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Growing Up Fisher

“Drug/Bust”

Written by

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Directed by

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SHOOTING DRAFT

12-13-13



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Growing Up Fisher

Shooting Draft
December 13, 2013

CAST LIST

MEL J.K. Simmons
JOYCE Jenna Elfman
HENRY Eli Baker
KATIE Ava Deluca-Verley
RUNYEN Lance Lim
ADULT HENRY (V.O.) Jason Bateman
PRINCIPAL SLOAN Matthew Glave
MADISON TBD
BROOKLYN TBD
CASHIER TBD
COP #1 Christopher Foley *COP #2 Leonard Jackson *
COACH GILL TBD
MRS. GLEBE TBD
DISPATCHER RADIO (V.O.) TBD
SIX-YEAR-OLD HENRY TBD *

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SET LIST

INTERIORS

MEL'S APARTMENT
LIVING ROOM
HENRY'S BEDROOM
JOYCE'S HOUSE
HENRY'S BEDROOM
KITCHEN
FOYER
BASEMENT
APARTMENT HALLWAY
CAMPUS BOOKSTORE
NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE
PRINCIPAL SLOAN'S CAR
HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM
JOYCE'S CAR
NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE

EXTERIORS

NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE
JOYCE'S HOUSE
DRIVEWAY
STREET
BACKYARD
GRIFFIN STREET APARTMENTS
HIGH SCHOOL

ACT ONE

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D1) 1

CLOSE ON: a finger in an empty drinking glass.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: MEL expertly pours himself orange juice, using the tip of his finger to feel when it's full.

1 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
One of the upsides of having a blind dad, you get to decorate his new apartment any way you want.

REVEAL: HENRY is setting up a bunch of Lord of the Rings-type goblins, elves and trolls in lucite cases on the shelf.

2 HENRY
You sure I can put anything up here?

3 MEL
As long as I can't hear it, smell it, or trip over it, knock yourself out.

Mel hands Henry the glass of OJ. He stares at it skeptically.

4 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
One of the downsides, finger juice.

Henry grimaces -- what can you do? -- and takes a drink.

5 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Another, slightly bigger, downside? His bedtime stories...

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - HENRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FB1) 2

Over Mel tucking in an adorable 6-YEAR-OLD HENRY:

6 MEL
...yep, got this freak infection and went blind when I was twelve. Went to bed 20/20. Woke up... nothin'.
(innocently)
Huh, I was just a few years older than you.
(then, upbeat)
Anyway, get some sleep, buddy.

Mel flips off the bedside light, leaving Henry in the dark.

7 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Only one part of the story ever changed...

POPS of Mel finishing the story on different nights (FB2): 3

8 MEL
Huh, just three years older than you.

ANOTHER NIGHT (FB3): 4

9 MEL (CONT'D)
Huh, just two years older than you.

ANOTHER NIGHT (FB4): 5

10 MEL (CONT'D)
Huh, just one year older than you.
(then)
Anyway, get some sleep, buddy.

The light goes out again. Over Henry's scared face...

11 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*You know the nightmare about showing
up to school in your underwear? I
would've killed for that one.*

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - HENRY'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER MORNING (D2) 6

Henry, in a t-shirt and underwear, anxiously stares at a calendar, focusing on a date marked "BIRTHDAY!"

12 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*Looking back, I realize how irrational
it was, but at the time, I was
terrified of my twelfth birthday.*

Mel enters.

13 MEL
Ready to head over to Mom's?

14 HENRY
(startled)
What? Yes, I'm fine!

15 MEL
Hey, you okay?

16 HENRY
Yes. You? Why?

17 MEL
Lately you've been acting a little...
not weird, but... yeah, weird.
(then)
You'd tell me if something was wrong,
wouldn't you?

18 HENRY
(overcompensating)
Of course, you're my father, I'm your
son. We got that father son thing.

19 MEL
(beat, still skeptical)
Okey-doke.

Mel exits. Henry immediately crosses to the window. From
outside we see him pull down the shade.

20 HENRY (O.S.)
E... L... Z... R...

Back inside, we reveal on the inside of the shade there's a
hand-written eye chart.

21 HENRY (CONT'D)
Still okay.
(then, gloomy)
But my birthday's not for three more
days.

He yanks the shade back up to hide the eye chart -- FWAAP!

MAIN TITLES: "GROWING UP FISHER"

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER THAT MORNING (D2) 7

Henry and KATIE eat breakfast. Henry checks his vision using
the back of a cereal box. Squinting intently, he holds the
box at arm's length, which pushes Katie's bowl towards her.

22 KATIE
What's happening here?

23 HENRY
Oh-- just... checking to see if I have
X-ray vision. Sometimes I think I
might.

24 KATIE
Oh, Bug. Try to get all that out of
your system now or they're gonna
destroy you in high school.

25 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*I didn't want to tell my family what
was worrying me because deep down I
knew it was ridiculous... slash
definitely, definitely happening.*

JOYCE enters, nervously excited, showing off her outfit.

26 JOYCE

Be brutally honest. Do I look like I'm trying too hard? Not trying at all? Where am I on the trying spectrum?

27 KATIE

You're very trying.

28 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

Plus, as always, my family had their own issues to deal with.

29 KATIE

Wait, is that my scarf? Mom, what did I tell you about wearing my clothes?

30 JOYCE

We have so many great talks, I can't remember.

(then)

I'm gonna be on campus to buy my textbooks so I have to look nice.

As Katie gets up and starts to take the scarf off Joyce...

31 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

Mom had decided to get her degree in Family Therapy... which, considering our family, should have earned her enough credits for a minor in Irony.

32 JOYCE

I could run into some of my classmates. My younger classmates. With their skin and their... necks.

33 KATIE

Fine. I just hate when you borrow my clothes. They always end up smelling like your perfume.

(sniffs the air)

My perfume! Stop borrowing my perfume!

A preoccupied Henry grabs his backpack and heads out.

34 JOYCE

See you later, birthday boy.

35 HENRY

It's not my birthday yet, Mom! Three days! Technically I'm still eleven!

36 KATIE

Man, you are more like Dad every day.

37 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*Any other day I would have taken it as
a compliment, but today I did not. And
that's why I said--*

38 HENRY
Well you're more like Mom every day!

Katie gasps, stricken. Joyce smiles proudly. Henry exits.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - SAME (D2)

8

Mel enters from a walk. Elvis stops and starts sniffing at a big stack of moving boxes piled by the door across from Mel's. PRINCIPAL SLOAN comes out of the other apartment.

39 PRINCIPAL SLOAN
Mel, hi, it's Principal Sloan from Henry's school. But now Principal Sloan from across the hall!

40 MEL
I heard a rumor you were moving in. This should traumatize Henry nicely.
(then)
Welcome to the building!
(off dog sniffing)
Elvis, get away from there. Sorry, I think he might be part bloodhound.

41 PRINCIPAL SLOAN
That's okay, he probably smells my ex-wife's apricot body splash. Or the salt from my tears. No, but it's good, everything's good.
(claps, bucking self up)
Fresh start, fresh start!

42 MEL
I'd love to help you lug boxes but...

43 PRINCIPAL SLOAN
No, no, of course.

44 MEL
Yeah, I get out of all sorts of stuff. Airport runs, charades... All in all, being blind is a pretty sweet deal.

Mel and Elvis exit into their apartment, leaving Sloan.

45 PRINCIPAL SLOAN
Wendy and I used to play charades.
(weak clap, back to work)
Fresh start.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - WHERE WE LEFT THEM (D2) 9

Joyce clears Henry's cereal bowl and box.

46 JOYCE

Well, you don't have to be a family therapist to know what's bothering Henry. He's obviously anxious that with the divorce, his birthday's gonna get lost in the shuffle.

47 KATIE

That's why he's gonna love the surprise party.

48 JOYCE

Maybe we should tell him about it. Should we? Let's tell him. Henry!

49 KATIE

Or, we could not tell him about the surprise party, and have it be a surprise party.

50 JOYCE

Remind me to stand like that when I wear that outfit. It's very effective and kind of cute.

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER (D2) 10

As Mel and Elvis enter, Elvis yanks him toward a bag that's on the floor, and starts sniffing it with a whining yelp.

51 MEL

Whoa, Elvis-- your snoot is out of control today.

(touches the bag, realizing)

No, no. Don't mess with Katie's stuff.

But Elvis keeps rooting. Mel picks the bag up and opens it.

52 MEL (CONT'D)

Did she leave food in her bag again? How many times do I have to give the ant speech?

He pulls out a baggie which we see has a joint inside. He sniffs it and realizes what he's dealing with.

53 MEL (CONT'D)

(re: pot)

Ohh, I'm gonna need a new speech.

EXT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER (D2)

11

Henry and Runyen shoot hoops. Henry puts up an air ball.

54 HENRY
See? I've lost my depth perception!
It's happening!

55 RUNYEN
Dude, you've always sucked at
basketball.

56 HENRY
Yeah, and now we know why!

He takes another pathetic shot. It clangs off the rim.

57 RUNYEN
Wow. Look, I'm sure you're not going
blind. But if you do, I'm there for
you, bro.

Runyen puts his hand up for a high-five. Henry misses badly.

58 RUNYEN (CONT'D)
(covering)
That was my fault, I moved it.

59 HENRY
Don't pity me.

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - THAT AFTERNOON (D2)

12

Katie enters. Mel sits, facing the door, waiting for her.

60 KATIE
Hi.

61 MEL
Are you?

62 KATIE
What?

63 MEL
Elvis found something in your bag.

64 KATIE
(guilty)
Oh, shoot.
(then, defensive)
Look, that energy bar was wrapped in
foil. There's no way ants were after
that.

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)
If you're still finding ants, it's
'cause of Henry! That kid keeps
chocolate in every pocket!

Mel dramatically reveals the joint, stopping Katie short.

65 KATIE (CONT'D)
What is that? That's not mine.

66 MEL
(check and mate)
Then why was it in your bag?

INT. CAMPUS BOOKSTORE - SAME TIME (D2)

13

Joyce is paying for her stack of textbooks, leafing through one as she waits for the CASHIER to ring her up.

67 CASHIER
That'll be... 158.52.

Joyce digs through her bag, looking for her wallet.

68 JOYCE
Oh, shoot. I'm sorry, I don't have my
wallet. Yesterday I borrowed my
daughter's bag and--
(gasps, remembering what else
she left in bag)
OH SHOOT!!

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT/APARTMENT HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER (D2) 14

Mel has worked up a head of steam with Katie.

69 MEL
So what, the joint just sprouted wings
and flew in there?!
(as a joint)
"Whoa, man, this bag is like a mellow
place to hang out, man."

70 KATIE
Who are you supposed to be?

71 MEL
Oh, my apologies! I don't know about
drugs. How do they talk?

72 KATIE
I don't know either! It's not mine!

73 MEL

Katherine, please. You're talking to a trial attorney with thirty years of experience with evasive defendants.

74 KATIE

I'm not a defendant!

She turns and stomps away for the front door. Mel follows.

75 MEL

Katie, come back here!

76 KATIE

What, are you gonna throw your gavel at me?

77 MEL

I don't have a ga-- Do you even know what I do for a living?!

She exits down the building hallway. Mel is left at the open front door. Sloan is at his door across the way.

78 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

Don't feel bad. You've got one kid that hates you, I've got 516. The trick is not to take it--

Out of sorts, Mel just closes the door in Sloan's face.

79 PRINCIPAL SLOAN (CONT'D)

...personally.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - LATER (D2)

15

Joyce snoops around looking for Katie's bag. Mel enters and she stops dead in her tracks. She stands there nervously as Mel crosses in, then stops, sniffing the air.

80 MEL
Katie?
(no response)
Katie, are you here? I smell your perfume.

81 JOYCE
(silently curses, then)
Actually, Mel, hey, it's me! Hi!
(covering nervously, re: box)
I brought over a box of stuff for Henry's surprise party that I wanted to stash here-- not stash, not stash, store, store--

82 MEL
I'm actually glad you're here. We need to talk.
(pulling out a chair)
Come here, sit down.

She doesn't want to stop her search, but knows she has to play it cool, so she crosses over and sits.

83 JOYCE
Okay, what's up?

She gets up and continues her search. Mel talks to the empty chair.

84 MEL
Even though we're divorced, we need to be a united front when it comes to the kids, right?

Realizing she must respond, she tip toes back and leans in.

85 JOYCE
...Yes.

She immediately crosses away to continue looking for the bag.

86 MEL
Yeah, so, there's no easy way for me to say this. Our daughter's on drugs.

Across the room, this stops Joyce in her tracks.

87 JOYCE
What?

Mel turns to where her voice is suddenly coming from.

88 MEL
Come on, Joyce, you know I don't like
when you Speak 'n' Sneak.

EXT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - STREET - SAME (D2)

16

Runyen and Henry are going for a walk.

89 HENRY
What else? The Mona Lisa. I'm never
gonna see the actual Mona Lisa.

90 RUNYEN
Yeah. Oh, and all the new Star Wars
movies!

Henry groans. Runyen notices a twenty-something JOGGER in a sports bra across the street.

91 RUNYEN (CONT'D)
Hold on. I know what you need to see
before you go blind. Boobs. Naked
boobs!

Henry looks around self-consciously at neighbors out playing.

92 HENRY
Dude, shh, there are toddlers.
(then, quiet)
And I've already seen, you know,
"those." My dad's computer talks, so
it's kinda hard for him to set a
password I don't hear.

93 RUNYEN
Cyber-boobs won't cut it. You need to
see live ones. So later in life,
you'll have a reference point.

94 HENRY
(considering, then)
You're right. Yeah, so that on my
wedding night, when I'm, you know,
finally touching 'em, I'll have an
idea of what I'm working with.

95 RUNYEN

Wedding night? Wow. You really need to do this. We need to go on a quest.

96 HENRY

A breast quest. It's like the Lord of the Rings.

97 RUNYEN

Dude, you keep saying stuff like that, you won't touch 'em until your wedding night.

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER (D2)

17

Where we left Mel and Joyce...

98 JOYCE

Maybe it isn't hers. Maybe it's some other... good-hearted person's who just wanted to try it once but then stupidly, stupidly left it in Katie's bag.

99 MEL

Nah, it's hers. She ran right out of here. Guilty.

100 JOYCE

Okay, don't be so quick to judge.

101 MEL

How 'bout you be quicker to judge? What's going on over there, Joyce? I'm barely out of the house and our daughter's already on drugs?

102 JOYCE

Mel, she's not on drugs.

103 MEL

Joyce, wake up and smell the--

104 JOYCE

It's my pot! Okay? My pot, not Katie's. Yeah. What have you got to say now?

105 MEL

(beat)

That's not better!

(then)

I get that you're in an "experimental phase," Joyce. With your kale chips and your meditation app.

(MORE)

MEL (CONT'D)

But there's a line. I mean, good Lord, what are you running a drug den over there?

106 JOYCE

I've only had the joint a day and I haven't even tried it. A philosophy major I met at orientation gave it to me when I complimented her ukulele.

107 MEL

Oh, well, if you got it from a girl with no future, then...

108 JOYCE

You know what, Mel? I honestly don't care what you think. Maybe when we were married, but now that we're getting divorced, uh-uh. I've always kind of wanted to try pot. I've wanted to do lots of new things. Go vegan, maybe learn the drums. But I never even mentioned any of it, 'cause I knew this is how you'd react.

109 MEL

Then I did my job. You're welcome.

110 JOYCE

You're so uptight! And it pushed me away. And let me tell you something, if you don't ease up, you're gonna push Katie away too.

Mel scoffs, but a bit defensively.

111 JOYCE (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll kindly hand over my doobie, I'll be on my way.

112 MEL

Not gonna happen.

Elvis starts pawing at a drawer and making his tell-tale whimper yelp. Joyce opens the drawer and pulls out the joint.

113 JOYCE

In a drawer with the "pot" holders. Nice touch, Mel.

She storms out. He follows her and calls down the hall.

114 MEL

That's a coincidence! I would never trivialize drugs with a humorous hiding place!

But she's gone.

EXT./INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING (D3)

18

Henry and Runyen sneak over to the house next door.

115 RUNYEN

I'm telling you, we just go back to your house, we see Katie in the shower--

116 HENRY

My sister is not the reference point I'm looking for! Stop pitching it.

(then)

This is perfect. I heard my mom talking about how Mrs. Glebe breast-feeds every morning before work. Breast-feed! It's right in the name!

They get to the house and, climbing stealthily up on the porch railing, peek in a window.

117 HENRY (CONT'D)

Oh my God! There she is!

118 RUNYEN

Whoa... Mrs. Glebe is beautiful.

MRS. GLEBE'S back is to them, but -- good Lord! -- her shirt is off! They can't yet see her breasts, but she seems to be... touching them or something!

118A HENRY

(quiet awe)

Oh my god...

118B RUNYEN

(quiet awe)

Be cool...

Suddenly she's turning toward them! Henry and Runyen can only stare, open mouthed. And then -- wait, what the hell is on her breasts?! Some sort of contraption! A double breast pump! Their eyes go wide in horror.

119 RUNYEN (CONT'D)

Abort! Abort!

They jump off the porch and scramble from the house.

120 HENRY

It was like that cow we saw them milking on the field trip to Straus Farms!

121 RUNYEN
Now I wish I was blind!

INT. PRINCIPAL SLOAN'S CAR - LATER (D3)

19

Sloan is driving Mel, who is dialing his phone.

122 MEL
Hey, I appreciate you helping me take these party favors back over to Joyce's on your day off.

123 PRINCIPAL SLOAN
No problemo. I asked for two days off 'cause I thought moving would take at least that long. Turned out I only needed four hours. I have very little.

124 MEL (ON PHONE)
(sing-songy)
Hey, Katie-Pants. It's your fa-ther. Singing for no rea-son.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - SAME (D3)

20

Katie and TWO FRIENDS are walking with their lunches to an outside table. Katie covers the phone.

125 KATIE
(to friends)
Guys, save me a seat. It's this boy I met at camp. He's so obsessed with me.
(then, into phone, curt)
What?

126 MEL (ON PHONE)
Hey, just wanted to call and talk about our little... miscommunication earlier.

127 KATIE (ON PHONE)
You mean when you falsely accused me of doing drugs?

128 MEL (ON PHONE)
Yeah, I think that was the gist of it. Katie, I'm really sorry.

129 KATIE (ON PHONE)
Sorry for not believing me? Sorry for yelling? Sorry for your general... stick-up-your-ass...ish...ness?

130 MEL (ON PHONE)
It's sort of a blanket apology.

131 KATIE (ON PHONE)
You know what, Dad, I can't hear you.
I'm in a meth lab, it's really loud.

She HANGS UP and heads toward her friends. As she gets to the table, her cell rings again. She checks it.

132 KATIE (CONT'D)
Sorry, guys, it's him again. Obsessed.
(into phone)
What?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JOYCE'S CAR - SAME (D3) 21

Joyce talks to Katie on speaker as she drives.

133 JOYCE
Hey, Kitty-cat. Just calling to say
hi. How ya doing?

134 KATIE (ON PHONE)
This is actually not a good time--

135 JOYCE
Quick question: do you think things
have totally fallen apart since Dad
left?

Katie sighs. It's gonna be a long one.

INT. SLOAN'S CAR - A LITTLE LATER (D3) 22

We rejoin Mel and Sloan in mid-conversation.

136 MEL
Stick up my ass? If I had a stick up
my ass, I would have called her out
for using the word "ass." I am not
uptight.
(then, sensing something)
Wait, are you turning on Colorado? I
said stay on Apple Grove.

137 SLOAN
Yes, the blind guy correcting the GPS
lady is not at all uptight.

138 MEL

I mean, I feel bad for falsely accusing her, but, you know, it's drugs. I reacted the way any concerned parent would.

139 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

I guess. But if it was her joint, and you blew up like that, you think she'd ever come to you again? You don't want to push her away.

140 MEL

Why did you say "push her away"? Did Joyce tell you to say that?

141 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

No. I've actually never met Joyce. But hey, now that you mention it, when you're ready, I'd love an introduction.

(off Mel's reaction)

When you're ready.

INT. JOYCE'S CAR/EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - INTERCUT - SAME (D3) 23

Joyce has now pulled over and is still talking to Katie.

142 JOYCE (ON PHONE)

I mean I've got a lot going on in my life, but I feel like I'm doing an okay job looking after everybody. Dad doesn't think so. Do you think things are falling through the cracks? Do you feel like you're falling through the cracks? Is Henry falling through the-- Wait, where is Henry right now?

143 KATIE (ON PHONE)

He's at school. As am I.

144 JOYCE (ON PHONE)

Right. Good. Yes. You're both where you're supposed to be. Because things are stable. Because I'm stable.

145 KATIE (ON PHONE)

Okay, Mom, I gotta run... away. Talk to you later.

Katie hangs up and turns back to her friends, who are packing up, having finished lunch.

INT. SLOAN'S CAR - SAME (D3)

24

Mel and Sloan are as we left them.

146 MEL

...I mean, you're a principal. Your whole gig is by-the-book, so you get what I'm saying.

147 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

(stiff)

Yes. I am a man of the law. I respect order and I follow rules.

(then, whispers)

But I've also smoked pot.

148 MEL

What?

149 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

Yep. Gotta keep current with what's going on in my students' lives. Violent video games, the Twilight books, yogurt in tubes. Even the wacky tabacky. If they're into it, I gotta try it, so that way I can understand them and not overreact. Otherwise, I'll alienate them. And then I've lost them forever.

(then, wistfully)

Like in Twilight, when Jacob lost Bella.

A contemplative beat from Mel, then:

150 MEL

Hey uh... you got any pot?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - SAME (D3)

25

Runyen and Henry, nervously gripping the straps of their backpacks, stand amongst older, taller kids.

151 HENRY

I don't know if I feel comfortable doing this.

152 RUNYEN

Oh, you're not comfortable? Buddy, you got less than 24 hours 'til your birthday and then it's lights out! A girls' high school locker room is all we got! So you get comfortable!

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - FOYER - A LITTLE LATER (D3)

26

Sloan helps Mel carry in a box of party supplies.

153 MEL

...Like you said, maybe I need to, you know, sample stuff outside of my comfort zone. So I don't... lose them.

154 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

Mel Fisher, neighbor, dare I say friend... you are so G.D. brave...

Sloan takes a step towards Mel, arms outstretched.

155 MEL

You're not gonna hug me, are you?

156 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

(face really close to Mel's)
No.

157 MEL

So, can you... what do you call it?
Hook me up?

158 PRINCIPAL SLOAN

Hm, I don't have a guy since they closed that Blockbuster.

Elvis starts sniffing at Joyce's bag and making the same growling sounds he made the last time he sniffed out her pot. Mel gets an idea.

159 MEL

You know what, Sloan. I'm good here.
Enjoy the rest of your day off.

Mel ushers him out, quickly shutting the door on him. Mel turns to the dog.

160 MEL (CONT'D)

You find drugs better than real Elvis.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - FEW MINUTES LATER (D3) 27

Mel is with Elvis. He prepares himself to light the joint.

161 MEL

OK. I'm gonna do this. Pot. Pot. I'm going to be a person who smokes pot.

(then)

Elvis, go up wind, I don't want you breathing any second-hand drug smoke.

He lets the harness go and Elvis wanders off. Nervous, Mel puts the joint to his lips and tries to light it with a BBQ lighter.

WIDEN TO REVEAL: TWO YOUNG COPS watching him from an open gate to the backyard. Unaware, Mel, facing them, continues to try to light the joint. Finally, the cops have had enough.

162 COP #1

Seriously, sir?

Mel pathetically tries to hide the joint behind his back.

163 MEL

No I'm not! Who's this?

164 DISPATCHER RADIO (V.O.)

4-59, are you at the property?

165 MEL

Oh God.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM - SAME (D3) 28

Henry and Runyen sneak into an empty high school locker room.

166 HENRY

(looking around, a bit cowed)

Everything's bigger in high school.

167 RUNYEN

Yeah, if we got stuffed in these lockers it wouldn't be that bad.

They hear students starting to come in from outside.

168 RUNYEN (CONT'D)

Quick!

They slip into a supply closet and crack the door.

EXT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME (D3)

29

Mel is still with the cops.

169 COP #1

If you don't have a prescription,
we're gonna have to write you a
citation for possession.

170 MEL

Makes sense. There are laws, they
exist for a reason.

Elvis appears in his harness and pads to Mel's side.

171 COP #1

Oh, sorry. We didn't realize you
were... non-sighted.

172 COP #2

Yeah, I think we're good here. You
take care now, sir.

They start out, but something isn't sitting well with Mel.

173 MEL

Wait, what about the citation?

174 COP #1

It's forgotten, sir.

175 MEL

Don't call me sir just 'cause I'm
blind.

176 COP #2

We're not. We're calling you sir
'cause you're, like, 50.

177 MEL

I don't want special treatment! You
should be asking for proof that this
is my house. This is America! You
should be arresting me!

178 COP #1

Okay, loosen up, sir.

The cops cross out of the yard and exit. Mel shakes his head
and puts the joint back to his lips.

179 MEL

(with joint in his mouth)
Cops telling people to loosen up. This
country's going to hell.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM - SAME (D3)

30

Henry and Runyen are in the supply closet, looking out.

180 RUNYEN

Clear your mind and prepare for your
reference point 'cause here they come.

They watch in anticipation like Christmas morning. And
then... male gym students start to file in.

181 HENRY

Wait, what are guys doing in here?
What goes on in high school?

182 RUNYEN

Wrong locker room! Abort! Abort!

But they're trapped. The students start to undress.

183 HENRY

(deer in headlights)
Everything is bigger in high school.

Their view is suddenly obstructed as a gym teacher, COACH
GILL, opens the closet door. They stand there, caught.

INT. JOYCE'S CAR / EXT. GRIFFIN STREET APARTMENTS - DAY (D3) 31

Joyce drives Henry. A moment of awkward silence.

184 JOYCE

Henry, is this a cry for attention? Do
you need more structure and control in
your life? Or has this been inside you
for a while, and now that Dad's gone
you finally feel free to explore it?
Like me with my college courses, and I
guess you with boys.

185 HENRY

No! Mom, I told you! We thought it was
the girls' locker room!
(then, escaping)
Let me out, I can walk to Dad's from
here.

He opens the door before she's brought the car to a full stop.

186 JOYCE

If you want to talk, I'm here for you!

He's gone. Joyce's cell rings.

187 JOYCE (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Hey, Mel.

188 MEL (O.S.)
Joyce! It's me! Melvin Fisher!

189 JOYCE (ON PHONE)
I know, I just said--

190 MEL (O.S.)
I'm high as a kite and I need you to
save me!

191 JOYCE (ON PHONE)
Where are you?!

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - SAME (D3)

32

Mel is with Elvis. Behind them are a bunch of storage boxes.
Mel is holding a tennis racquet.

192 MEL (ON PHONE)
I'm either in the attic or the
basement. I know I took stairs to get
here.

As Mel takes a hit off a yogurt tube...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - A LITTLE WHILE LATER (D3) 33

Mel is at the island, finishing off another yogurt tube. He's still a bit high. Joyce puts out a water dish for Elvis.

193 MEL

I'm sorry I yelled at you for wanting to try pot. You're right. I am too uptight. I think it's 'cause of...

(point to eyes)

...these suckers, I have to overcompensate to feel like I have control of my surroundings.

194 JOYCE

No, it's okay. The pot was a mistake.

Mel has his head back and squeezes the last of the yogurt into his mouth.

195 JOYCE (CONT'D)

...Clearly.

(then)

I think you were right. I could stand to stay on top of things a little more now that we're apart.

196 MEL

I hit you with that? That's heavy stuff.

(suddenly realizing)

Oh no-- we missed Henry's surprise party!

197 JOYCE

It's tomorrow.

198 MEL

Oh. Good.

(then)

I am so thirsty, why am I so thirsty? I know when you're high you get the hungries--

199 JOYCE

The munchies--

200 MEL

...But I have the thirsties.

201 JOYCE

There's OJ right in front of you, here's a glass.

Mel pours himself a glass, using his fingertip.

202 MEL
I realized something. I am difficult.
I am very difficult. Let me finish.

203 JOYCE
I wasn't stopping you.

204 MEL
Where was I?

205 JOYCE
You're very difficult.

206 MEL
I am, Joyce. I am.
(sipping juice)
This is amazing. Have you ever tried
orange juice?

207 JOYCE
Couple times.

208 MEL
No I mean, have you ever really tried
it? I'm gonna get you a glass. Get me
a glass.

She hands him a glass. He pours, using his fingertip method.

209 MEL (CONT'D)
I think sometimes my need for control
means I try to control you and the
kids. It's like...
(realizing, re: finger)
...this. You want orange juice, but
I'm giving you finger juice. And that
is not fair.

210 JOYCE
It's okay. I'm sure the acidity kills
any bad stuff.

211 MEL
But I'm not just talking about this
finger in this glass.

He makes a show of dipping and re-dipping his finger.

212 JOYCE
That seems like more than you need to--

213 MEL

It's a metaphor, Jo-Jo. Your life is the orange juice and you and the kids deserve to live it without my finger in it. Without me controlling every decision you make.

He takes a sip, then--

214 MEL (CONT'D)

(suddenly realizing)
Oh no--!

215 JOYCE

It's tomorrow.

216 MEL

Oh. Good.

217 JOYCE

(to herself)
Yep, never smoking pot.

218 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

Mom did a pretty good job of talking Dad down when he was freaking out...

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY (D4)

34

Mel and Henry play basketball, their way: Mel tosses Henry alley-oops on a Nerf-type basketball hoop suction-cupped to the wall. Mel just lobs the ball close and Henry dunks it. Henry then runs the ball to Mel and they repeat the process.

219 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

...and the next day, he did the same for me. Not that I was freaking out or anything.

220 MEL

Excited for your birthday?

221 HENRY

I don't want to go blind!

222 MEL

I don't want you to either. How would we play basketball?

223 HENRY

I'm turning twelve and that's when you went blind and I know it's stupid but is it stupid or actually really smart and now it's too late to do anything about it 'cause there's only seven hours and twenty two minutes 'til my birthday!

224 MEL

(realizing it's serious)
Henry, whoa. Hey, what I had wasn't hereditary, okay? There is absolutely no chance you're going to go blind.
(then)
How long have you been worried about this?

225 HENRY

Not that long. Just like five, six years.

226 MEL

So only half your life. That's good. Why didn't you tell me about this before?

Henry takes a beat, then admits the truth.

227 HENRY

Because... I didn't want you to think that I didn't want to be like you.

Mel is touched.

228 MEL

Aw, buddy. That is the sweetest... and most insane thing I've ever heard!
(chuckling)
Why would you think I'd be offended you don't want to be blind? Nobody wants to be blind. Do you think I want to be blind?

Henry exhales, relieved, and hugs his dad.

229 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

How amazing was this guy that in my twelve years as his son, that was the first time I realized he didn't want to be blind? The man never complained about it.

Just behind him, the basketball hoop falls off the wall.

230 MEL

That damn hoop fall down again? Son of a-- The guy told me it would stick to any surface!

231 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

...Oh he complained about everything else. But never about the blind thing.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - FOYER - THAT NIGHT (N4)

35

Joyce and Katie quietly welcome Runyen and a few other of Henry's friends into the house.

232 JOYCE

(sotto)

Hurry up, everyone. Down to the basement. Henry's up in his room playing a video game. Doors close at 7:15, surprise at 7:20. Let's go, I run a tight ship in this house.

Runyen approaches Katie with his DJ equipment.

233 RUNYEN

Katie, I'm gonna be spinning tonight so feel free to make requests or I can just drop a few slow jams and see where the night takes us?

234 KATIE

(tousles his hair)

Aw, you're like a little DJ.

She crosses away. Runyen watches her go, touching his head where she touched.

235 RUNYEN

I'm in.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - SAME (N4)

36

The basement is decorated for the party. A dozen or so of Henry's schoolmates, male and female, are already there. Two girls, MADISON and BROOKLYN, approach Mel and Elvis.

236 MADISON/BROOKLYN

Hey, Mr. Fisher.

237 MEL

Hi, girls.

238 MADISON

I like your dog's saddle.

239 MEL
It's not a-- Thank you.

Joyce comes downstairs with Katie and pulls her over to Mel.

240 JOYCE
Hey, Mel.

241 MEL
Joyce, tell me Henry doesn't take the same classes as those girls.

242 JOYCE
I brought Katie over.

243 MEL
Heyyy, Katie. Kate-a-roo. K.T. and the Sunshine Band.

244 JOYCE
You two need to talk.

245 KATIE
Don't think we do.

246 JOYCE
Okay, you know what, I got this. Mel, right now I don't want you to think of me as your wife--

247 MEL
Ex-wife.

248 JOYCE
(to Katie)
...or as your best friend--

249 KATIE
Done.

250 JOYCE
I want you instead to think of me as your emotional interpreter.

Oh God.

250A MEL

Oh God. 250B KATIE

251 JOYCE (CONT'D)
No, come on, let's dig deep here. I think it was Freud who first said--

252 MEL
(immediately)
Katie, really, I am so sorry.

253 KATIE
(immediately)
Totally forgiven.

They hug.

254 JOYCE
Whoa. I am gonna crush those classes.

ANGLE ON: Runyen, with Madison and Brooklyn.

255 RUNYEN
Ladies, good to see you. If you want,
I can sneak you into the after party.

256 BROOKLYN
Like you snuck into the boys' locker
room?

They cross away, leaving a devastated Runyen.

ANGLE ON: Katie guides Mel through the party.

257 KATIE
(enjoying this)
So, Melvin. Let's review. First, you
accuse me of having pot. I told you it
wasn't mine, but did you believe me?
You did not. And as it turns out, not
only was it not mine, it was, in fact,
my mother's.

258 MEL
She told you--?

259 KATIE
She can't not tell me. She also told
me that she didn't smoke it. Because
you did.
(letting it sink in)
Do I have the facts of the case
correct? Counselor? If you'd like to
review them, they'll be in my back
pocket, where I'm gonna save them as
a, let's say, "get out of jail free
card."

ANGLE ON: Joyce, at the stairs.

260 JOYCE (O.S.)
Mel, 7:19, I need you to go get Henry.
Chop-chop.

Mel starts to cross away, but Katie stops him.

261 KATIE

Hey... Mom also told me why you smoked it. Something about wanting to be a better parent? I guess that's kind of sweet. And weird. But sweet.

Katie rubs his arm affectionately. Mel gives her a smile as he crosses toward the stairs to Joyce.

262 JOYCE

You got your excuse for Henry ready?

263 MEL

I do. Hey, listen, we're doing good.

264 JOYCE

Yeah. We're figuring it out. A few bumps in the road, but hey,
(indicating party)
we pulled this off. And it's gonna be the greatest night of Henry's life.

265 MEL

Yeah, not to get sentimental--

266 JOYCE

Good, we don't have time. We're a minute behind schedule.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - HENRY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER (N4) 37

CLOSE ON the door. We hear the sounds of a video game sword fight as Mel sticks his head in the door.

267 MEL

Henry? Hey, bud. Mom called me, there's a fuse out downstairs...

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER (N4) 38

Everybody settles down and takes their place, waiting in the dark for the guest of honor.

268 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

Mom and Dad thought I was worried my birthday would get overshadowed by the divorce. So they threw me a party I'd never forget.

We hear Henry and Mel coming down the stairs.

269 MEL (O.S.)

If you just point out which fuse, I can replace--

Henry flips on the lights--

270 ALL
Surpri--ohhh!

Everyone stares. HENRY IS IN NOTHING BUT HIS UNDERWEAR. Joyce slowly lowers the phone she was using to capture the moment.

271 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Never ever ever forget.

Mel stands next to the almost birthday-suited birthday boy, happily unaware.

272 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
I never wished Dad could see more than in that moment.

273 MEL
Ha ha, we got ya, buddy!

Mel puts a chummy arm around frozen Henry.

274 MEL (CONT'D)
Why aren't you wearing a shirt?

275 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Yep. Turns out the only boobs that were seen on my birthday were mine.

Henry scrambles back upstairs as DJ Runyen starts playing...

MUSIC CUE: "Celebrate" by Kool and the Gang

END OF SHOW