterer. He's making me slip covers for my sofa that same shade. Kiss Barbara for me.

MURRAY

You'll see her tonight. You coming to the luau?

LANIE

You mean that classic affront to all people of Asian-Pacific blood?
(a beat)
I can't wait.

EXT. LAS ESPERANZADO STREET - AT THE SAME TIME

Mort putters along in his cart. Way down the block, a tiny woman is slowly backing out of her driveway. Mort stops - a good fifty feet from her car - and waves for the woman to back out. The woman does not move. Mort waves again. Nothing. Mort inches forward - and about two feet along, the car quickly jerks out partly into the street. Mort screeches to a halt, still far from the car.

MORT

What the hell is wrong with you?

He waves for the car to continue backing out. Nothing.

MORT (CONT'D)
Oh, for Pete's sake.

Mort continues driving along - but here comes the car again!
He slams on the brake and screams.

MORT (CONT'D)
AHHH!

They're both still forty feet apart. And the duel in the sun
continues.

EXT. LAS ESPERANZADO STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Murray heads home with the meds. LYDIA ELKINS, late 60's, in
fairly good shape, hurries to intercept him.

LYDIA
Mr. Ziskin! Hello! Lydia Elkins.
This is my house. I'm just five
doors down from you - see? I am so
sorry to hear about your wife.

MURRAY
How do you mean?

LYDIA
I heard she took a turn for the
worse.

MURRAY
No, not really. She's hanging in
there. She'll be at the party
tonight.

LYDIA
Well, that's a relief. But I know
exactly what you're going through.
I lost my Larry three years ago.

MURRAY
I'm sorry.

LYDIA
I just want you to know I'm here if
you ever need a shoulder to lean
on. I'm always open.

MURRAY
Excuse me?

LYDIA
(not missing a beat)
My door is always open.

She puts a hand on his arm and begins slowly stroking it. Murray glances down at this. He clears his throat. He looks away uncomfortably. The stroking continues.

EXT. LAS ESPERANZADO SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY - NIGHT

TIME LAPSE as the sun quickly sets over the community.

INT. ZISKIN HOME - LIVING ROOM

Murray pushes a dressed-up Barbara in her chair to the front door. Patricia follows, fretting.

PATRICIA
This is a mistake, Murray. It'll be too much for her.

MURRAY
She'll be fine. I don't want her to miss the surprise.

PATRICIA
What surprise?

MURRAY
If I tell, it won't be a surprise.

PATRICIA
It's too much excitement. And the sun's going down. It'll be too cold for her.

MURRAY
So we'll only stay for an hour.

He looks at Barbara. He tries to fight it, but the sad reality of the situation wins out.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
Forty-five minutes.
(a beat, looking to Patricia)
Half an hour?

Patricia shakes her head and looks away.

MURRAY (CONT'D)
(giving up, quietly)
You're right, you're right.
(a beat)
But we're going. We'll tell
everyone she sends her best, and
we'll get someone to come stay with
her.

PATRICIA
I already called. The nurse will be
here in ten minutes.

MURRAY
Which nurse? The fat narcoleptic or
the skinny one who keeps telling me
now much Jesus loves me? I'm
supposed to leave my wife in the
care of a person who can't tell I'm
a Jew? I don't trust those powers
of observation. We'll call Sybil.

Hawaiian music plays as Murray crosses to the phone.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING

The center is huge and has everything a community could ever want or need. There's a dance floor, banquet tables, a workout room and a card room as well. The main room is decorated in a Hawaiian theme, and the residents have gathered (most of them wearing some form of Hawaiian garb) with their guests - including a number of young children.

ANGLE ON

LILY DUVAL, 40, African-American, an upbeat, high-energy Tiffany Haddish type, works for the company running the development and is in charge of activities. She teaches aerobics, leads hikes - you name it. She steps onto a small stage and speaks into a microphone.

LILY
Aloha, everybody, and welcome to
the annual Las Esperanzado luau!
Are we ready to party islands-
style? Let's hear it!

The crowd cheers, excited and ready to party.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Ladies, if you're wearing grass
 skirts, watch out - because I hear
 a couple of the men are showing up
 with lawn mowers!

She laughs - alone. No one gets the joke. Lopez appears and
 takes over the mike.

LOPEZ
 Actually - the use of a lawn mower
 or any gas-powered machinery in an
 enclosed space would be in strict
 violation of Las Esperanzado
 community guidelines as set forth
 in -

LILY
 (jumping in)
 Great to know! Thank you, Lopez.
 (to the crowd)
 Celebrate good times - come on!

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - AT THE SAME TIME

Tiki torches blaze away as caterers work at roasting a whole
 pig on a spit. People are lined up for snacks and punch.

ANGLE ON

Mort watches the caterers with some disdain.

MORT
 Nice pig. You realize there are
 Jews here.

The caterers - who may or may not speak English - ignore him.

MORT (CONT'D)
 No answer. Of course.

Murray joins him.

MORT (CONT'D)
 Why am I even here? I'm a wealthy
 man. If I wanted to go to a luau, I
 could get on a plane and fly to
 Hawaii.

MURRAY
 So why don't you?

MORT

Oh, sure. I leave the country,
watch what happens. The White House
puts a travel ban on Jews - I can't
come back, nobody here ever sees me
again!

LILY (O.C.)

Folks - could I have your attention
again for two shakes?

Lily is back on the mike. Lopez stands nearby.

LILY (CONT'D)

Mr. Lopez from our security
department feels there's still some
confusion concerning my earlier
remarks, so just to be perfectly
clear - there will be no lawn
mowers involved in tonight's
festivities.

Lopez pushes past Lily to take the mike again.

LOPEZ

And while I'm here - I just want to
alert everyone that at one point
later during the festivities, a
glitter cannon *will* be employed.
The effect of this device can be
enjoyable, but the sudden noise
could be an issue for those of you
with heart problems. And there's
little chance of this, but if
glitter gets in your eyes, it could
scratch your corneal tissue. And
blind you. Permanently.

(a beat)

Thank you.

Lopez nods and steps away from the mike. Lily takes over and
attempts to get the party started back up again.

LILY

Party on, party people! Woo!

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - LATER

Murray and Patricia are at a table finishing their dinner.

PATRICIA

I should've stayed home.

MURRAY

Sybil's there. Barbara's fine.

PATRICIA

She's not fine, Murray. I know you don't want to admit it - but she's failing. You have to accept the fact - you can't save her.

MURRAY

I already did - when I married her.

PATRICIA

(a laugh, has heard this before)

Oh, here we go.

MURRAY

I saved her from your parents. And from what Jonathan Schatz called the agony of Irish Catholic guilt.

PATRICIA

Who's Jonathan Schatz?

MURRAY

Rabbi Jonathan Schatz.

PATRICIA

Oh, so a rabbi knows all about Catholic guilt. And I suppose Jewish guilt is better?

MURRAY

At least it comes with a laugh.

Patricia laughs in spite of herself. Lily joins them.

LILY

Murray, we're all set up. Are you ready?

MURRAY

Fantastic! Yes!

Murray wipes his mouth and stands quickly.

PATRICIA

What's going on?

MURRAY

Ah - *that's* the surprise!

He hurries away.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Lily stands in front of a glittery curtain on an outdoor stage.

LILY

Well, now we have an extra special surprise for you, and to introduce it - let's give a warm welcome to our very own Murray Ziskin!

Murray steps up to the mic to applause - and a prolonged, throaty boo from Mort.

MURRAY

Thanks, everybody. As some of you know, I worked in the music business in Los Angeles for many years - so when it comes to music, I know one or two things. Okay - one.

Laughter from the crowd.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

But the one thing I know - it's all about the talent. And I'm excited to tell you - I've found that talent right here at Las Esperanzado. So here they are - the next big thing headed straight to the top - The Altacockers!

The curtain opens - revealing a band of five made up of men (and one woman) in their sixties, seventies and eighties. Folks might think this is a joke - but the group rips into a high-energy rendition of *Surfin' U.S.A.* - and the crowd is up on their feet, cheering and dancing.

Murray rejoins Patricia in the crowd. He motions to the group on stage. Pretty good, huh? She smiles - yeah, they're good. All of her tension and worry melt away in a moment - and she and Murray start dancing.

We see other people reacting to the music. Mort doesn't want to dance, but Carol dances happily around him - pretending he's her partner.

We see the dancing crowd from high above - the view from Dale's drone. Dale stands off to the side of the crowd - his eye on the sky - as he controls the drone's movement.

Murray and Patricia continue to dance - having a great time - until Patricia gets a phone call.

She excuses herself and steps away as Murray continues to groove. He looks around for another partner - oh, hell - there's Lydia, cutting through the crowd like a Great White. Murray grabs a protesting Mort and starts dancing with him. Anything to keep Lydia at bay!

The glitter cannon goes off! The crowd cheers as glitter fills the air! Murray's in heaven - until Patricia goes to his side, her face a mask of shock. She leans in to him and whispers. His face falls as the ground opens up under him - and the crowd continues laughing, singing and cheering, and the glitter floats down.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEFADE IN:

INT. ZISKIN HOME - BEDROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON

A framed black and white wedding photograph of a much younger and happier Murray and Barbara.

Murray sits on the bed, the photo in his hands. Barbara, dead now, sits up in her chair across from him, head slightly to one side, her eyes closed. Murray puts the photo on the night stand and takes Barbara's hands in his.

MURRAY

(a beat, quietly)

So - from that to this.

(a beat, smiling)

Do you remember the day we met? I snuck out of shul, went across the street to the park - and there you were. That first sight of you in that fluttery spring dress - light blue with little white flowers. I don't know what they were praying for across the street, but I was praying for a gust of wind to lift that skirt so I could see the most exquisite legs in history - or at least my fourteen-year-old history.

(a beat)

How much have I loved you, Barbara? I'll tell you the same as I used to tell Sybil when she was little. I love you sixty-six million, one hundred thirty thousand, four hundred and five Barbie dolls dressed for a wedding to the men of their dreams, all of them singer-songwriters. And I love you, Barbara, enough to trust you with my every secret - the deepest of which is how much I will always love you.

A soft knock at the door, then Patricia appears. Two men from a mortuary company can be seen behind her.

PATRICIA

They're here for her, Murray.

Murray nods, slowly releases his wife's hands and carefully places them in her lap - then he exits.

INT. ZISKIN HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Murray sits on the couch, lost in thought, Sybil at his side.

SYBIL

You hungry, Dad? You want something to eat?

MURRAY

I'm good, honey.

SYBIL

Jules is on her way over with Jeff. I thought - family time.

Mort knocks and enters. He's not good with emotion.

MORT

Ziskin. I'm sorry.

MURRAY

(introductions)

Sybil, my friend Mort Riskin. Mort, my daughter Sybil.

MORT

The lesbian, right?

(off Sybil's reaction)

Don't get mad at me, honey. Get mad at *him*. If I had a gay kid, I wouldn't tell *anybody*, believe you me.

Sybil reacts - "Who the hell *is* this guy?" A knock at the door and Lydia enters carrying a covered dish. She crosses to Murray and hands it to him.

LYDIA

Knock knock! Oh, Mr. Ziskin, I am so, so sorry.

MURRAY

Hello, Mrs. Elkins.

LYDIA

Call me Lydia.

MORT

Lydia, Mort Riskin -

LYDIA
 (quickly)
 Not you.
 (back to Murray)
 This is my famous hamburger
 casserole. I'm an excellent cook
 and a careful shopper with an eye
 for maintaining a budget. Don't
 worry about returning the dish.
 I'll be back to get it.
 (in his ear, sotto)
 Get it?

She gives Murray's arm a quick stroke - then starts out.

MORT
 Can I give you a lift - ?

LYDIA
 (quickly)
 Get off me, creep!

She exits. Mort crosses to Murray and takes the covered dish from him.

MORT
 The nerve of her. Your poor wife's
 not gone an hour, and the vultures
 are already circling.
 (the dish)
 I'll stick this in the kitchen for
 you. See? I can be helpful.

Mort exits into the kitchen with the covered dish. Sybil turns and fixes a look on her father.

SYBIL
 You told him I was gay?

MURRAY
 He saw your Subaru with the Obama
 bumper sticker in the driveway. He
 put two and two together.

JEFF, 17, lanky and quiet, enters. Jeff is Sybil's son, adopted during a previous relationship.

JEFF
 Hey, Gramps. How you doing?

MURRAY
 Better now that you're here.

Murray opens his arms and welcomes Jeff into a hug.

SYBIL
Where's Jules?

JEFF
Moving the car. Some weird security
guy showed up and told her she was
parked illegally.

SYBIL
Incredible.

JEFF
I loved Grandma, but I'm glad she's
not sick anymore.
(a beat)
How's Aunt Pat?

MURRAY
She's very sad, but she wants to be
alone. That's how the Gentiles do
it.

JULES enters. She's 41, African-American, soft-spoken - and
Sybil's partner. She goes to Murray and gives him a hug.

JULES
Hey, you. I'm so sorry.

MURRAY
I'm sorry about the security guard.

JULES
No, it was a new experience. First
time I've ever been busted for
parking while black.

Mort enters from the kitchen carrying the covered dish and a
bottle of Murray's wine.

MORT
Ziskin, you got a ton of grief food
in there. I don't want this going
to waste, so I'm just gonna take
it. And it looks a little dry, so
I'm taking some of your wine, too.

MURRAY
Mort, this is my grandson Jeff, and
Sybil's partner Jules.

Mort is instantly fascinated by Jules.

MORT

I see. How long you two been an item?

JULES

Just over a year.

MORT

And you're still together?

SYBIL

Why wouldn't we be?

MORT

I know how it is with you gals. You move in together after the first date, then later, once you actually get to know each other -

He blows a raspberry. Done.

JULES

You seem to know a lot about lesbians, Mr. Riskin.

MORT

I get Showtime.

He exits.

SYBIL

Dad, come sit. I want to talk to you about things - going forward.

Murray goes to the couch and sits next to Sybil.

JULES

Should we go out to the patio?

SYBIL

No. This is a family conversation.
(to Murray)

Listen, I know Mom was your whole world - but you're still young, Dad. You shouldn't be alone. When the time comes and you find someone you want to share the rest of your life with - I just want you to know I'll support that decision a hundred and ten percent.

MURRAY

Well, that's very sweet, darling -
but I don't need to worry about
that.

SYBIL

Maybe not now, but at some point in
the future -

MURRAY

I'm not gonna meet anyone.

SYBIL

You don't know that.

MURRAY

I do.

SYBIL

How?

MURRAY

Because I've already met someone.

A beat as Sybil attempts to process this. Jules takes Jeff by
the arm and quickly steers him outside.

JULES

Yeah, we're going outside.

They exit.

SYBIL

(a little lost)

Maybe I'm not following, Dad. When
you say you've already *met* someone -

MURRAY

I mean I've met the person I want
to spend the rest of my life with.

SYBIL

I'm losing my mind.

(a beat)

Who is it?

MURRAY

That's my business, I think.

SYBIL

I'm your daughter. That makes it my
business, *I* think. Tell me!

Patricia enters, looking a little shaky.

PATRICIA

Murray, it's been a long day. I'm going to have a glass of wine. Do you want one?

MURRAY

Maybe a little later.

PATRICIA

Sybil?

SYBIL

Thanks, I'm good.

MURRAY

(with great warmth and caring)

Everything's gonna be okay, Pat. She had a great life - and the best sister in the whole wide world.

Patricia smiles faintly and exits. Sybil has witnessed the short exchange between her father and her aunt - and seen her father's warmth and caring toward Patricia. A look of shocked recognition washes across her face.

SYBIL

(quiet horror)

Oh, dear God, no.

(a hoarse whisper)

Aunt Pat?

MURRAY

You said you didn't want me to be alone.

SYBIL

Yes, I said that. I *didn't* say shack up with your wife's sister!

MURRAY

Well, when you say it like that, you make it sound wrong.

SYBIL

Because it *is* wrong! I mean - Dad - please - you haven't even mourned yet!

MURRAY

(building anger and pain)

I haven't mourned? If you honestly believe that, I've got news for you: I've mourned my heart out!

(MORE)

MURRAY (CONT'D)

I mourned when the Alzheimer's was diagnosed. I mourned every day it ate away at her. I mourned when the aneurysm took whatever was left. I've mourned day and night for almost a year.

(quietly)

Sweetheart - I'm all mourned out.

SYBIL

I'm sorry, Dad. It's just a shock. I can't believe Aunt Pat's comfortable with this.

MURRAY

(small)

She doesn't know.

SYBIL

What?

MURRAY

I haven't discussed it with her yet.

(a beat)

I have to say something soon. She's already talking about going back to Columbus. If she goes, she might never come back.

(quietly)

I think I love her. I know I need her. And I'm pretty sure she needs me.

Sybil softens - still processing, but touched by her father's vulnerability.

SYBIL

(careful, protective)

Dad, listen to me. You can *never* tell Aunt Pat what you're thinking. Not ever. You know how proper she is. The words wouldn't be halfway out of your mouth - she'd run out the door and you'd never see her again.

(a beat)

Promise me you won't tell her.

MURRAY

But you said I shouldn't be alone.

SYBIL

Don't worry. *I'll* be here.

She takes his face in her hands and kisses him - as the bare-bones recording of *Ain't Love Easy* begins to play again.

MURRAY

Me and Patricia - it just happened.
You live with a person day after
day - you talk, you laugh, you cry.
Your aunt and I, we both love
music, we both love politics -
(a beat)
We both adored your mother.

EXT. ZISKIN HOME - BACK PATIO - LATER THAT NIGHT

A quiet evening. Sprinklers do their thing on the golf course in the dark behind the house. Murray and Patricia sit together, both drinking wine, both lost in thought, as Barbara's singing floats out into the night.

MURRAY

Voice like an angel.
(a beat)
She lit up my world.

PATRICIA

Mine, too, Murray. Mine, too.

MURRAY

Do you remember - the whole family
went - the cruise to Alaska?
(a beat)
The dogsled ride?

A beat, then Patricia howls with laughter. Murray joins in.

PATRICIA

I can't think about that now!

MURRAY

I tried to warn her. "Use the
bathroom before we leave the ship,
Barbara. It's a dogsled ride. It's
a long event. You won't be able to
hold it."

PATRICIA

You have to give it to her, though.
She almost made it through the
entire ride.

MURRAY

She was holding it with every
particle of her being.

PATRICIA
She would've been fine -

MURRAY
If only they hadn't stopped to let
the dogs pee.

They're both laughing now.

PATRICIA
Just the sound of all those Huskies
peeing in unison -

MURRAY
The look on her face -

PATRICIA
The floodgates opened -

BOTH
Whooosh!

They laugh themselves silly - and finally fall silent. Murray
takes a sip of wine - and steels himself.

MURRAY
You don't have to hurry off to
Columbus, you know.

PATRICIA
I should go.

MURRAY
There's gonna be - adjustment time.
Adjusting together will be a lot
easier than adjusting alone. Don't
you think?

PATRICIA
(with certainty)
No. There's nothing here for me
now, Murray.
(a beat)
Is there?

Murray's mind spins: is she *really* asking if there's a reason
to stay? Is she being coy? Is she as interested in Murray as
he is in her? He wants to answer her question honestly - but
he remembers what Sybil said - and all he can come up with
is:

MURRAY
I hear the babka's good.

Patricia chuckles, then thinks for a moment.

PATRICIA

We'll see.

Murray nods and looks out into the night. A beat, then:

MURRAY

Whooosh!

And Patricia starts howling again, spitting out her wine in the process. And as the two old friends laugh, and *Ain't Love Easy* continues to play, we:

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

END OF PILOT