

TWO ZADDIES

"Pilot"

written by

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FADE IN:

COLD OPEN

INT. POPPA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

DAMON "POPPA" FULTON, 50S, IS A MAN AT EASE IN HIS WELL-APPOINTED KITCHEN. DAMON "JUNIOR" FULTON, 30S, ENTERS.

POPPA

Hey, D-June, what do you need?

JUNIOR

Why do you think I need something?

POPPA

You're in my house.

JUNIOR

Can't I just come over to say hi?

(OFF HIS LOOK) I need some milk.

POPPA

Which one of my grandkids likes having cereal in the morning?

JUNIOR

Both.

POPPA

Right. So this moment didn't exactly sneak up on you.

JUNIOR

You know my ADHD mind is always going in a million directions at once.

POPPA

And none of those directions point to the store to get milk?

JUNIOR

Come on, Pops. You sound like Nina's  
dad riding me at work.

POPPA

The Foam Roller King. Makes the My  
Pillow guy seem like a delight.

JUNIOR

Can't your place just be a sanctuary?

POPPA

It is. My sanctuary. Hear that?

JUNIOR

I don't hear anything.

POPPA

Yeah, that's the sweet sound of living  
alone. Music to my ears.

JUNIOR

That's what it sounds like when I  
draw. Only thing that quiets my mind.

POPPA

My mind was quiet. Then you came in.

JUNIOR

How can you say you love to be alone  
when your job is to talk to people?

POPPA

I'd rather talk to a million people in  
their cars than one person in my kitchen.

JUNIOR

You might be even crankier than my  
father-in-law.

POPPA

You know, the whole reason he helped  
you buy the house next door was  
because he knows I love to be alone.

JUNIOR

You honestly think J.J. would loan us  
a down payment just to make you  
miserable?

POPPA

Of course. We've been pranking each  
other since eighth grade. We've  
always fought over everything, even  
your mother.

JUNIOR

So you won.

POPPA

No, he won. I married her.

JUNIOR

At least Mom never asked you to give  
up your dream.

POPPA

Nope. Just my happiness.

JUNIOR

I got more rejections yesterday.

POPPA

The comic strip or the graphic novel?

JUNIOR

Both.

POPPA

They say never let go of your dreams.  
But you're 36, bud. You're not a kid  
anymore. You've got kids.

JUNIOR

Stan Lee lived to 95.

POPPA

Yeah, but that's not when he made his  
debut. Is that how long you're going  
to give yourself to be published? 95?

JUNIOR

I bet I beat that by 20 years.

POPPA

Very funny. Listen, June, I worry  
that one day I'm going to be old and  
sick and I'm going to need someone to  
take care of me. And right now, you  
can barely take care of yourself. And  
that scares me.

JUNIOR

What are you afraid of? You got  
money, you can hire somebody.

POPPA

I don't want a stranger sponge-bathing  
me. I want you wiping my butt.

JUNIOR

Yes! Something to look forward to!  
(THEN) Mom says I've always marched  
to the beat of my own drum.

JUNIOR GRABS THE MILK.

POPPA

But you can't really march to the beat  
of your own drum if you're always  
borrowing someone else's drum.

JUNIOR

Always? Stop exaggerating. (THEN)  
You got any cereal?

AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE AINT. JUNIOR AND NINA'S - LIVING ROOM - DAY

JUNIOR, NINA, 30S, DAMON III (TREY), 10, AND MAYA, 9, ARE IN THEIR MORNING ROUTINE. JUNIOR AND TREY PLAY NERF HOOP.

NINA

Hey, hey, you need to be out front for the bus.

JUNIOR/TREY

It's point-game!

NINA SWATS JUNIOR'S SHOT FROM BEHIND.

JUNIOR

Foul! You got me on the arm.

NINA

Please. That was all ball. Maya, put down the iPad, you're on a three-day screen cleanse.

MAYA

Daddy sent me Game Pigeon. I gotta take my move.

NINA

(TAKING IPAD) Out, out, out. Trey, did you finish your math?

TREY

Dad said I could do it this weekend.

JUNIOR

(TO TREY) Today's vocab word is "narc."

NINA USHERS TREY AND MAYA OUT THE DOOR.

NINA

Honey, please don't set them on a course for junior college.

JUNIOR

Don't be elitist. Just because we met at a fancy school, what's wrong with junior college?

NINA

It's high school with ashtrays.  
(THEN) And don't we want our kids to be elite?

JUNIOR

Or... do we want them to be kids?

NINA

What we want is them to get scholarships. With our monthly nut, we're setting aside roughly 75 cents a year for their education.

JUNIOR

You know, basketball has paid for an awful lot of college.

JUNIOR FLIPS THE NERF OFF THE WALL AND REVERSE DUNKS IT.

NINA

When people ask if it's hard having a job and two children, I tell them, not as hard as having a job and three.

JUNIOR

Hey, we promised each other we'd never turn into our parents.

NINA

I was talking about the Montague-Capulet thing, not the growing up part.

JUNIOR

Should have clarified. (THEN) And isn't your whole job dedicated to anti-aging?

NINA

I don't market makeup to women so they don't grow up. My job is to make them feel bad about the way God made them.

JUNIOR

Doesn't seem fair that a makeup marketing rep is so naturally pretty.

SHE SHAKES HER HEAD BUT SMILES, KNOWING WHAT HE'S DOING BUT FAIRLY HELPLESS TO HIS CHARMS AS HE MOVES IN CLOSE.

NINA

(WARM) Also doesn't seem fair that I fell in love with Peter Parker and ended up with Peter Pan.

JUNIOR

Either way, got you in my web. (THEN) But if you want, I can turn into my dad.

(MORE)

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

(IMPRESSION) Kids today are so lazy!  
Jordan is better than LeBron! Drake  
couldn't carry Wu-Tang's jockstrap!

NINA

Yikes. Okay, not that. Speaking of  
cranky dads, mine's starting to feel  
taken advantage of. Can you try a  
little harder? And not be late again?

JUNIOR

What if the space-time continuum is  
not linear?

NINA

What if we just pretend it is?

JUNIOR

Okay. I'll be on time. Starting  
tomorrow. (OFF HER LOOK) I'm meeting  
a publisher this morning.

NINA

Publisher?

JUNIOR

Yeah, Howard from my basketball game.

NINA

You can't meet some random dude and  
just say it's Random House.

JUNIOR

Got a good feeling about this one.

JUNIOR OPENS THE DOOR AS POPPA ARRIVES WITH A GROCERY BAG.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

Hey, dad, gotta go.

POPPA

I like the hustle, June.

JUNIOR EXITS.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Wow, he's gonna be on time.

NINA

Yep. Just not for work.

POPPA

I brought you some milk because we both know he's gonna forget again.

NINA

This is all your fault.

POPPA

My fault? Poppa's got a brand new bag... of groceries for my grandkids.

NINA AD-LIBS "THANKS," SETS THE BAG ON THE TABLE.

NINA

You raised a grasshopper.

POPPA

Hey, that kid didn't want for anything. Private school, art supplies, basketball camp, snacks in the pantry. Good ones, too.

NINA

And any mention of how the real world works?

POPPA

I had enough "real world" growing up in the projects to last ten lifetimes. I didn't want my kids feeling any of that. Like Wu-Tang said, "I was raised out on these mean streets, you know where poverty and hell meet."

NINA

*Guess you lose some and win some, long as the outcome is income.*

POPPA

Exactly. Who said that?

NINA

Drake.

POPPA

Oh. Then it's stupid. (THEN) Look, I was busy being an ant at work. If he's a grasshopper, that's on his mom.

NINA

That's deflection. It's exactly what Dr. LaDondra Reed says in her new book, *The Goddess and the Jerk She Marries*. "Men love to take credit and hate to take responsibility."

POPPA

Hey, I didn't tell you to marry the  
guy. Why did you?

NINA

(REVERIE) He sat two rows behind me  
in American Lit. One day, when I was  
feeling pretty down, he put a drawing  
on my desk.

POPPA

Glad I was paying 50k a year for him  
to doodle and flirt.

NINA

It was a drawing of me, but it was so  
beautiful. He saw a beauty in me that  
I'd never seen in myself. When a guy  
makes you feel like that, you grab on  
with both hands and don't let go.

POPPA

My wife grabbed on with both hands.  
But they were around my neck.

NINA

(SWEETLY) Maybe she was just trying  
to get you to stop talking.

NINA SMILES AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE BINT. RADIO STATION - STUDIO - DAY

POPPA SITS IN HIS HIGH BACK CHAIR WITH HIS HEADPHONES ON.

POPPA

Okay, let's bring it on home with a  
few calls.

POPPA PRESSES A BUTTON ON HIS MIXING BOARD.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Poppa's house, holla at your boy!

LADONDRA (O.S.)

Why do you reduce every conversation  
you have with a woman to sex?

POPPA

It's not me. It's my dang-a-lang.

ANGLE ON - LADONDRA REED, 40S, SITS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE  
GLASS, IN STUDIO B, UNSEEN OVER POPPA'S SHOULDER.

LADONDRA

You see? You did it again. Are you  
so insecure in your masculinity that  
an intelligent woman is your  
Kryptonite?

POPPA

I like that you think I'm Superman,  
but honey--

LADONDRA

It's Doctor!

PRODUCER ALLEN WHITLEY, 30, SMILES AND GIVES HER A THUMBS UP.

POPPA

Doctor? Like doctor doctor? If someone is having a heart attack on a plane and they ask if there's a doctor on board, do you raise your hand?

LADONDRA

No, not that kind of doctor.

POPPA

Then not really a doctor, nah-mean?

LADONDRA

I may not know CPR, but I could definitely come on there and resuscitate your juvenile show.

POPPA

(LAUGHING) Now that's funny!

LADONDRA

I'm not laughing. I know men like you.

POPPA

Really?

LADONDRA

I'll bet you're sitting there in your dirty baseball cap covering up your bald spot.

POPPA RUBS THE BRIM OF HIS CAP SELF-CONSCIOUSLY.

LADONDRA (CONT'D)

... wearing sweatpants and an old wrinkled t-shirt...

POPPA EYES HIMSELF UP AND DOWN.

LADONDRA (CONT'D)

... and thinking your scruffy beard makes you look tough, when really it just makes you look old.

POPPA STROKES HIS BEARD.

POPPA

Ha! You could not be more wrong about me, sister from another mister! As much as I'd like to keep listening to you be wrong, that's all the time we have today. I'm Audi, New York!

POPPA HANGS UP AND MUSIC PLAYS THEM OUT AS ALLEN ENTERS.

ALLEN

There he is, Big Poppa Fulton!

POPPA

Allen. What's our system?

ALLEN

I need to knock.

POPPA

And then what do I say?

ALLEN

"Go away."

POPPA

And then what do you do?

ALLEN

I go away.

POPPA

(RISING) So why are you in my studio?

ALLEN

There are a couple of bits corporate would like you to dial back.

POPPA

Free speech is like arteries. You clog it up too much and the whole system collapses. When I was your age, young people wanted to push boundaries not set them.

ALLEN

I don't set boundaries, I just update you on their evolving dimensions, per the new station owners.

POPPA

You mean your uncle?

ALLEN

There's no nepotism going on here. Why does everyone think that?

POPPA

People see an unqualified person given  
a position of responsibility by a  
relative and just leap to conclusions.

RESET TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ALLEN STAYS RIGHT ON POPPA'S SHOULDER.

POPPA

Why are they messing with my number  
one show?

ALLEN

Number two show. We've taken a hit  
with our female demographic.

POPPA

I did not know that.

ALLEN

So corporate thinks it might be cool  
to have a female presence in studio.

POPPA

Terrible idea. A woman in the studio  
will change the entire culture.

ALLEN

What do you mean? It's just you.

POPPA

Yes. I'm the culture. And I don't  
want to change.

(MORE)

POPPA (CONT'D)

I like sitting in my studio, eating my  
tuna sandwiches and drinking coffee  
while I fart it up in there. That's  
my happy place.

POPPA AND ALLEN EXIT INTO HIS CORNER OFFICE.

RESET TO:

INT. POPPA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THEY ENTER AND FIND DR. LADONDRA REED WAITING INSIDE.

LADONDRA

Hello, Mr. Fulton.

POPPA

Who are you?

LADONDRA

Dr. LaDondra Reed. Nice baseball hat.

POPPA

Wait, the call was coming from inside  
the house?!

ALLEN

She's from the "Ask Doctor Reed" show,  
syndicated throughout the Midwest.  
She's on the Times' best seller list.  
We're so lucky to have her.

LADONDRA

Looking forward to working with you.

POPPA GIVES ALLEN A SLOW BURN LOOK.

ALLEN

I came to your office to tell you.

POPPA

And what did I say?

ALLEN

I knocked and you said, "Go away."

POPPA

And that's just what I'm gonna do.

POPPA SHAKES HIS HEAD AND EXITS, LEAVING ALLEN AND LADONDRA.

ALLEN

That actually went better than I  
thought it would.

AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE CINT. POPPA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

POPPA SHAKES HIS HEAD AS JUNIOR PACES.

POPPA

Hold on, your wife told you to try harder at work and you got fired? Do the D's in ADHD stand for dum-dum?

JUNIOR

It wasn't my fault. After the publisher turned me down, I needed some time to process the rejection, so I was a little later than usual.

POPPA

That all sounds like your fault.

JUNIOR

And J.J. said I wasn't sorry enough for being late.

POPPA

How sorry were you?

JUNIOR

Not at all.

POPPA

Yeah, that's probably not quite enough.

JUNIOR

Nina is not happy. I can always tell how mad she is by how bad her OCD gets. She starts cleaning. Right now she's tearing through the garage.

POPPA

If she's still mad after that, send her over to my garage. It's a mess.

JUNIOR

I was coming right off this stomach punch of a rejection and J.J says it's time for me to let go of my dreams.

POPPA

You know, where I grew up, stomach punches weren't metaphors. (THEN) As much as I can't stand the guy, maybe he's right.

JUNIOR

You never had to give up on your dreams.

POPPA

And I live alone with some high-end collectible athletic footwear.

JUNIOR EYES POPPA'S IMPRESSIVE SNEAKER COLLECTION, PROUDLY DISPLAYED ON GLASS SHELVING.

POPPA (CONT'D)

You know, divorce doesn't have to be the end of the world.

JUNIOR

I could come live with you.

POPPA

Okay, let's take divorce off the table.

JUNIOR

Right. Not on the table. I'd be lost without her.

POPPA

Kinda lost with her.

JUNIOR

I guess it's true. You can't have it all. And I gotta take something off the table. I've got my family that I love. My father-in-law that I hate. And my dreams that I haven't met yet.

POPPA

This is like that riddle with the fox, the chicken and the sack of grain. How do you paddle 'em all across the river?

JUNIOR

Well, how do you?

POPPA

How would I know? Your mom threw me out of the canoe mid-stream.

AND WE...

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOSCENE DINT. POPPA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

POPPA AND JUNIOR ARE AS THEY WERE.

POPPA

So this comes down to a choice. Keep being a grasshopper -- and live with a very angry wife in a very clean house -- or become an ant.

JUNIOR

I guess it's true what Henry David Thoreau said, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation."

POPPA

Now you're getting it!

JUNIOR

But even if I'm willing to become Ant-Man, how do I get my job back?

POPPA

Just invite J.J. over for dinner and lay out your newfound commitment. Tell him you're putting down your pencils and stepping up at work.

JUNIOR

I'd feel more confident in a house he didn't help pay for.

POPPA

Fine. We'll do it here in my sanctuary. But invite Nina to act as a human shield. He won't be that mean to you with his daughter there.

JUNIOR

I don't know if you remember his wedding toast, but he has no problem being mean to me in front of her.

POPPA

He was just rattled because he had to follow me. I brought the house down.

JUNIOR

You did like 45 minutes.

POPPA

Because I was feeling generous. Just remember, if I'm not talking, everyone in the room is being cheated.

JUNIOR SHAKES HIS HEAD AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE EINT. RADIO STATION - STUDIO - DAY

POPPA, WEARING A NICE SHIRT, NO HAT, ENTERS. LADONDRA IS SITTING IN HIS CHAIR. ALLEN LOOKS THROUGH THE WINDOW. THERE'S A CANDLE BURNING ON THE CONSOLE.

POPPA

What's with the candle?

LADONDRA

I lit it. Smelled like someone had sex with a boiled egg in here.

POPPA

If you must know, I eat a tuna sandwich and a hard boiled egg every day. And I like the sulfur scent. It makes the place feel worked in, ya dig? Why are you sitting in my chair?

LADONDRA

Just wanted to feel what it's like being Captain Kirk.

POPPA

Don't get too comfortable, Miss Uhura.

AS LADONDRA CROSSES, POPPA STARTS THE SHOW.

POPPA (CONT'D)

New York City! Poppa Bear is in the buildin' with best-selling author, Dr. LaDondra Reed. With a name like "LaDondra" you must have had some funny nicknames growing up.

LADONDRA

Oh yeah. La-donk-a-donk. La  
Dandruff. (RHYMES WITH CHINA) La-Gina.

POPPA

La-Gina? Who called you that?

LADONDRA

My brothers.

POPPA

Figured. So what do you like to be  
called?

LADONDRA

Dr. Reed. Wasn't sure you'd be back  
today.

POPPA

Why not? It's my show. Besides, the  
last woman I walked away from ended up  
with half my money.

LADONDRA

Oh, I know how that hurts. You might  
have read about my ex in "The Goddess  
and the Jerk She Marries." I still  
have PTSD.

POPPA

Not another acronym! My son has ADHD,  
his wife has OCD and now you with  
PTSD. I'm sick of all these BSD's!

LADONDRA

You think these disorders are BS?

POPPA

No, I'm just tired of this generation and their afflictions with no cures. Einstein and Shakespeare probably had ADHD. Hell, even Prince must have had it. That's why he couldn't go on stage without his ass hanging out the back of his pants. But he didn't let it keep him from greatness.

LADONDRA

You know, with some of your retrograde views, your ass is kinda hanging out too.

POPPA

Good thing I keep my money-maker tight.

LADONDRA

Just know, Poppa, when the comet comes, it wipes out all the dinosaurs.

POPPA

What are you, a paleontologist?

LADONDRA

No. I'm a comet.

OFF HER SMILE AND POPPA'S LOOK WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE HINT. POPPA'S HOUSE LIVING/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

POPPA, JUNIOR AND NINA SET THE TABLE.

NINA

Remember, the whole point of this dinner is helping my dad understand that Junior is ready to step up.

POPPA

Yeah. You know how I know? It was my idea.

NINA

Just don't make it about the two of you.

POPPA

Eyes on the prize. Although in this case, the prize is working for J.J. So kind of a booby prize.

JUNIOR

No. You know what, J.J. actually showed some faith in me. And I repaid that faith by focusing more on my drawing than work. That's not cool.

POPPA

Rehearsing?

JUNIOR

Yeah. How'd that sound?

NINA

Not bad. For the record, I believe in your talents. You just can't have them pulling you away from work.

JUNIOR

I just gotta figure out how to make working for your dad as fun as drawing.

POPPA

Just gotta make a root canal as fun as shooting 3-pointers. No problem.

POPPA CLOCKS JUNIOR'S RESIGNATION, LOOKS A LITTLE FORLORN HIMSELF AS THE DOORBELL RINGS.

NINA

Ready, hon?

JUNIOR

Born ready.

POPPA

You were born colicky. And aiming the wrong way. Guess you've been kinda direction-less from the jump.

POPPA OPENS THE DOOR TO REVEAL DAPPER J.J., 50S.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Welcome, J.J.

J.J.

Dey-Dey.

POPPA

If you think nicknames you gave me as a kid still bother me, you're wrong.

AS J.J. ENTERS, POPPA MIMES PUNCHING HIM FROM BEHIND, CLEARLY BOTHERED BY THE OLD NICKNAME.

JUNIOR

Let me take your coat.

J.J.

It's cashmere, please don't let it rub up against anything of your father's in the closet.

JUNIOR CROSSES WITH THE COAT.

NINA

Come sit.

THEY TAKE THEIR PLACES AT THE TABLE. IT'S TENSE.

J.J.

How's my baby girl?

NINA

I'll be better once my husband has his job back.

J.J.

You know I'll take care of you, Sweet Pea. I don't horde my wealth like some people.

POPPA

You don't "horde it," you "lord it." Over these kids.

J.J.

You're just bitter that you're only the second most successful person to make it out of our projects.

POPPA

I got millions of fans who would disagree.

J.J.

Which is a mere fraction of the number of people who are fans of my foam rollers.

JUNIOR

(PEACEMAKER) Hey, I'm a fan of both!

POPPA

(TO J.J.) You've never gotten over that day I took you down in the paint and abused you until the whole neighborhood was laughing.

NINA

And... we're back in the projects.

J.J.

(TO POPPA) I don't even know what you're talking about.

POPPA RISES AND DEMONSTRATES THE BASKETBALL MEMORY.

POPPA

I drop-stepped left, I drop-stepped right, up and under, fadeaway. You got clowned. Over and over.

J.J.

It's sad that you're clinging to a memory from the summer we turned 13.

POPPA

Ha! I knew you remembered!

J.J.

At least all my kids have a job. Your son couldn't even keep the one I generously gave him.

NINA NUDGES JUNIOR.

JUNIOR

Yeah, about that. I just wanted to say, if you gave me another chance, I wouldn't be taking any more meetings with publishers. Or drawing during your presentations when I'm pretending to take notes. Or using the color copier to make my submissions. (OFF J.J.'S LOOK) Or leaving the toner empty when I use all the color ink.

J.J.

And are you ready to dedicate yourself to spreading the gospel of foam?

POPPA

That must be "Roll'd Testament." Ha!

NINA

(TO JUNIOR) Baby?

JUNIOR

Hey, foam is where the heart is, right?

J.J.

Good man. If you're serious about being serious, I guess you deserve another shot.

NINA SQUEEZES JUNIOR'S HAND. POPPA CLOCKS IT ALL.

POPPA

Speaking of deserving another shot, how are your knees, J.J.? 'Cause you deserve another beat-down in the low post.

J.J.

My body has never felt better. You know why?

JUNIOR

(TRYING) Foam!

POPPA

Relax, June, you're already getting the root canal.

AND WE...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREESCENE JINT. POPPA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

POPPA AND NINA LOAD THE DISHWASHER.

NINA

Thank you for hosting. I know that was tough, but it's what we all want. Junior to grow up.

POPPA

He's not that grown up. Still just you and me loading the dishwasher.

NINA

He promised the kids he'd take them some dessert.

POPPA

You like your job?

NINA

Some days it's okay. You?

POPPA

I used to be shot out of a cannon to get to that microphone. But you do your dream job long enough and it just becomes a job. Think I started taking it for granted.

NINA

No matter your blessings, you get too used to them and it's easy to forget how blessed you are.

POPPA

You think I should color my beard?

NINA

Nah, you make it look good. And you may have raised a grasshopper, but I like knowing my baby zaddy isn't going to lose his good looks any time soon.

JUNIOR ENTERS. NINA EXITS TO GIVE THEM A MOMENT.

POPPA

Hey, June. All the dishes are loaded. You still got your impeccable timing.

JUNIOR SETS A DRAWING ON THE COUNTER.

POPPA (CONT'D)

(RE: DRAWING) What's that?

JUNIOR

This is my swan song. My farewell portrait before I put away my pencils. The epitaph on my dreams.

POPPA TAKES IN THE DRAWING.

POPPA

Damn. Who is this tough-looking, ripped, mo-fo? Bald Panther?

JUNIOR

That's my favorite super-hero of all  
time. That's you, Dad.

JUNIOR EXITS. POPPA EYES THE DRAWING, FLEXES TO MATCH THE  
IMAGE. THE WAY JUNIOR CHANGED HOW NINA FELT ABOUT HERSELF  
WITH A DRAWING 15 YEARS AGO IS NOW HAPPENING TO POPPA.  
JUNIOR'S STILL GOT IT. AS POPPA'S GEARS TURN, WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE KINT. RADIO STATION - POPPA'S OFFICE - DAY

POPPA TALKS TO ALLEN.

POPPA

Of all your uncle's media holdings,  
why did I get stuck with you?

ALLEN

He gave me my choice. And that was  
easy. I've been listening to you  
since I was a kid.

POPPA

So since last week?

ALLEN

Working with you is a dream come true.

POPPA

Must be nice to just have it handed to  
you.

ALLEN

Yeah, it's pretty awesome.

POPPA

What were some of your other choices?

ALLEN

His empire has shrunk a lot. From 32  
radio stations to five.

(MORE)

ALLEN (CONT'D)

From 50 dailies to one weekly  
newspaper on Long Island. Ten local  
TV affiliates to two.

POPPA

Yeah, old media is on life support.

ALLEN

Doesn't mean we can't go out fighting.

POPPA

Like the marines on Wake Island in  
World War II.

ALLEN

Did they win that battle?

POPPA

No, they all got killed. (THEN)  
Listen, if I'm gonna fight to keep  
this thing going, you're going to have  
to do something for me.

ALLEN

Go away?

POPPA

In addition to that.

AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE MINT. RADIO STATION - STUDIO - DAY

POPPA AND LADONDRA ARE ON THE AIR.

LADONDRA

Don't get me wrong. Masculinity is very attractive. When it's not masking insecurity.

POPPA

You want to give the listeners an example of non-toxic masculinity?

LADONDRA

Barack Obama.

POPPA

Oh boy. Hear that, fellas? The bar is only set at Barack Obama.

LADONDRA

I remember when President Obama quoted Corinthians. "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things."

POPPA

I'll bet he put those things away thirty seconds after he met Michelle.

LADONDRA

Nothing worse than grown-ass men playing video games, reading comics and bragging about their sneaker collections.

POPPA

Yeah. Wait, what?

LADONDRA

You know what I really loved about my forever president? His playlists. They were diverse, just like the man.

POPPA

I guess he was okay.

LADONDRA

Oh, I suppose you know music better than President Obama?

POPPA

Of course. I'm a DJ. And what kind of music do you listen to, Doctor? Classical? Opera? Enya?

LADONDRA

You got me so wrong. I got my doctorate in psychology but it could have been in hip-hop.

POPPA

Really?

LADONDRA REACHES FOR POPPA'S MIXING BOARD.

LADONDRA

Here, let me play you something.

POPPA PLAYFULLY SLAPS HER HAND.

POPPA

Uh uh uh, no touchy.

LADONDRA

Come on, you said you wanted to know  
what I listen to.

POPPA

Yeah, but you've only been in here two  
days and you're already trying to  
touch my knobs? You've got to earn  
the right to play songs.

LADONDRA

And how do I do that?

POPPA

Well, since you're a rap historian,  
maybe you entertain our listeners with  
some bars?

LADONDRA

Sure thing, you name it.

POPPA

Okay, just something simple. Little  
Busta Rhymes.

LADONDRA

Love him.

POPPA

If you can recite all of Buster's lyrics on "Look at Me Now" you can play the next song.

LADONDRA

Oh, that's a tough one. But if I do it, what do I get besides being able to touch your knobs?

POPPA

What do you want?

LADONDRA

I want to see you dance.

POPPA

If you can recite all the words to that song, I'll twerk for you.

SHE SMILES, TAKES A BREATH AND BEGINS TO FLOW, WOWING HIM. POPPA RISES AND BEGINS TO SHIMMY. SHE GESTURES FOR HIM TO TURN AROUND AND SHAKE HIS MONEY MAKER. AS HE TWERKS, HIS BOARD LIGHTS UP WITH CALLS. HE CROSSES AND ANSWERS.

POPPA (CONT'D)

You're in Poppa's house. What's crack-a-lackin'?

CALLER

Hi, my question is for Dr. Reed.

POPPA

Sorry, she's still catching her breath.

POPPA CLICKS TO THE NEXT CALLER.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Poppa's house, what's shakin' bacon?

CALLER #2

I want to talk to Dr. Reed.

CLICK.

POPPA

Poppa's house, what's really goin' on?

CALLER #3

That was incredible! I think Dr. Reed did it even better than Busta Rhymes!

POPPA

What do you know about hip-hop?

CALLER #3

Everything you taught me, Dad.

POPPA

Junior?! Get back to work! Okay, it seems we're out of time for calls.

POPPA CLICKS OFF. LADONDRA SMILES A WINNER'S SMILE.

LADONDRA

You gonna let me touch your knobs?

POPPA

Why not? You're already pushing my buttons.

THEY EYE EACH OTHER, PREPARING FOR THE NEXT ROUND, AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE PINT. JUNIOR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

NINA IS THERE AS JUNIOR ENTERS.

NINA

Hey hon, how'd it go?

JUNIOR

Amazing.

NINA

You can just say "fine." You don't have to lie for me.

JUNIOR

No, seriously, it was amazing. I even enjoyed your dad today.

NINA

Are you on fentanyl?

JUNIOR

Kind of. I got an email from a weekly newspaper on Long Island. They're gonna run my comic strip.

"WEEKLY NEWSPAPER ON LONG ISLAND" JUST AS ALLEN SAID IT.

NINA

That is amazing.

JUNIOR

Now don't worry, it's not gonna interfere with my job. In fact, I can endure anything from your dad now that I feel like my dream is alive.

NINA

Seeing you happy makes me happy.

JUNIOR

Seeing you happy at seeing me happy  
makes me even happier.

NINA

Seeing you happy at seeing me being  
happy for your happiness makes me--

THEY KISS.

NINA (CONT'D)

Champagne!

SHE EXITS TO THE KITCHEN AS POPPA ENTERS.

POPPA

How'd it go, Ant-Man?

JUNIOR

You're not going to believe this. A  
newspaper is gonna publish my strip.

POPPA

What?! No way. That's awesome, June!

JUNIOR

I don't even remember this paper.  
Must have been one of the hundreds of  
submissions I sent out.

POPPA

Must have been. I'm proud of you.

JUNIOR

You sure? You're not mad that I'm still feeding my inner grasshopper?

POPPA

Hey, I had lots of day jobs while I pursued radio. Everyone deserves a dream. Take it from Bald Panther.

JUNIOR

He is pretty smart.

POPPA

This could be it, June. You could be on your way.

JUNIOR

How about you? How you doin'?

POPPA

(SMILES) I may just have these little T-Rex arms (MIMES), but it's gonna take a big asteroid to wipe me out.

JUNIOR

You've always been a fighter, Pops. I mean, you came from nothing and made something. I came from something and have made nothing.

POPPA SMACKS HIS SHOULDER WITH A STUBBY T-REX ARM.

POPPA

What?! Look around. You're doing something I couldn't do.

(MORE)

POPPA (CONT'D)

You're keeping your family together by  
keeping your family happy.

JUNIOR

Yeah. That counts for something,  
right?

POPPA

That counts for everything. That's  
the real hero stuff.

POPPA WAVES HIM IN FOR A HUG. NINA ENTERS WITH CHAMPAGNE.

NINA

Hey, Poppa, we're celebrating. I  
could get another glass.

POPPA

Thanks, but you know me, happy to be  
alone with my thoughts in front of the  
NBA package. (BEAT) But... if we're  
toasting Junior, I guess I could stay  
for one glass.

JUNIOR

(MIMICKING POPPA) I don't know, my  
crib's my sanctuary, don't need people  
all up in my business, coming at me,  
all day, every day...

POPPA LAUGHS AT HIMSELF, AS JUNIOR AND NINA SMILE. NINA HANDS  
POPPA THE FIRST GLASS AND HE MIMES NOT BEING ABLE TO GET IT  
TO HIS MOUTH WITH HIS STUBBY T-REX ARMS. AND WE...

END ACT THREE

TAGINT. RADIO STATION - STUDIO - DAY

LADONDRA LISTENS TO POPPA'S 'WHAT-HAVE-WE-LEARNED' RIFF.

## POPPA

Shakespeare said, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." That last one sounds kinda dirty. For most people, it takes an awful long time to become an overnight success. Jimmy Morris made his big league pitching debut at 35. Julia Child published her first cookbook at 39. Susan Boyle was 47 when she sang on Britain's Got Talent. Hell, if your dream is to be the President of the United States, apparently you can hang onto that one til you're like 100 years old. But sometimes even when you've achieved your dream, somebody else would like to snatch it from you. So you not only have to fight like hell to make your dreams come true, but then you've got to fight to keep other people's hands off them. You ready to fight, New York? I know I am. You're in Poppa's House.

LADONDRA SMILES AS WE PUSH IN PAST POPPA, REVEALING JUNIOR'S DRAWING OF HIM, FRAMED AND PROUDLY DISPLAYED OVER HIS SHOULDER.

AND WE...

END SHOW