

CLIVE KENSINGTON'S AMERICA

"Pilot"

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

CLIVE KENSINGTON (Ike Barinholtz, great voice, humble narcissist) talks to camera on an empty set.

CLIVE

Hello, I'm Clive Kensington. Over the past decade I've cast my camera's unblinking eye into some of humanity's darkest open sores, defining what the definition of a docuseries could be defined as. Like in "Clive Kensington's Summer of Smut," when I investigated pornography's effect on society by watching nothing but online porn for ninety days straight.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

CHYRON: *Day 68*

Clive's dead eyes stare down at the gas pump he's holding in his tank. He pulls it out a bit, then back in. He repeats this, getting faster each time until he pulls the pump out and sprays gasoline all over his car. WARNER, (60s, Clive's seasoned producer and "father figure") runs in to save him.

CLIVE (V.O.)

And of course, my most recent series, "Clive Kensington's Drugcember," a thirty-one day special on the dangers of drug addiction...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Clive exhales a plume of smoke before he tips over and SMASHES through a glass coffee table covered in various drugs and paraphernalia. Once again, Warner dashes into frame to rescue his star.

CLIVE (V.O.)

...which eventually led to me accepting the Emmy for Outstanding Documentary or Nonfiction Series...

INT. NOKIA THEATRE - NIGHT

Footage from the Creative Arts Emmys. Clive is wild-eyed and clearly on something as he accepts the award at the podium.

CLIVE (V.O.)
...even though I wasn't nominated.

Clive raises the award and lets out a PRIMAL SCREAM. Security arrives and a scuffle sends Clive to the floor. As he stands, blood spurts from the award's sharp gold wings impaled into his shoulder. Warner is there again to help him off.

CLIVE (V.O.)
That hurt, but not nearly as much
as it did discovering how my peers
in the press perceived me.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Clive is in a hospital bed as Warner reads from a newspaper.

WARNER
"...and while the trivial work of
the coiffed crusader has led many
to call him a schlockumentarian, I
must object. Clive Kensington is a
documenterrorist, whose work is
like a car bomb in the parking lot
of the audience's intelligence. I
bet he's holed up in a cave right
now, plotting his return and
filming it because he believes it
might make for good television."

CLIVE
Ridiculous.

Clive makes a subtle "cut" gesture to camera.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - BACK TO SCENE

CLIVE
Some said I'd never work again.
Others, like my lawyers, filed a
countersuit to dispute that and won
in appeals. This court-mandated
show is my last chance to prove I
belong among the great
documentarians, like Michael Moore
and all the other ones. To do that,
I'll need to tackle the biggest
subject of my career:
(to other camera, grave)
America. Ever heard of it?

Clive walks past hanging black and white images of Vladimir Putin, Kim Jong-un and Chris Hemsworth.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Seems silly now, but in fifty years will it? Russia interferes in our elections, North Korea lies to our face, and Australians keep taking our superhero roles. So, is America cancelled? Or are we prepping for the fourth quarter comeback we practically invented? I'll answer that by spending each season with a different slice of America's pie. First up, the American family... or what's left of it.

Using the data below, we see CGI graphs, 3D charts and interactive maps that put CNN's overdone graphics to shame.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Today, one in seven Americans say they'll never marry. We're ranked third in the world for divorce. And this country's birth rate has plunged so low, we bankrupted Toys "R" Us. Which leads me to ask:
(to other camera, grave)
Family, are they worth it?

Sepia images of rural American families working hard in the 1800s dissolve into photos of families today on their phones.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

There was a time when family was needed to survive the harsh life on the farm, but not anymore. We have Postmates to bring us soup when we're sick, Uber to drive us to the airport, and if you need love, you're 10 to 30 right swipes away. If families were so important, wouldn't they have an app by now?

INT. CAB - DAY

Clive rides in the back of a cab.

CLIVE

To prove my point, I'll spend the next year embedded with a typical American family as their newest member. And per my trademarked Kensingtonian style, I'll show you everything. Their faults. My faults. Your faults. There are no second tak--

CAB DRIVER
You talking to me?

CLIVE
(to camera, exactly)
There are no second takes.

EXT. SOMEWHERE - DAY

A drone shot starts CLOSE ON Clive, making it hard to determine where he is.

CLIVE
So this season, come along on a
journey with me, Clive Kensington,
as I examine the American family
on... *Clive Kensington's America!*

As the drone pulls up and away, we REVEAL Clive is sitting in the lap of the Lincoln Memorial.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)
Hey!

CLIVE (CONT'D)
Coming down now.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Clive sits at a table covered in submission packets.

CLIVE

The family I chose to embed myself in would be the biggest decision I made since I started parting my hair to the left. But none of these submissions seemed right. They were either too fake or the kids were too ugly or the city they lived in didn't have a Sephora. But then, I found them.

PHOTO MONTAGE - THE HALL FAMILY

Various photos of the Hall family dissolve in and out.

CLIVE (V.O.)

A divorced, single mom working two jobs while raising two bi-racial kids who said bye-bye to dad after he was transferred to Texas. This family was anything but perfect. But to me, they were everything but not perfect. These are the Halls.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Clive stands before an older house that's seen better days.

CLIVE

And this is their broken home. It's our first meeting and I realize I have no idea how much this must be tearing them apart. No one in my family has ever been divorced. In fact, my parents were so committed that after dad died, mom passed an hour later of a broken heart.

(a moment, then)

Car accident. He wasn't wearing a seatbelt and a tree branch went right through her chest. For once I was glad they never took me on their Christmas vacations.

EXT. HALL HOUSE - DOORSTEP - DAY

The CREW preps for the first shot. Clive pulls Warner aside.

CLIVE

And we're sure I shouldn't be in an adult-sized bassinet?

WARNER

Very.

(addressing crew)

Okay, people, couple things. One: ABR, always be rolling. If you don't film it, it didn't happen. Two: be alert, but also respectful.

CLIVE

First camera crew to catch a door slam gets twenty bucks.

As Warner shoots Clive a look, we FREEZE FRAME.

CLIVE (V.O.)

This is Warner, my producer and the guiding force on every one of my projects. He is also a gay man. Which is not important to me at all. Although, very important to him, as it should be.

Warner goes over assignments with their main cameraperson, TERRY (20s, tall ambitious dummy).

WARNER

And Terry, you know your marching orders?

TERRY

I'm always on Clive, unless the kids are crying, fighting or cutting themselves.

CLIVE

Or the mom's drunk! Jesus, Warner, why the hell did we hire this guy?

TERRY

(genuinely offering)

They told me it's because I'm tall and you have less neck fat when shot from above.

Clive shoots Terry a look... and then slightly lowers his chin to hide his neck fat.

WARNER

Are we expecting the whole family?

CLIVE

Joyce confirmed they'd all be here
for the first day of shooting...
which she thinks is next week.

WARNER

(rubs his temples)
What happened to doing things
different on this one, kiddo?

CLIVE

We are. We will. But the first
episode is so important. If we
catch them off guard, then we can
see how screwed up they really are.
I might even be able to get tears.

There is a SCREAM from inside the house. Clive smiles.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Let's go get us some Emmys, people!

WARNER

Clive, you can't just--

Too late. Clive enters the front door and into...

INT. HALL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Clive moves cautiously through the house.

CLIVE

(like a cop)
Clive Kensington, documentarian. Is
everything okay?

Another SCREAM. It's coming from the back.

JOYCE (O.S.)

Stop! You're hurting me!

Clive dashes for the bedroom door and bursts in to find...

MIA (14, but seems younger) walking on the naked back of
JOYCE (40s, Maya Rudolph-type, big mom energy). They begin
SCREAMING. Joyce covers up as Mia SLAMS the door in his face.

TERRY (O.S.)

Do I get the--

CLIVE

You're not getting the twenty
bucks.

TALKING HEAD -- JOYCE AND MIA

Mia and Joyce sit on the couch and talk to camera.

MIA

(game show intro)

Hi, I'm Mia Hall. I'm fourteen and I love dancing and Miles Teller.

JOYCE

(not sure where to look)

Hi, I'm Joyce. I'm the mom-- a mom. Not the mom. So dumb. And I love my family and... that's it.

(then)

That was bad, right?

Clive steps into frame and sits next to them.

CLIVE

It was. For these interviews, just imagine you're talking to a friend.

MIA

What kind of friend? Because there's like so many kinds. There's the friends you can tell everything to and then there's the friends you only tell stuff to so that they tell you stuff or the friends--

CLIVE

(snaps)

Like it's your best friend!

MIA

Lana moved last month, so I'm sorta between best friends right now.

Clive bites his tongue. Just then, the shot gets blocked by the lower half of RAY (70s, dying, can't wait) as he walks into frame in his dirty undershirt and boxers.

RAY (O.S.)

What's going on in here?

FREEZE FRAME.

CLIVE (V.O.)

This is the crotch of Ray, Joyce's ex-husband's ailing father who she offered to take in after Reggie was forced to transfer to Texas.

Ray turns around, covering the screen with his backside.

CLIVE (V.O.)

And this is his butt.

INT. HALL HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

Clive gawks at the number of family photos lining the walls. But they're nothing compared to the giant, gaudy wall stencil at the end that reads, "Family is Everything."

JOYCE

I'm so excited to be a part of this show. I also think family is so important. To me, family is...

JOYCE (CONT'D)
...everything.

CLIVE
...everything.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I see that. That must've been hard to believe when Reggie was telling you it was over?

JOYCE

(dodging the question)
And here's where you'll be staying.

Joyce opens the door and we see that the room is covered in posters, magazine cutouts and fan art of Miles Teller.

MIA

This was my room. Can you tell...er?!

Mia's very happy with her joke. Clive's already over her.

JOYCE

Mia will bunk with Devin while you're with us. Sorry he's not here, but he's at marching band practice. Devin's one of the top drummers in the state. He's already got scholarship offers. "Proud mom" alert. Anyway, he'll be home for family biminer.

(off his look)

That's what Devin called "family dinner" when he was a baby.

CLIVE

Oh, you don't have to do that just because I'm here.

JOYCE

We do it every night.

CLIVE

You eat together every night?

JOYCE

Of course. We're family.

Joyce and Mia laugh. Clive tries to join in, but he's clearly a little bugged out. This is not what he was expecting.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Ala Borat, Clive interviews REAL PEOPLE on the street about how dumb family dinners are.

TALKING HEAD - CLIVE

CLIVE

Certainly everyone was on their best behavior today. But tonight, I will find the drama bubbling underneath if it's the last thing I do. Which it might be if I don't.

INT. HALL HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

As Clive and Mia set the table, he fishes for problems.

CLIVE

This must be so hard for you, huh?

MIA

Setting the table or not dancing every time there's a camera on me?

CLIVE

What? No. I meant with your dad gone. Must be hard not seeing him.

MIA

I see Dad twice a day on Skype and we have a group chat with Devin. I named it "The Halls of Justice."

As Mia delights in her own wordplay, Clive steams. The DOORBELL rings. Clive takes the opportunity to exit. Mia takes that opportunity to dance and does "The Shiggy" for camera.

INT. HALL HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Clive opens the door, for KASSANDRA, who looks... well, we have no idea how she looks because her face is **PIXELATED** and will remain so throughout. However, the frumpy cardigan she's constantly pulling cat hair off of says plenty. FREEZE FRAME.

CLIVE (V.O.)

This is Cassandra, Joyce's sister and an English teacher at the kids' high school. She's refused to sign the release form, so we can't show her face.

KASSANDRA

Reality show started already?

CLIVE

It's a docu--

Kassandra breezes past Clive to find her sister.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

--series.

(to camera)

I hate people who say that. But I didn't come here to make friends.

INT. HALL HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

They're all seated, including Ray, still in his undershirt.

JOYCE

Ray, you wanna put on a real shirt?

RAY

No thank you.

JOYCE

So, anything fun happen today?

CLIVE

Or sad?

MIA

Pass the beans, Uncle Clive.

KASSANDRA

Don't call him that. He's not your uncle, he's a stranger with a camera. Plus, it sounds... creepy.

MIA

I don't hear it. Besides, he's supposed to be part of our family and he's too old to be "Cousin Clive."

Clive leans over to DEVIN (17, Jayden Smith, fresh eyebrow ring, new to being "over it"), who is tapping out a beat on his leg with his fork and knife.

CLIVE

I'm not that old. Sick eyebrow ring, B-T-dubs.

Devin gives a polite nod. FREEZE FRAME.

CLIVE (V.O.)

This is Devin. I assume. He hasn't said a word to me yet.

Devin goes back to drumming.

CLIVE

You know, I once had a nose ring. Got it when I was in prison for a long weekend. *Clive Kensington's Doing Hard Labor for Labor Day.*

KASSANDRA

Why are you in all your shows?

CLIVE

Well, you can't spell documentarian without an M and an E. Or an I. Which is why I and me are always in them.

JOYCE

I'm embarrassed to say this, but I haven't seen any of your shows.

CLIVE

You wouldn't be the first person who's said that to me. I blame the marketing people. They never really got me. I think the whole department had a ketamine problem or something.

MIA

Can I stream them somewhere?

CLIVE

Unfortunately rights issues get pretty murky online. The internet is a terrible platform for content.

KASSANDRA

Really? Because everything else is on there.

CLIVE

Well, not everything.

RAY

I saw a video on the internet of a kitty cat meowing "well hi" in a southern accent.

Joyce exits to refill the water pitcher. Clive follows.

INT. HALL HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

CLIVE

Delicious meal. You really have a lovely family.

JOYCE

That's sweet. Thank you.

CLIVE

Everyone just seems so happy. Especially when you consider how hard it's been since Reggie left. How hard was it exactly when he took off his ring?

JOYCE

Ah, ah. I don't want to talk about the past. I'm happy to talk about the now, but make it quick, because right now I wanna finish up and go to bed. Worked two jobs today.

Clive is not giving up and continues to follow her.

CLIVE

Okay, then let's talk about that. Two jobs. That can't be easy. All those extra hours working that could be spent with your babies.

Joyce stops as this hits her. Clive sees a crack and digs in.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Although, they're not babies anymore, are they? They're turning into young adults right before your very eyes, at least for the brief amount of time that your very eyes even get to see them each day.

Joyce nods quickly, unable to speak. Clive smells tears and hugs her. Over her shoulder, he mouths to Terry...

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(mouthing)

Zoom. In.

JOYCE

That's been the hardest part of all of this, which is why... why...

CLIVE

Why what? Why you can't sleep at night? Why you cry in your car? Why even splitting up a KitKat can trigger you?

JOYCE

No. It's why I am so thankful! The stipend you're paying to film us means I get to quit my second job and spend more time loving my family. I couldn't be happier.

She hugs Clive hard. Fuck. As Terry finally ZOOMS IN, it's on Clive's annoyed face and he waves the camera away.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Clive bursts into the garage, which is in the midst of being converted into the production office. Seeing Clive, Warner quickly stuffs the file he's looking at into a drawer.

WARNER

How was dinner?

CLIVE

We're done here. Call that ugly family. We'll fix the kids in post.

WARNER

Oh boy. What's wrong?

CLIVE

Nothing! That's the problem. The mom won't talk about the past, the son won't talk at all, the girl won't stop talking and the only drama I'm getting is from the blurred out mafia informant.

WARNER

First of all, you really need to learn their names. Second, we can't leave. We're over budget as is.

CLIVE

Well, we gotta do something. Let's get Dad transferred back to town, move him in next door--

WARNER

No! You are here to document their lives. That's it. Anything more and... well, you know what happens.

LOCAL NEWS FOOTAGE - FLASHBACK

ANCHORWOMAN

And finally tonight, a documentarian is under fire after allegations that it was all faked.

INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

CHYRON: *Clive Kensington's What Goes Down Must Come Up (2014)*

CLOSE ON a bathroom stall. Inside, someone is VOMITING.

CLIVE (O.S.)

Oh god, I hate my body image.

ANCHORWOMAN (V.O.)

Clive Kensington was supposed to be examining eating disorders by becoming a bulimic before his high school reunion. But this leaked footage has called the entire production and it's incredibly offensive premise into question.

More VOMIT noises. The camera lowers so we can now see into the stall, where Clive is pouring chunky soup into the bowl.

CLIVE

I need to fit into that suit--
(sees camera)
What are you doing? Get out of--

Clive kicks at the camera and as it goes BLACK.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - BACK TO SCENE

CLIVE

I love how bulimia is bad, but being too scared to make yourself throw up is somehow worse.

WARNER

When you told me the idea for this show, I got so excited because I always knew you had it in you. You don't need the gimmicks. You don't need to force anything. That family has everything you need.

CLIVE
But they won't let me in.

WARNER
That's the work. When you run into
a wall, you gotta dig deep.

CLIVE
(beat, vulnerable)
I can do this, right?

WARNER
Of course you can. You're Clive
Kensington.

CLIVE
(not so sure)
I'm Clive Kensington.

WARNER
(correcting)
You're Clive Kensington.

CLIVE
(nailed it)
I'm Clive Kensington.

WARNER
You're damn right you are. Now get
outta here. You've got work to do.

Clive gives Warner a big hug and heads out, excited.

TERRY (O.S.)
Are you ever gonna tell him?

WARNER
Shut the fuck up, Terry.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

TALKING HEAD - CLIVE

Clive stands outside a medical building.

CLIVE

To get the family to let me in, I needed to know why they were keeping me out. So I came here to see Dr. Elise Goodwin, the city's top family therapist who had availability today.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Clive sits across from DR. ELISE GOODWIN, (30s, should feel like a real therapist).

DR. GOODWIN

Families going through divorce often do develop trust issues, but that's just one of the many possible reasons they might be keeping you out.

CLIVE

Many? Wow. I knew something was off the moment I heard they eat dinner together every night. I mean, that's just not normal.

DR. GOODWIN

And what is normal? What were your family dinner's like?

CLIVE

Like everybody else's -- you either ate in your room or in front of the tv or with the doorman.

DR. GOODWIN

I see. Tell me about your parents.

CLIVE

They're dead.

DR. GOODWIN

Oh. I'm so sorry.

CLIVE

It's fine. Batman didn't seem to have a problem with it. *Batman*.

Dr. Goodwin turns the page in her notes and begins writing.

TALKING HEAD - CLIVE

Outside the Medical Building.

CLIVE

To get the Halls to let me in, Dr. Goodwin says I need to earn their trust. She's also strongly recommended I come in for sessions twice a week and keep a dream journal. Seems this family is an even bigger mess than I thought.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

At a high school assembly, Clive talks to the students about filming on campus. Devin and Mia are seated on the stage.

CLIVE

...and so make sure you get your parents to initial that form. Now, before we go, I want to remind you this is a very delicate subject we're dealing with here. Devin and Mia have had their idyllic lives ripped out from underneath them. So, all I'm asking is that when you see us filming in the halls and Mia's crying her eyes out or Devin's punching a locker, don't stand back there going...

(mimes jerking off)

"Unggghhhhh!" Or this.

(mimes humping the air)

"Take that."

Shocked laughter from the students in the audience. The camera also catches Cassandra shaking her PIXELATED head.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Looks funny, but it's not. It's hurtful. And it's hard to edit around. Which is why before we go, I'm going to let you all get it out of your systems. That's right, go ahead. Make any face, any gesture, any position you can think of. Go on. Get it out.

In the bleachers, students take to the invite quickly and begin having a giant air orgy. Clive thinks this is working, until he turns to see Devin sneaking out in embarrassment.

Clive chases after him. Mia remains on stage and tries to join in, but is too innocent to be good at this. She notices AMBER JAMES (18, future contestant on *The Bachelor*) smiling in her direction. Mia sneaks a look behind her. Nope, nobody back there -- Amber James is definitely looking at Mia. Wow.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Clive looks for Devin, but he's gone. Just then, pixelated Cassandra approaches.

KASSANDRA
You are unbelievable.

CLIVE
So is the amount of cat hair on that sweater. Did you get my email?

KASSANDRA
Yeah, I got your email. And your texts. And your Edible Arrangement. I'm never signing that release, so you can stop wasting your time.

CLIVE
Did you read the card?

KASSANDRA
Yeah, why did you sign it "The Erotic Masseur of Documentary Filmmaking?"

CLIVE
(to camera)
Because I always get my hands on the release.

Clive turns and walks away "victorious" as Cassandra gives him the finger, which is also pixelated.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Mia takes notes as Amber slides into the desk next to her.

AMBER
Hey. Mia, right?

MIA
It is, Amber James. Uh, why are you in here? You're a junior.

AMBER
It's fine. I know Diane. Hey!
(waves at teacher)
(MORE)

AMBER (CONT'D)

Listen, I just wanted you to know,
my parents are also divorced.

MIA

Oh.

AMBER

Thank you. That means alot. So, if
you ever want to talk, how's today
after school?

Off Mia's stunned face, we...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MUSIC ROOM - LATER

Clive sits at the piano in the empty music room and taps out
a slow, creepy tune until we realize it is the "Entertainment
Tonight" theme. MIKEY, a member of the marching band, enters.

CLIVE

Hey, where's marching band
practice? I need to talk to Devin.

MIKEY

No practice today because of the
game tonight. And you wouldn't find
him anyway. He quit months ago.

CLIVE

(small smile to camera)
He did now, did he?

MIKEY

(weirded out)
Uh, yeah, that's what I said.

Clive considers this as he finishes up the theme song in a
creepy, minor chord version. Meanwhile, behind him, two PUNK
KIDS in the doorway begin making various obscene gestures.

TALKING HEAD - JOYCE

JOYCE

With no night job, now I can pick
up Mia from school. Very excited to
get back in my little girl's life.
(weird voice)
Ice cweam pwarty!
(quickly back)
That was weird. This camera talking
thing is harder than it looks.

INT. JOYCE'S CAR - DAY

Joyce is driving, Mia's in back and Amber rides shotgun. Most people would assume Amber was Joyce's friend.

MIA

Thank you so much, Mom.

AMBER

Yeah, thanks, Mom.

JOYCE

(sort of really asking)
How could I say no?

Amber holds her phone way out for a selfie, finds her look and we FREEZE as it becomes...

AMBER'S INSTAGRAM @AMBERSTAYSBUSY

There are 842 likes for the post: #strongpowerfulwomen. Amber smolders, Mia beams and Joyce has a hint of fear in her eyes.

INT. PETE'S HOUSE - DAY

PETE'S WIFE holds a newborn as she leads Clive to the back.

PETE'S WIFE

What channel is this gonna be on?

CLIVE

FOX.

PETE'S WIFE

Ah.

CLIVE

Not a fan?

PETE'S WIFE

Well, here we are.

She opens the door for Clive and we see...

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

...the rehearsal space for the Spaghetti Horses, the punk band Devin recently joined. PETE (30, guitarist, last chance to make it) sees Clive and stops. One by one the others join him, except for Devin, who continues to happily wail on his drums. Finally, he sees Clive and we hear his first words:

DEVIN

F***.

Well, almost.

EXT. PETE'S HOUSE - LATER

As Devin paces, Clive tries to find a cool way to lean on a tree in the yard and keeps failing.

DEVIN

My mom hates being lied to. She's gonna kill me.

CLIVE

No she's not and even if she tried, I wouldn't let her. They've already done three docs on that. The whole "mom murders child" thing is so played out.

DEVIN

Our first gig is this weekend. Pete's wife already got a sitter. If I'm grounded, she'll kill me.

CLIVE

Well, she actually might. Look, I can help, but you need to let me in. Why can't you just be honest with your mom?

DEVIN

I mean... I just...

Devin motions to the cameras.

CLIVE

Wait, is that why you're so quiet around me? The camera?
(considers, then)
This only works if we know we can trust each other. Telling me is your part, and this part is mine. Terry, turn off the camera.

TERRY (O.S.)

Really?

CLIVE

Terry, turn it o--

CUT TO:

BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - LATER

Clive, Warner and Terry stand over the edit bay looking at a black screen.

CLIVE
--the hell would you turn off the camera?!

TERRY
Because you told me to turn off the camera!

CLIVE
ABR! Always be recording!
(then, realizing)
So it's all gone? I have nothing?
Nothing for my first episode? I!
Have! Nothing! Dramatic!

TERRY
(beat, then small)
This seems kinda dramatic.

Clive picks up the camera and is about to throw it at Terry when we FREEZE FRAME.

CLIVE (V.O.)
This looks bad. But I can explain.

INT. HALL HOUSE - FLASHBACK

CHYRON: 12 MINUTES EARLIER

Clive and Terry skip into the room feeling good.

CLIVE
...I mean, you saw that right? Dev and I were like total bros.

TERRY
The way he opened up to you? I thought you two knew each other.

CLIVE
I see so much of myself in him.
Back in my Deerfield Academy days I was also a bit of a rebel. And I played the harp.
(then, smiles)
And hey, I don't want you getting a big head, but we did good today.

Clive gives him a fist bump. Terry swells with pride.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

And you got a good frame on us when he was telling me everything?

TERRY

(blinks)

Sorry?

CLIVE

With the camera in your lap, it seemed a little low. But you got both of us in there, right?

Uh oh. Terry realizes he fucked up. This is bad and there's nothing he can do, so of course he says...

TERRY

Yep. Got both of you in there. Looks great. No neck fat.

Just then, Joyce enters holding a bottle of champagne.

JOYCE

I did it. I quit! You shoulda been there. I walked right in and said "I can't work here anymore," and then she said "okay" and then they offered it to this guy that they had on file and he said yes and so I turned in my uniform and got most of my deposit back.

(thinking, then)

Maybe you didn't need to be there.

CLIVE

Sounds great. Give me a minute and we'll do a proper interview.

Clive heads out. Terry sticks around.

TERRY

Could I get a glass of that?

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Clive enters to find Warner at his desk. Terry follows.

CLIVE

We got our trailer moment! I did it just like you said and Devin opened up like a can of Pringles. And once I popped, he couldn't stop telling me everything. No tears, but a trailer moment for sure, right Ter?

TERRY
(sweating, but committed)
Trailer moment!

WARNER
Load it into the edit bay. I can't
wait to see it.

TERRY
(weirdly confident for a
guy who is fucked)
Then don't!

Terry plugs in the camera as Clive and Warner wait.

CLIVE
The kid quit marching band, but he
kept it secret so he wouldn't be
another person disappointing her.

WARNER
He said that?

CLIVE
That and so much more. Hey, Terry,
what's up? We don't have all year.

TERRY
Yeah, well, uh, see the thing is...
uh, neither does Warner.

Clive's confused. Warner's concerned. Terry's shiny.

CLIVE
What are you talking about? And do
you use astringent because you
should?

TERRY
(blurts)
Warner's retiring.

Clive laughs until he sees... Warner glaring at Terry.

WARNER
Et tu, Doofus?

CLIVE
Wait -- this is true?

WARNER
This is not... how I wanted this to
come out. But now it's out. I'm
done, kiddo.

CLIVE

You're retiring? You're leaving me?
Just leaving me with no notice?

WARNER

I am going to finish out the
season. So we still got six months
together.

CLIVE

Thanks. Even a baby gives you nine
months notice before it ruins your
life and it doesn't even have a
brain. And you told Terry before
you told me?

WARNER

He overheard a private conversation
I was having with Ivan.

CLIVE

You told Ivan before you told me?!

WARNER

He's my husband. And I want to
spend more time with him.

CLIVE

Mhmm. Okay. But just so you know,
once you leave you can't come back.
So why don't you take some time to--

WARNER

My mind is made.

CLIVE

Mhmm. Okay. But don't blame me when
you feel like a real dum-dum after
you see how good this footage is.
Terry, the tape.

TERRY

Seems like his mind is pretty made
up.

CLIVE

Play the goddamned tape, Terry!
(trying to read Terry)
What's wrong with the tape? Am I
double chinning? Terry?
(then, realizing)
Terry, tell me you didn't turn off
the camera when I told you to turn
off the camera?

(MORE)

CLIVE (CONT'D)

(off Terry's whimper)

Why the hell would you turn off the camera?!

TERRY

Because you told me to turn off the camera!

CLIVE

ABR! Always be recording!

(then, realizing)

So it's all gone? I have nothing?

Nothing for my first episode? I!

Have! Nothing! Dramatic!

TERRY

(beat, then small)

This seems kinda dramatic.

Clive picks up the camera and is about to throw it, when...

JOYCE (O.S.)

Hello?

They turn to see Joyce holding a tray of champagne glasses.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I was bringing this for Terry and then thought we should all have some. Am I interrupting?

She is, but Clive snaps to as he gets an idea.

CLIVE

Not at all. Let's celebrate!

Everyone takes a glass. Clive trades the camera he's holding for Terry's glass, downs both and then gives Terry the nod to start filming. Clive is back to work, a man on a mission.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

So Joyce, you just quit your job. What are you doing tonight?

JOYCE

I have no idea. Last time I had a Friday night off my cell phone was the size of... well, actually it was similarly sized. Maybe even smaller. What happened to phones?

CLIVE

Hey, I just had an idea right now in this moment.

(MORE)

CLIVE (CONT'D)

What if you and I go to the
football game and watch Devin in
the marching band?

JOYCE

That's such a great idea!

CLIVE

I know! That's why I thought of it!

JOYCE

I'll text him right now.

CLIVE

No, no. Let's surprise him. More
dramatic that way.

JOYCE

He's gonna freak out!

CLIVE

Somebody's gonna!

Joyce exits. Clive preps to go as Warner approaches.

WARNER

You don't have to do this.

CLIVE

Actually, I do. Need something for
that trailer. Who knows, might even
get some tears.

(then)

And your retirement can start
tomorrow. Your way wasn't working
anyway. I'll stick with mine.

Clive turns to go and trips over a half-built chair. Clive
looks up to see Terry looming above his embarrassment.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Oh, now you're filming?!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. JOYCE'S CAR - LATER

Using lipstick cameras, it's just Joyce and Clive in the car. It's quiet. ANGLE ON Joyce driving in her "JHS BAND MOM" sweater. We hear faint GRUMBLES offscreen. Finally...

JOYCE

You know, having two teens has made me really good at reading moods. And texts on their home screens. Wanna talk about it?

ANGLE ON Clive sulking in the backseat.

CLIVE

I'm a grown man, not a teen, so no thanks.

(looks out window, mumbles)

This town sucks.

(then, a crack)

Warner is leaving the show. But I'm fine, so let's move on.

JOYCE

I'm sorry. You know, sometimes it's good to talk stuff like that out.

CLIVE

Says the woman who refuses to talk about her past.

Joyce takes that in. The truth stings a little. Then...

JOYCE

You know what the worst part was when Reggie told me it was over?

CLIVE

I don't know, because like I said, you never talk about--

JOYCE

I'm trying to tell you about my past!

CLIVE

Oh, right. Sorry. Go ahead.

JOYCE

The worst part was... I looked really good that day.

(MORE)

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You ever get out of bed and it's just clicking? You slept your hair into a perfect tussle and your skin has that like... like...

CLIVE

Pore-less, dewy-matte glow?

JOYCE

Yes, exactly. And so I came downstairs and there was Reggie. He'd dropped off the kids at school early and made us coffee. And as he started to explain why he couldn't do this anymore, all I could think about was why couldn't he have done this any other day? Because I knew that after I was done crying, nobody was going to tell me how pretty I was.

(then)

Felt good to say that. And here I thought all I'd get out of this show was money.

A long beat, then...

CLIVE

The only person who ever believed in me is leaving and I don't think I can do it alone.

JOYCE

No, no. You're not alone, Clive. We'll be there for you.

CLIVE

Why?

JOYCE

Because you've embedded yourself in our family and that's what this family does.

ON CLIVE as this hits and we hear in voice over...

CLIVE (V.O.)

Joyce had finally opened up to me about her past and at last I got my tears. But I never could have imagined... they would be my own.

Tears roll down Clive's face as he smiles. Joyce sees this in the rearview and starts to also well up, but shakes it off.

JOYCE

Okay, enough talk about sad stuff.
Let's go see Devin play. That
always puts a smile on my face.

Uh oh. Clive suddenly remembers what they're doing.

CLIVE

Um, you know what, I can't. I'm
really not feeling so well. We need
to go home. Like right now.

JOYCE

We're almost there. And you need
this. When you hear that band play,
you're gonna forget everything.
Trust me. They get into the shape
of a dove and play Fleetwood Mac.

ON CLIVE as he tries to find some way out of this.

CLIVE (V.O.)

There was nothing I could do. I was
about to cause Joyce's broken
family to get even more broken. But
then I remembered something a very
good friend of mine once said: when
you hit a wall, you gotta dig deep.

Clive closes his eyes, leans out of Joyce's view and digs
deep... with his fingers in his throat. He GAGS, once, twice,
but the third time's the charm as VOMIT SPRAYS all over.

JOYCE

Oh! Oh god! Okay! We're going home!

As Joyce turns the car around, Clive smiles to camera, a
small remnant of his heroic spittle hanging from his chin.

INT. HALL HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clive watches as Warner and Joyce work together in the
kitchen. Mia and Amber pack up her things to go.

CLIVE (V.O.)

Maybe the trite wall stencil was
right. Maybe family is everything.
There are the good parts...

WARNER

...and don't make the soup too hot.
It's bad for his voice.

Clive takes note of Warner's care for him, then...

CLIVE

When I'm done eating, we should go over tomorrow's schedule.

WARNER

Absolutely, kiddo.

CLIVE (V.O.)

...there are pleasant surprises...

Ray enters, finally wearing a t-shirt, but it's the novelty kind that looks like you have a woman's bikini body. Still not ideal, but baby steps.

CLIVE (V.O.)

...and the unexpected turns.

MIA

So my mom said it was cool for me to go to the party tomorrow night.

JOYCE

Not my exact words.

AMBER

Sweet. I'll pick you up at eight. And I'll be driving my mom's SUV, so there's extra room for...

(looks to camera)

...anyone who wants to come.

(as she glides out)

Bye, Mia. Bye, Mom. Bye, Uncle Clive.

Hearing the last one, Mia finally registers what Cassandra meant by creepy. Just then, Devin comes in.

JOYCE

How was the game, hun? We were gonna come, but Clive got sick.

Clive gives him a wink. Devin's safe, but for how long?

CLIVE (V.O.)

But family also has hard parts...

DEVIN

Mom, we need to talk.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Devin hangs his head after telling his mom everything. Joyce wraps him up in a hug.

CLIVE (V.O.)
...and sad parts...

JOYCE
You never have to lie to me, honey.

CLIVE (V.O.)
...and the hard sad parts.

JOYCE
But you did. I know I haven't been
around as much, but I'm back now.
You're grounded for two weeks.

DEVIN
What?!

INT. HALL HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Devin storms down the hall to his room.

CLIVE (V.O.)
And just when you think you're done
with them, they give you exactly
what you've been looking for.

Devin SLAMS his bedroom door. The camera turns to find Clive holding a twenty. Clive hands it to Terry, then gives the "Family is Everything" wall stencil a pat on his way out.

EXT. HALL HOUSE - DAY

CLIVE
So maybe family is everything, but
is it worth it? That's still to be
decided this season on "Clive
Kensington's America." Good night.
I'm Clive Kensington.

WARNER (O.S.)
And cut.

Cameras continue to roll as Warner comes into frame.

WARNER (CONT'D)
Dynamite first episode, kiddo.

CLIVE
When it wins an Emmy, it's gonna be
a lot harder for you to leave.

WARNER
Indeed it will.

As Warner walks off, the wheels begin to turn as Clive realizes there might be a way. Just then a WOMAN approaches with her back to us. She and Clive silently stare at each other for a moment. Then...

WOMAN

Do you have any children?

CLIVE

No. But I went undercover as one.

WOMAN

You hurt those kids or my sister
and I will end you.

She hands Clive a stack of release forms. As the camera comes around, we realize who this is as we FREEZE FRAME.

CLIVE (V.O.)

This is Cassandra. She has agreed
to participate in the series.

We finally can see Cassandra's face and if you thought a woman in frumpy cat hair-covered clothes couldn't be pretty, you'd be wrong. And now that we can see them together, it's clear there is an attraction between these two opposites.

KASSANDRA

Joyce called me last night and for
the first time in forever she
opened up about Reggie. She said
that's because of you. So...

(throws up her hands)

...now I'm on a reality show!

Kassandra walks up to the house shaking her head.

CLIVE

(calling after)

It's actually-- doesn't matter.

Clive holds the release form up to camera.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

The erotic masseuse of documentary
filmmaking strokes again.

As Clive smiles, ready for the long journey ahead, the two Punk Kids from earlier pop up out of a bush and begin miming horribly offensive sex acts on each other. Clive spots this and as he chases after them we FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE