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Growing Up Fisher

“Secret Lives of Fishers”

Written by

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Directed by

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SHOOTING DRAFT

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Growing Up Fisher

Shooting Draft
March 14, 2014

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	
ANTHONY	Logan Miller	
JANICE	TBD	*
DR. FENTON	Peter Mackenzie	*
JAKE	TBD	
OWEN	Karan Soni	*
PROFESSOR HEINZ	Karl T. Wright	*
DOUG	Joe Spellman	*
MARTIN	Mike Gray	*
RICHARD BARR	Joel Polis	*
DR. LA CROIX	Christina Pickles	*
ADRIANA	TBD	*
CYNTHIA	TBD	
CUSTOMER	TBD	
TED (ON SPEAKERPHONE)	TBD	
MEL'S WATCH (V.O.)	TBD	*

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SET LIST

INTERIORS

MEL'S APARTMENT
MEL'S BEDROOM
BATHROOM
APARTMENT HALLWAY
LAW OFFICES
MEL'S OFFICE
SMALL CLASSROOM
GARLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL
HALLWAY
MOVIE THEATER
TICKET AREA
YO YO FROYO
DOCTOR'S OFFICE
EXAM ROOM
MARRIAGE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE (FB1)
JOYCE'S HOUSE
FOYER
BATHROOM
JOYCE'S DRESSING AREA
LIVING ROOM
PORCH (STAGE PORCH)
LAUNDRY ROOM *

EXTERIORS

N/A

ACT ONE

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - MEL'S BEDROOM - DAY (D1)

1

Mel strides out of his bathroom and checks his watch.

1 MEL'S WATCH (V.O.)
The time is: six-fifty-eight A.M.

2 MEL
Dammit, late already.

Mel buttons his shirt and flips his collar up, then searches for his tie.

3 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
My dad was a rock. Which was a good thing since he ran his own law firm, was newly single in his 50's, and had just gotten a guide dog...

He finds the tie... but Elvis is gnawing on the other end.

4 MEL
Elvis, what are you--?
(exhales, rolling with it)
No reason Casual Friday can't be on a Monday.

Mel puts his collar down, unbuttons the top two buttons.

5 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
...But Dad handled all the stress in his life like a pro. Plus everything we threw at him.

Mel and Elvis head out. In JUMP CUTS we track Mel as if the following happens in one continuous march to his office.

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS (D1)

2

Mel crosses out of his room. Katie intercepts him.

6 KATIE
I don't understand why I can't get a job!

7 MEL
Because you already have one. Your job is to study and get good grades. And you might want to start putting in some overtime.

8 KATIE

Anthony's place is hiring, I'd get to spend more time with my boyfriend--

9 MEL

Not helping your case.

10 KATIE

And I'd make my own money. You shouldn't have to pay for things like eyelash extensions.

11 MEL

And I won't have to, because you're not getting them. Or a job.

12 KATIE

Why are you always like this?!

13 MEL

Love you, too.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY (D1)

3

Mel and Elvis walk ahead of Henry, toward the elevator.

14 MEL

C'mon, Henry. Stop dragging your feet.

15 HENRY

Uch, I don't wanna go to school. Mr. Iserton's making us take another quiz. He's got such a stick up his--

16 MEL

I wouldn't finish that sentence if I were you. This is why I don't want you hanging out with those older boys.

17 HENRY

I was gonna say stick up his... nose.

18 MEL

Uh-huh. Clearly you think I have my head up my nose.

INT. LAW OFFICES - DAY (D1)

4

Mel strides in. Joyce falls into step beside him.

19 JOYCE

Just FYI, I'm getting my first round of grades this afternoon and I'm a little nervous, so don't expect much out of me today work-wise.

20 MEL
Good luck with your grades. Don't expect too much out of me today pay-wise.

Joyce chuckles then stops. Wait, is he serious?

21 JOYCE
Also, the copier ate some documents. They looked sort of contract-y so I thought I should let you know.

22 MEL
Have Janice call maintenance.

23 JOYCE
Can you? Janice is out sick.

24 MEL
Fantastic.

INT. LAW OFFICES - MEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS (D1)

5

Mel crosses to his desk. Joyce follows him in.

25 JOYCE
And hey, congratulations! The people from Barr and Ross Publishing called! They said they want the bulldog with the guide dog to represent them. You better get ready to work weekends.

26 MEL
(victorious fist pump)
Bring it on!

27 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
The man was a rock. That was no secret.

But Mel holds his fist high, frozen. And as Joyce exits, closing the door, he slowly falls out of frame.

28 MEL
Ooh, my back.

He lies on the ground, clutching his lower back. Elvis happily licks his face.

29 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
...The secret was that sometimes, even the hardest rock can crumble. But Dad didn't want us to know that. He never wanted anyone to worry about him.

INT. LAW OFFICES / INT. MEL'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER (D1) 6

Joyce knocks at Mel's door, concerned.

30 JOYCE

Mel, you okay? I heard a thump-thump.

She enters. Mel's already up and "fine," leaning on his desk.

31 MEL

Never better!

Joyce smiles and exits, and as the door closes, we glimpse Mel stiffly falling back into his chair.

MAIN TITLES: "GROWING UP FISHER"

INT. SMALL CLASSROOM - DAY (D1) 7

PROFESSOR HEINZ lectures, but most of the students, including Joyce, try to surreptitiously check their phones.

32 PROFESSOR HEINZ

...and that's why, as therapists, we must strive to actively listen.

(off their preoccupation)

Actively listen. I give up. Your grades should be posted, have at it.

Joyce and the others now make no effort to hide their phones. She takes a deep breath, then looks. She is shocked.

33 JOYCE

I got all A's. I got straight A's! I-- Wait, do A's still mean the same thing they did in the early 90's?

34 PROFESSOR HEINZ

Congratulations, Joyce. You're on your way. Before you know it, you're gonna be a therapist.

(sotto)

But shh. Most of these people won't be.

The professor exits. Joyce's head is spinning.

35 JOYCE

Wow... A therapist. This is really gonna happen. I'm locked in. It's a done deal. Good. I'm so full of pride that I... I can't fit in any air...

Joyce starts to hyperventilate. Other students gather around and offer their unprofessional professional advice.

36 LEWIS
Maybe she's schizophrenic-- or, or
agoraphobic--

37 DOUG
Don't listen to Lewis. He got a C
minus.

38 LEWIS
Shut up, Martin! I know things!

39 DOUG
She's clearly having a panic attack.

40 JOYCE
Yeah... I'm having a panic attack...
out of... happiness... A happy attack.
Is that a thing?

She tries to smile but she's freaking out. She puts her head
between her legs.

41 JOYCE (CONT'D)
(from between her legs)
Oh God-- how did I get this mustard
stain?

INT. GARLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY (D1)

8

Henry and RUNYEN hang on the outskirts of a group of 8th
graders, including hulking Neanderthal JAKE.

42 RUNYEN
I heard Jake shaves.

43 HENRY
I heard his bedtime is like eleven PM.

They notice the boys leering at something on Jake's phone.
They steel themselves and push their way into the group.

44 RUNYEN
'Sup? Whadda ya got?

Henry and Runyen see they're ogling a photo of a blonde
bending over.

45 JAKE
She was at the school bake sale. I
pretended I was texting and got some
good shots.

This is above their pay grade, but they try to be cool.

45A HENRY Nice. Good job. Dude.
45B RUNYEN The ol' text and shoot trick.
But then Henry looks closer at the photo and realizes...

46 HENRY
Wait... that's... my mom!
The older boys gasp, loving this.

47 JAKE
Oh my God. Fisher, your mom's a MILF!

48 HENRY
(oblivious)
Yeah she is!
The older boys laugh and walk away. Henry turns to Runyen.

49 HENRY (CONT'D)
What's a MILF?

50 RUNYEN
Okay. You're not going to like it.
It's a little degrading. It means "Mom
I'd Like To Feel-Up."

Henry gasps.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - TICKET AREA - DAY (D1)

9

CLOSE ON: Joyce, pouring her heart out.

51 JOYCE
When I saw all those A's, it hit me
like a ton of bricks. I saw my whole
life laid out. I'm going to graduate,
open a practice, write three to five
award-winning books and die.

We REVEAL she's unloading on OWEN, a movie theater employee.

52 JOYCE (CONT'D)
If you told me how these movies end,
why would I come see them? I hate
spoilers. I don't want a spoiler in
the movie of my life. I want the
adventure and freedom, I want to be
surprised. You know what I mean, Owen?

53 OWEN
Whatever ends this.

54 JOYCE

I don't want to be a therapist! I should be in class now, but I just couldn't go. And I can't go home. I mean, how am I supposed to explain it to my kids-- oh, God, and my ex! It was so hard to tell them I wanted to start all over again and go back to school in the first place. Now I have to tell them I want to start all over again, all over again?

55 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

If Mom had shared this with us instead of with Owen, everyone would have been better off. Especially Owen.

56 JOYCE

Anyway, I've got three hours to kill.
(looking at marquee)
What should I see?

57 OWEN

(under his breath)
A therapist?

INT. YO YO FROYO - NEXT DAY (D2)

10

Mel and Henry enter. Mel is walking stiffly, but hiding it.

58 MEL

Come on, bud. Something's obviously eating at you.

59 HENRY

No, I'm telling you, I'm fine. You can't see my face. It's totally smiley.

60 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

I didn't want Dad to know I'd been hanging out with the older kids. And I was way too embarrassed to tell him about my hot mo-- my mom. Mom.

61 MEL

Maybe I can get it out of you with some frozen yogurt.

Mel reaches for his wallet, lets out a squeak of pain.

62 MEL (CONT'D)

Actually, you got any cash? I'm good for it.

As the person in line in front of them steps aside, we
 REVEAL: Katie in a Yo Yo FroYo uniform, behind the counter.

63 HENRY
 No way.

Katie freezes, shoots him a look: "please don't tell."

64 MEL
 What, they bring back Bavarian Mint?

65 HENRY
 (beat, then, enjoying this)
 I don't know. Do you have Bavarian
 Mint? Ma'am?

Katie looks into the back and motions for ANTHONY to help,
 but he's on the phone. She turns back to Mel and Henry.

66 KATIE
 (French accent)
 Not today, sorry. Something else?

67 MEL
 Oh, you're French. Comment t'allez
 vous, aujourd'hui?

68 KATIE
 Oui. From France. ...Oui.

69 HENRY
 Why don't you slowly list all the
 flavors for us?

Katie puts her hands together, begging. Henry rubs his
 fingers together indicating money. Katie nods, giving in.

70 HENRY (CONT'D)
 Actually, we'll figure it out. Two
 small cups, please.

As Henry smiles and hands Katie the money...

71 HENRY (CONT'D)
 You were right, Dad. Coming for yogurt
 did make me feel better.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - NEXT DAY (D3)

11

Mel sits on an examining table on his cell phone. DR. FENTON
 enters with x-rays.

72 MEL (ON PHONE)
 I'm just honored you chose to go with
 our firm.

(MORE)

MEL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
And let me tell you something,
everything you've heard about me, it's
true. They sue you. We sue them back
twice as hard.

73 DR. FENTON
Okay, Mel, hang it up.

Mel holds up a just-a-minute finger, then laughs.

74 MEL (ON PHONE)
No, don't apologize. I am a bulldog--
your bulldog. Okay, talk to you soon.

He hangs up and turns to Dr. Fenton.

75 DR. FENTON
So if you're a bulldog I guess that
makes me your vet?
(chuckles, then)
How are you, Mel?

76 MEL
Great. Really great. Just got a great,
new client--

Dr. Fenton touches Mel's back gently and he jolts in pain.

77 MEL (CONT'D)
Not great! Not great!

78 DR. FENTON
Back acting up again?

79 MEL
A little.

80 DR. FENTON
Mel, this has been going on for years.
We've already done x-rays so we know
there's nothing structurally wrong.

81 MEL
Tell that to the shiv in my spine.

82 DR. FENTON
I think we need to revisit the idea of
stress management. Have you given any
thought to talking to someone?

83 MEL
A shrink? Yeah, Joyce and I tried it
once...

INT. MARRIAGE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - FLASHBACK (FB1) 12

Mel (no Elvis) sits with Joyce as their new therapist, CYNTHIA, takes a seat.

84 CYNTHIA
 First of all, congratulate yourselves for being here. Now I want you to think of this as a safe space, a nest of sorts, where together we can unpack your emotional truths.

85 MEL
 Yep, I'm done. See you at home.

He gets up and exits.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT (D3) 13

Back with Mel and Dr. Fenton.

86 MEL
 Wasn't for me.
 (then)
 All I need is a couple pain pills and I'll be good as gold.

87 DR. FENTON
 Mel, those are only a band-aid. You have to come up with some coping mechanisms for stress. For example, I dabble in model trains.

88 MEL
 Well, I'm not a six-year-old boy, so... how 'bout that prescription?

89 DR. FENTON
 If I write you one you'll just be back in another four months.

Mel takes this in.

90 DR. FENTON (CONT'D)
 Come on, what's your go-to stress reliever?

EXT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - PORCH (STAGE PORCH) - LATER (D3) 14

Mel, with Elvis, finds the spare key under a flower pot.

91 DR. FENTON (V.O.)
 Anything that you used to do that you haven't been able to do lately with your schedule?

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS (D3) 15

He enters and calls out to see if anyone is there.

92 MEL
Hello? Joyce?

No reply. He heads up the stairs with Elvis...

93 DR. FENTON (V.O.)
Something that makes you feel
completely relaxed...

SCENE 16 OMITTED 16

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER (D3) 17

Mel settles into a warm bubble bath. It is heaven.

94 MEL
Ohhhh sweet mama sunrise, I missed
this.
(then)
Elvis, this stays between us.

INT. GARLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY (D3) 18

Henry and Runyen are walking when they see Jake and his buddies. They put their heads down and keep moving.

95 JAKE
Got any more pictures of your mom?

96 RUNYEN
(aside to Henry)
Keep walking, keep walking...

But Henry can't help himself and turns back.

97 HENRY
None that you get to look at. They're
all mine!

The older boys laugh. Runyen tries to pull Henry along, but Henry jerks away from him, and crosses angrily toward Jake.

98 JAKE
What, you wanna fight?

99 HENRY
I'll kick your ass!

Henry gets to Jake and stares up at him. He's got six inches and fifty pounds on Henry. The bell rings. Runyen rushes up.

100 RUNYEN
Are the breaks getting shorter and shorter? My goodness. Bye now!
(ushering Henry away)
Walk away, walk away, walk away...

101 JAKE
Next time I see you, Fisher, you're dead!

102 RUNYEN
(to Henry)
I can't help you if you refuse to be helped!

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM/FOYER - LATER (D3)

19

As Mel, with Elvis at his side, pulls a towel out of the dryer and folds it...

103 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Dad went to great lengths to cover his tracks. He wanted us to think that any problem, no matter how big, would roll right off his back. But really his back is where every problem ended up.

He and Elvis cross into the foyer just as Henry enters.

104 HENRY
Hey, Dad. What are you doing here?

105 MEL
Oh-- Henry, hi!
(thinking fast)
I, uh... had to wash Elvis because he got sprayed by a skunk. Yeah, and, as you know, I don't have a tub at my place. Which is why I'm here. For the dog. And the tub. So the dog could use the tub.

106 HENRY
(not really caring)
Oh, okay.

Joyce enters through the front door and stops, surprised.

107 JOYCE
Oh! Hey, hi! They let us out of class early! For good behavior. They do that in grad school.

108 MEL

Elvis got sprayed by a skunk! That's why I'm here. Holding a towel.

109 JOYCE

(not listening)

Great. Well, better get started on my homework. I have sooo much homework.

She bends over to pull books out of her bag. Henry looks at her bending over, exactly like the photo on Jake's phone.

110 HENRY

Do you always have to wear such tight pants? Wouldn't you be more comfortable in some sweatpants or something? God!

111 JOYCE

What's with you?

112 HENRY

Nothing! Just... we learned about Apartheid in school and I'm very upset! Man's cruelty to man...

Katie enters wearing street clothes and a Yo Yo FroYo Visor.

113 KATIE

Oh, hey, Dad.

114 MEL

I had to give Elvis a bath here 'cause the groomer's so damn expensive!

115 KATIE

Okay.

Henry signals to her that she's still wearing her work visor. Katie yanks it off.

116 KATIE (CONT'D)

This is Anthony's visor. Guys give their girlfriends their work visors now. It's a thing.

117 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

We were so consumed with keeping our own secrets, we didn't realize everyone else was keeping secrets too.

118 KATIE

I've got homework.

119 HENRY

Me, too.

120 JOYCE
Me, too! I already said that!

121 MEL
I should go feed Elvis.

122 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*Maybe we would have realized if our
heads hadn't been so far up our own...
noses.*

As they all head separate ways, breathing sighs of relief.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

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

20

Henry and Runyen are having snacks.

123 HENRY

I had to hide from Jake in the janitor's closet. Did you know he puts the recycling in with the regular garbage? The regular garbage!

124 RUNYEN

Dude, there are only two ways this'll end: your mom gets fat, or you fight Jake. Either way genetics are against you.

125 HENRY

Can't I just move into the janitor's closet?

126 RUNYEN

You're gonna have to start lifting your dad's weights to get those wet noodle arms in fighting shape, son.

TIME CUT TO: Henry trying to lift a dumbbell. He can't get it off the ground and it immediately pulls him down with it.

127 HENRY

Oh my God, what are those, like a hundred pounds?

128 RUNYEN

Ten. Hey, after Jake kills you, can I have your Xbox?

Henry sighs. Runyen grabs a jug of milk off the counter and hands it to Henry.

129 RUNYEN (CONT'D)

Let's start slow.

Henry curls the milk jug. He can do it!

130 HENRY

Yes! I feel the burn--

Just then, the cap pops off and milk sprays everywhere.

INT. YO YO FROYO - DAY (D4)

21

Katie and Anthony are behind the counter. Katie makes sure the coast is clear, then gives him a kiss on the cheek.

131 ANTHONY

Katie. Remember, when we're on the clock, I'm not Anthony, your boyfriend, I'm Anthony, the Assistant Shift Manager and Toppings Captain. Good rule of thumb: when the apron's on, lips off.

Katie chuckles and salutes him, then gets a text.

132 KATIE

Ooh, my mom just said she's staying late at school. So I don't have to be home for dinner. What should we do?

133 ANTHONY

Hey, no texting on the floor.

134 KATIE

Jeez, sorry, "boss."

135 ANTHONY

Look, you're already on thin ice for abusing your sampling privileges. Don't make me write you up.

Katie is put off. Anthony checks his watch.

136 ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Oh, hey-- shift's over.

Anthony removes his apron, then puts his arm around her.

137 ANTHONY (CONT'D)

(immediately baby talk)

Does baby want to see movie?

138 KATIE

(pointedly)

I haven't clocked out yet.

Anthony quickly removes his arm from around an annoyed Katie.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - TICKET AREA - A LITTLE LATER (D4)

22

Joyce is once again bending Owen's ear.

139 JOYCE

(re: showtimes board)

So what'll it be today? Chick flick or blood diamond documentary? Who are we kidding? I'll go chick flick but if anyone asks, I saw the documentary.

140 OWEN

No one will ask. No one talks here but you.

Behind Joyce, Katie and Anthony cross up.

141 ANTHONY

Is that your mom?

142 KATIE

No, my mom's in... class.

Katie sees it is. BACK ON: Joyce handing Owen her student ID.

143 JOYCE

One student.

(then, taking it back)

Actually, Owen, no student discount.

You were probably wondering, yes, I had to do it. I dropped out of school.

Katie's eyes go wide. She pulls Anthony away. BACK ON: Joyce.

144 JOYCE (CONT'D)

Drama, right? My life should be a movie. Who would play me? A young Helen Hunt? A young Jennifer Lawrence?

145 OWEN

Isn't she like twenty-three-- Nope. Not getting sucked in.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - A FEW HOURS LATER (D4)

23

Joyce enters the quiet house.

146 JOYCE

Anybody home? 'Cause I'm home. From school. Got my backpack. From school. Where I was.

No answer. She exhales, takes a box of licorice from her backpack, pulls one out and takes a bite. She heads upstairs.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - JOYCE'S DRESSING AREA - MOMENTS LATER (D4) 24

Joyce enters, chewing, and opens the closet. REVEAL: A wet Mel, wearing a towel around his lower half and his dress shirt on top, which is buttoned incorrectly and sticks to his wet body. Elvis is beside him. Joyce screams, startled.

147 MEL

Oh, hey, Joyce.

148 JOYCE
What the hell is going on?

149 MEL
I, uh...
(then)
Look, I'm freezing. Let me get back in
the tub and I'll tell you.

He crosses back toward the tub.

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - LATER (D4)

25

Katie enters as Henry comes out of his bedroom, sweating and holding a jug of detergent and a can of paint.

150 HENRY
I... was doing laundry and... painting--

151 KATIE
I don't care.

She pulls a large frozen yogurt out of a bag:

152 KATIE (CONT'D)
Enjoy your hush yogurt, you little
blackmailer.

153 HENRY
You got a job but I get paid. It's
like you're working for me!

154 KATIE
I'd rather work for you than Anthony.
He treats me like his employee.

155 HENRY
Aren't you his employee?

156 KATIE
Yes, but I'm also his girlfriend. This
was supposed to make us closer, but
now we're not getting along at all.

157 HENRY
So, then quit.

158 KATIE
I can't, because...

159 HENRY
Why not?

160 KATIE
(beat, decides to tell him)
All right, listen. I think Mom and Dad
might be having money problems.

161 HENRY
What?

162 KATIE
Well, I heard Mom say she had to drop
out of school, and you know how much
she wants to be a therapist.

163 HENRY
(realizing)
Oh my gosh, Dad asked me to pay for
our yogurt yesterday.

164 KATIE
And he said it was too expensive for
Elvis to go to the groomer!

165 HENRY
And maybe that's why Mom's wearing
such tight pants. She can't afford
clothes that fit!

166 KATIE
What?

167 HENRY
Never mind.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER (D4)

26

Joyce, on the closed toilet, faces Mel, who reclines in the tub.

168 MEL
It's not a big deal. My back tightened
up because I've been under a little
stress. I needed a way to relax and my
apartment doesn't have a tub.

169 JOYCE
Why do you think that is?

170 MEL
I assume they didn't have the space
for both a shower and a--

171 JOYCE
I mean your stress. What's going on?

172 MEL
Nothing. The usual.

173 JOYCE

Mel, it's never gonna get better if you don't talk about it.

174 MEL

I don't talk, Joyce. I do.

175 JOYCE

Okay, well, what "don't" you talk about?

176 MEL

You know, work. Just took on a great new client, but he's gonna be pretty demanding. Can't let that cut into my time with Katie and Henry, since I'm already seeing them less. Still figuring things out with Elvis. And you.

177 JOYCE

That's quite a laundry list.

178 MEL

Oh, right, gotta do laundry. But it's fine. You know me, the tougher things are, the more I like it.

179 JOYCE

Interesting. Your back doesn't seem to like it.

Mel takes this in. We DISSOLVE to later in the "session."

180 JOYCE (CONT'D)

You think that's why you expect so much from the kids?

181 MEL

You mean, I'm hard on them because I'm hard on myself?

182 JOYCE

Something to consider.

183 MEL

Huh. Hang on, I need more hot water.

DISSOLVE again. Mel has relaxed further into the tub.

184 JOYCE

When do you think your need to be Superman started?

185 MEL

Probably around twelve, when the ol' eyes went. My mom didn't want me to feel less than other kids. She heaped a lot on me to show me I could handle it.

186 JOYCE

And you didn't want to disappoint her.

187 MEL

Course not. I wanted to prove myself to her. So I always took on too much. I guess I'm still doing that.

(aha moment)

Oh, my God. I'm still doing that!

Joyce nods knowingly.

188 MEL (CONT'D)

I never thought about it like that. Wow. Everything's starting to loosen up. Look, I can move a little without screeching like a hunted monkey.

189 JOYCE

Wow, that's specific.

190 MEL

Joyce, I know I made fun of it when you signed up for classes, but you have a real gift. You're not gonna be a great therapist... You already are one.

Joyce looks sheepish. As Mel turns on the hot water with his foot, sending a trickle of water into the tub...

191 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

Mom wanted to tell Dad she had dropped out, but after their impromptu hydro-therapy session, she was rethinking that choice... and rethinking the location for said session.

192 JOYCE

All right, our time is up.

193 MEL

Can I just ask you one more--

194 JOYCE

Mel, get out, I have to pee.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. LAW OFFICES - MEL'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY (D5)

27

Mel sits with RICHARD BARR (50's, aggressively corporate). They're on speakerphone with opposing counsel.

195 MEL

...And, as Mr. Barr's new attorney, I feel your client's lawsuit is frivolous.

196 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

Dad left Mom's tub a new man. For better or worse.

197 TED (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

Yes, I heard you were threatening to file a countersuit?

198 BARR

It's not a threat if we've already done it! Tell him, Mel! Drop the bomb!

199 MEL

Actually, Richard, I didn't file it.

200 BARR

Kaboom-- What?

Mel reaches over and hits mute on the speakerphone.

201 MEL

I think we need to take a step back and really try to figure out what we're hoping to accomplish. I don't know that aggression is always the right tack.

202 BARR

What the hell are you talking about? Who neutered my bulldog?!

203 MEL

Not neutered, enlightened.

(then)

Richard, do you have a tub at home?

Barr stares at Mel incredulously.

204 TED (ON SPEAKERPHONE)

Did you guys mean to hit mute? 'Cause you didn't.

INT. SMALL CLASSROOM - DAY (D5)

28

An invigorated Joyce hands a pink form to her professor.

205 JOYCE

...I mean, if I can fix my bonkers ex-husband in one session, how can I deny myself-- and the world-- this kind of talent?

206 PROFESSOR HEINZ

I just signed a form for you to drop out two days ago.

207 JOYCE

That was... an emotional hiccup. Is that a term? It should be. Man, am I good at this, or what?

The professor signs the form and Joyce takes her seat.

208 PROFESSOR HEINZ

We're all lucky to have an esteemed therapist with us today. Please welcome, Dr. Samantha La Croix.

DR. LA CROIX steps to the front of the class. She is Joyce's 70-year-old doppelganger!

209 DR. LA CROIX

Hello, future colleagues. I've been a therapist for over forty years. It's my life's work.

210 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

Whoa. In this poised, elegant woman, Mom saw herself, twenty-five years from now...

211 DR. LA CROIX

I shouldn't say work, because therapy is my calling. My patients' problems are my problems. I give one hundred percent of me, to them.

This hits a nerve for Joyce. As La Croix continues...

212 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)

As Mom listened to her speak about devoting her life to her patients, she decided, once and for all...

Joyce suddenly stands up.

213 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
...no way was this for her.

As La Croix drones on, Joyce stands up and crosses out of her row, stepping over people's bags.

214 JOYCE
(sotto)
Excuse me. Sorry. Sorry. Excuse me.

She reaches the professor and slides him the enrollment form.

215 JOYCE (CONT'D)
(embarrassed whispering)
Yeah, so, I'm outta here. Can you just sign underneath where I crossed out your signature? Thanks. Yeah. Sorry.
(sotto calling)
Beth. Beth. I'm gone for reals this time. Yeah. You're gonna have to drive to the field trip Wednesday.
(starts out, turns back)
Ooh, I think I left the cord for my laptop. Oh, wait, I have it. Sorry.

She waves and tip toes out.

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - HENRY'S BEDROOM - LATER (D5)

29

Henry does curls with two jugs of bleach.

216 RUNYEN
Put those down, it's not working. You're gonna have to fight. Jake might be bigger than you, and stronger than you, but...

Beat.

217 HENRY
What?!

218 RUNYEN
I couldn't come up with anything. I thought I could spin it.

219 HENRY
You're supposed to be helping me! I can't fight that guy! He'll kill me!

220 RUNYEN
My advice? Fight like a girl. Bite, scratch, pull hair. If you can get a hand in his mouth, that'd be great.

221 HENRY

I was gonna hit him with a tube sock I filled with change but I can't find it.

222 RUNYEN

Okay. Let's rehearse. I'll be Jake, you be you. Put your fists up.

(sighs)

No, thumbs outside the fist.

They circle each other.

223 RUNYEN (CONT'D)

Okay, left jab coming. Block it.

Runyen punches Henry in the eye. Henry stumbles backwards.

224 RUNYEN (CONT'D)

Not with your face!

INT. YO YO FROYO - SAME TIME (D5)

30

Anthony chastises Katie.

225 ANTHONY

Just look at the toppings bar! There are cashew clusters in the Oreo bin! It's chaos!

226 KATIE

Some people might like them together.

227 ANTHONY

It's my job to think up clever topping combos. Caramel with a pinch of fruity pebbles? That was my baby. Your job is to keep the bins organized.

228 KATIE

Okay, this is not working out. We can't be kissing one minute and boss/employee the next. We have to make a change.

229 ANTHONY

You're right. Can you give me a few days to find someone to replace you?

230 KATIE

Oh, I'm not quitting. I can't. I need the money.

231 ANTHONY

Then... what are we doing?

232 KATIE
Give it another second...

Katie waits for him to get it. He does not.

233 KATIE (CONT'D)
We're breaking up!

Anthony is shocked. A CUSTOMER walks up.

234 CUSTOMER
Hi, which flavors are dairy-free?

235 ANTHONY
(overcome with grief)
Can't you see we're going through
something here?!
(then, bereft)
Mango and strawberry.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - FOYER - LATER (D5)

31

Joyce enters, carrying groceries.

236 MEL (O.S.)
Oh hi, Joyce.

She yelps, startled, and turns to find Mel, sitting in the chair by the stairs. He stands as soon as she enters.

237 MEL (CONT'D)
I was just in the neighborhood. Out
and about. How're things?

238 JOYCE
You want to get in the tub, don't you?

239 MEL
Give me five minutes to fill it up.

Mel heads upstairs. Joyce realizes she created an emotional tub monster.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY (D5)

32

Mel reclines in the bath. Joyce sits on the closed toilet.

240 MEL
...Normally I'd be upset that I lost a
client, but maybe it's a good thing. I
mean, just like I have to get used to
the new Mel, so do my clients. Right?

241 JOYCE
Yeah... I'm not sure if you should be taking advice from me...

242 MEL
What are you talking about?

They hear Katie enter Joyce's bedroom.

243 KATIE (O.S.)
Mom?

244 MEL
She can't see me like this! What do we do?

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - JOYCE'S DRESSING AREA - SAME TIME (D5) 33

Katie walks up to the bathroom door, reaching for the handle.

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS (D5) 34

She enters to find Joyce, alone, sitting on the closed toilet, filing her nails. The shower curtain is pulled shut.

245 KATIE
I broke up with Anthony!

246 JOYCE
Oh, I'm sorry, honey. But I can't say I'm surprised. It was like one dumb thing after another out of his mouth.

247 KATIE
No-- it wasn't that. It was...

248 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Katie realized she couldn't tell Mom what happened without revealing her secret job. She had to cover it up.

249 KATIE
You're right. It was 'cause he's dumb.

250 JOYCE
Soooooo dumb.

Henry enters, now with a black eye, and is surprised to see Joyce and Katie.

251 JOYCE (CONT'D)
Henry, what happened to your eye?!

As Henry freezes...

252 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*I panicked. I had just come in for
makeup to hide it. I couldn't tell her
why Runyen hit me, so I--*

253 HENRY
Katie got a job at the yogurt place!

254 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
...did that.

255 JOYCE
What?!

The shower curtain is yanked open, revealing a sudsy Mel and
Elvis in the bubble bath.

256 MEL
What the hell's going on here?!

Katie and Henry scream.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. JOYCE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER (D5)

35

Joyce, Katie, Henry and Mel in Joyce's robe sit on the couch.

257 MEL

...And your mother was just helping me talk out my stress so my back would stop tensing up.

258 KATIE

In the tub?

259 HENRY

That's so weird.

259A MEL

I guess it is a little weird.

259B JOYCE

We're an unusual family.

260 MEL

Whatever you kids are going through, I'm not gonna get stressed about it because we are in the presence of an excellent therapist. Joyce, make with the therapy.

261 JOYCE

Okay, well... Katie, why do you feel the need to actively rebel against your-- I can't do this! I quit! I quit school. I dropped out! Twice!

262 MEL

What? Why?

He starts to fidget as though his back is tightening up.

263 JOYCE

I changed my mind! I don't wanna be a therapist. I can't live my life for clients. I've lived my life for you guys for the past twenty years-- no regrets, every day's a gift-- but I can't help other people figure out who they are until I figure out who I am. And it's gonna take time. I'm very complicated!

263A HENRY

We know.

263B MEL

Tell me about it.

264 KATIE

So wait, you didn't quit 'cause we're having money problems?

265 MEL
Money problems? No! What is happening
around here?!

266 JOYCE
Mel, calm down.

267 MEL
(not calm)
I'm calm. I'm very calm.

268 JOYCE
(to Katie)
Sweetie, we're not having money
problems.

269 KATIE
Oh, thank God. Now I can quit and get
back together with Anthony!
(then, to Joyce)
You really think he's dumb?

270 JOYCE
What? Nooo! When I said he was dumb, I
meant, like... he doesn't say smart
things.
(deflecting)
Henry, what happened to your eye?

271 MEL
Who gave you the shiner?
(stands, rubbing his back)
It's getting hard to sit.

Henry looks at all their expectant faces, then...

272 HENRY
Okay, Runyen punched me 'cause he was
training me to fight this eighth
grader who showed everyone a picture
of Mom and called her a MILF and I was
too embarrassed to tell you and I
didn't want to hurt Mom's feelings and
if we're not having money problems I
should transfer to a private school--

273 JOYCE
Wait, a boy called me a MILF?
(secretly flattered)
That's... awful. Did he call any of
the other mothers a... that terrible
thing? Or was it just me?

Mel is trying to remain calm, but this is too much.

283 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*...Katie was free to quit her job and
in the on-again off-again saga of her
and Anthony, they were on-again...*

284 KATIE
Did you find someone to replace me?

A pretty sixteen-year-old GIRL enters from the back in a Yo
Yo FroYo uniform, smiling at Anthony. Katie looks jealous.

285 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
...for now...

INT. GARLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY (D6)

38

Henry and Jake stand toe-to-toe as Jake's friends look on.

286 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
*...As for me, I figured out how to
deal with Jake...*

287 HENRY
(re: black eye)
Someone already beat you to it, so you
probably don't even want to hit me now.

288 JAKE
You got plenty of face left for me.

Just then, Runyen comes around the corner.

289 RUNYEN
Henry, your mom's here to pick you up.

290 JAKE
Just 'cause your hot mom rescued you
today, doesn't mean tomorrow I won't--

In SLOW MO, Joyce turns the corner: no makeup, messy hair,
sweatshirt, mouth guard, etc. Jake and his friends recoil.

291 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Actually, Mom and her mouth guard did.

292 JOYCE
(mouth guard lisp)
Schorry I'm late, schweetie. I had to
scthop at the pharmathy to get my foot
cream.

293 JAKE
(beat, horrified by her)
You know what, Henry, we're good.

Henry starts to leave, but Jake's buddies block his way.

294 JAKE (CONT'D)
C'mon, step aside. He's gotta get home. To that.

Henry happily joins his mom.

295 HENRY
Thanks, Mom. You think I should've just stood up to him?

296 JOYCE
No, honey.
(then)
He would have deshtroyed you.

INT. MEL'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY (D6)

39

CLOSE ON: Joyce, looking pleased.

297 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Mom discovered a new path...

298 JOYCE
I saw you had a need and I filled it!
See, I do want to help people. Just not in a boring beige pantsuit way, more in a hip creative way! Sooo, I've decided to go back to school for interior design!

REVEAL: Mel is soaking in his new bathtub.

299 MEL
Sounds great. Thanks for the tub.

300 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
And Dad...

Mel shuts his eyes, relaxed. His phone rings. He picks it up.

301 MEL (INTO PHONE)
Mel Fisher... What?! They can't do that to us, Barr! You tell those bastards you and your bulldog will take them for every cent!

302 ADULT HENRY (V.O.)
Well, Dad will always be Dad.

END OF SHOW