# **HOME GAME**

"Pilot"

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&

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## COLD OPENING

FADE IN:

INT. MARK AND LISA'S BEDROOM - DAY

LISA (MID-30'S, A PETITE DYNAMO, AFTER THREE KIDS SHE'S STILL GOT IT) ENTERS THE BEDROOM. SHE'S CARRYING A TOTE BAG FILLED WITH FABRIC SAMPLES, BLUEPRINTS, AND A NUMBER OF THREE-RING BINDERS WHILE ALSO TALKING ON HER CELL PHONE. SHE SPEAKS WITH THE BLUNT BUT PLAYFUL STYLE OF SANDRA BULLOCK FROM "THE BLIND SIDE."

LISA

(INTO PHONE) You're not remodeling my guest room, Leo. You're two months behind on an elementary school library. So do you hate children, or reading, or both?

MARK (ALSO 30'S, HANDSOME, A LARGE AND ATHLETIC MAN) STANDS COMPLETELY NUDE, FRESH OUT OF THE SHOWER, IN FRONT OF A SECOND STORY WINDOW, STARING OUTSIDE. THROUGH CLEVER CAMERA WORK AND STAGING, WE WILL KEEP HIS JUNK OFF CAMERA THROUGHOUT. LISA DOESN'T SEE HIM.

LISA (CONT'D)

Look, one more no-show from you and your crew, and I will kill you with my bare hands and bury your body in the periodicals section.

LISA SPOTS MARK IN ALL HIS GLORY AND ARCHES AN EYEBROW.

LISA (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) I have to go, my husband is scaring the neighbors. Love to Susan! (HANGS UP) Mark, if our towels are too small, I can just stitch two together.

I'm drying my body in the sun, the way nature intended. Also, from here I get a great view of my lawn.

(ADMIRING) Magnificent.

LISA CROSSES TO THE WINDOW AND PULLS THE DRAPES.

LISA

Well, our neighbors are getting a view of your lawn. And our street isn't zoned for peep shows.

MARK

Probably best. They should always be out by the airport, where they're more convenient. (THEN) You know what I like about being retired?

**T**<sub>1</sub>**T**SA

Taking a fifty-two minute shower, then "air drying" your floppity-flop for an hour?

MARK

Wrong. I did that in the locker room every day.

MARK STRETCHES LUXURIANTLY, THEN BEGINS TO STRUT NAKED AROUND THE ROOM. LISA CAN'T HELP BUT LAUGH AT HIS EXUBERANCE.

MARK (CONT'D)

What I like is that there's no more schedule. There's no more itinerary.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm not memorizing someone else's playbook. Now Mark calls the plays.

LISA

I know that after 12 years in the NFL, you've learned certain habits. And I'm glad that you're feeling more... free.

MARK

That's the word. I feel free.

LISA

But keep in mind, we have three daughters.

MARK

Who are at school.

MARK SMIRKS AND, STILL NAKED, STRUTS OUT OF THE BEDROOM TO THE HALLWAY. FOR A LONG BEAT, LISA WAITS PATIENTLY. THEN, O.S., WE HEAR A TRIO OF GIRLISH SCREAMS.

TESS/JULIA/CHARLOTTE

Daddy!/Gross!/Oh my God!

LISA

(TO HERSELF) Not on Saturday.

MARK RUSHES IN FROM THE HALLWAY, GRABBING A TOWEL OFF THE BED AND COVERING HIMSELF. AFTER HE COLLECTS HIMSELF...

MARK

I'm going to need a copy of the girls' playbook.

CUT TO:

## MAIN TITLES

## ACT ONE

#### SCENE A

## FADE IN:

## INT. SCHLERETH KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - MORNING

IT'S EARLY MORNING, AND MARK IS IN THE KITCHEN. HE IS COOKING UP A STORM -- EGGS, TOAST, WAFFLES. HE'S ALSO MAKING A GIANT MESS. LISA ENTERS.

LISA

(SURPRISED) Hey. What's all this?

MARK

Lisa, I can't help but notice the huge amount of work you do to run this house, especially on a school day.

LISA

Well, thank you, honey.

MARK

But it's pretty obvious you can't handle it alone.

TITSA

Remember when I said "thank you"? I really meant "screw you."

MARK

Take Saturday for instance. Not one of those girls ate a healthy breakfast.

LISA

They lost their appetite after they saw you naked.

MARK SHOOTS HER A LOOK.

LISA (CONT'D)

I'm not joking. And most other days they like to keep their breakfast light.

MARK

Do they, Lisa? Or have they just gotten used to an empty breakfast table because you're busy running the PTA and killing contractors?

**T**<sub>1</sub>**T**SA

I've been feeding them their whole lives. I think I know what they want.

MARK

Well, let's find out. I say if they come in here and see chocolate chip waffles and eggs and juice, they'll shower me with hugs and thank-you's.

CHOCOLATE-CHIP WAFFLES POP UP FROM THE TOASTER. HE GRABS ONE, PUTS IT ON A PLATE AND SQUIRTS WHIPPED CREAM ON IT.

MARK (CONT'D)

Happy faces. They love that. (THEN)
Now where do we keep the juice boxes?

LISA

In 2004. How old do you think our kids are?

MARK

(SUDDENLY WARY) How old do you think they are?

LISA

They're teenage girls, and they're not that into 3,000 calorie breakfasts.

Now please tell me what's really going on in that head of yours.

MARK

I've just been paying attention around here lately. The ship is leaking. I think we both know it.

LISA LOOKS LIKE SHE MIGHT JUST LOSE IT ON MARK, WHEN TESS CALLS INTO THE KITCHEN FROM THE LIVING ROOM.

TESS (O.S.)

Mom? Is Daddy in there?

LISA

Yeah.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

Is he air drying his floppity-flop again?

LISA GIVES MARK A LOOK -- "I TOLD YOU."

MARK

I'm dressed, come eat a hearty
breakfast!

LIKE A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS, TESS, JULIA, AND CHARLOTTE ENTER THE KITCHEN, ALL IN A MASSIVE HURRY TO GET OUT THE DOOR. TESS IS 17, INNOCENT AND CAREFREE, GORGEOUS. JULIA IS 15, A DANCER, TIGHTLY WOUND, GORGEOUS. CHARLOTTE IS 13, AN ATHLETIC TOMBOY, GORGEOUS. THEY AD-LIB "GOOD MORNING" ETC.

LISA HEADS FOR THE REFRIGERATOR, FAST AND EFFICIENT.

LISA

(FOR MARK'S BENEFIT) Charlotte: Mango

Tango and a Balance bar.

SHE GRABS A JUICE AND A BAR AND HANDS IT TO CHARLOTTE. MARK HAS A PLATE WITH A WAFFLE IN EACH HAND AND TRIES TO GET IN FRONT OF THE GIRLS TO TEMPT THEM WITH HIS WARES, BUT THE ACTION IS FAST AND HE FINDS HIMSELF IGNORED.

CHARLOTTE

Soccer shorts?

LISA

In the dryer. Sports bra on the hook.

CHARLOTTE HEADS OFF TO GET HER CLOTHES, THEN EXITS.

MARK

(CONFUSED) Sports bra?

LISA

(TO MARK) Now's not the time. Julia:

melon cubes and a bottled water.

LISA HANDS JULIA HER THINGS. JULIA FEELS THE WEIGHT OF THE MELON CAUTIOUSLY.

JULIA

Is this eight ounces?

LISA

Is this my first day?

JULIA RELAXES AND HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

LISA (CONT'D)

(CALLING AFTER HER) Remember, ballet is an hour longer every day this week, so start your homework at lunch!

JULIA WAVES "GOT IT" AND EXITS. TESS GETS HERSELF A BOTTLE OF ICED COFFEE FROM THE FRIDGE, THEN SEES MARK'S WAFFLES.

TESS

Happy faces! I love it.

MARK SMILES. TESS TAKES A SWIPE OF WHIPPED CREAM WITH HER FINGER AND POPS IT IN HER MOUTH AS SHE EXITS. MARK IS CLEARLY A LITTLE STUNNED BY THE TORNADO OF TEEN GIRL THAT JUST SWEPT PAST HIM. THEN HE RECOVERS AND CELEBRATES.

MARK

Boom, scoreboard!

LISA

"Scoreboard"? You just got shut out.

MARK

Tess <u>loved</u> the happy faces. (THEN, CHEERFUL) So what are we doing today?

LISA

I'm meeting with Leo about the remodel of the library, where there will be yelling, and then lunch with the school board, where there'll be more yelling if that idiot Bill Blankenship tells me not to get emotional.

MARK

Blue 42, blue 42!

LISA

No, no no no no no--

MARK

Calling an audible! Blow that junk off and have lunch with me. We could see an early movie. We'd be the only ones there. We could sit in the back row and do it.

LISA

Do what? Blow out your knee again working around a cup-holder? (THEN) We can "do it" at home.

MARK

Sold! I'll meet you upstairs. Peep show starts in three minutes.

**T**<sub>1</sub>**T**SA

I'm not going upstairs.

MARK

Ooh! The living room! Love that!

MARK GRABS THE WHIPPED CREAM AND SKIPS OFF INTO THE LIVING ROOM. LISA SIGHS AND FOLLOWS.

RESET TO:

<u>INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS</u>

MARK JUMPS ON THE SOFA, WAITING FOR HER. LISA APPROACHES.

LISA

(A PATIENT SMILE) Honey, I love you, but you're driving me crazy.

(TAKING OFF HIS SHIRT) Ohh, yeeah!
You're driving me crazy, too.

LISA

You're retired, you're not on vacation.

MARK

I see it's been a while since you've done sexy talk.

LISA

You've spent six weeks hanging around the house, talking about how you're ready to "start the next chapter."
But have you called your buddy at the sports radio station?

MARK

I'm waiting for <a href="him">him</a> to call me. I don't want to look desperate.

LISA

(PATIENTLY) Fine. But while you're waiting, all you do is criticize breakfast, or bug me to blow off my plans, or stand in the kitchen and tell me I don't "move efficiently."

It's your footwork, you're wasting
energy. (DEMONSTRATES) Slide your
feet, keep your cleats on the groun--

LISA

Mark!

MARK LOOKS AT HER A BEAT.

MARK

You know what your problem is, honey?
LISA REACTS, RAISING A DANGEROUSLY LOADED EYEBROW.

LISA

My husband spent his life in a locker room and doesn't know he shouldn't say to his wife, "You know what your problem is?"

MARK

You're gripping the wheel of this racecar a little tight.

LISA

I thought we were a ship.

MARK

Don't confuse me when I'm saving this family. (THEN) Like just now. Why are you bugging Julia to do her homework?

Julia always does her homework.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

If anything, you should tell her it's okay to relax every now and then.

(THEN) You know, she's a lot like me.

LISA

You wanted to be a ballet dancer?

MARK

No. But I was very driven, just like she is. And if you keep hounding her, she's going to burn out really quickly.

LISA

Julia is not going to burn out.

MARK

Trust me, Lisa. You don't know her like I do.

THIS STINGS LISA. SHE FIGHTS TO KEEP A HOLD ON HER TEMPER.

LISA

I have to go murder a contractor now. But I'll be thinking of you the whole time.

LISA TURNS AND EXITS.

MARK

(CONFUSED; TO HIMSELF) I thought we were going to do it.

MARK LOOKS DISAPPOINTED, THEN SPRAYS A BLAST OF WHIPPED CREAM INTO HIS MOUTH.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE B

## INT. STINK'S SPORTS BAR - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

MARK SITS ON A CORNER STOOL WHILE HIS BROTHER SCOTT (MID 40'S, BALDING, PAUNCHY) TENDS BAR. THE PLACE HAS A HANDFUL OF MIDDAY CUSTOMERS. BEHIND THE BAR IS A LARGE PHOTO OF MARK RIGHT AFTER HE WON HIS LAST SUPER BOWL. HE'S HOLDING UP THE VINCE LOMBARDI TROPHY AND CRYING.

MARK

You know, I'm sick of that picture behind the bar. Swap it out for one where I'm not crying.

SCOTT

Stink, you're crying in all the pictures.

MARK LOOKS AROUND. IT'S TRUE, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PICTURES OF MARK FROM HIS PLAYING DAYS, SUPER BOWLS, HIS RETIREMENT PRESS CONFERENCE. HE'S CRYING IN ALL OF THEM.

MARK

Hey, what happened? Why am I crying in all the pictures?

SCOTT

This is how people know you. I'm trying to give the bar a clear brand.

MARK

Wait, I'm the "crying guy"? That's my brand?

SCOTT

Mom always said you were the "emotional one."

Scott, that's my nickname on the sign, and I say change the pictures!

SCOTT

But it's my bar. It might be named after you, and it might have been started with your money, and it might have been rebuilt with even more of your money after that fire... (THEN, CAVING) I'll change the pictures.

MARK SMILES TRIUMPHANTLY AS <u>COACH MCGEE</u> (60'S, ADDLED, ENTHUSIASTIC) <u>ENTERS FROM OUTSIDE</u>.

COACH MCGEE

Hey guys, sorry I'm late.

SCOTT

Late for what, Coach?

MARK

You know you don't actually work here, right?

COACH MCGEE

Mark, when I coached you in high school, discipline and punctuality were the backbone of my system.

MARK

I know. I just don't know why they're the backbone of your retirement.

COACH MCGEE

Retired? I'm working harder than ever. Here, look this over.

HE PULLS OUT A HUGE STACK OF PAPER. MARK REACTS, PUZZLED.

COACH MCGEE (CONT'D)

It's our new novel. We're co-authors.

MARK

Why are you always putting my name on your crazy get-rich-quick schemes?

COACH MCGEE

(DEFENSIVE) It worked for Scott.

MARK

It's a bar. It's not a board game, or a new kind of car wax, or a hip-hop musical. (THEN) Or a stupid novel.

COACH MCGEE

How do you know it's stupid? You don't know the premise. (THEN) An ex-NFL star and his old coach save the human race from a plague of zombies.

MARK

That was the premise of the hip-hop musical!

COACH MCGEE

It's cross-promotion. Multiple platforms. Social networks.

Those are just words you heard on TV.

COACH MCGEE

(RE: BOOK) Give it a chance.

MARK LOOKS SKEPTICALLY AT THE TITLE OF THE BOOK.

MARK

"End Zone to Dead Zone."

SCOTT

It's not a bad read.

MARK

Wait. You actually read it?

SCOTT

The plot really moves. A little racy for me in places.

COACH MCGEE

(ASSURING MARK) Tasteful. Women buy a lot of books. We don't want to upset them.

MARK

Then you should leave me out of it.

Seems like all I do lately is upset

Lisa, and I don't even know why.

COACH MCGEE

Well, since you retired, she thinks you've been stepping on her turf.

Yeah, and when I was playing, she always complained I wasn't around.

COACH MCGEE

Lisa thinks you don't appreciate--

MARK

Hang on. How the hell do you know what Lisa thinks?

COACH MCGEE

I talk to her every day. Nine AM. It's part of my system.

MARK HOLDS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS IN DISBELIEF.

COACH MCGEE (CONT'D)

Lisa thinks you don't appreciate what she does for you and the kids. Why not show your appreciation by giving her a night out with her friends? You stay home with the girls.

MARK AND SCOTT EXCHANGE A LOOK.

MARK

You know, that's not a bad idea.

SCOTT

And not for nothing... Stink Wax was a pretty good product.

SCOTT PULLS OUT A CAN OF CAR WAX WITH MARK'S FACE ON THE LID. COACH MCGEE SMILES. MARK PICKS UP THE BOOK AND STARTS TO READ.

ACT ONE

SCENE C

## INT. SCHLERETH KITCHEN - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

LISA IS IN THE KITCHEN, LOOKING AT A SET OF BLUEPRINTS AND MAKING NOTES. MARK ENTERS FROM OUTSIDE, CARRYING COACH MCGEE'S MANUSCRIPT. THEY EXCHANGE "HELLO"S.

LISA

Hey, is that "End Zone to Dead Zone?"

MARK

Yeah, it's a real disaster.

LISA

Stick with it. It gets better once

you guys meet the female scientist.

MARK

(STUNNED) Wait. You read this, too?

And you talk to Coach every day?

**T**<sub>1</sub>**T**SA

Yes, thank God.

MARK

"Thank God?"

LISA

Used to be three times a day.

MARK TAKES A BREATH, THEN APPROACHES HER GENTLY.

MARK

I want to apologize for earlier.

LISA

(TESTING HIM) For what?

MARK HESITATES. HE CLEARLY ISN'T SURE WHAT HE DID.

For... you know, what I did.

LISA

And what exactly did you do?

MARK

I... upset you?

LISA

Okay. Do you know why?

MARK

Because I... (TRYING TO REMEMBER WHAT COACH SAID) don't always respect... what you do around here?

LISA STARES AT HIM A BEAT, THEN:

LISA

Well, thank you for saying so.

MARK

(QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) Boom, scoreboard.

LISA

What?

MARK

Nothing. And I'm going to make it up to you. I want you to take Saturday night off. Go out with your friends. Go to a movie, or dinner, or I don't know what you hens do -- paint each other's nails and talk about boys.

LISA

Keep talking and you'll owe me a week with my friends.

MARK

Then do whatever you want. I'll stay home and handle the girls.

LISA

(SKEPTICALLY) Yeah... Not a great idea. Saturday nights have been pretty hectic lately.

MARK

But I've got a plan. (BIG WIND UP)

Movie night with Papa Bear!

LISA EMITS A LONG, LOW WHISTLE.

MARK (CONT'D)

Come on. I want to get back in the game around here.

LISA

I get that, honey. But you have no idea what you're getting into.

MARK

What are you talking about? I've been here on Saturdays before.

LISA

Physically. But Sunday was always right around the corner. Your head was in football.

So I'm a bad father because I was out earning a living for this family?

LISA

You're an excellent father. But you'll never keep those girls in this house for an entire Saturday night.

MARK

Huh. That sounds like a challenge.

LISA

Climbing Everest is a challenge. This is impossible.

MARK

Then it's on. And I think they're going to have a great time. You know why? Because I know my girls.

LISA

Cool. So what's the plan? Juice boxes and "Finding Nemo"?

MARK

(SCOFFS) Please. What do teenagers love these days? Vampires. (PRODUCES DVD) "True Blood," season one. Now that says "father-daughter night."

**SMASH CUT TO:** 

ACT ONE

SCENE D

## INT. SCHLERETH LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - THAT SATURDAY NIGHT

MARK IS WEDGED INTO THE SOFA WITH ALL THREE GIRLS WATCHING "TRUE BLOOD." WE  $\underline{\text{HEAR}}$  WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY A STEAMY SEX SCENE FROM THE TV. THE FOUR OF THEM ARE GIGANTICALLY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH WATCHING THIS TOGETHER.

SOUTHERN BELLE (ON T.V.)

(BREATHY) Why, Bill, no mortal man has ever touched me quite like that before.

ALL FOUR OF THEM SQUIRM AND REACT.

MARK

Does anyone want more popcorn?

JULIA

The bowl's still full.

MARK "ACCIDENTALLY" KICKS THE POPCORN BOWL OFF THE TABLE, DUMPING ITS CONTENTS ON THE FLOOR.

MARK

Does anyone want more popcorn?

MARK LEAPS UP AND HEADS FOR THE KITCHEN.

CUT TO:

#### INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

LISA IS IN THE KITCHEN WITH HER FRIEND <u>ISABELLA</u> (40'S, SUPER CRUNCHY EARTH MOTHER, JULIA'S DANCE INSTRUCTOR). LISA IS LOOKING AT ISABELLA'S FINGERNAILS.

LISA

I love that color.

MARK ENTERS WITH THE POPCORN BOWL AND OBSERVES:

#### ISABELLA

It's Bohemian Mauve. Roger actually came to the salon and helped me pick it. He is the best boyfriend ever.

LISA

And gorgeous, by the way.

MARK

Huh. So you <u>are</u> painting each other's nails and talking about boys.

LISA

And getting ready to leave. What do you think of "True Blood"?

MARK

Ohh, it's great. And the girls are lovin' it.

TSABETITIA

I thought the first season was a wonderful allegory about the outsider status of gay people in our culture.

MARK

Sure. I'm getting that. And the girls are <a href="lovin">lovin</a> it. (RE: WATCH) So you got, what, like an eight o'clock reservation?

LISA

We're leaving. Be sure to call if you need me.

Well, you can leave your phone here,

because I will not be needing you.

LISA

(COCKY) Okay...

MARK

(EQUALLY COCKY) Okay...

LISA AND ISABELLA HEAD OUT. MARK WAITS UNTIL THEY ARE GONE, THEN HEADS BACK INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

RESET TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARK ENTERS.

MARK

Okay, they're gone. Who wants to

watch "Finding Nemo"?

TESS/CHARLOTTE

(RELIEVED) Thank God!/I do, I do!

MARK PICKS UP THE REMOTE AND TURNS OFF THE TV. HE GETS A DVD BOX OFF THE SHELF AND SWAPS DISKS.

JULIA

(STANDS) You know, I just remembered I

have a History quiz on Tuesday, and I

really ought to review my notes...

MARK

Aw, come on, Julia...

TESS

Yeah, we haven't done this in like,

forever.

JULIA

What, watch softcore porn together?
We've never done that, and I never
want to do it again.

MARK

I'm putting in Nemo! The only naked people there are animals.

JULIA

I'm out of here.

TESS

Come on, Julia. We won't all be together forever, you know.

MARK

(A TOUCH EMOTIONAL) That's the message of "Nemo."

JULIA SHRUGS AND SETTLES BACK DOWN ON THE SOFA. MARK BEAMS AND SNUGGLES UP TO THE GIRLS. AS HE IS ABOUT TO HIT "PLAY" ON THE REMOTE:

SFX: CELLPHONE CHIRPS

TESS TAKES OUT HER CELL AND READS THE TEXT.

TESS

Okay, I'm out of here.

TESS GETS UP, GRABS HER KEYS, AND HEADS FOR THE FRONT DOOR.

MARK

Whoa, whoa. Where are you going?

TESS

Some of my friends are hanging out at Jill Blankenship's.

MARK GETS UP AND CROSSES TO HER.

JULIA

If she gets to leave, I get to study.

MARK

She's not leaving.

CHARLOTTE

Daddy, if Tess goes out and Julia's studying, we could go to the community center and shoot hoops. Maybe we could hustle that dentist you hate...

MARK

(INTRIGUED) Really, you think he'll be there? (THEN CATCHING HIMSELF) No, no, no. No one is going anywhere until Nemo is found. (HEARTFELT) You just said, we won't have this forever.

TESS LOOKS MOMENTARILY SWAYED.

SFX: CELL PHONE CHIRPS

TESS READS THE TEXT.

TESS

Oh my God! Ronnie Hart is there, and he might play with his band. Bye!

TESS HEADS FOR THE DOOR AGAIN, BUT MARK STOPS HER.

MARK

No!

TESS

Daddy, Ronnie Hart is a really good friend of mine, and last week he said, "I'd <u>love</u> for you to come to my next show." Do you know what that means?

MARK

I know exactly what that means. It means I'm going to find Ronnie Hart and punch him in the throat.

CHARLOTTE

Let her go, we'll play basketball.

JULIA

Whatever, I'm gonna study.

MARK

No one's going anywhere!

TESS

Maybe I should just call Mom...

MARK

No one's calling Mom! (THEN, THINKING FAST) What if... you called your friends who are hanging out at Jill Blankenship's and invited them to hang out here?

TESS

Maybe...

MARK

Have they seen "Finding Nemo"?

TESS

They want to hear Ronnie Hart shred.

MARK

Well, bring him, too. He can... shred in our basement.

TESS

Really? That could be cool. And Jill Blankenship's kind of a bitch.

MARK

What's with these Blankenships?

TESS

I'll go call Ronnie. Thanks, Daddy!

TESS GIVES MARK A HUG AND RUNS OFF TO THE KITCHEN.

JULIA

(ARCH) But, Father, however will we enjoy the "Finding Nemo" with those kids and their rock-n-roll music carrying on till all hours?

MARK

(CAVING) Go study. But don't learn anything new.

JULIA

(HUGS MARK) Yay!

MARK

Really? Studying gets a 'yay'?

JULIA HAPPILY EXITS UP THE STAIRS.

MARK (CONT'D)

(CALLING AFTER HER) You know, nothing you learn past nine o'clock is worth knowing!

CHARLOTTE

Hey, can we just watch football?

MARK PULLS CHARLOTTE IN FOR A HUG.

MARK

You're Daddy's favorite. Don't tell the other girls.

CHARLOTTE

They won't care. They like Mom.

MARK

What?!

TESS COMES BOUNDING BACK IN, ALL SMILES.

TESS

I talked to Ronnie, and he and his band are coming. I'm going to tweet our address to my friends, okay?

MARK

Uh, sure?

TESS

You're the best, Daddy. I love you so much!

MARK

More than your mom?

TESS

Way more.

MARK

Boom, scoreboard.

TESS

Mom would never let me have a band and fifty of my friends in the basement.

MARK FREEZES MID-FIST-PUMP AND GOES A LITTLE PALE.

MARK

Fifty? Five-oh?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE E

INT. RESTAURANT/SCHLERETH LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT
ISABELLA AND LISA SIT AT A TABLE FOR TWO, MID-DINNER.

ISABELLA

So apparently the stupid moon pulled the Earth off its axis, and the whole zodiac changed. Now Roger's a Virgo, and I'm a freaking Libra! (BITTER) You think you can believe in something.

LISA, DISTRACTED, PULLS A CELL PHONE OUT OF HER PURSE.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Tell me you're not checking on Mark.

LISA

He thinks he can keep the girls home all night, but there's no way. By now, Tess has been to three friends' houses and two malls. Julia's studying, either at the library or with the math club, and Charlotte's on a basketball court trying to win money off our dentist.

ISABELLA

You're like NORAD for teenage girls.

LISA

17 years, I haven't lost one yet.

## INT. SCHLERETH LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARK IS GIVING A <u>NERVOUS TEENAGE BOY</u> A TSA-STYLE PAT DOWN. THERE IS A LINE OF TEENAGE BOYS OUT THE DOOR.

MARK

You're gonna feel some pressure, son.

Just relax, even though I'm big enough
to kill you with my bare hands if you
even think about touching my daughter.

THE TEENAGE BOY GULPS. MARK'S PHONE RINGS.

SFX: CELL PHONE RING.

MARK (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Hello?

INTERCUT:

LISA

Hi, it's me. Just checking in.

MARK

Hey, honey. Everything's fine.

MARK GIVE THE TEENAGE BOY A THUMBS-UP. THE BOY EXITS THROUGH AN OPEN DOOR DOWN TO THE BASEMENT. MARK CRADLES THE PHONE TO HIS EAR AND STARTS PATTING DOWN TEENAGE BOY #2.

MARK (CONT'D)

Tess invited some friends over to

listen to music in the basement.

MARK FINDS A BOTTLE OF PILLS IN THE TEENAGER'S POCKET.

MARK (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Hold on, sweetie. (TO

BOY) What the hell is this!?

TEENAGE BOY #2

My allergy medicine.

You allergic to good, clean fun?

TEENAGE BOY

Um... no?

MARK

Then you won't need it. Move.

MARK TAKES THE PILLS AND SHOVES THE KID TOWARD THE BASEMENT.

MARK (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Sorry about that.

LISA

And Julia and Charlotte?

A <u>TEENAGE GIRL</u> IS NEXT IN LINE. SHE'S PRETTY BUT DRESSED TRASHY (THINK KE\$HA). MARK EYES HER.

MARK

(INTO PHONE) They're here, safe and

happy. See you later, okay?... Bye.

END INTERCUT.

HE HANGS UP AND OPENS THE HALL CLOSET BEHIND HIM AND TAKES OUT A HUGE BRONCOS KNEE-LENGTH WINTER PARKA. MARK THROWS THE PARKA OVER THE GIRL'S HEAD.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's warm down there. Stay hydrated.

HE GRABS A GATORADE FROM A BUCKET OF BOTTLES, HANDS IT TO HER AND MOTIONS HER OFF, AS <u>BYRON SMALLS</u> (30'S, LARGE, ATHLETIC, AFRICAN-AMERICAN) <u>PUSHES</u> HIS WAY INSIDE PAST THE TEENS.

SMALLS

Coming through here.

Smalls! Thank God. I got a daughter upstairs being a nerd, another shooting free throws, and one turning our basement into the House of Blues.

SMALLS

Got it. Need me to work security?

MARK

Yeah. What I've been doing is--SMALLS TURNS TO THE LINE OF TEENAGERS.

SMALLS

EMPTY YOUR POCKETS! NOW!

EVERYONE IMMEDIATELY EMPTIES THEIR POCKETS.

MARK

That'll work.

SMALLS AND MARK CONTINUES TO MOVE KIDS TOWARD THE BASEMENT, AS RONNIE HART (20'S, HIPSTER) AND HIS BAND ARRIVE. THEY ARE CLEARLY OLDER AND COOLER THAN ANY OF THE TEENAGERS.

RONNIE

Hey, you Tess's Dad? Ronnie Hart.

Nice to meet you.

MARK

You don't look like you're in high school.

RONNIE

Neither do you, man.

HE "PLAYFULLY" PATS MARK ON THE GUT. BEFORE MARK CAN REACT:

TESS (O.S.)

Ronnie!

TESS EMERGES FROM THE BASEMENT AND GIVES RONNIE A HUG.

MARK

(AS THE HUG LINGERS) Okay. All right. Ronnie, I'm gonna punch you right in the throat.

TESS

(BREAKS HUG) Stop it, Daddy. (TO BAND)

Just go downstairs, guys.

RONNIE AND HIS BAND HEAD DOWNSTAIRS. TESS TURNS TO SMALLS.

TESS (CONT'D)

Hey, Uncle Byron!

MARK

(TO TESS) That Ronnie guy is your friend? He's in his twenties.

TESS

I know. He's kind of young for me, but he's really cute. (OFF MARK'S LOOK) I'm joking. 22 is the perfect age.

SHE SMILES AND HEADS BACK TOWARD THE BASEMENT, LEAVING MARK REELING. SMALLS STEADIES HIM AS CHARLOTTE ENTERS.

CHARLOTTE

Uncle Byron! (TO MARK) Hey, if he's
here, can you and me go play
basketball?

Sorry, I can't leave the house with fifty teenagers in the basement.

SMALLS

And a smart-ass twenty-two-year-old rocker who gives lingering hugs.

CHARLOTTE

So Julia and Tess get to do what they want, but I'm stuck all by myself?!

MARK

Look, uhh... (GRASPING AT STRAWS)

Maybe call your friends and invite

them to play in our driveway.

CHARLOTTE

Awesome!

CHARLOTTE RUNS OFF.

SMALLS

It's too dark to play in your driveway.

MARK

I'm living moment-to-moment here,
Smalls!

SMALLS

(GETS AN IDEA) Relax. I got this.

SCENE H

EXT. DRIVEWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

DARKNESS.

SMALLS (O.S.)

Let there be light!

SFX: A BLINDING FLASH OF WHITE LIGHT.

WE SEE MARK AND CHARLOTTE STANDING UNDER A BASKETBALL HOOP IN THE DRIVEWAY BEHIND MARK'S HOUSE, BLINKING IN THE FLOOD OF LIGHT. CHARLOTTE HAS A BASKETBALL.

SMALLS JUMPS DOWN FROM A MAMMOTH PICKUP TRUCK WITH CAMOUFLAGE PAINT AND MASSIVE, HIGH-INTENSITY LIGHT BARS ACROSS THE WINDSHIELD, ACROSS THE GRILL, ALONG THE ROOF, ETC.

SMALLS (CONT'D)

(TO MARK) You always made fun of

Safari Truck. But she knew you'd come

around someday.

MARK

Oh my God. Thank you!

SMALLS HITS A BUTTON ON HIS KEYCHAIN REMOTE AND SAFARI TRUCK PULSES WITH LIGHT AND EMITS A SERIES OF TONES LIKE THE SPACESHIP IN "CLOSE ENCOUNTERS."

SMALLS

She says you're welcome.

JUST THEN, FIVE THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOYS ENTER FROM THE STREET.

CHARLOTTE

Hey, guys!

THE BOYS AD-LIB HELLOS WITH CHARLOTTE. MARK GRABS CHARLOTTE AND PULLS HER ASIDE.

Wait a second. These are your

basketball friends? A bunch of boys?!

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. I hate playing with the girls.

They're no good, and they cry when I

yell at them.

SMALLS

Boys can cry, too. (POINTEDLY) Right,

Mark?

CHARLOTTE JOINS THE GAME, LEAVING A WORRIED MARK IN HER WAKE. THE PLAYERS IMMEDIATELY SEPARATE INTO TEAMS.

**PLAYERS** 

Three-on-three?/I got Danny./I'll take

Alec. (ETC.)

MARK

This is madness. I'm locking

Charlotte in her room for ten years.

SMALLS

Relax. Charlotte only cares about the

game. I wouldn't worry about her.

BOY #1

(WITH OBVIOUS LUST) I'll cover

Charlotte.

SMALLS

(TO MARK) I'd worry about him.

SCENE J

## INT. SCHLERETH LIVING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

MARK SITS ON THE SOFA, SORTING THROUGH THE VARIOUS ITEMS CONFISCATED FROM THE TEENS. SMALLS ENTERS FROM THE BASEMENT JUST AS WE HEAR THE END OF A SONG FROM RONNIE'S BAND AND APPLAUSE (O.S.).

RONNIE (O.S.)

We're going to take a little break.

SMALLS

I caught a kid huffing something.

(HOLDS IT UP) But it was just his inhaler.

MARK

Oh. (PICKS UP PILLS) Maybe he really does need these. (THEN) Hey, man, if you want to take off, I think I got this now.

SMALLS

Oh, really?

MARK

Yeah. The girls are here, they're happy and they're safe. If I didn't have two bad knees, you would see my touchdown dance.

SMALLS

Why do you have a touchdown dance?

You never once even touched the ball.

But I had a dance, Byron. And it would have been glorious.

THERE IS A LOUD AND FORCEFUL KNOCK AT THE FRONT DOOR. MARK CROSSES TO THE DOOR.

SMALLS

That's reality at the door, telling you not to dance.

MARK OPENS THE DOOR. TWO DENVER POLICE OFFICERS ARE THERE.

MARK

Oh, hey, guys. What can I do for you?

COP #1

We're getting complaints about the

music and the lights outside--

COP #2

Hey. You're from the Broncos.

MARK SWELLS WITH PRIDE.

MARK

Yes, I did play--

COP #2

Byron Smalls!

SMALLS

(MEGAWATT SMILE) That's right.

BOTH COPS IMMEDIATELY BECOME SMITTEN LITTLE BOYS IN THE FACE OF THEIR HERO.

COP #1

Oh, man! Byron Smalls!

COP #2

Wow! You're so much cooler in person!

SMALLS STEPS FORWARD AND SHAKES HANDS WITH THE COPS.

MARK

And I'm Mark Schlereth. Offensive lineman.

THE COPS LOOK AT HIM A SECOND.

COP #1

Ohh... (NOT THAT INTERESTED) Yeah.

COP #2

(TO SMALLS) Remember that touchdown you scored in the Super Bowl?

SMALLS

56 yards for the game winner.

COP #1

That's right! And your touchdown dance! Classic!

MARK

Great story about that play. I had a pop-duel with the cat corner coming off the edge--

COP #2

(TO MARK) You know what? I do remember you. (TO COP #1) This is the guy who cried on the field afterwards.

COP #1

Right. And at your retirement speech.

COP #2

So embarrassing.

MARK

I'm an emotional guy, does that make

me less of a man?

COP #2

It doesn't make you more of a man.

TWO <u>TEENAGERS</u> ENTER THE LIVING ROOM FROM THE BASEMENT. THEY SPOT THE COPS AND FREEZE.

TEENAGE BOY #3

Cops! (CALLING DOWN THE STAIRS)

Everyone, cops! Cops!

WITHIN SECONDS A FLOOD OF TEENAGERS COMES BARRELING OUT OF THE BASEMENT DOOR AND SCATTERING IN EVERY DIRECTION. THE SLUTTY KE\$HA GIRL HAS SOMEHOW TRANSFORMED THE PARKA INTO A HOT, BELTED, BARE-SHOULDERED MINISKIRT.

TEENAGERS

Cops!/Go out the back!/Get out!

MARK

Don't run, you're not doing anything

wrong!

THE KIDS CONTINUE TO PANIC, KNOCKING OVER LAMPS AND FURNITURE. THE COPS, MARK AND SMALLS HAVE TO STEP OUT OF THEIR WAY AS THEY HEAD OUT THE FRONT DOOR.

AMIDST THE CHAOS, LISA PUSHES HER WAY IN THE FRONT DOOR. SHE SURVEYS THE SCENE, MOUTH AGAPE.

MARK (CONT'D)

Lisa! Hey, you're home!

LISA

What the hell is going on here?

THE STREAM OF FLEEING TEENAGERS FINALLY STOPS.

SMALLS

(TO THE COPS) Guys, I've got a couple

footballs in the back of Safari Truck.

Who wants an autograph?

COP #1

Oh, man, do I!

COP #2

Yes! Best night ever!

THE COPS RUN OUT TO THE YARD LIKE EXCITED KIDS.

MARK

(TO SMALLS) You just carry around

footballs?

SMALLS

I get recognized a <u>lot</u>, brother.

SMALLS EXITS AFTER THE COPS. MARK TURNS TO LISA. SHE STARES AT HIM, AWAITING AN EXPLANATION.

MARK

(BIG SMILE) So, how was dinner? You

hens get some good gossip time?

TESS ENTERS FROM THE BASEMENT AND THROWS HERSELF INTO A GIANT HUG WITH MARK.

TESS

Oh my God, Daddy, thank you so much!

LISA

Seriously?

TESS

I had a huge party, Ronnie Hart played a show in my basement, and then it got busted by the cops! They'll be talking about this for years!

MARK

You're welcome. (TURNS TO LISA) And you're welcome, too-- Oh, wait. You haven't thanked me yet.

LISA

You're my hero. Where's Charlotte?

MARK

Playing basketball against the boys in the driveway, in her sports bra, which I found on its hook.

TITSA

And Julia?

MARK

Upstairs in her room studying, making her the happiest person in the house.

TESS

I think Julia left, like an hour ago.

MARK/LISA

What?/What?

TESS

Yeah, I thought she talked to you.

LISA

Did she say where she was going?

No. She had a real sour look on her face, so I assumed everything was fine. (THEN) I'm gonna go carry Ronnie's guitar. (TRIUMPHANT) For the win!

TESS SMILES AND EXITS BRIGHTLY TO THE BASEMENT.

LISA

(SERIOUS) Mark, Julia has never once left the house without telling me where she's going.

MARK STANDS IN STUNNED SILENCE. <u>SMALLS RE-ENTERS</u>.

SMALLS

Mark, you got another Sharpie? These cops got on the radio, now half the force wants an autograph. (MOCK SERIOUSNESS) Sometimes I wish I didn't catch that Super Bowl-winning touchdown.

SMALLS THEN SMILES AND EXITS, CACKLING TO HIMSELF.

SCENE K

INT. SCHLERETH KITCHEN - A LITTLE WHILE LATER
MARK IS ON HIS CELL AS LISA ENTERS.

MARK

(HANGING UP) Why isn't she answering her phone?

LISA

She usually has her headphones on.

MARK

(TRYING TO TEXT) My stupid sausage thumbs keep turning "call home" into "cameltoe." (THEN) I told you this would happen.

LISA

(OFFENDED) What?

MARK

She's overworked and overstressed.

The same thing happened to my buddy in college. Starting linebacker, academic All-American, until the circuits fried, and he just took off.

LISA

Well, where did he go?

MARK

Cancun. (THINKS) Or maybe Canada. It was a long time ago.

LISA

Okay, then. I'll search Cancun, you take Canada. We'll meet back here in three weeks.

MARK

You know, you seem awfully calm for a woman who pushed her daughter over the edge.

SHE STARES AT HIM A BEAT, THEN:

LISA

That's because I know where she is. She's at the Hot Pot.

MARK

Holy crap! She's in Byron's jacuzzi?

LISA

No. The Hot Pot is a coffee shop down by D.U. She takes the bus there to study 'cause it makes her feel grown up. Know how I know that? Because I know my daughter.

THIS HITS MARK PRETTY HARD.

LISA (CONT'D)

Apology accepted, Mark-- Oh, wait.

You haven't said "I'm sorry" yet.

LISA TAKES HER CAR KEYS AND EXITS.

SCENE L

## INT. SCHLERETH LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - LATER

CHARLOTTE IS SITTING ON THE COUCH, READING COACH MCGEE'S MANUSCRIPT. MARK IS NERVOUSLY PACING BEHIND HER.

CHARLOTTE

Daddy, what's "decolletage?"

MARK

(DISTRACTED) I don't know, why?

CHARLOTTE

Coach McGee just "ravaged" a retired

biologist's "decolletage."

MARK

Purse. It means purse.

MARK GRABS THE NOVEL AWAY FROM HER AS JULIA AND LISA ENTER THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR.

MARK (CONT'D)

(TO CHARLOTTE) Off to bed. Now.

CHARLOTTE EXITS.

JULIA

Love you, see you in the morning.

MARK STOPS JULIA AT THE STAIRS.

MARK

Not you.

LISA

She's exhausted, honey. We can deal with this tomorrow.

(TO JULIA) You are not to leave this house without telling one of us exactly where you're going.

LISA

Mark, I already told her in the car--

MARK

Well, I'm telling her again.

JULIA

I texted Mom when I got to the Hot Pot.

BEAT. MARK REACTS, REALIZING WHAT HAS HAPPENED. HE SLOWLY TURNS TO A VERY BUSTED LISA, WHO HEADS FOR THE STAIRS.

LISA

Love you, see you in the morning.

MARK GENTLY STOPS LISA'S EXIT, THEN TURNS TO JULIA.

MARK

(FIRM) Tomorrow you're sleeping in, going to the mall with friends, and seeing a crappy movie. Got it?

JULIA

(SIGHS) Fine. But I'm studying as soon as I get home.

JULIA EXITS UPSTAIRS. MARK TURNS TO LISA, WHO LOOKS AWAY.

MARK

Lisa. (CLEARS THROAT) Scoreboard!

MARK LAUNCHES INTO AN ELABORATE END-ZONE DANCE, INCLUDING CHICKEN-WINGING, VOGUEING, SOME ROBOT, AND WHATEVER ELSE OUR LEAD ACTOR THROWS IN. FINALLY, HE GRIMACES AND STOPS.

LISA

Are you done?

MARK

No, but I think one of the screws in my knee popped out. (THEN, MOCKING) "I know where Julia is because I know my daughter!"

LISA

(FIERCE) I do know my daughter!

Because while you were off playing

football I was a mother and a father

to these girls. But six weeks into

your retirement you suddenly decide

you know the girls better than me.

MARK

(SUDDENLY ON THE DEFENSIVE) I didn't say "better," I just said...

(SWITCHING TACTICS) Look, she texted you, and you didn't tell me.

LISA

I was about to, and then you told me I

"pushed her over the edge." Do you

have any idea how that makes me feel?

MARK FLOPS DOWN ON THE SOFA AND PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.

LISA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

When I was doing my touchdown dance, I was <u>sure</u> I was gonna win this fight.

TITSA

Mark, since you retired, you've done nothing but criticize the way I do things. I can't take it anymore.

MARK

Look, I know I wasn't always here all the time, but now I am, and I want to contribute. I want to be valuable.

What am I supposed to do?

LISA PUTS A COMFORTING HAND ON HIS SHOULDER.

LISA

(SWEETLY) You have a choice. You can either find some reason to get out of the house every day -- soon -- or we're going to get a divorce.

MARK

I cut the grass every day.

LISA

If I can see you, you're too close.

(THEN) But that doesn't mean you're

not valuable around here. You're a

great dad, but... You're gripping the

wheel a little tight.

MARK NODS.

You know what it is? As a lineman, I could do my job all game, and no one would notice. But if I made one mistake, my quarterback got hammered and it's game over. I feel like it's the same thing with these girls. I make one tiny mistake, and boom, one of them's a stripper.

LISA

You need to trust them. They're a lot more grown-up than you realize.

MARK

Exactly! Now they're in the danger zone. (THEN) That's why I need to make up for lost time and be extra-involved with their lives.

LISA

Okay, that's the exact opposite of what I was trying to say.

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. MARK ANSWERS. IT'S SMALLS WITH HIS ARMS AROUND TWO ATTRACTIVE LADY COPS.

SMALLS

You guys got a camera?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

<u>TAG</u>

FADE IN:

INT. STINK'S - THE FOLLOWING MONDAY AFTERNOON

COACH MCGEE IS AT THE BAR. SCOTT IS BEHIND THE BAR. THE PICTURES ARE NOW ALL ACTION SHOTS OF MARK. MARK ENTERS NICELY DRESSED IN A SUIT AND TIE.

SCOTT

Hey, you look sharp.

MARK

I had an interview at KDVR. I'm gonna do some fill-in sports radio stuff.

COACH MCGEE

Great! We can talk about the book!

A CONFUSED LOOKING <u>CUSTOMER</u> APPROACHES THE BAR.

CUSTOMER

Excuse me, who's in all these pictures?

MARK

Oh, that's me. Mark Schlereth, I played for the Broncos. (POINTS)

Played in the Super Bowl, Pro Bowl...

THE CUSTOMER JUST LOOKS AT MARK, NOT GETTING IT.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm the guy who cries.

CUSTOMER

Oh, yeah!

MARK

(TO SCOTT) Put the pictures back.

END OF SHOW