

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL

Pilot

"A Few Things You Should Know About Melissa"

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ACT ONE

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SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. "SPOKES PEOPLE" - MORNINGNORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIKE SHOP. CLAY, TWENTIES, WIRY, ANARCHIST, HAS A BICYCLE UP ON A STAND. HE'S REPAIRING IT.SFX: ANGRY PUNK ROCK COMING FROM HIS I-POD.A CUSTOMER APPROACHES.

CUSTOMER

Excuse me. (NO RESPONSE) Sir?

NOTHING. THE GUY TAPS CLAY, WHO YANKS OUT HIS EARPIECE.

CLAY

(EXASPERATED) What?!

CUSTOMER

I'm interested in the Trek 2300.

CLAY

Show me your calves.

CUSTOMER

My what?

CLAY LIFTS THE GUY'S PANTS LEGS AND INSPECTS HIS CALVES.

CLAY

Sorry, bro. (INDICATING BIKE) This bike isn't for you.

(MORE)

CLAY (CONT'D)

It's for someone who's going to climb
eighty kilometers, through freezing
rain in the Pyrenees, coughing blood
as his lungs start to implode, sucking
on the pain like a lollipop...

ELI, ONE OF THE OWNERS, ENTERS. MID-THIRTIES, ELI DOESN'T
LIVE IN THE MOMENT. IN FACT, HE RARELY EVEN VISITS IT.

CLAY (CONT'D)

(TO CUSTOMER, SUDDENLY FRIENDLY)

...And the seat is super-comfy, in
case you go over any bumps...

THE GUY EXITS.

CLAY (CONT'D)

You missed it, Eli. That squeezer
thought he wanted the 2300.

ELI

Good thing you were here. Otherwise,
we'd have an annoying pile of money to
deal with.

ELI EXITS INTO THE BACK OFFICE.

RESET TO:

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

QUINN, ELI'S CO-OWNER AND BEST FRIEND, SITS WITH A FRIENDLY
WOMAN IN HER 30'S (DELIA). QUINN, MID-THIRTIES, DOES LIVE
IN THE MOMENT. IN FACT, HE RARELY LEAVES IT. ELI ENTERS.

ELI

(TO QUINN) What's going on?

QUINN

(RE: WOMAN) This is Delia. She's here for the manager job. Delia, this is my partner, Eli.

DELIA

Good to meet you.

ELI

(TO QUINN) I told you not to start the interview without me.

QUINN

I didn't. We were just chatting.

ELI

Oh. Okay. So, Delia. Tell us about yourself.

DELIA

Well, as I told Quinn, I just moved up here from San Diego...

ELI

(TO QUINN) So you did start the interview.

QUINN

No, I didn't.

ELI

She said "as I told Quinn, I moved here from San Diego." City of origin: vital information. That's part of the interview.

QUINN

What does it matter?

ELI

You know I don't enjoy being left out of things.

QUINN

Sorry. (TO DELIA, CONSPIRATORIAL)

Let's not mention the Sagittarius club we're starting. (WHISPERED, RE: ELI) Virgo.

ELI

So Delia -- and forgive me, you probably already covered this in the (POINTED) pre-interview "chat" -- do you have any experience relevant to managing a bike shop?

DELIA

Well, I managed a bike shop.

QUINN

Seems relevant.

ELI

And how would you characterize your managerial style?

QUINN

Her "managerial style"?

ELI

All managers have different styles. I want to know what kind of style she employs.

DELIA

(AT A LOSS) Uh, I'm nice.

QUINN

Great. Her managerial style is nice, yours is bizarre. Anything else?

ELI

I guess that about covers it. (THEN)
Um, we should...

ELI MAKES A HEAD MOTION TO QUINN.

QUINN

I agree. (TO DELIA) Job's yours, if you want it.

ELI

What?! I meant "we should discuss."

QUINN

You nodded. I thought that was "we should hire."

ELI

I didn't nod. I pointed my head in the direction of privacy, where, presumably, we would have discussed hiring.

QUINN

I already told her she's hired. We're not going to un-hire her.

ELI

Fine. (TO DELIA) When can you start?

DELIA

How's tomorrow?

QUINN

Perfect. And if our salesman, Clay, is mean to you when you come in, just tell him that you're not a customer.

DELIA EXITS.

ELI

Nice work. We just hired someone we know nothing about.

QUINN

To manage a bike shop! She walks upright, and she has a head. She's perfect. (THEN) You want to go for a ride after work?

ELI

Can't, I've got a date. You catch the Giants game last night?

QUINN

E, I know you're trying to sound casual about having a date, but the Giants got rained out last night.

ELI

Okay, tonight's my first date since Melissa and I got divorced, and I'm so gripped with panic, I may go skydiving beforehand, just to relax. Better?

QUINN

I buy it much more. So, who is she?

ELI

Remember I told you about that single mom at the kids' karate class?

QUINN

The one whose kid beat up Atticus?

ELI

No, that woman is a monster. And her daughter kicks in the nuts, despite repeated warnings. This woman's hot, and touches my arm when she talks to me. And, her kids respect the rules of the dojo.

QUINN

You asked her out? You dog!

ELI

She asked me out. To dinner at her house. So I guess she asked me in.

QUINN

(IMPRESSED) Look at you!

ELI

Yes, look at me. My hands are shaking, and my ass is sweating.

QUINN

Don't waste the sexy talk on me. (OFF ELI'S LOOK) Relax. You're gonna be fine.

ELI

How do you know?

QUINN

Because you've always been a guy who rises to the occasion.

ELI

Name one time, in all the years you've known me, when I rose to the occasion.

QUINN

You know what? You are due to rise to the occasion. You are so due.

CUT TO:

SCENE BINT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - THAT MORNING

MELISSA SITS ON THE COUCH, READING A CATALOGUE. MID-THIRTIES, COMPLEX, LOVABLE, MELISSA DIVIDES HER TIME BETWEEN LIVING IN THE MOMENT AND WORRYING THAT SHE'S NOT. HER OLDER SISTER, JANE, ENTERS. JANE'S THE ONE THE PARENTS DON'T TALK ABOUT AS MUCH.

JANE

Hey, Meliss.

MELISSA SHOWS JANE THE CATALOGUE.

MELISSA

This is where I want to live.

JANE

L.L. Bean? I don't think you can live there unless you're a fleece jacket.

MELISSA

No, Maine. I want to live in Maine.

JANE

So, you're okay driving the kids 3,000 miles to school every day?

MELISSA

We'll get books on tape. (RE:
CATALOGUE) Why shouldn't it be me,
laughing among the snowy pine trees,
with a monogrammed tote bag? (STARING
AT JANE) Were you crying last night?

JANE

How do you always know? (THEN) Palmer
and I had a big fight. He's taking
Claire away for her birthday.

MELISSA

Remind me: what's the argument in
favor of having a married boyfriend?

JANE

He's not afraid of commitment. (OFF
MELISSA'S LOOK) Must you judge?

MELISSA

I just want my sister to be happy.

JANE

I am happy. Two nights a week.

MELISSA

Two? I thought it was one.

JANE

He joined a fictitious squash league.
(THEN) Where are the monsters?

MELISSA

Mom has 'em today. They're sleeping over with her. (RE: CATALOGUE) I think the people of Maine would really get me.

JANE

Maybe they could explain you to me. What's going on with you?

MELISSA

I just want to do something different. Yesterday was six months since the divorce. I need to shake things up.

JANE

Make a purchase. That's what I do.

MELISSA

I should, shouldn't I? You know what? I should buy the hutch.

JANE

What hutch?

MELISSA

Remember, at the antique furniture store on Old Valley Road?

JANE

Ooh, you loved that hutch.

MELISSA

But Eli thought the hutch was unnecessary. He said it served no purpose.

JANE

Foolish Eli.

MELISSA

But now Eli's out of the picture. And I'm gonna get myself a hutch.

JANE

You are a dangerous, crazy rebel.

MELISSA

I know. Want to come with?

JANE

Can't. I've got to get Palmer a squash racket.

MELISSA

I thought the league was fake.

JANE

He needs it for leaving his house, and coming home.

MELISSA

Promise you'll let me know when I can judge.

CUT TO:

SCENE CINT. FURNITURE STORE - EARLY EVENING

AS MELISSA IS LOOKING AT AN ANTIQUE HUTCH (WHICH IS A CHEST FOR STORAGE, OR "SIDEBOARD," IF YOU WILL), SHE SEES SOMETHING THAT SEEMS OUT OF PLACE:

MELISSA

Quinn?!

QUINN

Hey, Meliss. How are you?

MELISSA

Great -- I'm buying a hutch!

QUINN

(KNOWING) Ah, the hutch.

MELISSA

What do you mean, "Ah, the hutch?"

QUINN

Eli and I discussed it a few times.

MELISSA

And what'd he say?

QUINN

That you and he had differing philosophies vis-a-vis hutches, which often led to conflict.

MELISSA

That's fair. So, what are you doing here?

QUINN

Looking for a new bed.

MELISSA

Really. What, did you break your old one, with some hot date?

QUINN

No, thirty-four just seemed like the right age to get rid of the college futon. (THEN) Which, the other night, I broke with some hot date.

A SALESMAN APPROACHES MELISSA, PAPERS IN HAND.

SALESMAN

You're all set. My first available delivery date is a week from tomorrow.

MELISSA

A week?! I need it now. It's an impulse buy. It's supposed to lift me up with its sheer impulsiveness!

SALESMAN

Well, maybe we can get it in your car.

MELISSA

I drive a Mini Cooper. The key barely fits in the car.

QUINN

Okay, here's what we do: we put the Mini Cooper inside the hutch, and we'll throw the whole thing in my truck.

MELISSA

Really? You don't mind?

QUINN

(TO SALESMAN) Wrap it up, my friend.
We'll take it to go.

THE SALESMAN CROSSES OFF.

MELISSA

Quinn, you're a lifesaver.

QUINN

No, I'm just a man with a truck.

CUT TO:

SCENE D

EXT. HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

ELI, IN JACKET, SHIRT, AND SLACKS, TOTING A BOTTLE OF WINE, RINGS THE BELL.

SFX: DOORBELL.

HE DOES SOME FINAL PREPS: HAIR SMOOTH, NOSTRILS CLEAN, ALL SYSTEMS GO. THE DOOR OPENS; IT'S A PRETTY MOM (WENDY).

ELI

(OFFERING WINE) Hi.

WENDY

(PUZZLED) Um, where are your kids?

ELI STANDS IN STUNNED HORROR, WHICH IS MADE EVEN WORSE AS TWO LITTLE HEADS APPEAR AT THEIR MOTHER'S KNEES.

ELI

(MORTIFIED) Oh, you meant a play date.

ON THIS, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOSCENE E

FADE IN:

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

QUINN IS CARRYING THE HUTCH, STRUGGLING MIGHTILY. AS MELISSA MOVES A SMALL TABLE OUT OF HIS WAY, A MAGAZINE ON IT CATCHES HER EYE. SHE FLIPS THROUGH... EVENTUALLY:

QUINN

(LABORED) Any chance you could read
that later?

MELISSA

Sorry, sorry. Okay, go.

HE MUSCLES THE HUTCH INTO PLACE, THEN CATCHES HIS BREATH.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Perfect. Thanks again, Quinn. Can I
offer you a cold beer?

QUINN

Beer, hernia surgery... Whatever
you've got.

MELISSA EXITS.

QUINN (CONT'D)

(CALLING OFF) Do me a favor. Don't
mention to Eli that I helped you.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Why?

QUINN

(CALLING OFF) Well, in the past, I took a strong anti-hutch stand. You know, sort of a guy solidarity thing. I don't want it to seem like I betrayed the brotherhood.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Got it.

MELISSA RETURNS.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

No beer. Sorry, I've been a little behind on my grown-up shopping.

SHE HANDS HIM A TINY JUICE BOX. HE LOOKS IT OVER; IT'S SOMEWHAT FOREIGN TO HIM.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Allow me.

MELISSA RIPS OFF THE STRAW, USES HER TEETH TO FREE IT FROM THE PLASTIC WRAPPER, AND DEFTLY POPS IT INTO THE BOX.

QUINN

Wow. You're like the sommelier at Chuck E. Cheese.

QUINN DOWNS THE JUICE IN ONE LONG SUCK, CRUSHES THE BOX, AND TOSSES IT OVER HIS SHOULDER.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Well, I should get going.

MELISSA

(HESITANT) Um, before you go... Would you do one more little thing for me?

FLIP TO:

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - STILL LATER

QUINN, NOW COVERED IN SWEAT, NUDGES THE COUCH INTO A NEW SPOT -- THE FURNITURE HAS BEEN COMPLETELY REARRANGED.

MELISSA

(LOOKING AROUND) I love it.

QUINN

Eighth time's the charm. (RE: BOOK)
Can I borrow that Italy guidebook?

MELISSA

Sure. Planning a trip?

QUINN

I'm thinking of going in the spring.
It's warm, but the Italian Ices won't have all melted yet.

MELISSA

So, who would you go with?

QUINN

Just me.

MELISSA

Wow. I could never travel by myself.
Then again, I have a hard time traveling with anyone else, either.
Pretty limiting, huh?

QUINN

You and Eli traveled okay together.

MELISSA

In the beginning. Then it became all about how I overpack, and how he doesn't believe in checking luggage.

QUINN

He doesn't?

MELISSA

He'd carry on a piano, if they'd let him.

QUINN

Is that what ultimately did you guys in? Carry-on luggage?

MELISSA

Come on, you and Eli never discussed the divorce?

QUINN

Of course we did. Every morning, there'd be a detailed briefing, followed by a Q and A. (THEN) But I never discussed it with you.

MELISSA

Well, one day, a few years ago, he was trying to get Atticus to eat a Brussels sprout, and I was wrestling with Hope to try to take her temperature. And I looked at Eli, and I realized, we'd become co-workers. Co-workers in a baby factory.

QUINN

Brussels sprouts? You know, that's technically child abuse.

MELISSA

They happen to be very high in folate.

QUINN

What's folate?

MELISSA

I have no idea. The point is, we used to be sweethearts. We would send each other silly e-mails, with mooshy pet-names, like "Gum Drop," and "Muffin Face." But somehow, all that went away. And no matter how hard we tried, we could never get it back.

QUINN

(BEAT) Were you... Muffin Face?

MELISSA

No, I was Gum Drop.

QUINN

I could see that.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

QUINN AND MELISSA ARE ON THE COUCH. THERE ARE MANY EMPTY JUICE BOXES ON THE COFFEE TABLE IN FRONT OF HIM, AS WELL AS A PLATE OF CHICKEN NUGGETS.

MELISSA

Remember the one you brought to Eli's thirtieth birthday? She had like a stripper name... Sunset? Sunshine?

QUINN

Ah, you mean Summer.

MELISSA

Yes. (PUZZLED) Wait, I thought Summer was the flight attendant, from Canada.

QUINN

Different Summer.

MELISSA

You've dated more than one Summer?!

QUINN

When you've been single as long I have, you end up with a Summer or two.

MELISSA

You know, Eli and I used to wonder if you'd ever get married.

QUINN

Really? What was the consensus?

MELISSA

Well, after the first Summer, it
didn't exactly seem likely.

QUINN

I guess that's fair. (RE: NUGGETS)
These are outstanding, by the way.

MELISSA

I'm a wiz with dinosaur chicken
nuggies. (THEN) Do you ever think
you'll meet "the one"?

QUINN

I don't know. Maybe, maybe not. But
as I see it, single people fall into
two categories: piners, and doers.
Piners sit around, pining for that one
person to fall out of the sky and
complete them. Doers go out and live
their lives. I have no interest in
pining. (RE: NUGGET) This one's not
dinosaur-shaped.

MELISSA TAKES THE NUGGET, AND TURNS IT.

MELISSA

Stegosaurus.

QUINN

Very impressive.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - HOURS LATER

MELISSA AND ELI SIT ON THE COUCH, LOOKING AT A YEARBOOK.

MELISSA

Okay, you can never tell anyone this:
Junior year, Eli and I once had sex in
the library stacks.

QUINN

I know.

MELISSA

Oh my god. He told you?!

QUINN

Please. How do you think he knew
about the East Asian Studies wing?

MELISSA

You did it there, too? With who?

QUINN

Remember Sally Higgins?

MELISSA

Ew, I can't believe you did it with
that trampy, red-headed slut!

QUINN

To be fair, I think it was more
auburn.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - STILL LATER

QUINN AND MELISSA LIE ON THE FLOOR, PEELING FRUIT ROLL-UPS
OFF THE CRINKLY PLASTIC WRAPPING AND EATING THEM.

MELISSA

Nope, just three: my high school boyfriend, then Eli, and Octavio.

QUINN

Octavio? You slept with an ancient Roman?

MELISSA

He was a water-skiing instructor at Club Med. Eli and I were "taking a break." (THEN) So, three for me, which means you beat me by forty-one.

QUINN

Kinda kicked your ass, didn't I?

MELISSA

(NOTICING) The sun's coming up.

QUINN

Wow. I should be more tired. Is it possible there's a lot of sugar in a gallon of Berry Blast and a dozen fruit roll-ups?

MELISSA

Let's just say, your mommy's not going to have any trouble getting you down for a nap this afternoon.

QUINN

(BEAT) This was fun, y'know? I mean, we've never really talked like this.

MELISSA

Yeah. (THEN) Can I make you a cup of coffee for the road?

QUINN

That'd be swell.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

MELISSA ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN WITH A STEAMY MUG.

MELISSA

You want milk? Sugar?

QUINN

Doesn't matter. To be honest, I don't really like coffee.

MELISSA

So, you let me make it for practice?

QUINN

No, because... I don't want to leave.

MELISSA

Oh. That's interesting, because... I don't want you to leave.

A BEAT, AS THEY JUST LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

QUINN

So what do we do now?

MELISSA

I'm not sure.

QUINN

I've got an idea. I'm going to take a step forward. If you back up, I'll know that was the wrong thing to do.

QUINN STEPS CLOSER TO MELISSA; SHE STAYS PUT.

QUINN (CONT'D)

That's encouraging.

MELISSA

Is there a part 2 of this plan?

THERE IS. IT'S A GREAT, SWEET, ROMANTIC KISS. UNTIL...

SFX: CELLPHONE

THEY BREAK. QUINN TAKES OUT HIS PHONE, LOOKS AT IT.

QUINN

Crap. I'm supposed to meet Eli to ride, like, ten minutes ago. (INTO PHONE) Hey, E, I'm so sorry... Yes, and the little hand is on the seven. I'm on my way.

HE FLIPS HIS PHONE SHUT.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

QUINN RUNS OUT. AS MELISSA WATCHES HIM GO, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREESCENE H

FADE IN:

EXT. SCENIC NORTHERN CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY - MORNING

QUINN AND ELI RIDE, SIDE BY SIDE, ON BICYCLES.

ELI

It was a play date, Quinn. A woman was expecting me to bring children; I brought merlot.

QUINN

Well, it could have been worse.

ELI

How could it have been worse?! If everyone involved had the mumps?

QUINN

Or any of a number of old-fashioned diseases. The important thing is, you finally put yourself out there.

ELI

Yeah, never again. (THEN) Do you think I should have fought harder to make it work with Melissa?

QUINN

No. You said yourself, it was destined to fail. Remember your whole theory about how she worried too much, and you worry too much, and how there needs to be at least one person in a couple who doesn't worry so much?

ELI

Even so. What if she was my one shot at happiness, and I blew it?

QUINN

(TENTATIVE) It's funny, I actually bumped into Melissa yesterday.

ELI

Really? Where?

QUINN

I was in this furniture store, and --

ELI

She was buying the hutch, wasn't she?

QUINN

You didn't hear it from me.

ELI

But it serves no purpose!

QUINN

I don't know. It allows you to both hide, and decoratively display, your china and glassware.

ELI

Since when are you the national
spokesman for hutches?

QUINN

Since '03, when Ed Asner stepped down.
Anyway, we hung out for a while. It
was nice.

ELI

How long did you hang out?

QUINN

I don't know, I didn't time it.

ELI

Ballpark.

QUINN

All night.

ELI

What?!

QUINN

It's not like anything happened.

ELI

So, you hung out all night, but
nothing happened.

QUINN

Right. (THEN) I mean, not nothing...

ELI

What's "not nothing?" Did something
happen, or did nothing happen?

QUINN

Well, faced with those two choices,
I'd say something happened.

ELI JAMS ON HIS BRAKES AND STOPS SHORT. QUINN STOPS, TOO.
THEY'RE BOTH STANDING OVER THEIR BIKES.

ELI

Did you sleep with her?

QUINN

Absolutely not! As I was leaving,
there was a little kiss. That's it.

ELI

Can you elaborate on the duration of
the kiss?

QUINN

Short. Maybe two Mississippis. Not
even. Two Kansases.

ELI

How did I not see this coming?

QUINN

What are you talking about?

ELI

Oh, come on. Remember the night in
college, when we both met her, and we
rock-paper-scissored for who gets to
ask her out? Eli's rock beats Quinn's
scissors. So Quinn waits...

QUINN

Right. It was all part of my master plan. At your wedding, I took her aside and whispered "divorce him in nine years, and I'll meet you at the furniture store on Old Valley Road."

ELI

She's off-limits.

QUINN

What claim do you have? You're not still in love with her.

ELI

She's my ex-wife! In what universe can you think that's okay?!

QUINN

It's not a matter of "okay". I'm talking about feelings here. I can't just shut them off.

ELI

Well, you better find a way.

QUINN

Or what?

ELI LUNGES AT QUINN, CAUSING BOTH OF THEM TO TOPPLE FROM THEIR BIKES. THEY ROLL AROUND ON THE GROUND, WRESTLING AWKWARDLY. FINALLY, THEY BREAK APART.

ELI

(OUT OF BREATH) You're my best friend!

We built a business together!

(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)

I can't believe you'd throw all that
away, just so you can get with
Melissa!

QUINN

If that's what you think I'm doing,
then you're not understanding me.

ELI

Well, why don't you educate me, then.
What am I not understanding?!

QUINN

Last night, I may have fallen for your
ex-wife. Do you understand that?

THIS HITS ELI LIKE A TON OF BRICKS. WITHOUT WORDS, HE GETS
BACK ON HIS BIKE, AND STARTS TO RIDE AWAY... UNTIL HIS
CHAIN POPS OFF.

ELI

Crap!

HE GETS OFF, TRIES TO FIX IT, BUT CAN'T. FRUSTRATED, HE
KICKS HIS BIKE, THEN PUTS IT OVER HIS SHOULDER, AND STARTS
WALKING DOWN THE HIGHWAY. AS QUINN WATCHES HIM GO, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

SCENE J

FADE IN:

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

MELISSA IS WITH ATTICUS (5), AND HOPE (3). THEY'RE CRYING.

MELISSA

Atticus, Hope, here's your choice:
water or milk. Mommy's sorry, but
she's all out of juice boxes.

THE DOOR OPENS, AND ELI ENTERS.

ATTICUS/HOPE

(SUDDENLY DELIGHTED) Daddy's here!!!

THEY RUSH TO HIM; HE HUGS THEM.

ELI

I've got something for you guys.

ELI PUTS HIS HANDS BEHIND HIS BACK. HE THEN TAKES THEM
OUT, WITH BOTH INDEX FINGERS EXTENDED.

ATTICUS/HOPE

(EXCITED) Tickle sticks!

HE TICKLES THEM INTO A FRENZY. THEY LOVE IT.

SFX: CAR HORN BEEPS.

MELISSA

Okay, there's Olivia's mommy, to take
you to school. Hugs and kisses...

THE KIDS HUG AND KISS MELISSA AND ELI. THEY THEN RUSH OUT
THE DOOR (AD-LIB GOODBYES, ETC). MELISSA TURNS TO ELI.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

Nobody does tickley sticks like you.

ELI

It's a gift. (THEN) I see you got the
hutch.

MELISSA

Sorry. It was nothing personal.

ELI

No need to apologize. We don't have
to answer to each other anymore. I
went back to briefs.

MELISSA

But boxers are so much cuter on you!

ELI

Be that as it may, according to the
State of California, you no longer
have any say over my cuteness.

MELISSA SMILES. ELI GOES TO THE TV, AND PICKS UP AN OLD
VHS CASE THAT'S ON TOP OF IT.

ELI (CONT'D)

When were you watching "Sound of
Music?"

MELISSA

This morning.

ELI

(RE: CASE) You never watched this when I was around.

MELISSA

That's because you hated it so much.

ELI

I didn't hate it. I just think Maria wasn't a very good governess. It was unprofessional for her to blur the lines with the Captain like that.

MELISSA

I know. That always bothered you.
(THEN) What brings you here, E?

ELI

Just came by to see how you were.

MELISSA

Oh. I'm great. You?

ELI

Hangin' in. So, you're happy?

MELISSA

I would have to say yes.

ELI

How happy? Scale of one to ten.

MELISSA

Ummm, eight.

ELI

(TAKEN ABACK) Really?

MELISSA

That's the number that popped into my head. I'm feeling eight.

ELI

Eight. Good. Well, I just wanted to check in. I should get to the shop...

MELISSA

Thanks for stopping by, Eli.

HE STARTS TO GO. THEN:

ELI

Is 10 the most happy, or the least?

MELISSA

The most.

ELI

Just checking.

AS ELI EXITS, WE:

CUT TO:

SCENE KINT. SPOKES PEOPLE - LATER THAT MORNING

DELIA IS BEHIND THE COUNTER. CLOSE ON CLAY, TALKING.

CLAY

The question you have to ask yourself is, how much pain are you willing to endure? When you've ridden so hard that stabbing, searing agony permeates every cell of your being, will your heart let you keep going, or will you break like every other sucker who thought they had what it took to ride the Tour?

WE SEE THAT HE'S TALKING TO A CHUBBY BOY, ALL OF TWELVE.

BOY

I just need something for my paper route.

ELI ENTERS.

ELI

(TO DELIA) Is Quinn here?

DELIA

He's in the office.

ELI, WITH PURPOSE, HEADS FOR THE OFFICE. AS HE DOES:

ELI

Clay, sell the kid a bike, or you're
fired.

BOY

(DERISIVE) Ah-hah! You got yelled at.

ELI EXITS.

RESET TO:

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ELI ENTERS. QUINN GETS UP FROM HIS DESK, MEETING ELI IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. IT'S TENSE. FINALLY:

QUINN

I'm not going to pursue anything with
Melissa. It's clear to me how much it
would hurt you, and I can't do that.

ELI

You have to.

QUINN

But I--

ELI

In all the years I've known you, I've
never seen you fall for someone this
hard. The fact that it happens to be
my ex-wife, well, that's my problem.
But you're my best friend, which means
I'm supposed to want you to be happy.
And I want her to be happy, too.

QUINN

I want to make her happy.

ELI

Well, to that end, there's just a few things you're going to need to know...

ELI TAKES A PAPER OUT OF HIS POCKET; UNFOLDS IT.

ELI (CONT'D)

(READING) She must sit on the aisle at a movie, because she hates making people get up if she needs to pee. She'll interrupt you when you're talking -- not because she's rude, but because you were taking too long. She will dress you, to the point where one day, you'll find yourself in a store, holding a shirt, and asking her, "do I like this?" She will almost never have sex on a Sunday, because Sundays are when she feels fat. On an airplane, she needs someone to hold her hand during take-off and landing. She's an unapologetic overpacker. She only wears tiny earrings, because dangly ones call attention to her ears, which she hates. She wants Van Morrison's "Into the Mystic" sung at her funeral.

(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)

She'd like the inscription that comes in a greeting card to be so moving, it makes her cry -- then she expects you to top that with what you write.

DRAMATIC BEAT...

ELI (CONT'D)

And, most importantly, as unlikely as it may seem, every one of these things will make you love her even more.

ELI FOLDS THE PAPER AND HANDS IT TO QUINN.

QUINN

(TAKEN ABACK) Wow. Anything else?

ELI

I don't want to scare you.

QUINN SMILES; THEN ELI DOES TOO. ON THIS, WE:

CUT TO:

SCENE 1

INT. MELISSA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

SFX: DOORBELL.

MELISSA CROSSES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT. QUINN IS THERE.

MELISSA

Hi.

QUINN

Hi. So, with your blessing, I talked to Eli about... us, and last night...

MELISSA

What?! You didn't have my blessing!

QUINN

That's a fair point.

MELISSA

How could you talk to him about that? And what about me? You and I didn't even talk about last night.

QUINN

Do you want to?

MELISSA

Sure. I'll go first. What was that, anyway? What happened? What were we doing? What were we thinking?!

QUINN

All valid questions. Well, for me, it was this incredible... magical moment, that existed outside of time and space.

MELISSA

(TAKEN ABACK) Well put.

QUINN

Why -- did you not feel anything?

MELISSA

I mean, there was a little something. (ADMITTING) Alright, totally. Magic, outside time and space, the whole thing. (CRINGING) So, how did Eli react?

QUINN

He's pretty much okay with, you know, the possibility of... you and me.

MELISSA

(INCRECULOUS) Eli?!

QUINN

Well, first he tried to beat the crap out of me on Highway 9, and then he stormed off in a huff.

MELISSA

That's the Eli I've come to know and love. (THEN) And then... not love.

QUINN

But eventually, he calmed down, and now he's fairly okay. He wants us to be happy.

MELISSA

That explains his odd little visit this morning, to ask if I was happy.

QUINN

See?

MELISSA

Well, I do want to be happy.

QUINN

Me, too. (THEN) So, what happens now?

MELISSA

(BEAT) I know. I'm going to take a step forward. If you back up --

QUINN KISSES MELISSA. IT'S A GOOD ONE, LASTING SEVERAL MISSISSIPPIS (EVEN MORE KANSASES). BUT MELISSA PULLS AWAY.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

This is really weird, isn't it?

QUINN

Not at all. 90% of the population is heterosexual.

MELISSA

(FREAKING OUT) It's just, you're Quinn.

QUINN

(PUZZLED) Yes, I've been told that many times.

MELISSA

No, I mean, I have two children with your best friend. You're their Uncle Quinn! You videotaped their births!

QUINN

Tastefully. I never went south of the belly button. From what I shot, those kids could have been adopted!

MELISSA

Even if we could somehow get past the weirdness, you and I are very different. I was married for nine years. You date people named Summer, and break beds with them.

QUINN

That's because I hadn't met anyone like you. I had no idea what I was even looking for. But you move a hutch, and drink a couple juice boxes, suddenly everything changes.

MELISSA

I know. It changed for me, too. But I need to go slow. I can't just jump in. I am not an in-jumper.

QUINN

Then maybe we could have a nice, slow
dinner some time. I know a place
where the service is terrible.

MELISSA

I'd like that very much.

QUINN

Good. Great. So, I'll call you.

MELISSA

I look forward to it.

QUINN GOES TO KISS HER, THINKS BETTER OF IT, AND OFFERS A
FIST. SHE AWKWARDLY FIST-BUMPS HIM.

QUINN

You know you have really pretty ears?

MELISSA

(COVERING EARS) Ew. No I don't.

Don't look at them.

ON THIS, WE:

CUT TO:

SCENE 1INT. ELI'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - THAT EVENING

CLOSE ON: TV SCREEN. IT'S A WEDDING VIDEO FROM NINE YEARS AGO. WE SEE ELI AND MELISSA, IN TUX AND WEDDING GOWN. IN FRONT OF THEM, QUINN (ACCOMPANIED BY AN O.S. BAND) IS SINGING THE ALLMAN BROTHERS' "MELISSA." IN TYPICAL QUINN FASHION, HE'S PRETTY GOOD.

QUINN (ON VIDEO)

(SINGING) *...Knowing many, loving
none... Bearing sorrow, havin' fun...
But back home he'll always run...*

WIDEN TO REVEAL: ELI AND QUINN, ON THE COUCH OF ELI'S APARTMENT, WATCHING THE VIDEO, DRINKING BEER.

ELI

How could I have been so naive? See
the way Melissa was looking at you?

QUINN

Yes, because I'm singing. You were
looking at me, too. The Rabbi was
looking at me, you paranoid freak.

ELI

(BEAT) You weren't very good.

QUINN

I was awesome. I could have been,
like, the lost Allman Brother.

ELI

Yeah, the one who got kicked out of
the band for sucking.

QUINN

That's not nice, Muffin Face.

ELI

(PULLED UP SHORT) What'd you say?

QUINN

You know. You and Melissa, Gum Drop,
Muffin Face...

ELI

I can't believe she told you that!

QUINN

Why, was it some kind of big secret?

ELI

The pet names a man shared with his
wife?! There is no bigger secret!

QUINN

E, relax.

ELI

This is all wrong! She's going to be
telling you stuff, you'll tell her
stuff, boundaries will be crossed,
feelings hurt. I don't think anyone
realizes the complexity of this!

SFX: PHONE RINGS.

ELI (CONT'D)

Don't think we're done discussing
this.

QUINN

I didn't think that.

ELI PICKS UP THE PHONE.

ELI

(INTO PHONE) Hello?... Hi, how are
you?... Uh huh... Sure, just a sec.

(COVERING PHONE) Guess who Hot Karate
Mom wants a non-play-date date with?

QUINN

Atta boy!

ELI HEADS INTO ANOTHER ROOM TO TAKE HIS CALL.

QUINN (CONT'D)

I want to hear. Put her on speaker!

QUINN FOLLOWS ELI OUT, LEAVING THE ROOM EMPTY. WE END UP
ON:

THE WEDDING VIDEO: QUINN SINGS; MELISSA AND ELI WATCH.

QUINN (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)

(SINGING) *...But I know that he won't
stay, without Melissa... Yes I know
that he won't stay, without Melissa...*

ON THIS...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW