

THE HALF OF IT

"Pilot"

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REVISED DRAFT

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COLD OPENING

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE

MIKE, NEWLY SINGLE DAD (THINK JASON BATEMAN) SITS ACROSS A DESK FROM HIS LAWYER, LINDA, A NO-NONSENSE, STRAIGHT SHOOTER.

LINDA

And you plan on custody being 50/50?

MIKE

Yep.

LINDA

Okay. And as you probably know, half of everything - assets, bank accounts, 401K's... go to Megan.

MIKE

Half?

LINDA

Yes. And going forward, roughly half of what you make will be going to her.

MIKE

Half?

LINDA

Yes. I'm sorry it's the law.

MIKE

So, she is going to get half? And I'm going to get half?

LINDA

Uh, right.

MIKE

(BEAT) Yes! I've never gotten close to half my money before! Does she know this?

LINDA

Well, I'm sure her attorney will--

MIKE

Because she is going to freak out!
She can't live on half! Linda, walk
me through this, if she spends more
than half and needs more, some outside
person, like an official steps in and
says, "T.O. No fair!?"

LINDA

(BEWILDERED) Sort of.

MIKE

So, I'm going to get fifty cents on
the dollar!? And I can get this in
writing? (LINDA GESTURES AT STACK OF
LEGAL DOCS) 50%?! Let's lock in that
rate. Time to smile Linda! Up top!

LINDA DOES NOT HIGH FIVE. MIKE HIGH FIVES NOTHING, ANYWAY.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Still doin' it!

FADE OUT.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE
SCENE A

INT. MIKE'S LOFT LIVING ROOM - DAY

MIKE IS SURROUNDED BY BOXES AS HE ROLLS BLACK PAINT ON A WALL OF HIS COOL, OPEN LOFT. HIS CLOTHES ARE COVERED IN PAINT. THE LOFT IS FILLED WITH FUN STUFF LIKE A PING PONG TABLE, DART BOARD, GIANT BEAN BAG... HIS BEST FRIEND, JULIE, ENTERS WITH A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE. JULIE (THINK ELIZA COUPE OR A GOOFY AMY POEHLER) IS PLAYFUL/AWKWARD, YET A CUTTING VOICE OF REASON.

JULIE

Wow!

MIKE IS STARTLED AND THE ROLLER HITS ANOTHER WALL.

MIKE

Julie, what the hell?

JULIE

Look at this place! You're like Tom
Hanks in BIG. When did you get rich?
(RE: BEAN BAG CHAIR) And classy?

MIKE

I wouldn't call it rich... but
remember how Megan spent most of the
money? Well, guess who just got a
raise.

JULIE POPS THE CHAMPAGNE AND SIPS THE SPILLOVER.

JULIE

This is from me and Jim, but I'm going
to pretend Jim gave it to me, because
he has never bought me champagne. (RE
PAINT) Phew! Is that tar or just lead
paint?

MIKE

It's chalkboard paint. Every happy home has chalkboards.

JULIE

Says who?

MIKE

Says Etsy, Pinterest, Houzz, Apartment Therapy, Real Simple...

JULIE

Slow down, you're getting divorced, not coming out of the closet.

MIKE

You need chalkboards filled with cute messages and hearts and "I Love You's," except mine will have a mommy-daddy parenting schedule that reminds the kids their lives have been blown apart.

JULIE

Mike, you're a great dad and you don't have to prove it; that can wait. How 'bout unpacking? (READS LABELS ON FOUR BOXES) "Miscellaneous," "Miscellaneous," "Sheets and Coffee" - not to be confused with "miscellaneous" - and, ooh, "Northwestern."

JULIE PICKS UP AN OLDER LOOKING BOX WITH STICKERS AND A NORTHWESTERN LOGO DRAWN WITH MAGIC MARKER.

MIKE

Don't open that. That went right from college to the attic to here.

JULIE

I'm going to.

MIKE

Not now. It's probably filled with embarrassing journals, Sarah McLachlan CD's and a pack of unused condoms.

JULIE

Sarah McLachlan might explain the unused condoms. And when you say *unused* to describe a pack of condoms, it means you think there are packs of *used* condoms.

MIKE

Those are called mementos.

JULIE

(LOOKS AROUND AT ALL THE BOXES) Man, it's like Raiders of the Divorced Ark in here. When are the kids coming?

MIKE

(SCARED TO ADMIT IT) Tomorrow morning.

JULIE

What!?! You don't have enough time! You know Megan is looking for any excuse to get more custody. And she's telling friends you don't have your act together enough to create a home for the kids.

MIKE

Give me a break. I buy the pre-mixed peanut butter and jelly ONE TIME, and she thinks I don't know how to make a sandwich. But don't worry, I'm heading back to my brother's to pick up their old bunk beds, and Gail is going to hook me up with the rest of the happy family stuff I need. You know: cute things for the fridge... spoons.

JULIE

Okay, that's good. Get some bendy straws, too. I loved those when I was a kid. (BEAT) And how are you holding up?

MIKE

Why are you asking me that now? Can't you see I'm busy painting the floor?

WE SEE THAT MIKE HAS LET THE ROLLER HANG ON THE FLOOR.

JULIE

'Cause you don't do change well. Plus, the kids come here tomorrow, and tonight is your first night all alone in what looks like a dotcom startup run by 12 year olds.

MIKE

Hadn't thought about tonight. So thanks for that. But sure, I'll be fine.

JULIE

Sure? "Sure" is what you say when the word "yes" feels too strong.

MIKE

Look, I don't really have time to sit with my feelings. And it's annoying that feelings always want to sit. If they can't keep up, it's their loss not mine.

SFX: KNOCK ON THE DOOR

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh, Megan's here.

JULIE

What?! I don't want Megan finding me here.

MIKE

Why?

JULIE

I don't want it to be so obvious I'm on "Team Mike." And with champagne, no less.

JULIE HIDES THE CHAMPAGNE.

MIKE

Julie, how could you possibly be on Team Megan? You were my best man. Here's the picture. It was in the first box I opened, "Pictures and socks."

JULIE

(LOOKS AT PIC) Oh, look at my Rachel haircut. I think that may have been a mistake.

MIKE

It wasn't the only one. Did either of us see that day leading to this...

MIKE OPENS THE DOOR AND MEGAN HANDS HIM A BOX.

MEGAN

Here's your stuff.

MEGAN IS FAIRLY ATTRACTIVE BUT LACKS WARMTH (THINK DEBRA MESSING) SHE IS NOT ONE-DIMENSIONAL IN HER "BAD GUY" ROLE, AS SHE HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR. SHE ENTERS WITH THEIR DOG WHO HAS BLACK AND WHITE COLORING.

MIKE

Thanks Meg. (TO DOG) Hey Domino!
Good boy. I miss you! You suck at
Skyping.

MEGAN SEES JULIE.

MEGAN

Oh, Julie. Hi.

JULIE

Hi, Megan!

THEY WAVE THEN REALIZE THEY SHOULD PROBABLY HUG.

MEGAN

How are you? I like your hair like that.

JULIE

So do you! I mean, you look great.
You both do. I guess you gotta get
into shape after these things, huh?

ONLY JULIE LAUGHS.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, (RE THE THREE OF THEM) I'm new at this.

MEGAN

Oh my god, what's that smell? Are you a cologne guy now?

MIKE

Good one.

MEGAN

Nice place. It's very... lofty. Where are the kids' rooms?

MIKE

Rooms? Their rooms are in *your* house. Here, they just have a room.

MEGAN

This is their room?

MIKE

Yeah.

MEGAN

Mike, there's no door.

MIKE

What? I'm sure there's a slidey, cool hidden door in the wall or something.

MEGAN

Nope.

JULIE

(AWKWARD BEAT) Well, that will make it harder for them to do drugs in their room. I smell good parenting.

MIKE

(RE: DOOR) Huh, how did I not see that?

MEGAN

And that's your bedroom upstairs? The one with no walls?

MIKE

Yeah, I guess the floor plan is a little open.

MEGAN

Floor plan? Mike, I don't think you or the floor have a plan.

MIKE

I'll put a door on their door. Don't worry about it.

MEGAN

I am worried about it.

JULIE

(ACKNOWLEDGING THE AWKWARDNESS) I'd go in another room, but there isn't one. So, I'll just be way over here unpacking some boxes.

MIKE AND MEGAN CROSS TOWARD THE KITCHEN AREA.

MEGAN

Mike, what are you thinking renting this place? You're going to have a 10 and an 8 year old staying here half the time. That is what you still want?

MIKE

This again? Meg, I was willing to stay together so I could be with my children all the time. Why now, would I want them less than half?

MEGAN

Well, they're coming tomorrow. Do you need more time? And not just the place, but you. The meals, the laundry, homework, being there for them? You weren't exactly hands on at home.

MIKE

(ANGRY) Yeah, I had a pesky thing called a job to pay for the meals, the laundry and the schools. And now I'll have the job and be just as hands on as you. Meg, my life is upside down right now, as I did not see any of this coming, but I can do this. And don't question if I am here for them, because everything in my life and in this place is for them. Everything.

AS THAT LINE RESONATES, MIKE LOOKS OVER MEGAN'S SHOULDER AT JULIE WHO HAS OPENED THE NORTHWESTERN BOX. JULIE IS CONFUSED AS SHE LIFTS A BIG RED BONG OUT OF THE BOX. SHE THEN REALIZES WHAT IT IS AND EXCHANGES A TERRIFIED LOOK WITH MIKE. MEGAN BEGINS TO TURN, JULIE PANICS AND AGGRESSIVELY SMASHES IT ON THE FLOOR.

JULIE

Oh no! I dropped your big glass...
Santa Claus.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE B

INT. CHRIS AND GAIL'S KITCHEN LATER THAT DAY

MIKE ENTERS THE IDYLIC FAMILY KITCHEN OF HIS OLDER BROTHER, CHRIS, AND HIS WIFE, GAIL. TO MIKE, THESE GUYS ARE THE PROS OF PARENTING. THEY ARE DOWN TO EARTH, AND NOT AT ALL ROMANTIC ABOUT FAMILY. CHRIS (THINK ROB RIGGLE) AND HIS 14-YEAR-OLD SON, DYLAN, ARE TALKING INTO A LAPTOP, SKYPING.

MIKE

Hey Chris. Hey Dylan.

CHRIS

Mom and Mark, you'll never guess who just walked in.

MOM (VO)

Oh, so he lives? Can you ask him why he isn't returning our ca--

MIKE CLOSSES THE LAPTOP. DYLAN DIES LAUGHING.

CHRIS

What are you doing?

MIKE

I can't talk to Mom right now. She and Mark keep asking to stay with me cause they're worried.

CHRIS

That's sweet.

MIKE

I'm here to get bunk beds for my kids, not my mother and stepdad. Plus, she keeps over-sharing about her and Dad's divorce.

CHRIS

That's called empathy.

MIKE

Well I don't want empathy that reminds me she cheated on Dad.

DYLAN

What!?

MIKE

Sorry Dylan. I forgot you were here. (THEN)

But right now I need family stuff...

MIKE STARTS TAKING STUFF OFF THE FRIDGE AND THROWING THEM IN A BOX.

MIKE (CONT'D)

...like funny magnets, a calendar,
this picture of Dylan in his awkward
braces stage.

DYLAN

I still have my braces.

MIKE

(CAUGHT) Oh. They're just a part of
you, I don't even see them anymore.

(MIKE MAKES A "YIKES" FACE AT CHRIS)

GAIL, CHRIS'S WIFE (THINK MELANIE LYNSKEY) ENTERS WITH A BOX FULL OF LINENS.

GAIL

Hi Mike, here are the sheets for the
bunk beds. A few are unopened. I hope
"Teletubbies" is still a thing.

MIKE

They're great. Thanks Gail, this is a
huge help.

GAIL STARTS HANDING MIKE ITEMS.

GAIL

Here, do you have spices?

CHRIS

Spices? He doesn't have food.

GAIL

At least take salt and pepper, and
sugar and a spatula and this thing that
keeps wine fresh after you open it.

MIKE

Does it work?

GAIL

No idea. Never opened a bottle I
didn't finish.

MIKE

Thanks, this is good.

GAIL

We're going to miss you around here.
This was a fun few weeks, at least for
us.

MIKE

It was fun for me, too. And I guess
someone had to binge "Orange is the New
Black" with you, if Chris wouldn't.

CHRIS

If I want to see crazy lesbians pee on
the floor, I'll go to a Melissa
Etheridge concert.

DYLAN LOOKS UP SORT OF LIKE, WTF?

GAIL

So, how are you doing?

MIKE

Occasionally, there are weak moments,
like yesterday when I almost took a
Zumba class, but I'm doing good.

GAIL

You seem good.

MIKE

Time helps. Looking back, we tried our
best, but our marriage was broken.

GAIL

They're all broken.

MIKE TURNS TO CHRIS THINKING HE'S OFFENDED. HE'S NOT.

CHRIS

They are. Every single day is broken,
and you spend it desperately trying to
keep it together.

DYLAN

What the hell?

CHRIS

Whoa! Dylan, forgot you were here,
pal. Big day for you.

GAIL

You know what the secret to a long
marriage is? Not getting divorced.

THAT SITS THERE A BEAT.

MIKE

At what point do you tell Dylan to
leave the room?

GAIL

But Mike, you both have to want it,
and she didn't anymore. And now you
will meet someone who does. Happens
all the time. Look how long your
mother and Mark have been together.

MIKE

That may not be the best example.

GAIL

Why?

CHRIS

Mom keeps sharing how before she met
Mark, she cheated on Dad.

GAIL

Duh. She cheated with Mark.

MIKE/CHRIS/DYLAN

What!!!!!!?

CHRIS

Okay, Dylan, time to leave.

DYLAN WAS ALREADY EXITING WITH EARS COVERED.

DYLAN

Too late.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE C

INT. MIKE'S LOFT LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

THE PLACE LOOKS WORSE, AS MORE IS UNPACKED. THE ROOM IS STREWN WITH TORN-APART BOXES, BUBBLE WRAP, MOVING BLANKETS...

MIKE'S NEIGHBORS, 20-SOMETHING HIPSTERS, ENTER. ALL IN THEIR SKINNY JEANS. TREVOR IS AN UPTIGHT, WHITE GUY, WITH A "HELVETICA" T-SHIRT AND IRONIC MUSTACHE. GEOFFREY IS A BLACK GUY, AND THE "CHIMNEY SWEEP" HIPSTER - VEST, SCARF, ROLLED-UP JEANS, BOOTS, OLD-TIMEY CAP... SUZI IS AN ASIAN HIPSTER, LIKE CHARLYNE YI, WITH BIG GLASSES AND A HUGE WOOL CAP. THEY HAVE BEEN DRINKING AND HAVE HALF A TWELVE PACK OF PABST BLUE RIBBON, THE "NECTAR OF THE HIPSTER GODS." (TIME MAGAZINE)

TREVOR

Hi, you're the new guy.

MIKE

That's me.

GEOFFREY

That's you!

GEOFFREY, THE LOOSE CANON IN THE GROUP, RUNS ACROSS THE ROOM AND DIVES ON THE OVERSIZED BEAN BAG. MIKE IS AMUSED.

TREVOR

That was Geoffrey. I'm Trevor and this is Suzi.

SUZI

Haaay.

SUZI GIVES PEACE SIGN AND CROSSES TO THE BLACK WALL.

MIKE

I'm Mike. You guys always day drink?

GEOFFREY

Usually we're just high.

TREVOR

We've been out celebrating Suzi's new job as a gaming programmer.

MIKE

Oh cool, like Xbox?

THEY LOOK AT HIM LIKE HE SAID THE UN-COOLEST THING POSSIBLE.

TREVOR

Uh, why would we be celebrating if it was Xbox? It's not 2005, and this isn't a fraternity.

MIKE

Good point?

SUZI SNIFFS THE BLACK WALL INTENSELY.

SUZI

This wall smells amazing!

GEOFFREY

So, how's the divorce going?

MIKE

How do you know I'm getting divorced?

GEOFFREY

Ping pong, plastic darts, the chalkboard paint.

TREVOR

Yeah, my dad did the chalkboard paint.

It's pretty obv.

MIKE

I didn't realize it was that obv.

SUZI

Whatever, we're buying chalkboard paint.

SUZI SEEMS LIGHTHEADED SNIFFING THE CHALKBOARD WALL.

GEOFFREY

Yo Mike, you want a beer or a hit off
the vaporizer?

MIKE

The what?

TREVOR

What do you do, Mike?

MIKE

I'm a vet.

GEOFFREY

Like a military vet, or a meow vet?

MIKE

(INCREDULOUS) The meow kind.

TREVOR

So where are the animals?

MIKE

We're still trying to figure out the
pet thing. Right now, I only see my
dog about once a week.

SUZI

And that bums you out because you know
that's like once every two months for
the dog.

MIKE

Hadn't thought about it that way.

GEOFFREY

And where are the kids?

MIKE

They come tomorrow.

TREVOR

Get the F O! Not here?!

MIKE

Yeah.

GEOFFREY

Oh man, you've got to get right.

MIKE

(WTF?) Is this about the vapor thing?

TREVOR

No, it's about this disaster area.

SUZI

Let's help him! This will be fun! Is
this the paint?

SUZI HOLDS UP THE CAN OF BLACK PAINT, SNIFFING IT HARD.

MIKE

That's nice of you guys, but I think I
got this.

GEOFFREY

You don't got this.

GEOFFREY CROSSES TO THE KITCHEN ISLAND BY MIKE AND TREVOR.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

What's your plan?

MIKE

Uh everything, more unpacking, putting
together the bunk beds, hanging the TV-
- cable guy comes tomorrow.

TREVOR

Cable guy?!

SUZI

Is he going to hook it up to your VCR?

ALL THREE LAUGH.

MIKE

(FACETIOUS) This is fun.

GEOFFREY

Mike, cancel the cable guy. We'll hook you up.

TREVOR

You can have our old Roku. We lost the remote, but you can use your phone as the remote. Where's your phone?

MIKE PULLS OUT HIS PHONE. IT'S AN OLD IPHONE.

GEOFFREY

Shut up! Is that the 3G?!

SUZI

No way, lemme see. Awww, I want one!

TREVOR

Do you still refer to it as your car phone?

MIKE

Got it. You're surprised it doesn't have a rotary dial.

TREVOR/GEOFFREY/SUZI

(DEAD SERIOUS) A what?

MIKE

All right. Now a beer sounds pretty good.

GEOFFREY

That's the spirit; loosen up, Mike.

THEY ALL TAKE BEERS. SUZI SEARCHES MIKE'S PHONE.

SUZI

Ten bucks says this has the Myspace app. (THEN, IMPRESSED) Whoa, Uber.

MIKE

See, not so bad.

GEOFFREY

Do you take Uber to get movies at Blockbuster?

MIKE SIPS HIS BEER, SMILES AND HAS HEARD ENOUGH. HE NOW FEELS COMFORTABLE TO BE HIMSELF AROUND THEM.

MIKE

Ah, kids today. BT dubbz, (WINKS) I like your costumes. I didn't know Mumford and Sons had a clothing line.

GEOFFREY

Ha ha! That's Trevor's favorite band!

MIKE

But here's where I get confused, are you guys hipsters or nerds? Because I've heard that hipsters are just nerds with old-timey facial hair and tattoos.

ALL THREE HIPSTERS PULL A SLEEVE DOWN TO COVER THEIR TATTOOS.

TREVOR

We're not nerds.

MIKE

Trevor, please. When was the last time any of you saw or read anything without a dragon in it? (THEY THINK) Exactly. And thanks to you, I can only see movies about comic books or

MIKE (CONT'D)

The Hobbit. What we need now is a
Revenge of the Jocks.

LAUGHS ALL AROUND, INCLUDING MIKE. THEY CHEERS EACH OTHER.

TREVOR

So time to unpack?

MIKE

Yeah, time to unpack another ironic beer.

MIKE GRABS ANOTHER BEER.

GEOFFREY

I've got the munchies. We've got to
get Grub Hub over here.

MIKE

Grub Hub?

TREVOR

The food delivery app?

MIKE IS LOST.

SUZI

(HOLDING PHONE) Not on here. But Bing
is! (LAUGHS HARD)

TREVOR

I'll order the food.

GEOFFREY

Mike, were you married or in a coma?

MIKE

(LAUGHING) Basically in a coma.

SUZI IS STILL LAUGHING HARD.

SUZI

Bing!

RESET TO:

SCENE D

INT. MIKE'S LOFT LIVING ROOM - AN HOUR OR SO LATER

THEY ARE STILL IN THE KITCHEN, BUT CRUSHED BEER CANS AND FOOD CONTAINERS COVER THE ISLAND. THEY ALL SEEM MORE WASTED/COMFORTABLE. MIKE IS POURING THE LAST OF THE CHAMPAGNE INTO A BOWL.

MIKE

I promise I will have glasses next time you are over. I should have paid someone to get this place ready. That's what my ex would have done. She threw money at everything. Except a savings account.

TREVOR

A little spending problem, huh?

MIKE

Yeah, but she might start making money now. She's writing a book called, "How to Live on Two Hundred Dollars a Day When Everything Else is Paid For."

THEY ALL LAUGH.

GEOFFREY

Well, now that you're single, maybe you should spend a little money on clothes.

MIKE

What's wrong with my clothes?

GEOFFREY

They have writing all over them.

MIKE

Writing?

GEOFFREY

It all says, "I give up."

MIKE

Oh, I'm supposed to wear denim tights,
like you guys?

TREVOR

You couldn't fit in our skinny jeans
if you wanted to.

MIKE

I don't want to, but I bet I could.

GEOFFREY

You're on. We'll go get more beer, if
you can fit into Trevor's jeans.

MIKE

Done.

TREVOR AND MIKE START TAKING OFF THEIR SHOES AND PANTS.

SUZI

This is fun! And you have to wear my
hat and Geoffrey's scarf!

THE THREE START TO MAKE-OVER MIKE. THE HAT AND SCARF GO ON.
WHEN TREVOR'S PANTS COME OFF, WE SEE THAT HE HAS HIGH SOCKS
WITH SOCK GARTERS.

MIKE

Good lord, even your socks are
hipsters! Okay, give me these things.

MIKE PUTS ON THE SKINNY JEANS AND THEY CAN'T GET UP ALL THE
WAY. TREVOR AND GEOFFREY HELP OUT AND ARE LIFTING MIKE OFF
THE GROUND WITH EACH TUG. SUZI IS LAUGHING HARD.

SUZI

Oh my god! I'm going next door to grab
some more beer and get my Polaroid.

MIKE

Ironic camera, who would have guessed?!

SUZI RUNS OUT. WITH A LAST DRAMATIC EFFORT, THE GUYS FINALLY GET THE PANTS UP AND MIKE BARELY MANAGES TO BUTTON THEM. HE LOOKS ABSURD.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Ta-da!

THE GUYS LAUGH REALLY HARD. AND MIKE STARTS WALKING BACK AND FORTH AS IF HE'S MODELING ON A CATWALK.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Behold, the hipster! Not a pretty sight, is it? Now my clothes say, "I try really hard to look like I'm not trying."

THEY HEAR SUZI KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's open, Suzi. (THEN) You know what, I think this is my new look.

CHARLOTTE/SAM

Daddy?

MIKE

Daddy!?

MIKE TURNS. IT'S MEG WITH THE TWO KIDS, CHARLOTTE (10) AND SAM (8). MIKE COULD NOT LOOK MORE BUSTED BY MEGAN. A PANTS-LESS TREVOR TRIES TO HIDE BEHIND GEOFFREY.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(SUPER AWKWARD) Hi guys.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO
SCENE E

INT. MIKE'S LOFT LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MEGAN IS PISSED. MIKE CROSSES TO THEM, SHUFFLING BECAUSE HE CAN BARELY WALK.

MIKE

Hey Charlotte! Hey Sam! (TO MEGAN)
Wow, you showed up like a day early.

MEGAN

I texted you a bunch of times that the kids
couldn't wait to see the place.

CHARLOTTE

Is this a costume party?

MIKE

Sort of, sweetie. (TO MEGAN) Oh, I
didn't get the texts. These guys had
my phone. That's Geoffrey and that's
Trevor with the socks. Guys, this is
Megan.

TREVOR/GEOFFREY

Hi.

THE DOOR OPENS BEHIND MEGAN, AND SUZI ENTERS, COVERING HER EYES.

SUZI

I'm not looking if I can see the
outline of a mangina.

WHEN THERE'S SILENCE, SHE UNCOVERS HER EYES, LOOKS AROUND FOR A BEAT CONFUSED, AND THEN...

SUZI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, wrong apartment.

SUZI TURNS AROUND AND EXITS. THEN...

MEGAN

(TO MIKE) Can we talk outside for a minute?

MIKE

Sure. Kids, why don't you play some ping pong.

CHARLOTTE/SAM

Cool!

MIKE

And Trevor, why don't you put on my pants.

MIKE AND MEGAN STEP OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

MEGAN

Mike, is this a joke?

MIKE

Let's back up. What are you even doing here?!

MEGAN

I told you; the kids couldn't wait to see the place.

MIKE

Well if I didn't text back, make up an excuse why you can't come over!

MEGAN

That's a good start to co-parenting.

MIKE

So now you're *against* dishonesty?!
That's new.

MEGAN

Oh, seriously! That was completely different. And you violated my privacy, going through my emails!

MIKE

Yes! I did! And I caught you with the smoking guy in your hand! (LONG FUNNY BEAT) I meant gun, but guy works, too.

MEGAN

I can't do this, again! You know he's just a friend, like you have Julie. But it's easier for you to think I cheated because that's the simple explanation you need. Mike, I know this is hard, but nobody cheated. It was over, and I just accepted that before you did.

THAT SITS THERE A BEAT AS MIKE SEEMS TAKEN ABACK.

MIKE

Did you go to communication camp? Because you were never this clear when we were married.

MEGAN

Mike, be honest, I don't think you can handle this yet. This is a huge change for you. And you don't do change.

MIKE

Why does everybody keep saying that?! I can handle this.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

And when you say you're going to bring
them tomorrow, bring them tomorrow.

THEY ARE INTERRUPTED BY TREVOR AND GEOFFREY EXITING THE LOFT.

TREVOR

Excuse us, we're just going to head
home.

MIKE

Okay, and you should keep my pants, at
least for interviews.

GEOFFREY

(TO MEGAN) Nice meeting you. Good
luck with the book.

MEGAN

The what?

MIKE

Nothing.

AS MIKE STARTS WADDLING BACK TO THE LOFT, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE F

INT. MIKE'S LOFT LIVING ROOM - LATER

WE HEAR BANGING. THE CLOCK SAYS 1:12AM. MIKE IS A SWEATY MESS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LOFT TRYING TO LIFT THE TOP BUNK ON TOP OF THE BOTTOM. FAIL. HE SITS DEFEATED AND CALLS JULIE.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JULIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

JULIE ANSWERS HER CELL WHILE READING IN BED.

JULIE

(WHISPERS) What's up?

MIKE

Hey sorry to wake you, but I need you.

JULIE

Don't worry, nobody's asleep here.

MIKE

Then why are you whispering?

JULIE

Jim, is downstairs on the computer, undoubtedly with his pants off, and I don't want him to know I'm awake when he's in that state. He might aim it at me.

MIKE

Can you come over? I can't get the bottom bunk on the top bunk.

JULIE

You don't have the beds together yet?!

MIKE

I do, they're just not stacked.

JULIE

Did you not see the stacking part coming? "Bunk" is in the name. Just put them in the room as two beds.

MIKE

They don't fit, the room's tiny, which is another screw-up in renting this place. I had to assemble them in the living room.

JULIE

I can't come over, but I'll swing by in the morning.

MIKE

(DEFEATED) Julie, how did I get here? Look at me. Sitting on the floor all alone in a strange apartment. Maybe Megan is right. Maybe I'm not ready for this or half custody.

JULIE

(SITS UP) Hey, you are Mike freaking Tate. You can do anything you put your scattered mind to. Who was voted class president his senior year in high school?

MIKE

I was the only one who ran, and I only got half the votes.

JULIE

Okay. But who recently went out on his own and opened the number one, independent animal clinic in West Hollywood?

MIKE

Frederick and Salsh.

JULIE

Okay. But you're still the number one straight guy helping animals in West Hollywood. Mike, stop knocking yourself down. Being a father is about showing up. Sure, there will be missteps like renting a family-unfriendly loft with no doors and filling it with toxic paint, but listen... from what I hear, parenting is like suicide, the attempts are just as important as the results.

MIKE HAS A CONFUSED LOOK.

Now show Megan you are ready for this!

JULIE'S VOICE GOT LOUD AND SHE HEARS JIM COMING UPSTAIRS.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Damn! Jim's coming. But, Mike, you've got this.

MIKE

Thank you, Julie. That means a lot. I don't know what I would have done through all of this without you. We don't say this enough as friends, but I love you. (LONG BEAT) Hello?

CUT TO: JULIE PRETENDING TO BE PASSED OUT IN HER BED AS WE SEE JIM'S HAND NUDGING HER.

JIM (O.S.)

Hey babe. You awake? Julie bear?

MIKE HANGS UP AND STANDS, CLEARLY EMBOLDENED BY THE CALL. HE THINKS... AND THEN STARTS SEARCHING ON HIS CELL PHONE.

DISSOLVE TO:

CHYRON: 6 MINUTES LATER

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE G

INT. MIKE'S LOFT LIVING ROOM - 6 MINUTES LATER

MIKE OPENS HIS DOOR AND A MIDDLE-EASTERN LOOKING MAN ABOUT MIKE'S AGE WALKS IN.

MIKE

Thanks for coming in. I appreciate
it. How are you doing?

GERALD

Good.

MIKE

Good. (BEAT) I'm Mike.

GERALD

I'm Gerald.

MIKE

Cool.

GERALD

Yeah. (LONG BEAT) So where to?

MIKE

Over here. I called because I need help
putting this bottom bunk on the top.

GERALD

(CONFUSED) Do you know what Uber is?

MIKE

Yeah, but I figure I'm paying for your
time and if it's the same to you, you
can start the meter or whatever you do
to get the clock going?

GERALD

It is far from the same, but the
meter's already going, so...

MIKE

Great. Why don't you get that end, and we will (THEY LIFT) lift with our legs! THEY PUT THE TOP BUNK ON TOP.

MIKE (CONT'D)

That was easy. A little too easy. (SHAKES THE WOBBLY BED) I would never sleep up there.

GERALD

So, what's next, laundry?

MIKE

Ha ha, good one, Gerald. No, that was it. But can you stay until your next fare?

GERALD

I guess so.

MIKE

Cool, we'll just hang out for awhile. Oh, and can you help me hang these beads on that "door?" You see I rented this place and didn't realize there were no doors on the doors. Here's my problem, Ger, I'm of two minds - half the time I'm newly single guy who's excited to be alone and begin this new chapter, BUT I lose sight of the other half, who is newly single dad who's a little bummed he's alone plus he's in WAY over his head with single parenting and-

GERALD'S PHONE BEEPS.

GERALD

Sorry, it's another fare. But we covered a lot.

MIKE

Can you ignore that one?

GERALD

I can't.

MIKE

I understand. I should go to sleep anyway. But if I need you later, I can just order another "ride?"
(CHANGES MIND) Actually, kids come tomorrow and I can't avoid being alone here anymore. I'll just find my sleeping pills and get it over with.

GERALD

(CONCERNED) What?

MIKE

No! Not that. I literally mean find them in these boxes and then just go to sleep until morning.

GERALD IS SKEPTICAL.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Ger, I'm not going to kill myself. I just found out I'm getting half my money!

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE H

INT. MIKE'S LOFT LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

JULIE ENTERS WITH COFFEE AND DONUTS. THE PLACE LOOKS AMAZING, ALTHOUGH THE BUNK BEDS ARE STILL IN THE LIVING ROOM. THE CHALKBOARD WALL HAS A BEAUTIFUL FLOOR- TO-CEILING CHALK HEART. MIKE IS IN A GOOD MOOD, COOKING BACON.

JULIE

This place looks amazing! Cool heart!
I didn't know you could draw so well.

MIKE

I can't.

JULIE

And when did you find time to shop for
bacon?

MIKE

I didn't.

SFX: TOILET FLUSHES. GERALD EXITS FROM THE BATHROOM.

GERALD

Hi Julie.

JULIE

How do you know my name?

GERALD

I know everything about you. It was a
long night.

MIKE

Okay, thanks for coming back, Ger.
Same time next week for another sesh?

GERALD

We never got around to moving the
kids' beds into Camp Awesome.

WE SEE THAT "CAMP AWESOME" IS PAINTED IN CALLIGRAPHY ABOVE
THE KIDS' ROOM.

JULIE

So that's what sharing a bedroom is called, now.

MIKE

(TO GERALD) Julie can help with that. You've done enough, my friend.

THEY HUG IT OUT. GERALD HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

JULIE

Nice meeting you, Ger.

GERALD

Thanks, Julie. Give my best to Jim, and throw him a bone once in awhile.

JULIE

I do!

GERALD EXITS.

MIKE

Love that guy. I wonder if my insurance covers Uber?

JULIE

You had Uber spend the night?

MIKE

So cheap. Uber might be my new nanny.

JULIE

When does Megan get here?

MIKE

Any minute.

JULIE

Damn! I've been here every time she's come over.

MIKE

Nope, you missed a doozy last night.
Hey, help me slide the bunk beds into
the room?

THEY SLIDE THE BEDS AND IT HITS THE DOOR FRAME. THEY TRY
AGAIN, AND THE BEDS WILL NOT FIT THROUGH THE DOOR.

JULIE

They won't fit; they're too wide.

MIKE

No they're not.

MIKE PUSHES AND PUSHES AND KEEPS BANGING THEM. AND STARTS TO
LOSE HIS COOL.

MIKE (CONT'D)

They have to fit. They are going to
fit. Fit. Fit. Fit!!!

JULIE

Mike, stop. It's not happening.

MIKE

It's over. I've lost custody.

JULIE

Whoa, Mr. Meltdown! When I came in
you seemed so put together?

MIKE

I was fooling myself. I haven't slept
a wink. (URGENT IN A FUNNY WAY) I
have to get Gerald back here. Gerald
is my everything.

MIKE GETS OUT HIS CELL PHONE, BUT JULIE STOPS HIM.

JULIE

Okay, focus! Eyes! Eyes!

JULIE GRABS MIKE'S FACE, BUT MIKE STRUGGLES LIKE AN IMMATURE CHILD TO AVOID EYE CONTACT. IT'S ABSURD. FINALLY HE HAS TO LOOK AT HER.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Good boy. We can do this, okay? (THINKS)

I've got it. You are having a slumber party in the living room.

MIKE

Yes! Perfect! I'll get my mattress.

MIKE RUNS UPSTAIRS AND REAPPEARS CARRYING HIS BED.

JULIE

A single blow-up mattress?

MIKE

I know. I'm getting a real bed, but this isn't as bad as it looks. Meg and I divided all our sheets and if you really wrap it, a king sheet can fit a single bed. Plus, instead of washing it every week, I can just rotate the sheet to the clean part.

JULIE

That story was sadder than "The Fault in Our Stars."

MIKE

Help me slide the bunk beds over here. It's like a drive-in movie theater for beds. Popcorn, sheet forts, s'mores, their favorite movie of all time, funnest dad, ever.

JULIE

Totally intentional, funnest dad ever.

MIKE

This will work. How does the rest of the place seem? Safe and kid-friendly?

JULIE

Mike, it looks great. Really.

SFX: INCOMING TEXT. JULIE READS MIKE'S PHONE ON THE ISLAND.

JULIE (CONT'D)

It's Megan, "Parking. Please, no skinny jeans." Have you been giving her skinny jeans?

MIKE

Long story. (THEN) Can you stay?

JULIE

This is all you, my friend.

JULIE CROSSES TO THE SLIDING GLASS DOORS.

I'm heading out your patio and I'll hop the fence. And you won't be needing this poison anymore.

JULIE PICKS UP THE CAN OF CHALKBOARD PAINT.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Remember, you are Mike freaking Tate.

You got this!

JULIE TURNS AND RUNS RIGHT INTO THE GLASS DOOR. THE PAINT CAN SHATTERS THE GLASS AND IT RAINS DOWN EVERYWHERE.

JULIE (CONT'D)

(PANICKED AND FAST) Oh my god! That's like 50 bongs. Okay, here's what you do, do you have a baseball?

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

Put it right here and blame it on
stupid kids. Or a bird; do you have a
huge, dead bird?

MIKE BREAKS INTO LAUGHTER. HE APPRECIATES HER INTENSE
CONCERN, BUT IT'S USELESS AND NOW COMPLETELY OUT OF HIS
CONTROL. HE HAS TO LET IT ALL GO.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Okay, maybe not a bird.

MIKE

No, Julie, it's okay. There's nothing
to do now. And I've got nothing to
hide. I'll be fine. Thank you.

THEY EXCHANGE A LOOK THAT ONLY BEST FRIENDS COULD BEFORE A
BIG MOMENT. JULIE THEN TURNS AND CRUNCHES HER WAY OUT. THEN
MEGAN ENTERS WITH THE KIDS, WHO RUN INTO MIKE'S ARMS.

CHARLOTTE/SAM

Daddy!

MIKE

My babies! I'm so glad to see you!

THE KIDS NOTICE HOW IMPROVED THE PLACE IS.

CHARLOTTE

The place looks so cool!

MEGAN

(RE: BEDS) Is this their bedroom now?

MIKE

Tonight it's the family bedroom -
popcorn, sheet forts and their
favorite movie.

CHARLOTTE/SAM

Yes!

THE KIDS RUN TOWARDS THE BEDS.

MIKE

Whoa! Be careful, there's some broken glass over there.

MEGAN NOTICES THE BROKEN DOOR.

MEGAN

Oh my god! That's why it's so clean; you were really robbed.

MIKE

No. I broke it. It's fine.

MEGAN

It's not fine. They're sleeping here, tonight. First there weren't doors on the bedroom doors and now... do you hate doors?

MIKE

Meg, it's broken, and I'm going to fix it. That's all you need to know.

MEGAN

I need to know my kids are safe.

MIKE

(FIRM) Our kids are safe. They're with me.

MEGAN SENSES THE SHIFT AND BACKS OFF.

MEGAN

Okay. Well... all their stuff is in their bags.

MIKE

Perfect. Guys, say goodbye to Mommy.

THE KIDS SAY GOODBYE AND AD-LIB I LOVE YOU'S. MEGAN IS A LITTLE HESITANT TO LEAVE.

MEGAN

Okay, have fun with Daddy.

MEGAN GOES TO EXIT.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(TO MIKE) You're going to keep the front door, right?

MIKE

Good one.

MEGAN

Thanks.

MEGAN EXITS. MIKE JOINS THE KIDS.

MIKE

I'm so glad you are here! I've got a whole day planned and tonight, let's order in some pizza, throw tons of candy in our popcorn and watch your favorite movie.

SAM

How about ET?

MIKE

That's my favorite. This is your night.

SAM

It's our night.

MIKE

You know I cry during ET.

CHARLOTTE

I think you're going to cry now.

MIKE

These aren't tears, they're just shards of glass in my eyes.

THEY ALL HUG. IT'S A TENDER MOMENT. THEN JULIE APPEARS IN THE PATIO DOORWAY.

MIKE/KIDS

Julie?

JULIE

Sorry, but your fence is too high and
I tore my pants trying to climb over.

JULIE SHOWS THE RIP IN THE BUTT OF HER PANTS. SHE IS SAD.

MIKE

Are you crying?

JULIE

Well these were my favorite pants...
plus I may have overheard you guys and
suffered an emotional sneak attack.
You guys are going to be great.

MIKE

I know.

THEY ALL GET UP TO HUG JULIE, AS WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

INT. MIKE'S CAR - MONDAY MORNING.

MIKE IS DRIVING WITH BOTH KIDS IN THE BACK. WE HEAR NEWS ON NPR IN THE BACKGROUND.

MIKE

So you get a tardy slip if we're late?

SAM

I think so. Mom has never been late.

MIKE

Of course.

WE HEAR A STORY ON THE NEWS.

NEWSCASTER VO

Mary Sinclair was 82 years old.

CHARLOTTE

Dad, who is Mary Sinclair?

MIKE

NEWSCASTER VO

(EXCITED) Oh my god. She was NPR now takes a look at Mary amazing. She is one of the Sinclair's life and legacy... best writers and poets ever and...

MIKE

Oh! NPR is going to tell us about her right now. This'll be great. Here.

MIKE TURNS UP THE VOLUME ON THE RADIO.

NEWSCASTER VO

Born in Arkansas in deep poverty...

MIKE

See, born very, very poor...

NEWSCASTER VO

She was raped when she was 9-years-old.

MIKE QUICKLY CHANGES THE STATION TO MUSIC.

MIKE

We can learn about her later. Ooh! Is
this Ariana "Grand?!"

MIKE, COMPLETELY ON EDGE, STEALS GLANCES IN THE MIRROR AS THE
WORD STILL HANGS IN THE AIR. FINALLY...

CHARLOTTE

Dad, what's rape?

MIKE IS FROZEN. IT'S HIS WORST NIGHTMARE. EVENTUALLY...

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Dad?

MIKE

I'm thinking.

MIKE THEN GETS AN IDEA. HE BRACES HIMSELF, AND THE CAR IS
JOSTLED.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Whoa! I hit the guy's bumper in front
of me. You kids alright?

HE DIGS THROUGH GLOVE COMPARTMENT.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay, Daddy has to go exchange
information with the other driver.
You sit tight and hopefully this will
take awhile, I mean won't take awhile.
Be right back.

MIKE GETS OUT OF THE CAR AND IS GONE. THE KIDS LOOK CONFUSED
AS WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW