

PUSHING DAISIES

"Comfort Food"


Episode #3T7058

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. LONGBOROUGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS - NIGHT

Establishing. The school at night.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL - KITCHEN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The haunting, lonely kitchen, illuminated by the pale light of the moon, has a visitor: YOUNG NED. Tiptoeing in stocking feet.

NARRATOR

At this moment, Young Ned is 9 years, 9 months, 15 days, 10 hours and 2 minutes old. Awakened by loneliness-induced insomnia, he found himself in desperate need of comfort.

TIME CUT. Ned, no stranger to this kitchen, has littered the tabletops with flour, pie tins, milk and fruit. He bakes.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And "comfort," for Ned, meant pie. The risks were great, but Young Ned rationalized his rogue impulse baking as sheep-counting.

TIME CUT. Ned now has a delicious pie before him. He smiles, cuts a big slice and happily eats.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

What harm could come of a single pie, in the dark of night, with all the evidence ingested?

EUGENE walks in. Stops dead in his tracks. Staring.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

He was caught in flagrante delicto by one Eugene Mulchandani...

Eugene stares at Ned. Ned stares at Eugene.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...who immediately joined him in the act.

TIME CUT. The two boys eat side-by-side, faces smeared with filling.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Ned and Eugene were unprepared for what happened next.

The boys stop. REVERSE TO REVEAL a BUNCH OF BOYS now standing at the kitchen entrance. Silent. Slightly awed. Staring. CAMERA PUSHES IN ON INGMAR TODD. He smiles, an idea forming.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The aroma of freshly-baked pie, wafting through boarding school halls, awakened an entire class who had but one thing in common:

Ned and Eugene now sit in the middle of the GROUP of boys, all happily eating pie, getting along, stuffing their faces.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

They were all far from home and needed comfort. The longing and homesickness which filled the school like a plague was magically lifted with every bite...

Ingmar Todd stands at the door, collecting dollar bills as, one by one, his SCHOOL CHUMS file into:

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...and the party began.

ROARING '20S MUSIC plays as the boys all whoop it up. They dance, eat pie, Ned bakes more. It's all got a SPEAKEASY, "Flappers Gone Wild" feel to it -- until -- CLAP! A grown-up hand slaps down hard upon young Ned's shoulder. Music STOPS.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Until it stopped.

THE PRINCIPAL looks down upon Ned with an old man's frown.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And Young Ned learned that even a forkful of immediate gratification can lead to a world of grave consequences.

Ned, his apron removed, is marched out by the principal, past all the other boys -- a walk of shame. His face fills frame.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

MATCHING CUT: ADULT NED's face. His expression has not changed.

NARRATOR

A lesson to be learned again years later at the grave of Charles Charles, currently-dead father of the girl called Chuck.

PULL BACK to show Ned and CHUCK standing in the freshly-dug grave of Charles Charles (RE-USE EPISODE 207, "ROBBING HOOD").

NED

Ready?

Chuck's nervous, but she climbs into the grave.

CHUCK
I'm ready. I think.

Ned flips the casket open. Prepares to alive-again Chuck's father. When:

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Wait.

NED
What?

CHUCK
If we each get half a minute, you go first.

NED
No, no. You go. If you spill over the first thirty seconds, then no biggie. As opposed to spilling over the second thirty seconds, which would be yes biggie.

CHUCK
I'm not gonna spill. I budgeted every second. Five seconds for "I miss you"s, ten seconds for "I love you"s and fifteen seconds to give him his birthday present.

NED
That's not enough seconds. You should have all sixty. We don't need to fact-find about Dwight. I don't know what I was thinking.

CHUCK
You were thinking it was important to protect us from a mysterious, potentially-dangerous man. You go first.

NED
No, you go. This is awkward.

CHUCK
Go first or I hit you with the shovel.

A solid closing argument. Chuck nods, Ned touches the body, it blue-SPARKS back to life. Sits up in shadow. Ned talks fast.

NED
Hi, Mr. Charles or do I just call you Charles doesn't matter it's me, Ned. I lived across the street from you when I was a little boy.

CHUCK
Hi, Dad. It's me, Charlotte. You've been dead twenty years.

CONTINUED: (2)

The SHADOWY CORPSE visibly reacts. Ned plows through, eager to get out of the way of the father-daughter reunion.

NED

I'm sure you have a lot of questions, but can you put 'em on hold for just a second and tell us: Is Dwight Dixon a bad man?

CHARLES CHARLES, a figure SEEN ONLY IN SHADOW, answers in a slightly-gravelly, head-cold voice:

CHARLES CHARLES

Yes.

NED

Oh. Uh-oh. He stole Chuck -- I still call your daughter "Chuck," still, like when I was nine--

CHUCK

Fifteen.

NED

No, I was nine.

CHUCK

Seconds.

NED

(snapping back)

Dwight stole your pocket watch and left a veiled threat about exposing a very big secret he knows we probably don't want exposed.

CHARLES CHARLES

If he got the watch, you got nothin' to worry about. The threat's his insurance policy. You don't say nothing, he'll return the favor.

NED

Good to know. You're up.

Ned gives Chuck a quick, loving look -- and goes. As he walks away from the open grave, CAMERA TRACKS BACK with him, leaving Chuck behind. Ned turns and watches from a distance.

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker's gift of life lasted for one precious minute only. A minute he eagerly shared with the Chuck of his life...

REVERSE: CLOSE ON Ned, smiling, watching his good deed. DISTANT LIGHTNING FLASHES across the sky, followed by a THUNDERCLAP.

CONTINUED: (3)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*...to give her but half a minute to catch up
on a lifetime with a father long lost.*

Ned checks his watch. And the smile is replaced with sadness.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*30 seconds were all he could give, and not a
second more.*

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ned and Chuck are spooning. Yes, spooning, Chuck safely wrapped up in boyfriend Ned's loving arms. They are safe, however, as a curving PLASTIC SHEET divides them. Ned is dead to the world, lightly snoring. Chuck stares into middle-distance. Then:

CHUCK

Ned?

No response. He's asleep. Chuck slowly peels his arm off and slips out, onto the floor. She looks back, bends and kisses him on the cheek through a corner of the plastic and leaves.

NARRATOR

*As Chuck soundlessly broke the bonds of her
plastic-wrap embrace and snuck away to beat
the break of day...*

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

VIVIAN sits on the couch, her coat draped over her lap, waiting.

NARRATOR

*...Vivian waited for Dwight Dixon, gentleman
caller, unaware her sister Lily chased him off
their front porch 3 hours earlier.*

Vivian turns to the door and waits. She looks stunning and sexy. She waits. And waits.

INT. DWIGHT'S MOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

LILY sits in Dwight's motel room, the one stashed with weapons, last seen in Episode 207. She calmly faces the door, shotgun on her lap, just like Josh Brolin in "No Country for Old Men."

NARRATOR

*Sister Lily would make certain Dwight Dixon,
gentleman caller, would never call again.*

Lily bites into a saltine, keeps waiting. A shadow passes under the doorway crack of light. Lily silently lifts the gun. The door opens and DWIGHT DIXON walks in.

To find Lily's shotgun aimed right at him. He freezes.

LILY

Way I see this, we both have something you want.

DWIGHT

What would that be, my spicy cocktail?

Lily lifts her free hand and dangles... Charles Charles's GOLD WATCH on its chain.

LILY

I got my daughter's watch and you got your insides where you want 'em.

(then)

You're gonna dig up Charlotte's grave and you're gonna put this watch back where you found it. After you tell me your real story.

Dwight smiles his disarming killer smile. Unseen by Lily, he reaches around behind his back and wraps fingers around the REVOLVER tucked in his waistband. Still charming:

DWIGHT

Well. It all began when I was conceived in the sweat and sawdust of a traveling carnival. My mother was the bearded lady and my father was an acrobat named--

Dwight whips the gun out fast, but Lily's trigger finger is a split-second faster and she -- BOOM!

SEEN FROM OUT IN THE HALLWAY:

Dwight and the whole motel door get BLOWN OFF, flying toward us, revealing Lily, standing Clint Eastwood triumphant amidst the swirling SMOKE, and we CUT TO:

LILY. Still sitting where she was, biting a saltine.

NARRATOR

Both sisters remained ladies in waiting.

The door is on its hinges. Dwight hasn't arrived. Lily gives up. Grabs a pen and scrawls a note. Leaves. CAMERA HOLDS ON THE NOTE: "I GOT IT. U WANT IT? CEMETERY. - L."

INT. PIE HOLE - DINING AREA - EARLY MORNING

The Pie Hole is closed. Ned watches Chuck make her way across the counter, filling sugar bottles with sugar from a pitcher.

NED

I'm declaring it an emotional snow day.

CHUCK

But you love that cook-off. And you and Olive didn't get to go last year.

NED

I chose not to go last year. I was busy.

CHUCK

Because of me.

NED

I like being busy because of you. And I'm looking forward to being busy because of you all day. You can't just do what you did last night and not be... overwhelmed.

CHUCK

I admit I'm plenty whelmed. But not overly.

NED

Overly is on its way. Probably looking in the window right now. You had to say hello-again and goodbye-again to your dad in 30 seconds.

CHUCK

I just told myself it was thirty seconds more than we were supposed to have.

NED

How'd that work?

CHUCK

Still hurt. It didn't matter how I budgeted my seconds. The hello-againing was wonderful and the goodbye-againing... wasn't.

(then)

You should go to that cook-off.

NED

You're trying to get rid of me.

CHUCK

No, I'm not. I think I need an emotional snow day, too.

NED

You need an emotional snow day from me? Am I school? Oh, no. Is it weird now? Are we weird now because I did... it with your dad?

CHUCK

Not weird. I've never felt more in love with you. But I'm also feeling a whole lot of other things.

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

So many things I wanna tell you, I don't wanna tell you, I'm afraid to tell you, I don't know how to tell you.

NED

You don't have to tell me if you don't want to. I mean, you do. Eventually.

CHUCK

I will. Tonight. I promise. In the meantime, Olive's counting on you. She said two years ago, she could taste that first prize Blue Ribbon. Until that taste was replaced with the bitter tang of defeat.

NED

Bitter tang, bitter Olive. It's a story.

CHUCK

This time it's gonna have a happy ending. Go to the cook-off. Olive will love you for it.

OFF that pronouncement...

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

Ned and OLIVE, dressed in brilliantly-designed outfits representing the hometown goodness of the Pie Hole, enter the world of the Papen County "BEST IN BELLY" COMFORT FOOD COOK-OFF, a PAGEANT-LIKE baking contest. They pass VARIOUS CONTESTANTS, each dressed in their respective food-based outfit, each stationed at a Googie architecture-style station ("RINGS OF FIRE" onion rings, "DER WAFFLE IRON," etc.). Among them is COLONEL LIKKIN of COLONEL LIKKIN'S SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN.

OLIVE

Isn't it great to be back again? Just you and me, shoulder-to-shoulder, eye-to-eye, decorative hats fixed squarely on sweaty brows, bonding in the fiery kiln of competition that forges men's souls.

NED

We're baking pie, Olive.

OLIVE

Not "pie." Damn great pie. This is our year. We're in a better place than we were two years ago. I, for one, am no longer encumbered with the tension of a sexual nature toward you. I'm focused. This is why coaches tell their players to abstain before a big game. Focus.

NED

I never really played sports.

OLIVE

We should have won last time. Would've won,
if we hadn't gotten screwed by...

CAMERA SWOOSHES IN on Olive, now filled with quiet, deadly rage.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

...the Buffalo.

REVERSE TO REVEAL MARIANNE MARIE BEETLE, of MUFFIN BUFFALO,
whipping up a batch of muffins and chatting up some JUDGES.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Sweet Lord in Heaven, how I hate the Buffalo.

LEO BURNS, the obese, blinding COOK-OFF AIDE (think Julie, your
cruise director) toddles up on his Rascal.

LEO BURNS

When you say "Buffalo," do mean the noble
breed of bison lost forever to settlers' greed
or the upstate New York hamlet still thirsting
for Super Bowl glory?

OLIVE

I mean the galloping bitch on wheels whipping
up those crap muffins over there.

LEO BURNS

Marianne Marie Beetle. They call her the
Pastry Slayer. Every competitive pie, tart
and sweet quiche that crosses her path gets
gored on the horns of Muffin Buffalo.

He shakes their hands.

LEO BURNS (CONT'D)

Leo Burns, the new Comfort Food Cook-Off
Coordinator and lover of all things foody.

OLIVE

I just love that all foods are welcome at this
year's Comfort Food Cook-Off.

NED

It's like best in show, only, "best in belly."

LEO BURNS

Which means Buffalo Muffin will be locking
those horns with Colonel Likkin.

Leo surreptitiously points to the Colonel Sanders-like COLONEL
LIKKIN, glad-handing some fans.

CONTINUED: (2)

LEO BURNS (CONT'D)

The Colonel will be frying himself this year. Not "frying himself," but he himself will be frying. Chicken. It's an honor to watch.

OLIVE

The honor will be frying his ass up extra crispy and taking First Place.

LEO BURNS

He and the Buffalo are the teams to beat. Likkin's been the Best in Belly Blue Ribbon winner fifteen years running. But there's an empty winner's plate, waiting to be loaded.

OLIVE

(bows, points to hat)

With Damn Great Pie!

LEO BURNS

You're the Pie Holers! I'm a very, very, very big fan. As Event Coordinator, I'm not allowed to say this, but I'm rooting for you.

OLIVE

He's a dreamboat. Well, tugboat. But still. Let's set up. Partner.

As Leo toddles off on his scooter, Ned and Olive move on, passing various booths. They pass Marianne Marie.

NED

Don't see her, don't see her, not seeing her.

MARIANNE MARIE

Ted! So nice to see you came back after taking a year off to lick your wounds and hide in the dank shadows of humiliating defeat. And you were so close...

OLIVE

Yeah. Mysterious. As if someone deliberately sabotaged our oven, Cheater McGee.

MARIANNE MARIE

It's a poor workman who blames his tools.

OLIVE

Just keep your oven mitts to yourself.

MARIANNE MARIE

I plan to, as I present more award-winning muffins to the judges. And you remember, now: Losing doesn't make you a loser. Oh, wait. It does. Better get stuffing your pie holes!

Ned pulls angry Olive away.

OLIVE
That Buffalo is going down.

NARRATOR
But despite the freshly-stoked heat of the competition before him, the Pie-Maker's thoughts strayed away from pastries to be made, and toward Chuck...

OMIT

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - STREET - DAY

Establishing.

NARRATOR
...wondering what she could possibly be afraid to tell him...

EXT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - STREET - DAY

Establishing.

NARRATOR
...and knowing how secrets make secret-keepers feel lonely...

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

Chuck enters a darkened room. Looks scared. Crosses the room toward a shadowy corner...

NARRATOR
...never suspecting that Chuck was not alone at all.

She moves quickly to a MYSTERY MAN and hugs him in an embrace:

CHUCK
Hi, Dad.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

CAMERA DESCENDS FROM THE HEAVENS to FIND Chuck and Ned standing over the coffin of Charles Charles, as before.

NED

You're up.

Ned gives Chuck a quick, loving look -- and climbs out of the grave. As he walks away, CAMERA TRACKS BACK with him, leaving Chuck behind, then TRACKS BACK to Chuck, leaving Ned behind.

CHUCK

Hello, again. I know I don't look like the Charlotte you remember--

CHARLES CHARLES

Oh, you're the Charlotte I remember all right. Button-button. Cute as. Now isn't this nice.

CHUCK

I missed you, Dad. Sonofabitch.

(looks at watch)

Now we're eating into our "I love you" time. I love you and "Happy Birthday."

CHARLES CHARLES

It's my birthday?

CHUCK

Not today, but it was gonna be.

CHARLES CHARLES

Then I died.

CHUCK

I never got to give this to you. But now I can. So I guess in a way it is your birthday.

Chuck hands her father the wallet she made for him as a child. A LIGHTNING FLASH ARCS overhead, followed by a THUNDERCLAP. She HUGS him tight. Then pulls back, an idea forming...

CHUCK (CONT'D)

It's your birthday. Put on my gloves. Hurry.

She quickly pulls off her gloves and he pulls them on. She looks over her shoulder to see Ned approaching. Chuck gives her father one last hug and whispers in his ear:

CHUCK (CONT'D)

When he touches you, play dead. I'll be back to dig you up in an hour.

CHARLES CHARLES

What?

Chuck backs away as Ned jumps back in the grave.

CHUCK

I love you, Dad.

CHARLES CHARLES

(intrigued)

I love you, too, button-button.

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker gave every second he could give and not a second more.

NED

It was nice to see you again, Mister Charles.

CHARLES CHARLES

(intrigued and confused)

Yup. You, too, Nedly.

NARRATOR

Torn between the Pie-Maker she loved and the father she lost, Chuck looked for a sign to rationalize the betrayal she was about to commit...

Ned extends his hand, and as Charles Charles takes it, A BOLT OF LIGHTNING FLASHES ACROSS THE SKY with an IMMEDIATE THUNDERCLAP.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...and miraculously found it.

Ned startles as Charles Charles drops back into his coffin. Chuck blinks, startled by the timing of the lighting flash.

NED

Are you okay?

CHUCK

Uh-huh.

She quickly closes the lid on her father's coffin.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

Chuck is wrapping the gauze around her seated father's head. The job almost complete, he looks like *"The Invisible Man."*

CHARLES CHARLES

It didn't feel like twenty years. It felt like something, but... Do the years you spent being dead count as part of your lifetime?

CHUCK

Best left to philosophers. What did it feel like if it didn't feel like twenty years?

CHARLES CHARLES

Gliding. Holding your breath and being able to breathe and just... gliding.

CHUCK

I didn't glide.

CHARLES CHARLES

Now, why would you have any business gliding?

CHUCK

I died. And then Ned touched me. But there wasn't any gliding, there was just... Ned.

CHARLES CHARLES

And he never touched you again?

CHUCK

No. He can't. Not without--

CHARLES CHARLES

Good.

Chuck can't help but smile.

CHARLES CHARLES (CONT'D)

How is this possible? You, me, here again in the here-and-now when we belong in the hereafter? Since when did death get a loophole?

CHUCK

Since Ned. Your dreams are gonna be a lot more vivid now. It's neat. And my bees--

CHARLES CHARLES

You have bees?

CHUCK

Since you died. Then they died and Ned touched them, too. Now their honey is... well, you've never had honey like this.

CHARLES CHARLES

Hate to look in the gift horse's mouth, but I'm not gonna start craving human flesh, am I?

CHUCK

No. Although everything does taste better.

CHARLES CHARLES

What's the catch, button? Hiding me away like every stray cat, dog and goose that met your acquaintance. You don't want Nedly-Deadly to know my bucket's still kicking. Why?

(then)

Is there a catch?

CHUCK

Not that you're aware of.

CHARLES CHARLES

What?

CHUCK

Not that I'm aware of.

(off his look)

Okay. There's a catch. And I have to go catch it before I get caught.

CHARLES CHARLES

You gonna tell me what this catch is, button?

CHUCK

I will. Tonight. I promise.

NARRATOR

As Chuck's plan was percolating...

INT. EMERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM A JAPANESE COFFEE SYPHON to find EMERSON COD sitting at his desk. The coffee syphon percolates.

NARRATOR

...Private Investigator Emerson Cod gently extracted the delicate flavors of Bolivia Wara coffee grounds for a smooth, clean coffee experience on a morning that would soon prove to be anything but smooth or clean.

Chuck barges in:

CHUCK

Emerson!

Emerson holds up a "one moment" finger to her, takes a sip of coffee from his already-poured cup, then sets it down.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

I need your help.

EMERSON

Pay help or friend help?

Chuck puts her hands on her hips.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Damn. See that? That's the kind of body language you never hear with pay help.

Chuck's façade begins to crumble and continues to do so over:

CHUCK

Ned brought my father back to life, but only for a minute and when the minute was up, Ned touched him again like we always do. No biggie. But yes biggie. In the heat of the moment, my thinking wasn't so much "thinking" as "feeling." I couldn't help myself and I tricked Ned with my gloves and my father's alive which Ned doesn't know. Please help me.

Emerson watches. Thinks. Then:

EMERSON

What was the part about your gloves?

CHUCK

I'm a horrible person. I used Ned. My dad's alive because I have impulse-control issues and now somebody else is dead.

(beat)

What do I do?

EMERSON

First, blow.

He hands her a box of tissues.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Second, trust.

CHUCK

You're not mad?

EMERSON

Furious. Steaming. Red-hot. I'll yell at you later, girl. Right now, I'm gonna help.

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

CLOSE ON a pie pan as -- PLOP! A load of berries gets loaded in. Olive is cooking, and fast. Ned tries to help as she blasts past him, putting the newly-made berry pie in the oven.

OLIVE

I don't want your help. You're slowing the roll, chief. I'm in the zone.

Ned looks across the way to see Marianne Marie matching Olive's every move, baking muffins, exchanging the stink-eye.

MARIANNE MARIE

(calling out)

Working awful hard for disappointment over there.

OLIVE

I am gonna win that Blue Ribbon, wrap it around her neck and strangle her with it.

NED

Olive. You're baking with hate.

OLIVE

Rich, buttery, high-in-carbohydrate hate. You know what no one tells you about cooking with the Dark Side? The food is really good.

She goes back to the oven, Ned follows her, reasoning.

NED

Revenge is a dish best served cold. We make pie. Warm, delicious, happy-making pie.

Olive sends a cloud of flour into the air.

OLIVE

Help cook or get out of the kitchen, short-pants.

NED

Fine.

Ned helps. Marianne Marie, across the way, is one step ahead. She pulls a tray of muffins from the oven, smells them...

MARIANNE MARIE

Ah, the sweet smell of victory.

OLIVE

Not this year, turd-muffin.

MARIANNE MARIE

I'll shut your pie hole good.

OLIVE

Bring it, stale-cakes. We're gonna win.

MARIANNE MARIE

Who's "we," sucka? I'm gonna win.

They, like every CONTESTANT on the floor, STOP COLD when they hear a blood-curdling SCREAM!

CONTINUED: (2)

Leo Burns rides his Rascal at top speed to the source of the screaming, to Colonel Likkin's closed-curtained cooking station. He pulls the curtain back as the chefs crowd around him to see:

The Colonel is halfway in his own boiling vat of grease. His wife and sous-chef, THE WIDOW LIKKIN, is screaming.

THE WIDOW LIKKIN

My husband, the Colonel! He's dead!

Ned rushes forward and, using OVEN MITTS, PULLS the Colonel from his own bubbling vat. The man is a deep-fried CORPSE.

NED

Not just dead. He's extra crispy.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ned, Olive, Marianne Marie, Leo and other chef contestants look on, sadly, as distraught sous-chef, the Widow Likkin, rambles in shock.

THE WIDOW LIKKIN

My husband, the Colonel, gone forever.

NED

I'm afraid it looks like he collapsed and fell into his own boiling oil.

THE WIDOW LIKKIN

I always knew one of his many massive heart attacks would do him in -- no man in his prime should collapse into his own deep fryer, it's just so undignified...

OLIVE

True. At least the Colonel left this world fryin'.

NED

Should be some comfort.

THE WIDOW LIKKIN

There's no comfort knowing the secret recipe will die along with him. The recipe was the Colonel's life's work, his greatest and only legacy.

NED

Surely he wrote it down.

THE WIDOW LIKKIN

Surely he didn't. My husband was a fat-frying savant. Kept the recipe stored in his head. Worth a fortune, built his franchise on one deep, original taste. If only I could have him back, for one minute -- to preserve his lasting, loving memory.

She SOBS. Ned frowns, then eyes the PARAMEDICS, who are preparing to enter the curtained-off cooking station. Knows what he must do.

NED

Olive. I need you. Help me help the widow.

OLIVE

How? Her husband's dead, what are you gonna do? Haul him back to life and say, "Dude, what's your recipe?"

Pause.

NED

Maybe he left something behind. Just distract the paramedics long enough for me to, uh, examine his workstation.

He ducks behind the curtain. As the paramedics almost pass, Olive sticks her fingers in a bowl of raspberry sauce, smears it on her face:

OLIVE

Ahh! My eyes are bleeding!

She runs away. The paramedics follow.

INT. COLONEL LIKKIN'S COOKING STATION

Ned steps in and shuts the curtain. He's ALONE with the extra-crispy corpse of the Colonel and -- SPARK! -- un-deads him.

COLONEL LIKKIN

I finally know what my birds felt like.
(re: himself)
Guess I'm dead, eh?

NED

Heart attack. Not a lot of time and the Widow Likkin wants to preserve your secret recipe.

COLONEL LIKKIN

Good woman, my bride. Let's do it. I got all 500 herbs and spices right up here. Better pull up a chair and grab a pen.

NED

That sounds like a long trip down a lazy river we don't have time for.

COLONEL LIKKIN

You can't rush goodness.
(then)
Did you say, "Heart attack"?

NED

(grabbing pen and pad)
I did. Shall we start with herbs or spices?

COLONEL LIKKIN

Bushwah! Some carpetbagging coward snuck up behind, battered me in my own batter and shoved me into boiling oil. It was murder, son.

NED

(this is news)

Really? But you didn't see who did it?

COLONEL LIKKIN

Attacked from behind. They were stealthy, like a snake or a Yankee.

NED

(nervously checks his watch)

Okay, why don't we hit the headlines of the recipe and then with the time left over we can circle back around to the murder -- this is silly. Are you sure you didn't write the recipe down?

COLONEL LIKKIN

I did.

NED

You did? And we couldn't have just started with that?

COLONEL LIKKIN

Don't usually trust fast-talkers. Got one handwritten copy. Keep it right here in my...

The Colonel reaches for his breast pocket. But his arm, deep-fried, crackles and will not bend. Crispy bits break off.

COLONEL LIKKIN (CONT'D)

Here in my... tarnation, the fat-frying process seems to have robbed me of mobility.

Ned takes a set of tongs from nearby and, with a nod of permission, digs into the Colonel's breast pocket. Empty.

NED

There's nothing there.

COLONEL LIKKIN

Impossible! I've kept my recipe right there -- the same spot for thirty years. What scoundrel stole my secret recipe?

NED

I'll find out. And I'll find out who killed you, too. But now, I'm afraid time is up.

COLONEL LIKKIN

I hate to go. But at least I'm going delicious.

Ned shivers, grossed-out and touches the Colonel, RE-DEADING him just as the curtains part, the PARAMEDICS wheel their gurney in.

NARRATOR

And as the Colonel went back to being dead...

INT. EMERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Emerson is shrugging on his coat as Chuck leads him to the door.

NARRATOR

...Chuck faced the consequences of her impulsive decision to bring her father back to life.

CHUCK

The bring-Dad-back part I don't regret. How can you regret reuniting with someone you love who you thought you'd never see again?

EMERSON

Point taken.

CHUCK

The much bigger problem -- maybe the *biggest* problem, in an objective sense -- is the dishonesty with Ned and the making-someone-else-less-alive part.

EMERSON

"Less alive." Nice euphemism, killer.

CHUCK

We were at the cemetery in the dead of night. There was nobody else was around. Maybe nobody died.

EMERSON

You think this is a "sometimes" rule? Ned lets a person stay alive longer than a minute and someone else has to die *sometimes*? No. It's an "every time" rule and some sucker's dead in the leaves.

Chuck rises, agitated.

CHUCK

Oh, god. I may have killed some nice old lady with insomnia who was taking flowers to her husband. Or an old-time grounds keeper whom everyone loves and calls "Pops"? Or...

EMERSON

Either way, there's a dead body to find.
Which was deaded by Ned, only he don't know
about it on account of you didn't tell him.
And that's the wrong I'm correcting.

CHUCK

I know what I did was wrong -- but I was
spurred to action by the spur-of-the-moment
which leaves me living in the deep, dark world
of consequence. But if you help me clean this
up, then Ned won't have to live anywhere but
the bright, happy world of pie. And then all
Ned and I will have to deal with is each other.

EMERSON

And your daddy. You can't keep that from him.
(then, off her, relenting)
Okay. We take care of the body first, but
then you go straight to Pie Boy.
(beat)
You ain't gonna start bawling again, are you?

Chuck gratefully kisses him on the cheek.

CHUCK

Thank you.

EMERSON

Don't be pecking me, woman! That's the peck
of cahoots, which we are definitely not in.

CHUCK

Thank you anyway.

PRE-LAP:

THE WIDOW LIKKIN (V.O.)

The cook-off will continue.

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

In front of the cordoned-off workstation for Colonel Likkin.
Leo Burns stands by the widow as she addresses the ASSEMBLED
CHEFS, Ned, Olive and Marianne Marie included.

THE WIDOW LIKKIN

The Colonel would have wanted it that way.
His tragic heart attack must be honored by us,
his sacred community of fellow chefs.

They all bow their heads a beat. Then:

LEO BURNS

Who now all stand a much better chance of winning. Proceed.

They BOLT back to their cooking stations. We favor Ned and Olive.

OLIVE

It's a tragedy, obviously, but you know what they say -- when God closes a door, he opens an oven.

NED

"They" don't say that. Or if they do, they don't have much compassion for a dead Colonel.

OLIVE

I'm not going to let you bait me into getting all soft and compassiony when we're this close to nailing this competition.

NED

What would you say if I told you I think the Colonel was murdered?

OLIVE

Boohoo, more room at the top.

(then)

See? I am in the zone.

(then, off him)

Oh my God, you're not kidding.

NED

I think the Colonel had a copy of his secret recipe and someone killed him for it.

OLIVE

How could you possibly know that from looking at his dead body?

NED

(vamping)

I... am an investigator. Working alongside Emerson has taught me things. Deductive and inductive reasoning, evidence gathering. Dead bodies have a lot to say... to the trained professional.

OLIVE

("huh?")

Uh-huh.

NED

And anyway, my educated hunch says there's a murder to solve.

OLIVE

Does your hunch realize you don't have Emerson or Chuck to help you? You've never solved a murder mystery alone before.

NED

I'm not alone.

OLIVE

Me? Ooh. I just got all tingly, and not just in the nether regions. How do we do it, the whole P.I. thing? Sneak around all cloak-and-dagger, or do we just jam a gun in the suspect's mouth and say, "Sing, canary, before I decorate this wallpaper with your guts"?

NED

Neither. And technically, I don't believe you can blow someone's guts out their mouth.

OLIVE

Wuss.

They reach their own cooking station. Olive slides back the curtain to REVEAL -- their pies have been SABOTAGED. Filling is slopped all over the place, flour everywhere and the oven SMOKES.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Holy smokes, our oven's smoking!

Olive puts on oven mitts and rips open the oven door. Pulls a tray out, littered with burnt, smoking hockey pucks of pies.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Sabotaged. I'll bet it was the Beetle.

NED

And I bet it was the Colonel's killer.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chuck and Emerson walk through the cemetery together.

CHUCK

This doesn't take the sting of responsibility out altogether, but I brought cash. When we find the body, we'll take it to the nearest funeral home, with cash and a note saying, "Every human body has dignity, please bury this one." It'll be just like leaving a baby on a doorstep, only on the tail end of things.

EMERSON

And the point of this would be say-what?

CHUCK

Closure.

Emerson stares into the bushes between two small mausoleums.

EMERSON

Mmm-hmm. Something tells me the body we find
will give you anything except "closure."

CHUCK

Where'd you get that idea?

EMERSON

Oh, I didn't get it. It was given to me.

Chuck pushes aside some shrubbery, looks, too.

CHUCK

By Dwight Dixon.

We see what they're looking at: DWIGHT DIXON lies dead, a grin
on his face, slumped against a wall.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chuck and Emerson stand over the body of Dwight. Emerson silent, somber. Chuck upset.

CHUCK

I killed him!

EMERSON

Bet you're wishing you offed that sweet old imaginary lady now.

CHUCK

What was Dwight Dixon doing here?

EMERSON

Got one theory. Looky here.

Emerson guides Chuck to show her:

ANGLE -- a partially-hidden RIFLE with a scope on a TRIPOD.

CHUCK

A rifle?

Emerson bends and carefully looks through the scope--

EMERSON

Seems like sweet ol' Dwight was already set up for a shot. Your weighty conscience might be a little less weighty after you take a look.

Chuck bends to take a look.

CHUCK

Why would Dwight have a gun?

(then)

Hells bells...

CHUCK'S POV: Through a long lens at her father's grave, 100 yards off.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

That's my father's grave. Was he going to kill us?

EMERSON

Not if you killed him first.

CHUCK

Why would Dwight want us dead?

NARRATOR

As is traditional, the "why" in this case was met with an equal and opposite "because."

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK (RE-USE FROM "ROBBING HOOD")

Dwight enters his motel room to discover the watch he stole from Chuck, as well as his own, is missing. He reacts.

NARRATOR

Upon discovering that the pocket watch he had stolen from Chuck had been stolen back...

Lily stands still on the ledge as Dwight grabs a GUN, goes.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...Dwight set out to reclaim the mysterious timepiece one last time.

OMIT

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Dwight assembles his rifle...

NARRATOR

Following Chuck to the graveyard, Dwight assumed her intent was to return the watch to the grave from which it had been stolen.

Dwight squints through the scope, looking across the graveyard.

DWIGHT'S POV: THROUGH THE SCOPE CROSSHAIRS.

Ned and Chuck flip open Charles Charles's casket.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Ready to pull the trigger and reclaim his prize, Dwight paused, unbelieving the unbelievable sight he saw.

A blue spark FLASH lights Ned's and Chuck's features as a shadowy figure of the dead rises from the grave.

DWIGHT -- pulls back from the scope, then looks again...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Dwight's mind reeled at the miraculous event before him, and, as is traditional, he decided to put an end to the thing he did not understand.

CLOSE ON HIS TRIGGER FINGER, preparing to squeeze...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*But, as all his reeling and unbelieving had
taken exactly 61 seconds...*

Dwight DROPS DEAD, OUT OF FRAME.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...no shot was ever fired.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

CLOSE ON Dwight's FACE as he is dragged through the grass.
Chuck, dragging the body with Emerson, seems much happier.

CHUCK

If I hadn't kept my father alive, I'd have
been murdered a second time.

EMERSON

Once was plenty.

CHUCK

And Ned would be gone, too. That's three
points lighting up our side of the cosmic
scoreboard by getting rid of Dwight.

EMERSON

You saved that bundle you were gonna blow on
getting Mr. Boom-Boom buried, too. Better to
bury him here.

They arrive at Charles Charles's grave.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

You stay here, I'll get a shovel. We'll get
him under the grass before the pay-your-
respects-at-lunch crowd shows up. By the time
the grass grows back on the plot, it'll be
like none of this ever happened.

Emerson goes. Chuck waits.

CHUCK

I can't wait for it to be like none of this
ever happened.

Dwight's EYES suddenly POP OPEN:

DWIGHT

But it did happen.

OFF Chuck, displeased and puzzled...

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

Olive scrapes off the last burnt husk of a pie from her hopeless tray of all-burnt pies as Ned examines the oven.

NED

Someone tampered with the oven. Now the flame won't shut off.

OLIVE

Let it burn. Maybe it'll destroy this building and all its memories of almost winning with the cleansing power of flame.

NED

Olive -- we're staying in the contest.

Olive has an instant attitude adjustment.

OLIVE

We are?

NED

We need keep competing as a cover, so we can investigate Colonel Likkin's murder.

OLIVE

Winning would make an excellent cover.

NED

Whoever killed the Colonel is a risk-taker. Desperate. Same as our saboteur.

OLIVE

So find the saboteur, we find our killer.

NED

And maybe we find our ingredients. They took everything we need to bake pies.

OLIVE

I'm on it.

Olive turns to exit and stops, nearly colliding with Vivian. Standing, dressed to the nines, makeup running. Near tears.

VIVIAN

Olive?

OLIVE

Vivian?

NED

Vivian?

OLIVE

What are you doing here? Oh, honey. Are you crying?

VIVIAN

I stopped by the Pie Hole, but it was closed. And, yes, I was crying.

NED

Why's the Pie Hole closed?

OLIVE

(to Vivian)

It's man trouble, I can tell. I knew that Dwight Dixon was heartbreak waiting to pop.

VIVIAN

I don't blame Dwight. And I don't blame myself, this time. This is Lily's fault. She aimed a shotgun at his privates and told him to stay away from us. But half of us is me, and I don't want him away. I want him close.

OLIVE

(to Ned)

Give us a minute.

NED

I'll get back to fixing this. Good to see you, Vivian.

Olive leads Vivian away from Ned, who returns to the oven.

VIVIAN

Forgive me. I'm so wrapped up in finding my man, I'm thoughtlessly keeping you from yours.

OLIVE

Who? Ned? No. We're partners in a contest. Unromantic partners. Like a brother and sister. Like an androgenous, asexual brother and sister. My man? Ha. Ha-ha. Ha, ha hee ha ho. That's a laugh.

VIVIAN

When Dwight didn't show up for our date, I tried to laugh, too. Tried to tell myself my feelings for him were silly. But lying to yourself about love never works.

OLIVE

Damn.

VIVIAN

I know. But still, I keep lying and looking all the same. If you see Dwight at the Pie Hole, will you tell him about the looking part? I'd like to see him.

OLIVE

I understand.

Vivian exits. Olive looks back at Ned at their oven.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Boy, do I understand.

She goes back to Ned.

NARRATOR

Olive hoped the Pie-Maker would not find any clues on her face that the dam around her heart was starting to crack.

NED

I've found something.

(beat)

When our saboteur sabotaged our oven, he made one sticky mistake.

Ned puts his finger in a sticky, brown residue inside the oven.

OLIVE

What is it? Toxic soot with a dash of DNA?

NED

It's sweet. Woodsy. Like a forest in the Berkshires in the crisp autumn dawn.

OLIVE

(tasting)

Caramelized sugar.

NED

Maple syrup.

OLIVE

Only one chef here uses pure maple syrup.

NED

The Waffle Nazi.

OLIVE

The Waffle Nazi.

CAMERA WHIPS ACROSS THE COOK-OFF FLOOR TO REVEAL: **Der Waffle Iron.**

A Googie architecture waffle pan of a booth. Inside, the lederhosen-clad WAFFLE NAZI berates his lederhosen-clad ASSISTANT -- holding a waffle in her face.

CONTINUED: (3)

WAFFLE NAZI

You vill taste ze magic!

Ned and Olive nod knowingly. Olive weighs the spatula in her hand, ass-kicking on her mind...

OMIT

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chuck nervously looks around for Emerson to return, but he's not back yet. Staring at her from the grass is the silent corpse of Dwight Dixon. Chuck stares back, "Not afraid of you, fucker."

NARRATOR

Chuck had seen dead bodies talk before, but this was different. This was just her guilty mind giving rise to her guilty feelings.

CHUCK

You're just my guilty mind giving rise to my guilty feelings.

Dwight bursts out, merrily:

DWIGHT

Doesn't change the fact that you have royally screwed up.

CHUCK

Fine. You talk. I'll shovel.

DWIGHT

Was it worth it? Sure, fine, I'm a bad man, you saved three good people putting me down. Three-for-one sale on the grandest scale.

Chuck looks back, anxiously. Still no Emerson...

CHUCK

(calling)

Anytime with those shovels!

(to Dwight)

What would you have done?

DWIGHT

Same thing, probably. I'd have killed you, too. But here's the difference...

CHUCK

Emerson!

DWIGHT

I would have told Ned by now.

CHUCK

Shut up!

Emerson appears, carrying two shovels.

EMERSON

Who you talking to?

CHUCK

Shut up. Nothing. No one. I don't need to talk to anyone about anything because my conscience is clear.

EMERSON

Great. Then grab a shovel.

They start shoveling. ON DWIGHT, as a shovelful of dirt lands on his face.

DWIGHT

Ned will never forgive you!

Chuck shovels faster.

INT. COOK-OFF - DER WAFFLE IRON BOOTH - DAY

We see Der Waffle Iron booth -- empty. Until Olive pokes her head over the counter. Ned joins her, they sneak in.

OLIVE

This is an incredible violation of the P.C.C.F.C.O. rule that no chef is allowed in another chef's kitchen. It's immediate disqualification.

NED

Concentrate on the killer. The Waffle Nazi is likely our saboteur.

OLIVE

Find the saboteur, find the killer.

NED

Any evidence linking Waffle Nazi to Colonel Likkin would tie up this case in brown paper, wrapped with strong, sturdy twine.

They investigate. As they look for clues:

OLIVE

Know what I love about Vivian? Her imagination.

Ned, not listening, stares at THREE BOWLS of batter.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

She thought you and I were a couple. So crazy, it's like imagining us as Hobbits, or on jet packs.

Ned stirs all three batter bowls. One is slightly thicker, harder to stir. This one interests him.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Or Hobbits on jet packs. Isn't the idea of us romantically entwined a panic, a scream, a four-hour heart attack of complete impossibility?

Ned dips his finger in, tastes the thicker mixture. Smiles.

NED

It all makes sense.

OLIVE

It does?

NED

This batter is better than batter. It's evidence we can use to wrap up this case.

OLIVE

(crushed)

Hurray. What is it?

Ned spoons Olive a taste of the batter.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Delicious. Savory, not sweet. Bursting with what's gotta be, like, 500 herbs and spices.

NED

The Colonel's secret recipe.

Just then -- the curtain RIPS aside and the Waffle Nazi, backed up by Marianne Marie Beetle, stands accusatorily.

OLIVE

And, the killer on a plate.

NED

Sir, I accuse you of--

WAFFLE NAZI

Sabotage!

CAMERA WHIPS to the Waffle Nazi's own row of waffle irons. Each and every one of them with its CORD SEVERED.

WAFFLE NAZI (CONT'D)

You haff sabotaged *mein* irons!

NED

We didn't do that.

MARIANNE MARIE

Don't cry, *mein Herr*. Look.

(checks her watch)

It's Justice O'clock. I'm telling.

The Waffle Nazi and Marianne Marie stand together, Ned and Olive looking guilty as sin. *Busted*.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

OMIT

INT. COOK-OFF - DER WAFFLE IRON BOOTH - DAY

Ned lifts up the cut waffle cord to inspect it. This only makes him look guilty. Waffle Nazi and Marianne Marie stand blocking the exit.

WAFFLE NAZI

Well, Pie Holers, it looks as if you are soon to be eliminated from the competition.

MARIANNE MARIE

We're kicking you out before you baked yourself out.

WAFFLE NAZI

When Leo Burns toodles up on his scooter and sees how many rules you have broken, your dreams of comfort food glory are *kaput*.

NED

We're not the saboteurs.

WAFFLE NAZI

Oh, yah, my vaffle cord just leaped in your arms like a puppy vantage love, zen cut itself in two.

NED

You saw our oven; we were sabotaged, too.

MARIANNE MARIE

Liars roast in Hell -- just sayin'.

WAFFLE NAZI

You sabotaged yourselves to avoid suspicion.

OLIVE

When we present the evidence we got, you can kiss the cook-off *auf Wiedersehen*.

Long pause. The Waffle Nazi has no idea what was just said.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

It's "goodbye" in German.

WAFFLE NAZI

I do not speak a vord of German. I speak English *mit* a German accent. *Pageantry*.

NED

We found this batch of the Colonel's recipe in your kitchen.

OLIVE

That's a big bowl of motive, Fritz.

WAFFLE NAZI

Motive for what? Are you suggesting murder? Phht. Ridiculous. *Herr* Likkin and I were soon to become business partners.

NED

Chicken and waffles?

WAFFLE NAZI

Would have caught Popeyes with their pants down. And I have the paperwork right here.

He holds out a folder, then snatches it back as Leo arrives on his scooter. Looks about, aghast.

LEO BURNS

What in the name of Julia Child are you people doing? I can't count the number of rules violations going on here. I am so disappointed.

NED

There may be the appearance of rules being bent or broken completely, buy there's a bigger picture here you need to see.

(beat)

I just haven't finished painting it yet.

OLIVE

We're not the saboteurs.

LEO BURNS

Poppycock. The Pie Hole is disqualified.

OFF Olive's stunned disbelief...

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Chuck and Emerson finish burying Dwight.

EMERSON

That'll work, let's get out of here.

CHUCK

Wait. We need a priest, or a rabbi, or a somebody to say some words. Dwight was not the nicest person, but still every body deserves to be buried with dignity.

EMERSON

I got buttocks of dignity to sprinkle the ground with. Get holy.

Emerson bows his head, Chuck joins him. He intones:

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Here lies Dwight, here lies his gun. He was bad, but now he's done. Let's go.

They do. Chuck sighs:

CHUCK

All this and I still have to deal with my mother.

EMERSON

You mean your father.

He looks to see Chuck is gone. Like the Dark Knight.

CHUCK (O.S.)

I mean my mother.

Emerson stops short at encountering: Lily. She's tastefully dressed and carries a shotgun.

EMERSON

Lily. Delighted.

LILY

Can the crap and sell it to tourists. What are you doing here, Cod?

EMERSON

Do you care?

LILY

Not really.

ANGLE ON Chuck, hiding, but relishing Lily's voice all the same. Emerson gestures "get behind me" as he talks to Lily...

EMERSON

And might I inquire, what are you doing here?

LILY

Waiting for Dwight Dixon.

EMERSON

He may disappoint. Men do that.

Emerson maneuvers to keep Chuck hidden from Lily.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

And the shotgun?

LILY

Military salute.

EMERSON

For Dwight Dixon.

LILY

For Charles. But if I happen to miss and blow Dwight's head off, completely by accident, that's something my lawyers can pretty much straighten out later.

Lily goes.

EMERSON

So lovely catching up.

Emerson looks back to Chuck, both sigh in relief.

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

Olive packs up her pots and pans -- dejected but resigned.

OLIVE

That's everything. But there's no bag big enough to carry home my busted dreams of Blue Ribbon victory.

NED

Back to the Pie Hole. Which is closed, which is strange, because Chuck should be there.

POV: Colonel Likkin's booth is unoccupied and unwatched.

NED (CONT'D)

The Colonel's chicken booth.

OLIVE

An empty nest -- chock-full of clues.

NED

A really bold detective team would sneak in for one last bit of recon before packing in their pots and pans for good.

Olive nods. She's in. They pack up supplies, walking out... then DUCK INTO the Colonel's booth while no one's looking.

INT. COOK-OFF - COLONEL LIKKIN'S BOOTH - DAY

The place is a mess with batter mix and flour coating the floor.

NED

Memorize the scene -- every detail. The prints in the batter. The footprints, gurney tracks, the... What's that?

Olive dabs a finger into the flour and finds, coated, underneath, one of several bright bits of plastic.

OLIVE

Sprinkles! I love sprinkles. You love clues, two great tastes that taste great together.

Olive tastes it, spits it out, appalled.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Peeah! How come you do the detective taste-test and get crème brûlée and I get...

They examine the shiny bits on the ground together.

NED

Painted plastic. Cheap jewelry.

OLIVE

Left here before the Colonel was killed.

NED

Which means they belong to the killer.

Engrossed in the mysterious clue before them, neither Ned nor Olive see the MYSTERIOUS FIGURE sneak up behind them, holding a PAN in each hand, rising them up like two deadly weapons and...

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

Seen outside the Colonel's booth. We hear BONG! BONG! Beat. Marianne Marie comes out alone. Holding two pans. Wearing two earrings. One intact, one a little smashed, but both the color of painted plastic -- THE COLOR OF SPRINKLES. La-di-da...

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. STEAMER TRUNK - DAY

CLOSE UP ON Ned and Olive, face-to-face, like lovers, so close they're nearly kissing.

OLIVE

The most important thing is to keep our wits about us and our nerves steady.

Camera begins TILTING SIDEWAYS as Olive talks.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

There's no good in freaking out, so don't go crazy and start, I dunno, kissing me or something ridiculous like that.

CAMERA COMPLETES ITS TILT TO REVEAL Ned and Olive are, in fact, lying together in a trunk -- Ned on top.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

Just 'cause we're locked in a trunk and could die any minute.

Ned begins to push up with his back and GRUNT a bit.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

What're you -- Hey -- clean thoughts, chum.

Ned gives one last push and pushes the lid off the trunk.

INT. COOK-OFF - COLONEL LIKKIN'S BOOTH - DAY

The trunk opens, knocking off Marianne Marie, who was sitting on top. She holds her pans in a defensive posture as Ned and Olive scramble out of the trunk.

MARIANNE MARIE

You're tangling with Muffy the Pastry Slayer.

NED

You're the killer!

Marianne Marie has, yes, one earring on one ear, and a shattered, plastic-y mess dangling from the other.

MARIANNE MARIE

You're the killer! Ya deep fried the Colonel. Suppose you were gonna bake me in my own oven.

NED

No one's baking anybody.

MARIANNE MARIE

I heard what you said.

INT. COOK-OFF - OUTSIDE COLONEL LIKKIN'S BOOTH - FLASHBACK

Marianne Marie stands outside the Colonel's closed-off booth, eavesdropping.

NED (O.S.)

Painted plastic. Cheap jewelry.

OLIVE (O.S.)

Left here before the Colonel was killed.

NED (O.S.)

Which means they belong to the killer.

Marianne Marie gasps, worries, gets an idea. She lifts up her frying pans, preparing to commit violence...

RESUME - AS BEFORE

OLIVE

Your earrings are cheap.

NED

If you weren't here to kill the Colonel, why were you here right before he got killed?

MARIANNE MARIE

Nobody killed anybody. I thought the Colonel died of a heart attack. I only snuck in here to...

She stops herself.

OLIVE

You're the saboteur.

NED

But not the killer.

OLIVE

Sabotage is a disqualifying offense. Ha!

MARIANNE MARIE

In the Good Lord's good name, have mercy. I lost my secret weapon. Little Ivy's Fruit Cocktail went out of business and dragged my once-mighty muffins down along with it. This is the flush of shame in my cheeks. But I did what I had to. I need that Blue Ribbon prize if Muffin Buffalo is to roam again. You see before you a desperate woman, not a killer.

Leo Burns rolls up on his Rascal.

LEO BURNS

Marianne Marie Beetle, you can't be in here. Disqualified. Pie Holers. You two can't be here at all. Banned for life! Which reminds me, I forgot to report your disqualification to the judges, which I'm gonna do right now.

Leo starts to turn his Rascal around. Ned glances down, notices the two sets of tracks in the batter-covered floor.

NED

You're the killer.

LEO BURNS

Me? Look at me? I ride a scooter. What kind of killer do you think I could possibly be?

NED

The kind that leaves tracks.

We see Ned's POV: the TIRE TREADS in the batter on the floor match Leo's Rascal tires perfectly.

LEO BURNS

Those are gurney tracks. When the paramedics wheeled away dear Colonel Likkin.

OLIVE

Those are gurney tracks. The flattened treads that go over to the batter and then back to the deep fryer are killer tracks. Yours.

MARIANNE MARIE

Looky. And those are hot-oil burns on his arms. Did the Colonel spatter when you fried him, you sick son of a bitch?

Ned, Olive and Marianne Marie have Leo surrounded.

LEO BURNS

Pixie dust and lemonade -- you have no proof and that story will never hold up in court.

Ned reaches into Leo's pocket and snatches out -- the recipe. The paper it is written on has been ripped, Scotch-taped together, ripped and taped together countless times.

NED

This will.

MARIANNE MARIE

The Colonel's secret recipe.

OLIVE
You're busted, tubby.

NARRATOR
The facts were these:

EXT. PARKING - FACTS ARE THESE MONTAGE - DAY

CLOSE ON A PHOTO of the smiling Colonel. PULL BACK TO REVEAL the photo is on an enormous bucket of fried chicken. SKINNY LEO BURNS happily walks to his car, eating chicken.

NARRATOR
One year ago, Leo Burns was a slender and happy, but slightly-lonely man. One day he chose to drown his sorrows in a bucket of Colonel Likkin's Southern Fried Chicken.

As Leo walks to his car, we slowly favor his ANKLES as he gets in the car, also in shot. Skinny ankles get in the car.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Which led to another and another. Ad nauseam.

MONTAGE. ANGLE ON the ankles. The shot never changes. Leo gets in the car. All we see is the ankles, GETTING FATTER, SOCKS STRETCHING and the car frame goes DOWN A LITTLE FURTHER every time he gets in.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Predilection led to addiction, and soon, the Colonel's unique blend of 500 herbs and spices were all Leo could eat.

Finally, the ankles are so fat that when Leo gets in the car, the car chassis touches the pavement. Pause. Fat ankles get out, waddle out of frame.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Diabetes, obesity and night blindness were all quick to follow the coated volumes of wings, breasts and thighs Leo ate.

Fat ankles toddle back through frame -- on a Rascal. He drops a greasy bucket of chicken on the way -- the Colonel's smiling FACE filling frame.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Having lost himself to Likkin, Leo vowed to destroy the Colonel and his precious recipe.

INT. COOK-OFF - COLONEL LIKKIN'S BOOTH - DAY - FLASHBACK

The Colonel cooks and HUMS, adding spices to his batter. In the background, a churning vat of deep-frying fatty oils. Leo quietly WHIRS up behind the Colonel on his Rascal.

NARRATOR

Leo volunteered as this year's Comfort Food Coordinator, waiting for the Colonel to make his annual appearance...

Leo grabs the Colonel and shoves him face-first into the batter, lifts him by his belt, spinning him around toward his own boiling vat...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...which would become his final appearance.

The Colonel almost sees Leo. But Leo heaves him into the vat. Watches the Colonel boil. Leo reaches into the Colonel's breast pocket, pulls out a curious piece of paper. He unfolds it. Reads. Awed.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But Leo could not bring himself to destroy the secret recipe that robbed him of his life...

Leo is about to rip it in two, then thinks better of it and tucks the recipe into his front pocket.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...and that was his undoing.

Leo looks about guiltily -- and scoots away.

OMIT

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

TWO POLICE lead Leo away as Ned, Olive and Marianne Marie watch. They hear an announcement:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Attention cook-off contestants. All entries must be on the judges' table in thirty seconds. Thirty seconds.

OLIVE

Leo never reported our disqualification.

NED

What can you do in thirty seconds? We got nothing and our stove is broken. I'm sorry.

OLIVE

You were right. Revenge *is* a dish best served cold. Why I whipped up a killer lemon icebox pie, stored it in our fridge, named it "Plan B."

MARIANNE MARIE

Don't mean squat if it isn't on the judges' table in--

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Twenty seconds.

Olive and Marianne Marie exchange a brief, icy stare. Olive SPRINTS for the judges' table, picking up the boxed pie as she goes. Marianne Marie grabs her muffin basket. We go to full-on cheesy '70s SLOW MOTION as they race, neck-and-neck...

Until Marianne Marie SHOVES Olive right OUT OF FRAME. Olive, still running, can be heard (OFF-SCREEN) CRASHING.

Marianne Marie's got it all to herself, now. She runs toward the judges' table like she's in *Chariots of Fire*.

CLOSE ON Marianne Marie's face, victor's joy turns to hesitation as a deep RUMBLING SOUND grows behind her. And we SEE -- Olive, riding the Rascal, speeding past Marianne Marie.

BACK TO REAL TIME as Olive SCREECHES to a stop in front of the judges' table, leaving skid marks. She daintily places her pie box -- DING! -- down a second before defeated Marianne Marie arrives, just a second or two too late.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. COOK-OFF - DAY

The JUDGES stand together as the assembled COMFORT FOOD CHEFS stand waiting for the verdict. The Widow Likkin stands beside Ned as they all wait.

THE WIDOW LIKKIN

The Colonel would be so proud. Now I have his recipe, that nice doughnut man and I are going into business together.

(proudly)

"Finger Likkin Doughnut Holes."

NED

Sounds delicious. And filthy.

OLIVE

America's favorite. You'll make a fortune.

WAFFLE NAZI

Shhhh-shhh-shh!

CONTINUED:

JUDGE

The Blue Ribbon first prize in this year's annual Comfort Food Cook-Off goes to...

Various tension-building shots of all the contestants, waiting, hoping to hear their own name...

JUDGE (CONT'D)

The Pie Hole!

Olive jumps up and down, claps with glee. APPLAUSE as Olive and Ned step up to the judges' circle and accept their Blue Ribbon. Ned smiles at Olive, reaches over and holds her hand for a brief moment before raising both their hands in victory. Olive closes her eyes. CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Olive, eyes closed...

OLIVE'S VOICE

(singing)

CLOSE YOUR EYES, GIVE ME YOUR HAND, DARLING.

Olive opens her eyes as CAMERA PULLS OUT TO REVEAL we are now--

OMIT

INT. COOK-OFF - PIE HOLE BOOTH - DAY

Olive, alone, clutching her ribbon to her bosom, smiling as she sings "ETERNAL FLAME" by the Bangles:

OLIVE

(singing)

DO YOU FEEL MY HEART BEATING, DO YOU UNDERSTAND? / DO YOU FEEL THE SAME, AM I ONLY DREAMING? / IS THIS BURNING AN ETERNAL FLAME?

She tries turning off the stove that will not turn off. She quits trying and continues to sing:

OLIVE (CONT'D)

SAY MY NAME--

NED

It's Chuck.

OLIVE

It's Olive.

NED

No, it's Chuck. She's not at the Pie Hole. She said she'd be there all day. If she were there all day, she'd answer the phone.

OLIVE

Maybe she's stepping out. Stepped out.

NED

I don't know where she is. Vivian doesn't know where Dwight is. What if Dwight leaving Chuck's obituary was more than an insurance policy? Do you mind if I go look for her?

OLIVE

I don't mind.

NED

Sorry to leave you with the mess.

OLIVE

I'm used to the mess.

With that, Ned leaves Olive alone to ponder her Blue Ribbon. After a moment, she begins to sing again:

OLIVE (CONT'D)

SUN SHINES THROUGH THE RAIN / A WHOLE LIFE SO LONELY, AND THEN YOU COME AND EASE THE PAIN / I DON'T WANT TO LOSE THIS FEELING...

She crosses to the oven, whose FLAME continues to burn.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

SAY MY NAME--

Ned pokes his head back in:

NED

Olive?

OLIVE

Yes.

NED

Congratulations. Partner.

OLIVE

Congratulations to you. Partner.

Ned leaves again. Olive sighs, then sings quietly:

OLIVE (CONT'D)

DO YOU FEEL MY HEART BEATING, DO YOU UNDERSTAND? / DO YOU FEEL THE SAME, AM I ONLY DREAMING? / OR IS THIS BURNING AN ETERNAL FLAME?

The FLAME in the oven finally FLICKERS OUT.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - DAY

A DOORBELL rings. Vivian opens up. REVEALING Ned standing there. Lily joins Vivian at the door.

VIVIAN

Ned.

NED

Hello, Vivian, Lily. I was in the neighborhood -- passing by, really -- when I wondered if you'd like some pie which I forgot to bring, but while I'm here, I was also wondering if you know where I might find Dwight Dixon.

LILY

Ninth circle of Hell, if there's any justice.

VIVIAN

Lily, stop. We don't know where Dwight is, and how could you forget a thing like pie? I find that curious, it comes in a box, you know.

Lily sees something.

LILY

You got a squatter in your old digs over there?

Ned turns to see a CURTAIN at his old childhood home swiftly and suspiciously jerk itself back into place.

NED

I'll find out.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

Ned rushes in, looks about, frantic.

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker braced himself to find Chuck held hostage by the deadly, desperate Dwight Dixon...

NED

Chuck? Chuck...

NARRATOR

...unable to imagine a sight far more disturbing.

Chuck comes out from the darkness. Ned is visibly relieved.

NED

I was worried. I thought--

CHARLES CHARLES (O.S.)

Charlotte?

CHUCK

It's okay, Dad.

NED

"Dad"?

Charles Charles steps into the room. He sees Ned, stops. Ned freezes, too. Then looks at Chuck, his face full of hurt.

CHUCK

This is what I didn't know how to tell you.

The two lovers, emotion swirling on their faces, look to one another, Charles Charles between them, and on this image, we...

BLACKOUT.

END OF SHOW