

COLD OPENING

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

(ANGIE, MS. FRYE, MARLON)

WE MEET **ANGIE WADE** (30'S, ATTRACTIVE, SMART, VERY TOGETHER)
SITTING ACROSS FROM AN ATTRACTIVE FEMALE COUNSELOR, **MS. FRYE**.
ANGIE LOOKS AT HER WATCH.

ANGIE

I'm so sorry, Miss Frye. Maya's dad
should be here any minute.

MS. FRYE

Do you want to call him? Maybe he got
lost or he's been in an accident. It's
been almost thirty minutes.

*

ANGIE

Oh, I can assure you, he hasn't been
in an accident. Thirty minutes is
usually about the time he comes
through the door and says--

JUST THEN **MARLON WADE** (40, HIP, CASUAL, CONFIDENT) ENTERS.

MARLON

T'sup? Sorry I'm late. I was on my way
out of the house when I got distracted
by an online quiz that reveals which
character on *Saved By The Bell* is your
soulmate, then I ate a Hot Pocket and
fell asleep.

ANGIE

(To MS. FRYE) See? He's fine.

MARLON

I got Screech, by the way. It's a damn shame. I was convinced it was Zach.

MARLON LEANS OVER AND HE AND ANGIE KISS.

MARLON (CONT'D)

How you doing, Baby?

ANGIE

Marlon, Miss Frye wants to talk to us about Maya.

MARLON

You mean Shane. Maya doesn't get in trouble. Shane gets in trouble. A lot.

MS. FRYE

No one's in trouble. Maya's teachers have noticed that she seems a bit distracted and withdrawn these days and I was wondering if you can think of any reason your daughter might be struggling. Is there anything happening at home?

MARLON AND ANGIE SHARE A KNOWING LOOK.

ANGIE

I think we may know what's bothering her.

MARLON

(Nods in agreement) Yeah. You see, I broke the 80" TV with a Wii controller. We've been having to watch the 65" in the bedroom.

ANGIE STARES AT HIM.

ANGIE

Marlon. I was talking about our divorce becoming final.

MARLON

No, I'm pretty sure it's the TV. (To Ms. Frye) It's been upsetting for all of us.

MS. FRYE

I'm sorry. I'm confused. You two are divorced?

ANGIE

Well, we've been separated for a couple of years, but our divorce became final a month ago. I think that may be what's on Maya's mind.

MS. FRYE

But you kissed when he came in and called each other baby.

*

ANGIE

Oh, yeah, well, old habits die hard. We were together for sixteen years.

MARLON

She's my soulmate. Well, she and Screech.

ANGIE

We kinda decided as parents that we'd remain close for our children's sake. It's actually a movement among fractured families. They call it C.C.D. Child-Centered Divorce.

MARLON

I call it "Keeping it cool."

MS. FRYE

Wow. I'm very impressed. That tells me that you're wonderful, loving parents.

MARLON

It tells you something else, Ms. Frye. That I am single and very available.

HE GIVES HER A SEXY SMILE. ANGIE ROLLS HER EYES.

ANGIE

And if you're interested in a romantic partner who's immature, self-centered and unreliable, Marlon is your man.

MARLON TAKES NO OFFENSE AND LOOKS RIGHT AT MS. FRYE.

MARLON

What do you say, girl?

HE GIVES HER HIS MOST CHARMING SMILE AND SHE SMILES BACK, A BIT UNSURE OF WHAT TO MAKE OF THIS.

OPENING CREDITS

ACT ONEINT. MARLON'S HOUSE - SOCIAL MEDIA FEED *

WE ARE INSIDE MARLON'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL: THE MARLON WAY, HE TALKS ENERGETICALLY, IN QUICK CUTS, DIRECTLY TO CAMERA.

MARLON

People! Welcome to The Marlon Way. *

Marlon here. We just hit 6 million *

subscribers! I thank you and will do *

my best to keep y'all entertained! So, *

I woke up this morning at 5:15 and *

thought, "why am I up so early?" More *

importantly, I thought, "why am I the *

only one who's up?" I then decided to *

drive over to Angie's house and invite *

she and the kids to join me! *

INT. ANGIE'S BEDROOM - EARLIER THAT MORNING *

MARLON SMILES TO CAMERA. ANGIE IS ASLEEP BEHIND HIM. *

MARLON *

(Screaming) Angie!! *

SHE FREAKS OUT AND WAKES UP, YELLING AT HIM. *

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER *

MAYA (13) SLEEPS. MARLON SMILES. *

MARLON *

Maya!!! *

HE BOLTS UP, HORRIFIED. *

MAYA *

Why are you my dad?! *

INT. SHANE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

SAME SET UP. SHANE (10) IS SOUND ASLEEP.

MARLON

Shane!!!

SHANE BOLTS OUT OF BED SCREAMING. IN HIS PANIC HE RUNS STRAIGHT INTO THE CLOSET DOOR AND FALLS TO THE GROUND IS A HEAP. MARLON LAUGHS UNCONTROLLABLY.

INT. MARLON'S HOUSE - SOCIAL MEDIA FEED

MARLON

Then I got home and found my roommate
Stevie asleep on the couch. Why should
I deny him the enjoyment of a sunrise?

INT. MARLON'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MARLON SMILES TO CAMERA AS STEVIE (40'S) SLEEPS ON THE COUCH.

MARLON

Stevie!

HE DOESN'T BUDGE. MARLON WAITS.

MARLON (CONT'D)

STEVIE!!!

NOTHING. MARLON GETS RIGHT DOWN NEXT TO HIS EAR.

MARLON (CONT'D)

STEVIE!!!!!!!

STEVIE ROLLS OVER CALMLY.

STEVIE

Oh, hey, man. I didn't see you there.

We getting breakfast?

MARLON SHAKES HIS HEAD TO CAMERA. AND WE...

CUT TO:

SCENE BINT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

(MARLON, ANGIE, MAYA, SHANE, YVETTE)

A BEAUTIFUL, WELL-KEPT, UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS HOME. ANGIE ENTERS FROM WORK, HER ARMS FULL OF GROCERIES AND CONSTRUCTION PLANS.

ANGIE

Maya! Shane! I'm home! (Then) What the-

SHE STOPS WHEN SHE NOTICES THAT HER LIVING ROOM IS DOMINATED BY AN EPIC FORT. BLANKETS, PILLOWS, SOFA CUSHIONS, CLOTHESPINS, LAMPS, ETC. IT'S PRETTY SPECTACULAR. THE FLAP TO THE FORT OPENS AND A 10-YEAR-OLD BOY EXITS. THIS IS **SHANE** (A LOVABLE SMART ASS LIKE HIS DAD).

SHANE

Mom! Check out our fort! You like it?

ANGIE

Like it? It's... amazing.

SHANE

It was Dad's idea!

MARLON EMERGES FROM THE FORT WITH A HUGE SMILE ON HIS FACE.

MARLON

Pretty cool, right?

ANGIE

It's very cool. (Pointedly to Marlon)

And it takes up my entire living room!

And you used my good sheets. The

expensive ones with a 900 thread count

made from Egyptian cotton.

MARLON

They gave us the best support, yet let

in the most light. Worth every penny.

SHANE

You want to see inside, Mom?

ANGIE SEES HER SON'S ENTHUSIASM AND MELTS.

*

ANGIE

Of course! I can't wait!

ANGIE LEANS DOWN TO ENTER THE FORT.

MARLON/SHANE

Stop!/Hold up!

SHANE (CONT'D)

What's the password?

ANGIE

I don't know the password.

SHANE

Here's a hint. What do Dad and I love more than anything in the world?

ANGIE

(Sighs) Farts.

*

MARLON/SHANE

She's good./That one's too easy.

MARLON

Good guess, but no. What's the one thing in the world that Shane and I can't live without?

ANGIE

XBox?

*

MARLON/SHANE

Damn, she's good!/She knows us well.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Another good guess, but no!

ANGIE

(Sighs) Can I please just come in?

MARLON/SHANE

Not without the password.

ANGIE

Fine. I give up then.

ANGIE CROSSES OFF TO THE KITCHEN.

MARLON/SHANE

Keep guessing!/Come on!

ANGIE

I have to put these groceries down.

SHANE

(To Marlon) Dad, I'm gonna go fortify
the ceiling in the rumpus room.

MARLON

Good. Don't use too many clothespins.
We're gonna need them for the skylight
in the master bedroom.

THEY DO AN ELABORATE HANDSHAKE/FIST BUMP. MARLON CROSSES TO
ANGIE IN THE KITCHEN.

ANGIE

Why is it you always do the really
big, disruptive projects in my house? *

MARLON

Well, for one thing, I only have one
set of sheets and two pillows. *

ON THE ISLAND IS A BOTTLE OF TEQUILA AND TWO MARGARITAS.
MARLON HANDS ONE TO ANGIE AND TAKES OUT HIS PHONE.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Here. Hold this. Smile. You love it!

THEY HOLD UP THE DRINKS AND SMILE LIKE THEY'RE HAVING THE
GREATEST TIME. MARLON SNAPS A SELFIE. ANGIE PUTS THE DRINK
DOWN AND CONTINUES UNLOADING THE GROCERIES. MARLON TYPES ON
HIS PHONE.

ANGIE

What did we just sell?

MARLON

Paco's Alcohol-Free Tequila. For those
people who love the taste of tequila,
but hate the feeling of uninhibited
euphoria that alcohol provides.

ANGIE

Alcohol-free alcohol? What's the point
of that?

MARLON

Right? It's like being invited to a
sex-free orgy.

ANGIE

How are you supposed to sell that?

MARLON

It's not my job to sell it. It's just
my job to put it on my channel, make
sure my subscribers see it and
heighten awareness of the brand!

(MORE)

MARLON (CONT'D)

I need a post that gets 3 million
"likes" by Saturday.

*

ANGIE

Good luck. Are you staying for dinner?

MARLON

Let's see, I can either have a home-
cooked meal with you and the kids or
eat a bowl of cereal while Stevie
tells me all the ways he could make
Game Of Thrones a better show. Tough
one, but I think I'll stay for dinner.

*

ANGIE

Good, because we need to talk to Maya
about our meeting with her counselor.

ANGIE GOES TO MAKE A CUP OF COFFEE. SHE GRABS A CUP AND STOPS
AT AN EMPTY SPACE ON THE COUNTER.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Where's the coffee maker?

MARLON

It's in the fort. We're opening a
Starbucks behind the recliner.

ANGIE ROLLS HER EYES AND SIGHS: THIS IS LIFE WITH MARLON.

MARLON (CONT'D)

This fort is gonna be off the hook,
Ange. Ain't that right, Shane?

*

SHANE (O.C.)

(Inside the fort) For real!

MARLON

We're gonna have a DJ, VIP area, be *
 chilling, popping bottles. We're gonna *
 get a bouncer to keep out any ladies *
 that are not fine with a capital "F."

JUST THEN THE FRONT DOOR OPENS. IN WALKS **YVETTE** (30'S,
ANGIE'S BEST FRIEND, SEXY, STYLISH, A BIT OF A TRAINWRECK),
 CARRYING A ROLL OF FABRIC. SHE STARES AT MARLON.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Shane, we may need that bouncer sooner
 than we thought. (Then) Hello, Yvette.

YVETTE

I thought of you today. I saw a
 billboard for Erectile Dysfunction.

MARLON TAKES OUT HIS CELL PHONE AND HOLDS IT TO HIS EAR.

MARLON

Sorry, I can't talk right now. I'm on
 the phone with Stank Ho magazine. They
 want to do a cover story on you. *

ANGIE

(Sympathetically to Yvette) Yeah, you *
 lost that round.

YVETTE CROSSES TO ANGIE AND HANDS HER THE ROLL OF FABRIC.

YVETTE

I thought you divorced him. He's here
 more now than when you were married.

MARLON

Just because your six ex-husbands
can't stand you doesn't mean that
there aren't mature, sophisticated
adults in the world who love and
support each other, even in divorce.

YVETTE

FYI, fool, I only have four ex-
husbands! The other two marriages were
annulled before they began.

MARLON

Oh, it's only four divorces? And here
I thought you were bad at marriage.

ANGIE

(Re: Fabric) Is that the fabric the
Bryants wanted for their love seat?

YVETTE

Yes. I told them we're interior
designers and that we'd feature them
on our website so they gave it to us
at cost. (Then) More importantly, are
you excited about tomorrow night?

*
*
*
*
*

ANGIE

Yeah, Yvette, I was thinking. I don't
know about tomorrow night. I was going
to take the kids to the movies and --

*
*
*

YVETTE

Angela! Come on!

ANGIE SIGHS, RELUCTANT TO GO OUT.

MARLON

Ange, I'll take the kids to the
 movies. You girls have big plans?
 Girl's Night Out! Standing in line
 outside the club, watching all the
 young girls get in 'til about ten-
 forty-five and when y'all give up, go
 get pancakes and call it a night.

Baby, you need more nights like that!

THE TWO WOMEN STARE AT HIM, IRRITATED YET AMUSED.

ANGIE

Thank you, Marlon. You're right! (To
 Yvette) I'm in!

YVETTE

(To Marlon) Are you sure you don't
 have to check with whatever crazy
 bimbo you're currently dating?

ANGIE

Yes, Marlon, who is the latest lady?
 Is it still the girl with bad breath?

MARLON

She did not have bad breath. She had a
 bad tooth...that caused an unpleasant
 odor. Get your facts straight!

YVETTE

*

Maybe it's the girl who thinks Obama
is a reptilian shape-shifter?

MARLON

She showed me some very compelling
evidence to support her claims!

ANGIE

*

What about the stalker? Have you
gotten rid of the stalker?

MARLON

I've tried, but...she's a stalker.

*

ANGIE LAUGHS AS SHE GRABS THE FABRIC OFF THE COUNTER AND
CROSSES. SHE STUBS HER TOE ON A SECTION OF THE FORT.

ANGIE

Ouch! Marlon, how big is this fort
going to be?

MARLON

Not very big at all.

THEIR DAUGHTER **MAYA** (13, AN INTROVERTED THINKER, A+ STUDENT
WHO LACKS THE CONFIDENCE HER BROTHER HAS) COMES DOWNSTAIRS.

MAYA

Has anyone seen my humidifier?

MARLON

(Pointing) It's in the spa section of
the fort near the hall closet.

ANGIE ROLLS HER EYES.

CUT TO:

SCENE C**INT. MARLON'S SOCIAL MEDIA FEED**

MARLON ADDRESSES HIS CAMERA WHILE HE EATS.

MARLON

Yo, people. Marlon here. You know what goes best with spaghetti and meatballs? Paco's Alcohol-Free Tequila! Kids love it, too!

HE PANS TO SHANE WHO IS SIPPING A VIRGIN MARGARITA.

SHANE

Thank for the margarita, Dad!

ANGIE (O.C.)

Marlon you can't post a video of a child drinking a margarita!

MARLON

You can if it's alcohol-free!

HE WINKS AT HIS CAMERA AND WE PULL OUT INTO...

INT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

(MARLON, ANGIE, MAYA, SHANE)

MARLON AND SHANE ARE AT THE DINNER TABLE WITH ANGIE AND MAYA.

MAYA

I can't believe over 6 million people actually subscribe to your channel, Daddy. (Then) No offense.

MARLON

None taken. I can't believe it either.

ANGIE

Yes, your father is very lucky that the Internet came along when it did and allowed him to make a living by documenting every one of his idiotic thoughts and impulses.

MARLON

If it hadn't, I'd just be the funniest dude at the car wash.

MAYA

May I please be excused? I have homework to do.

ANGIE AND MARLON SHARE A LOOK.

ANGIE

Actually, we'd like to talk to you.

SHANE

Maya's in trouble? This is new.

MAYA

I'm not in trouble, Shane!

SHANE

(Re: Angie) Listen to her tone! That's the trouble tone! Believe me. I know that tone. It makes my palms sweat.

Feel!

HE GRABS HER HAND TO FEEL HIS PALMS.

MAYA

I'm not feeling your sweat!

*

ANGIE

No one's in trouble.

MAYA

(To Shane) See?

ANGIE

We sat with your counselor today.

*

SHANE

(To himself) Ooh, that's not good.

ANGIE

Maya, honey, is there something bothering you? She said that you seem a bit distracted and we just want to make sure you're okay.

MAYA

(Covering) Nothing's... wrong.

*

ANGIE

Are you upset that our divorce is final? Because we want you to know we love each other very much and we'll always be here for you and Shane.

MAYA

(Scoffs) Divorce? I'm not upset about your divorce. You guys get along better since your separation.

MARLON

(To Angie) See?! I told you it wasn't the divorce.

(MORE)

MARLON (CONT'D)

(To Maya) Baby, we're going to get the 80" TV fixed real soon! Don't you worry about it.

ANGIE

Maya, honey, what's bothering you? *

MAYA

(Sighs) There are these girls at school. Tiffany, Shelby and Claire. They tweeted out a meme of me with the word "NERD" across my face because I finished our English assignment early and asked Ms. Ritter if I could read my book for the rest of the period. *

SHANE

That is very nerdy behavior. *

ANGIE

Baby, you should tell us these things. These girls need to understand that their actions and words have power and that bullying is wrong. *

MAYA

I told them that! And they said that that's what a nerd would say. *

SHANE

They're not wrong, Mom.

ANGIE GIVES SHANE A STERN LOOK.

MARLON

Hold up?! You're being bullied? But you go to an all-white private school. How is that even possible?

ANGIE

Marlon, what are you talking about?

MARLON

She's black. A black girl can't be bullied by a bunch of white girls. White people are afraid of black people. It's in their DNA. Maya, all you gotta do is act "black" in front of these girls. The minute they roll up on you, you just gotta be like, "Oh, hell no! You wanna mess wit me?! No, you don't. I'm crazy like that!

THE FAMILY ALL LAUGH. MARLON RISES AND WORKS THE ROOM.

MARLON (CONT'D)

"You don't know me, Boo! You. Don't. Know. Me! All, y'all little white bitches better recognize I'm not here to play. For real! You don't know me!"
(Then) You do that, they're never gonna mess with you again. If you black up, they're gonna back up.

HE STARES AT THEM KNOWINGLY AND TAKES A BIG BITE OF FOOD. THE KIDS LAUGH. ANGIE SMILES.

CUT TO:

SCENE DINT. MARLON'S SOCIAL MEDIA FEED

WE'RE ON MARLON'S CHANNEL. HE TALKS TO CAMERA, QUICK CUTS.

MARLON

(As a woman) Me and my girls are going out this weekend to get our freak on!
(Mexican accent) Lovely female! My name ees Paco! Drink my Tequila... and then when you get sloppy and dirty in the back seat of a car it will be because you truly are sloppy and dirty and not because you are under the influence of alcohol! Adios!

INT. MARLON'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

(MARLON, STEVIE)

WE COME OUT OF HIS FEED AND INTO MARLON'S APARTMENT. IT'S VERY COOL, VERY MALE. IN THE CORNER IS A DECKED OUT COMPUTER AREA WITH TWO IMACS, A GREEN SCREEN AND A MICROPHONE. THIS IS HIS HOME STUDIO. HE HOLDS A BOTTLE OF PACO'S.

MARLON

How the hell am I gonna get 2 million "likes" by Saturday? There's nothing to "like" about this stuff. I need to make this thing go viral somehow.

WATCHING TV ON THE COUCH, IN A SLANKET (A BLANKET WITH SLEEVES), IS **STEVIE** (40'S, LETHARGIC, SIMPLE, CONFIDENT).

STEVIE

Yo, dude. Your cable's broken. The only channels you get are VH-1 Classic and Oprah's network.

(MORE)

*

STEVIE (CONT'D)

While I do love me some Lady O, I'ma need a bit more variety than that.

MARLON RISES AND CROSSES.

MARLON

Oh, so, "my" cable is broken? "My" cable? I notice that whenever things are working they're "ours." "Our" TV. "Our" hot tub. But when shit breaks it becomes "mine." Why is that?

STEVIE

Don't lash out at Stevie just because you got a busted-ass cable box.

MARLON

Maybe Stevie should get his own cable box! When Angie and I separated and I got this place, you said you were "in-between" things and asked if you could "crash" on my couch for two weeks! That was two years ago! Two years you've been crashing on my couch in your nasty-ass slanket!

STEVIE

Is that all you remember about our past? Do you not recall fifteen years of loyalty and devoted friendship?

MARLON

Yes, but --

*

*

*

STEVIE

Do you not recall that it was me,
 Stevie, who told you to post your
 first video on YouTube which went
 viral, generated ad revenue and
 allowed you to began an illustrious
 career as a social media personality?

*
 *
 *
 *
 *
 *

MARLON

Yes, you may have been instrumental in
 launching my career.

STEVIE

Instrumental? (Beat) I'm the wind
 beneath your wings, bitch.

STEVIE RISES, REMOVES HIS SLANKET AND CROSSES TO THE KITCHEN.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

You don't have to worry about Stevie
 wearing out his welcome because I
 recently created a vision board to
 figure out the next stage of my life!

*
 *
 *

MARLON

Really? Where is this vision board?

STEVIE

(Points to his head) It's all up here.
 It's loaded with my dreams, my
 strengths and my passions. I've
 decided to make a career shift.

MARLON

I think you actually need a career in order to make it shift.

STEVIE

There you go again, lashing out with your biting sarcasm. I believe I can help you with that if you'd like to start seeing me professionally.

MARLON

Professionally?

STEVIE

I'm becoming a life coach slash motivator.

HE TAKES A BIG SWIG OF MILK FROM THE CONTAINER.

MARLON

A life coach?

STEVIE

Slash motivator.

MARLON

I'm sorry, Stevie, but I can't imagine any scenario in which you could offer me any life coaching slash motivation.

STEVIE

Really?

MARLON

Really.

*
*
*
*

STEVIE

Is that so?

MARLON

That is so.

STEVIE

You're supposed to pick your kids up
at Angie's house at 6pm, right?

MARLON

Yes.

STEVIE

It's 6:25.

*

MARLON LOOKS AT HIS WATCH AND PANICS.

MARLON

Dammit!

STEVIE

That one was on the house.

MARLON BEGINS SCRAMBLING TO GET HIS THINGS TOGETHER. STEVIE
SWIGS HIS MILK.

*

CUT TO:

SCENE E**INT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - LATER**

(ANGIE, MAYA, MAYA/SHANE, MARLON, STEVIE, DEVON) *

MAYA AND SHANE STAND BY THE FRONT DOOR WITH THEIR COATS ON AS
ANGIE RUSHES IN FRANTICALLY, PUTTING ON HER EARRINGS. *

ANGIE

Why can he never, ever be on time? *

I allocate 30-35 minutes for his *

lateness! I tell him 6 when I want him *

here at 6:30 and he still manages to *

be late! He's impossible! *

MAYA

Daddy says he's always late because *

he's a genius. He says that Einstein

was just like him.

MAYA/SHANE *

(A'la Marlon) But way less sexy. *

MARLON AND STEVIE ENTER. *

MARLON

Sorry, I'm late, baby!

ANGIE

It's almost seven o'clock, Marlon! *

MARLON

Yes, but I have a very good excuse for *

being late.

ANGIE STOPS RUSHING AROUND AND CROSSES HER ARMS. *

ANGIE

Really? What is it?

MARLON

(Beat) Actually, I thought you'd say
"I don't want to hear any excuses" so
I didn't come up with one.

ANGIE

That's what I thought. Now, please go!

STEVIE SEES THE FORT.

STEVIE

That's a bad-ass fort!

HE GOES TO CLIMB INTO THE FLAP, BUT ANGIE GRABS HIM AND
SHOVES HIM TOWARDS THE DOOR.

ANGIE

No! No! No! You can see it later! Go!

MARLON

Damn, Angie, what's your rush? Is it
90's night at the club? Is there a Bel
Biv DeVoe cover band playing?

ANGIE

No, unlike you, I don't like to be
late for things! (To kids) I love you
both. Have fun. Eat junk. GO!

*

SHE PUSHES THEM ALL TOWARDS THE DOOR AND RACES UPSTAIRS.

MARLON

(Re: Angie) Okay, kids. We're gonna
have to start regulating Mommy's
caffeine intake. You hear me?

THE KIDS NOD AND THEY GO TO EXIT. STEVIE STOPS HIM.

*

STEVIE

Hold up. Movie theater food's *
 expensive. These kids'll need snacks. *
 We don't want to spend too much money. *
 Maybe we should just stock up here.

MARLON

There's that "we" again. "I" got
 plenty of money for snacks! (Points to
 Stevie) "We" don't!

STEVIE

Come on, dude! You know Angie always *
 gets the best snacks!

MARLON

Fine. (To Kids) Go wait in the car.
 We're gonna raid the pantry.

THE KIDS EXIT. MARLON AND STEVIE CROSS TO THE KITCHEN.

STEVIE

Pantry raid. Pantry raid. I don't know
 why you ever got divorced! If I had a
 woman like Angie, buying top-notch
 snacks like these? I'd never leave!

THEY OPEN THE PANTRY AND BEGIN LOADING THEIR POCKETS.

MARLON

It didn't work when we were married.

STEVIE

And you're really never going to get
 back together? Ever? Like ever ever?

MARLON

It's better like this. I got my kids. *

Angie. I spend lots of time with them *

plus I do my thing with the ladies!

THE DOORBELL RINGS. MARLON CROSSES TO ANSWER IT.

MARLON (CONT'D)

(Crossing) Me and Angie get along

better than ever and I don't ever have *

to commit to anyone. I got it wired,

bro. My life is perfect right now. I

would not change a damn thing.

HE OPENS THE DOOR TO REVEAL A TALL, WELL-BUILT, WELL-DRESSED,
HANDSOME BLACK MAN HOLDING FLOWERS. THIS IS **DEVON**.

DEVON

Hi. I'm here to pick up Angela.

MARLON'S FACE FALLS. STEVIE SMILES AND BITES A POP TART.

INT. MARLON'S SOCIAL MEDIA FEED

MARLON LOOK RIGHT INTO CAMERA.

MARLON

Oh, hell no!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**SCENE H****INT. ANGIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

(MARLON, ANGIE)

ANGIE STANDS FACING A MIRROR, PUTTING ON MAKE UP. MARLON PACES IN FRONT OF THE BED BEHIND HER.

MARLON

Oh, Hell, no! Hell, no! Hell to the
NO! Hell, no! Uh-uh. Hell, no! Hell--

ANGIE

Are you done?

MARLON

Hell, no!

ANGIE

How many more do you have?

MARLON

I'd say at least thirty-five.

ANGIE

Marlon! I don't have time for this. *

MARLON

(Indignant) You lied to me, Angela! I
can't even look at you right now!

ANGIE

I did not lie to you! Yvette asked me *
if I was excited about tonight and you *
assumed we were going dancing! *

MARLON

Ha! But you did not correct me! That
makes you complicit! That's right, I
know that word. And you not telling me
the truth is as bad as a lie! Ergo, I
know that one too, you are a liar!

*
*
*

ANGIE TURNS, LOOKS DIRECTLY AT HIM.

ANGIE

(Pointedly) Do you really want to talk
about lying in our relationship?

*

MARLON

(Immediately) Alright, damn, woman,
move on. Jesus! Why you gotta live in
the past? What's done is done.

ANGIE

Quite frankly, Marlon, I'm surprised
you're this upset. It's one date! How
many skanks have you been out with
since we separated?

MARLON

Number one: Please do not degrade
women with the misogynistic term
"Skank." It offends me as a feminist.
And number two: I never brought them
skanks around our children!

ANGIE

Devon is a doctor. And a triathlete!
And a youth pastor!

MARLON

That supposed to impress me?

ANGIE

And I didn't want to bring him around
our children. You showed up an hour
late to pick our children up! That's
the only reason we're having this
conversation!

*

MARLON

I could've been a doctor, but you know
I got a queasy stomach! My doctor
dreams were dashed the first Halloween
I gutted a pumpkin!

ANGIE

Marlon, this is very hard for me. I
haven't been on a date since 1998.

MARLON

(Angry) Who the hell did you go on a
date with in 1998?!

ANGIE

You! That's the last date I was on.
Can you please be an adult about this?

*

*

MARLON

Me?! Hell, I am an adult. I'm cool
with all of this! But, this isn't
about me! This is about our children!

*

*

ANGIE SIGHS AND EXITS THE BEDROOM.

MARLON (CONT'D)

This is the type of stuff that makes
them grow up to be strippers, Ange!
And not the good strippers who are
flexible and can clap their asses, but
the lazy ones who just stand by the
pole and move their hips! You want
that for your daughter?! Or your son?!

MARLON FOLLOWS.

RESET TO:

INT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
(MARLON, ANGIE, MAYA, SHANE, STEVIE, DEVON)

ANGIE AND MARLON COME DOWN THE STAIRS.

MARLON

Seriously, Ange. Seeing their mother
with another man? It could be
traumatic for them! Meeting this dude
could make them angry, introverted
children of divorce!

*

*

*

THEY REACH THE LANDING AND THEY SEE MAYA AND SHANE EACH
GIGGLING UNCONTROLLABLY AND HANGING ON THE OUTSTRETCHED
BICEPS OF DEVON. ANGIE SMILES. MARLON'S FACE FALLS. HE RUNS
DOWN THE STAIRS, CROSSES TO THE KIDS. HE GRABS THEM.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Kids, Daddy needs to holler at you for
a sec. (To Devon) Excuse us. *

HE CROSSES WITH THE KIDS TO THE KITCHEN. ANGIE FOLLOWS. HE
STANDS THEM SIDE BY SIDE AND KNEELS BEFORE THEM.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Kids, I have news that may be very
upsetting for you. And it's okay for
you to get angry. Feel free to cry or
scream or curse at Mommy if that's
what you need to do. Okay? (Deep
breath) Mommy is going to go out
tonight... on a date... with that man
over there. Now, if you don't want
that to happen just say --

SHANE

MAYA

That's great, Mom!

He seems really nice!

MARLON'S FACE FALLS. ANGIE SMILES AND HUGS HER KIDS.

ANGIE

Oh, thank you, guys. I love you so
much. (To Marlon) Thank you for that.
I feel so much better.

MARLON IS ABOUT TO SPEAK WHEN THEY HEAR GIGGLING. THEY TURN
TO SEE STEVIE HANGING ON DEVON'S OUTSTRETCHED BICEP. *

STEVIE

Man, he's strong.

THEY ALL LAUGH. MARLON LOOKS TRULY HELPLESS.

CUT TO:

SCENE JINT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - LATER

(ANGIE, DEVON, MANAGER, MARLON, PATRON)

A BEAUTIFUL, HIGH-END RESTAURANT. ANGIE AND DEVON ARE ON THEIR DATE. ANGIE IS NERVOUS, BUT EXCITED.

ANGIE

This is a beautiful restaurant, Devon.

DEVON

For a beautiful woman.

ANGIE LITERALLY BLUSHES.

DEVON (CONT'D)

Your children seem wonderful.

ANGIE

They're good kids. Most of the time. I can't take all the credit though.

Marlon is a great dad. *

DEVON

You two were together for a long time?

ANGIE

We met in college. Well, I was in college and Marlon was pretending to be in college to meet girls. *

DEVON

You two get along well?

ANGIE

We do. Marlon's very kind and funny and generous. But I don't want to talk about my ex-husband on a date. *

DEVON

I'm afraid we may have to.

ANGIE

Why is that?

DEVON

Because he's here.

DEVON POINTS TO THE FRONT OF THE RESTAURANT.

DEVON (CONT'D)

He's been peeking through that window
for the last ten minutes.

ANGIE LOOKS OUT THE FRONT WINDOW OF THE RESTAURANT AND SEES
MARLON PEERING IN. SHE IS MORTIFIED.

ANGIE

Oh, my God.

SHE GLARES AT HIM. MARLON TRIES TO HIDE, REALIZES HE'S BUSTED
AND THEN ACTS AS THOUGH HE'S LOST AND CHECKS THE ADDRESS. *
MARLON ENTERS AND CROSSES TO THE TABLE.

MARLON

What the what?! You guys are eating
here? That's crazy! I was out getting
frozen yogurt for the kids, I walked *
by and I was like, "Is that Angie?"

ANGIE

It's a rather spectacular coincidence *
considering that this restaurant is *
forty minutes from your house and
there are at least a dozen frozen
yogurt places in between.

MARLON

Yeah, but I heard the stuff over here was the bomb. Figured I'd make the drive. I love me some fro-yo. You feel me, David?

DEVON

It's Devon.

MARLON

Is it?

ANGIE

Who's watching the children, Marlon?

MARLON

Stevie is looking after them. Now, I know you think that something bad's gonna happen, but I'm not worried because the kids are there. *

ANGIE

I suggest you go get your fro-yo now. *

MARLON

Yup, I'm gonna jet. Let you get back to your date. Good to see you, Dennis.

DEVON

Devon.

MARLON

Is it? My bad. Peace.

HE LEAVES.

ANGIE

Devon, I can't apologize enough for that. I am mortified.

DEVON

I've already forgotten about it. *

(Beat) Yvette tells me you used to *

dance. I'd love to hear more about -- *

MARLON POPS BACK IN.

MARLON

Real quick. Sorry, Darryl.

DEVON

Devon.

MARLON

(Talks over him to Angie) While I'm here I should probably talk to you about the garbage cans. I got a letter from the city saying that starting in October they're gonna be picking them up on Thursdays instead of Tuesdays. *

ANGIE IS ABOUT TO LOSE HER SHIT.

ANGIE

I'm certain that this is something we can talk about at another time.

MARLON

No, I hear you. It's just if you leave the cans out with trash in them you get critters digging through them and, God forbid, one of our children is killed by a bear. I'd never forgive myself for not mentioning it.

ANGIE GIVES HIM A LOOK. IT SAYS: I WILL KILL YOU.

MARLON (CONT'D)

(To Devon) Our son Shane often smells like peanut butter and has little to no survival skills. He'd be a sitting duck for one of them bears, so... I just wanted to mention it. I'm gonna bounce. Sorry to bug you. (To Devon) See you soon, Jeff.

HE EXITS. ANGIE STEWS IN ANGER. DEVON IS CALM. HE GOES TO SPEAK, BUT ANGIE POLITELY HOLDS UP A FINGER. HE WAITS A BEAT. MARLON APPEARS.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Real quick --

*

ANGIE FLIES OUT OF HER SEAT AND GRABS HIM BY THE ARM. SHE DRAGS HIM ACROSS THE RESTAURANT.

ANGIE

You've got two seconds to get --

*

MARLON

Hold up! I can explain!

ANGIE

Marlon! I swear --

*

MARLON

Please! I have a confession to make.
Okay? I'm not here looking for frozen
yogurt. I prefer ice cream, if I'm
honest. And in further honesty, I have
absolutely no idea what day the
garbage cans go out.

ANGIE

Then why are you here?

MARLON

I have concerns about this Devon guy.
I did some research on the Internet.
Dug up some dirt! It seems this dude
is one unsavory individual.

ANGIE

Really? What did you find, Marlon?

MARLON

Well, while he's got a credit score of
783 and no prior arrests, his Equifax
history shows a delinquent payment to
The Gas Company in June of 2003. It
starts with a late payment, Ange, but
then it's a slippery slope. Next thing
you know the dude's slinging crack,
snatching purses and harvesting the
organs out of homeless people! I'm not
sure I want him around my family.

ANGIE IS ABOUT TO RIP HIM APART, BUT IS INTERRUPTED BY DEVON WHO APPROACHES.

DEVON

Excuse me. Is there a problem?

ANGIE

Devon--

MARLON

There's no problem, brother. Unless you're The Gas Company and people take advantage of you.

DEVON

Excuse me?

THE **RESTAURANT MANAGER** APPROACHES MARLON.

MANAGER

(To Marlon) Pardon me, sir, I'm going to have to ask you to leave? *

MARLON

Me? Why do I have to leave? *

MANAGER

You're not dining with us this evening and you're disrupting our guests.

MARLON

(Loudly) Oh, really? Is that the reason or is it because I'm black?!

MANAGER

No! (Re: Devon) He's black! We're not asking him to leave.

TWO WAITERS APPROACH. MARLON LOOKS AROUND AT THE **ALL-WHITE STAFF** AND IMMEDIATELY LAUNCHES INTO HIS CRAZY BLACK GIRL ROUTINE HE SHOWED MAYA EARLIER.

*
*

MARLON

Oh, hell, no! Y'all don't know me! You want to step to me? Huh? You think I came to play? You don't know me, Boo! I'll fight all y'all white folks! Believe that! I'm crazy!

THE ENTIRE RESTAURANT IS WATCHING. PEOPLE BEGIN FILMING WITH THEIR CELL PHONES. THE MANAGER WAVES TO AN OFF-CAMERA PERSON.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Y'all picked the wrong black man! The wrong one! You. Don't. Know. Me.

JUST THEN **A VERY LARGE CHEF** ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN. HE AND THE WAITERS GRAB MARLON AND START WRESTLING HIM OUT THE DOOR. HE GETS LOUDER AND LOUDER. BY NOW, MOST OF THE RESTAURANT IS FILMING WITH THEIR PHONES. MARLON OVERHEARS AN EXCHANGE BETWEEN **A PATRON** AND HIS WIFE AS THEY DRAG HIM PAST A TABLE.

PATRON

(Filming) This is totally gonna go viral.

MARLON FREEZES. NOTICES ALL OF THE CAMERAS ON HIM. GETS AN IDEA, THEN:

MARLON

Paco's Alcohol-Free Tequila! Paco's Alcohol-Free Tequila! If I had drank that tonight I wouldn't be having this outburst! Paco's Alcohol-Free Tequila!

HE SCREAMS IT REPEATEDLY AS THEY DRAG HIM OUT. ANGIE IS MORTIFIED.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**SCENE K****INT. MARLON'S HOUSE - LATER**

(MARLON, STEVIE)

STEVIE WATCHES TV IN HIS SLANKET AS MARLON PACES AND CHECKS HIS PHONE.

MARLON

You believe this? Angie still hasn't called! Is she even concerned that I was dragged off by a mob of angry white people?! No! She only cares about Devon. That dude is bad news. The hell kind of name is Devon anyway? Sounds like devil! That can't be good!

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STEVIE

(To himself) Looks like it's time for ol' Stevie to put on his life coach hat.

HE RISES, HIS SLANKET DRAPES BEHIND HIM LIKE A JEDI CAPE.

STEVIE (CONT'D)

Listen up, Stevie's gonna break it down for you right now. Tonight wasn't about Devon. Or Angie. Tonight was about Marlon. Angie's not calling right now because Angie doesn't know why Marlon did what Marlon did? Because Marlon doesn't communicate with Angie. Marlon acts out of fear.

MARLON

Oh, really, Life Coach? What is
Marlon's fear? Huh? Tell me!

*

*

STEVIE

Only Marlon can answer that question.
And only Marlon can communicate that
to Angie. You're mad at yourself, man.
She didn't do anything wrong. (Looks
right at him) Talk to her, Marlon.
Tell her about it. Tell her all your
crazy dreams. Let her know you need
her. Let her know how much she means.

*

STEVIE TURNS IN HIS SLANKET AND SITS BACK DOWN. MARLON
ACTUALLY THINKS ABOUT WHAT HE SAID. AFTER A BEAT.

MARLON

Was that Billy Joel?

STEVIE

Damn right. Dropped some early 80's
Billy Joel knowledge on your ass. I've
been watching VH-1 Classic all day.
Fix your damn cable box and you'll get
better advice!

MARLON SMILES AT HIM.

CUT TO:

SCENE 1INT. ANGIE'S HOUSE - LATER

(ANGIE, MARLON)

IT'S LATE. ANGIE COMES DOWN FROM HER BEDROOM IN PAJAMAS. SHE GOES TO THE KITCHEN AND GETS OUT A PACKAGE OF POP TARTS. SHE TURNS TO THE TOASTER, BUT FINDS ONLY AN EMPTY SPACE ON THE COUNTER AND AN EXTENSION CORD THAT'S PLUGGED INTO THE WALL ABOVE IT. SHE FOLLOWS THE CORD ACROSS THE ROOM. IT LEADS INTO THE EPIC FORT. SHE SIGHS. THEN HEARS THE TOASTER POP UP. SHE ROLLS HER EYES AND CROSSES TO THE MAIN FLAP.

ANGIE

Marlon?

MARLON

Yes.

ANGIE

What are you doing?

MARLON

Eating Pop Tarts and drinking away my sorrows.

ANGIE

Can I come in?

MARLON

What's the password?

ANGIE

Marlon, can we please not do this right now--

MARLON

I must insist upon the password.

ANGIE

(Getting frustrated) I don't know the password.

MARLON

It's the one thing in the world Shane
and I can't live without.

ANGIE

Marlon, I'm not in the mood for --

MARLON

What is the one thing in the world
that Shane and I cannot live without?!

THIS STOPS HER. HER FACE SOFTENS.

ANGIE

Me?

THE FLAP TO THE FORT OPENS.

MARLON

Enter.

SHE CRAWLS INTO THE FORT. MARLON HAS IT DECKED OUT WITH MOOD
LIGHTING AND A SPACE HEATER. HE IS EATING POP TARTS FRESH
FROM THE TOASTER AND DRINKING PACO'S FROM THE BOTTLE. THERE
ARE TWO OTHER EMPTY BOTTLE BESIDE HIM. ANGIE NOTICES THEM.

ANGIE

Did you drink three bottles of that
stuff?

*

MARLON

I know it has no alcoholic effect, but
it's incredibly sugary and goes very
well with Pop Tarts. It's making me
feel better and yet I'll still be able
to drive home safely.

HE SMILES AT HER. SHE DOESN'T SMILE. AFTER A BEAT.

ANGIE

What happened tonight, Marlon?

HE DROPS HIS FRONT.

MARLON

I don't know. I panicked, I guess.

ANGIE

Because of one date? You've been on hundreds of dates in the past two years. You don't see me panicking.

MARLON

That's because no matter how many women I date, there's absolutely no chance of me finding anyone as good as you.

ANGIE IS TOUCHED.

MARLON (CONT'D)

When I saw him tonight. With you. With the kids. I realized that a woman like you can easily find someone as good as me. (Beat) Better than me.

ANGIE

Marlon--

MARLON

That dude is everything I'm not, Ange. He's everything you always wished I was: mature, responsible, educated.

(MORE)

MARLON (CONT'D)

He doesn't show up late for everything
 he does. I got scared that he was
 gonna take my place. That if you and
 this guy hit it off I wouldn't be able
 to be close to you and our kids. I'm
 afraid of losing my family. And I know
 it's a strange thing to say to your ex-
 wife, but I'm afraid of losing you.

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ANGIE

First of all, I've never wished that
 you were anything other than Marlon.
 If you were different, then you
 wouldn't be the funniest man I've ever
 known, the best friend I've ever had
 and the most loving father I've ever
 seen. And secondly, you're never going
 to lose me, Marlon. We're family. We
 always will be. My babies have your
 eyes. Devon can't touch that.

MARLON IS TOUCHED. THEY SMILE. HIS PHONE BEEPS. HE CHECKS IT.

MARLON

4.6 million likes.

HE SHOWS ANGIE HIS PHONE. SHE READS:

ANGIE

"Black man goes crazy in restaurant,
 begins yelling about Paco's Alcohol-
 Free Tequila."

MARLON

Got an email from the CEO. Paco himself. He's very happy.

ANGIE

At least something good came from tonight.

MARLON

I'm sorry about ruining your date. Co-parenting isn't as easy as we make it out to be, but we can do it. And if you want to see Devon again, I'll be cool with it. If you're cool with a guy who doesn't pay his gas bills, got two parking tickets in Encino last spring and has a chipped molar on the upper left side of his mouth.

*
*
*
*

ANGIE

You got his dental records?

MARLON

I need to make sure he's good enough for my soulmate.

*
*

SHE SMILES. HE SIPS HIS PACO'S.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG**SCENE M****INT. SCHOOL COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

(MARLON, ANGIE, MAYA, MS. FRYE)

ANGIE WAITS ACROSS FROM MS. FRYE. AGAINST THE WALL IN A CHAIR IS MAYA, HEAD HUNG IN FEAR AND SHAME.

ANGIE

Again, I'm sorry. He should be here
any min--

MARLON BURSTS IN.

MARLON

T'sup?! Sorry I'm late. I was going to
be here on time, but then I realized
at the last minute that I'm incapable
of that.

HE KISSES ANGIE AND EXTENDS HIS HAND TO MS. FRYE. SHE SHAKES
IT AS HE KISSES HER HAND.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Well, well, well. We meet again.

MS. FRYE

Yes, Mr. Wade. It's a shame that it is
under these circumstances.

MARLON REALIZES MAYA IS THERE.

MARLON

Hey, baby, what's up?

MAYA HANGS HER HEAD.

MS. FRYE

Mr. and Mrs. Wade, your daughter Maya said some things in the cafeteria this afternoon that were threatening, racially-charged and politically incorrect.

ANGIE SHOOTS A LOOK AT MAYA WHO CAN'T MAKE EYE CONTACT.

MARLON

What did she say?

MS. FRYE TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND READS FROM A PIECE OF PAPER.

MS. FRYE

Well, she paraded around the cafeteria, clapping her hands, moving her head from side to side and loudly shouted: (Reading) "Hell, no. Y'all b-words don't know me! Y'all don't know me. I'm black! Really black. You better back off, boo. Y'all little white b-words better recognize."

MS. FRYE LOOKS UP. SHE IS PRETTY DISAPPOINTED. ANGIE SIGHS. MARLON STARES AT MS. FRYE FOR A BEAT AND THEN A SMILE CREEPS ACROSS HIS FACE. HE REACHES OUT BEHIND HIM AND EXTENDS HIS FIST TO HIS DAUGHTER FOR A FIST BUMP. MAYA LOOKS UP AND SMILES. SHE CAUTIOUSLY EXTENDS HER FIST AND BUMPS HER DAD'S. MAYA BEAMS. ANGIE SIGHS.

INT. MARLON'S SOCIAL MEDIA FEED

MARLON

That's my baby right there!

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW