

THE KICKER

(The Life & Times of Daryl Thorkelson)

"Pilot"

Written by

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ACT ONE

A

FADE IN:

INT. STUDIO BACKSTAGE AREA - MORNING
(DARYL, GIL, RUSS, TONY GONZALEZ)

CLOSE ON A TV MONITOR SHOWING "THE CREW", A "THE VIEW"-TYPE SPORTS SHOW FEATURING A ROUNDTABLE OF FORMER NFL PLAYERS. THE HOST IS EITHER A TONY GONZALEZ-TYPE, OR TONY GONZALEZ.

TONY GONZALEZ (ON TV)

When we return to The Crew we'll have Pro Bowl kicker, and now book author, Daryl Thorkelson. He's second on the all-time scoring list and (CHUCKLES) one of the true wackos of the NFL.

DARYL (O.C.)

What the farg?! Where does he get off calling me a wacko?

REVEAL DARYL THORKELSON, 40ISH, WATCHING THE MONITOR. HE IS NICELY DRESSED, ALTHOUGH NOT AS STYLISH AS HIS BROTHER/AGENT, RUSS THORKELSON (THINK DAVID SPADE). GIL BISBEE (THINK JACK MCBRAYER), DARYL'S EXTREMELY LOYAL FRIEND/EMPLOYEE, STUFFS FOOD FROM CRAFT SERVICE INTO HIS POCKETS.

RUSS

I don't know, maybe because you say "What the farg?" Or you're not wearing pants?

FULL FRAME OF DARYL SHOWS HE IS WEARING CARGO SHORTS AND FLIP FLOPS BELOW HIS SPORTS JACKET AND DRESS SHIRT.

DARYL

Wacko? No way. Curious? Yes.

Insightful? Sure. Enlightened --

RUSS

Stop ranking words! Do you know how much pleading it took to get you on this show?

DARYL

These are all my former teammates. Why would you have to plead?

RUSS

Because they're all former teammates!
(TO GIL) Gil, quit stuffing food into your pockets! This is why animals are always attacking you!

GIL

Actually the doctor said it's because I release feline pheromones. I got written up in a medical Instagram.

DARYL

Let Gil pocket some donuts. He looks so happy, like a cartoon race car.

RUSS

We look low rent. This is the most important stop of your book tour. You could wind up here when you retire.

DARYL

Retire?! I'm still one of the best kickers in the game. Probably the best, if you don't look at stats.

RUSS

Look, I didn't want you writing a book, but while you promote it let's look professional. So when you go out there no oddball rants or abstract thoughts, no talks about space travel or dragons or the absurdities of the human race --

DARYL

You're listing everything in my book!

RUSS

Yeah, maybe don't bring up your book.

DARYL

On my book tour? I really hate how any athlete who actually has something to say is an "outcast" or "wacko".

WHILE DARYL CONTINUES, TONY GONZALEZ ENTERS BEHIND HIM TO CHECK OUT CRAFT SERVICE.

DARYL (CONT'D)

When I do someday retire, if I wind up on a moronic show with a bunch of empty-headed jocks, please kill me.

DARYL NOTICES TONY GONZALEZ GLARING AT HIM.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Or just kill me now. (THEN) Hi, Tony.

GIL PULLS A GLAZED DONUT FROM HIS FRONT POCKET AND HANDS IT TO TONY GONZALEZ.

CUT TO:

B

INT. THORKELSON HOME - KITCHEN/INT. BACKSTAGE/INT. "THE CREW"
SET - LATER

(ALONZO, BAMBI, DARYL, HOWIE, RUSS, TONY GONZALEZ)

BAMBI THORKELSON, MID-30S, WEARING SCRUBS AND A LAB COAT, IS HURRYING AROUND THE KITCHEN AS HOWIE, BAMBI AND DARYL'S 12 YEAR-OLD CHRONICALLY UNMOTIVATED SON, ENTERS.

HOWIE

Can I stay home from school today?

BAMBI

Has my answer ever been "yes"?

HOWIE

No, not even on Columbus Day. It was just me and that creepy janitor Cooley.

BAMBI

Stop saying that. You know full well Edgar Cooley died thirty years ago.

HOWIE LOOKS OVER AND SEES DARYL ON TV. BECAUSE DARYL'S SITTING, IT ACTUALLY LOOKS AS HE'S DRESSED NICELY.

HOWIE

Hey, why's Dad on TV in people clothes?

BAMBI

He's in L.A. promoting his book, but then he'll actually be home tonight for a few days. Isn't that great?

HOWIE

I don't know. He's gonna ask me what I learned lately and then he'll make me go to a museum or outside.

BAMBI

Wow, what a tragic childhood. You're like an Irish folk song.

HOWIE

Totally. (THEN) What's for breakfast?

BAMBI

Your choice. There's cereal with no milk or burnt waffles in the garbage.

HOWIE

Definitely waffles.

BAMBI PULLS WAFFLES FROM THE TRASH AND SCRAPES OFF THE BURNT AREA AND COFFEE GRINDS AS HOWIE TURNS UP THE VOLUME ON THE TV. AS THIS SCENE CONTINUES WE CUT BETWEEN THE BAMBI AND HOWIE AT HOME, RUSS AND GIL BACKSTAGE, AND DARYL ON THE SET.

TONY GONZALEZ

So, Daryl, you and I were teammates. And what I remember mostly is you had an opinion on everything, and that you always had to come off as the smartest guy in the room.

DARYL

Thank you. Merci. Grazie. Arigato.

TONY GONZALEZ ROLLS HIS EYES. ANOTHER PANELIST, A GIANT MAN NAMED ALONZO, CHIMES IN.

ALONZO

There was a guy like that on my team. He used to play ghost music in the locker room. I think he was a kicker.

DARYL

Yeah, that was me, Alonzo. And it was opera.

TONY GONZALEZ

Anyway, I read your book, and one of the essays was an imaginary press conference with, get this guys... God.

THE OTHERS PLAYERS REACT WITH SHOCKED FACES AND "OH NO HE DIDN'T" AND SO ON.

DARYL

Well yeah, it's satire --

TONY GONZALEZ

(PLAYING DUMB) Oh really? It's not for reals? Me just dumb jock.

DARYL

No, you're smart, and very pretty by the way. So of course you can see the humor. God asking players to stop thanking him for their success, that he doesn't root for any one team or person. But in the end he confesses he does hate the Cleveland Browns.

DARYL LAUGHS. HE IS THE ONLY ONE LAUGHING.

TONY GONZALEZ

If you're really as smart as you think you are --

DARYL

Thank you.

TONY GONZALEZ

-- then you knew it was going to offend people. So why write it?

DARYL

Because it's funny. And true! Why would God care about a football game when there are wars and famines and pop stars having Twitter beefs?

ALONZO

I thank the good Lord all the time -- for my Super Bowls, my family, my lawyers -- are you satir-ing me?

DARYL

No, I would never do that, because we played together, and you terrify me.

ALONZO

Goofing on religion isn't cool. Maybe if you thanked God once in a while you wouldn't have such a stupid face!

DARYL

Okay, solid burn, I'll give you that. But I'm actually a student of religion. I've read the Bible from cover to cover, plus the Torah, the Quran --

THEY ALL REACT, SHOCKED.

ALONZO

You read the what now? What religion
are you?

QUICK CUTS TO RUSS BACKSTAGE AND BAMBI AT HOME.

RUSS

Oh no, that's a classic Daryl trap.

BAMBI

Think before you answer, baby.

DARYL

None. I'm not even sure God exists.

BACKSTAGE, RUSS IN A FULL PANIC, PULLS THE FIRE ALARM AS GIL
GRABS A PLATTER OF COLD CUTS AND RUNS OUT OF THERE.

ON STAGE, EVERYONE REACTS TO THE BLARING OF THE FIRE ALARM.

ALONZO

What's that noise? Did you just start
the apocalypse? (YELLING UP AT THE
HEAVENS) I'm not with Thorkelson!

AS EVERYONE STANDS AND STARTS EXITING, DARYL'S CARGO SHORTS
ARE EXPOSED.

AT HOME, BAMBI AND HOWIE HAVE BEEN WATCHING THE DEBACLE.

HOWIE

Mom, can I stay home from school?

BAMBI

Yeah, maybe it's best you don't go to
St. Francis today.

BAMBI LOOKS BACK AT THE TV, CLEARLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT'S TO
COME.

CUT TO:

C

INT. THORKELSON HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER
(BAMBI, DARYL, GIL, LEWIS, RUSS)

DARYL ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY RUSS AND GIL. BAMBI GREETES DARYL
AT THE DOOR WITH A BIG HUG.

DARYL

Wow, what a nice greeting. (THEN)

You're divorcing me, aren't you?

BAMBI

I had my chance to run when you sang
our wedding vows. So this is on me.

DARYL

(SINGING) FOR BETTER OR WORSE...

THE PHONE RINGS. BAMBI LIFTS IT AND IMMEDIATELY HANGS UP.

BAMBI

And how's your day been?

DARYL

It's all good. As long as I stay off
the internet. And radio. And TV. And
the phone. And the street. And riding
in the car with my brother. Although,
to be fair, he hasn't blurted out
anything for two minutes.

RUSS

Book burnings! Groups are actually
organizing bonfires for Daryl's book!

DARYL

And you said no one would buy it.

RUSS

I just want to say one more thing, not as your brother, not as your agent, but as a normal civilian. (SCREAMS) Why?!

BAMBI

(SHRUGS) He's got a point.

DARYL

Gil, on the other hand, has been a rock. You know, one of those rocks that cry uncontrollably.

GIL

(FIGHTING TEARS) It's just all so sad.

BAMBI

Well, I hate to bring up more bad news, but there's some guy from your team here to talk to you. He's from legal.

DARYL

Yikes, he flew here on a bye week?

(REACHING) Maybe it's to support me?

BAMBI

Oh, I love your childlike belief in everything good, except, you know, God.

DARYL

I never said I didn't believe. But without definitive proof, who's to say?

RUSS

Definitive proof? How about you've
made millions kicking a stupid ball?

LEWIS BROWN, A LAWYER TYPE, ENTERS FROM THE KITCHEN. HE
APPROACHES AND HANDS DARYL A DOCUMENT.

LEWIS

Lewis Brown, Mr. Thorkelson. I'm here
on behalf of the Broncos. We've
drafted an apology which we want you to
read at a press conference.

DARYL

Apology to who?

LEWIS

The fans, the NFL, the Broncos, the
city of Denver, everyone you offended,
God, Bud Light With Lime, the official
sponsor of the apology --

RUSS

Hold on one second. I'm Mr.
Thorkelson's agent and my client
doesn't do anything unless I say so.

RUSS LOOKS AT THE DOCUMENT FOR ONE NANOSECOND LIKE HE'S ON AN
AARON SORKIN SHOW, THEN HANDS IT TO DARYL.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Yeah, do this.

DARYL

Apologize? For what? Being an
American stating his beliefs?

(MORE)

DARYL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if I offended people, but I'm not going to cave just because we live in the age of fabricated outrage. Has anyone ever heard of the First Amendment?

GIL

Don't go in the water until thirty minutes after you eat?

DARYL

No.

GIL

Hot baths damage sperm?

DARYL

No, those are old Mom sayings. First Amendment. Free speech. Free exercise of religion, even if it means none.

RUSS

No one cares about your rights. This isn't America, it's the NFL! Apologize so the team can protect itself, and then everything can be back to normal.

DARYL

As I wrote in my book --

RUSS

God, not that stupid book again.

DARYL

As I wrote in my book, "To achieve success on the gridiron, one must buy into the team philosophy. But in life, that can lead to a mob mentality, and the greatest success can sometimes only be achieved by the dissenting voice."

LEWIS

Communist.

DARYL

No, it's the one hundred percent exact opposite. Know your facts.

LEWIS

I don't have to, I'm a lawyer. And that means it is my privilege to inform you that until you apologize, you are suspended from the team. I'll see myself out. Good night, sir.

LEWIS GRABS HIS BRIEFCASE AND EXITS WITH A FLOURISH.

DARYL

It's all a bluff. I mean, suspended during a bye week? That lawyer guy tries to come off as so tough, yet at what point is he going to realize he just exited into a closet?

LEWIS (O.C.)

I realized it immediately, I was just waiting until you all left. And we're not bluffing, we already signed Anatoly Bogomolov to the practice squad.

DARYL

That guy? He smokes, he drove a motorcycle through Caesar's Palace, he shot a bear... how is that not offensive?

LEWIS (O.C.)

He's colorful.

RUSS

(TO DARYL) You will apologize, right? Americans are a forgiving people. Or maybe they're just stupid. Either way, it's all good. (TO BAMBI) Talk some sense into him.

BAMBI

Have you ever known Daryl to apologize for saying something he believes in?

RUSS

No, but I've only known him my entire life.

BAMBI

Well, I stand behind my husband no matter what.

RUSS

You say that now. I've been around this game twenty years, I've seen too many guys retire before they're ready. It never goes well. Ever! Best case scenario -- Dancing With The Stars. Second best -- arrested at your car dealership. Third best -- quick death.

GIL

Well if boss dies, I'm going with him.

BAMBI

No, we are not turning this into some weird Heaven's Gate nonsense. Daryl will be fine. All I ask is during this, everyone be normal. Or not normal.

DARYL

I don't know what you mean.

BAMBI

Yes you do. Every time things get screwy around here, I'm the only responsible adult. Just once I would like everyone's cooperation, at least until Daryl gets his job back. If he does.

DARYL

Of course I'm getting my job back, it's
all a bluff. In the meantime, I'm
going to enjoy my suspension. Not
bound by a contract I can do whatever I
want. Today I am born anew, like the
calf we saw being birthed at that farm
before I puked and passed out.

BAMBI

(SIGHS) Yeah, that was a fun honeymoon.

DARYL HEADS UPSTAIRS, WHISTLING AS HE GOES. RUSS TURNS BACK
TO BAMBI.

RUSS

Well somebody better be bluffing.
Because the last thing I want to do is
go find other clients. Athletes are
like scary kindergarteners that drive
super fast and get everything pregnant.

THEY ALL STAND THERE WITH WARY "IT'S ALL GONNA BE ALL RIGHT,
RIGHT?" LOOKS ON THEIR FACES, AS LEWIS BROWN UNSUCCESSFULLY
TRIES TO COME BACK OUT OF THE CLOSET AND EXIT OUT THE FRONT
DOOR WITHOUT BEING SEEN.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

D

FADE IN:

INT. THORKELSON HOME - KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

BAMBI IS HALF-DRESSED, SCRAMBLING TO COOK BREAKFAST, AS DARYL ENTERS LOOKING REFRESHED.

DARYL

Ah, what a tremendous day. You realize this is the first morning in twenty-five years I'm not at the gym already?

BAMBI

Yeah, it's all anyone's talking about. (SMILES) How do you like your eggs?

DARYL

Hmm, that's an interesting question.

BAMBI

No it's really not. And if your answer isn't "crumpled" you're out of luck.

SHE SHOVES A PLATE OF EGGS IN FRONT OF HIM. THEY DO INDEED LOOK CRUMPLED. DARYL EXAMINES THE PIECES OF TOAST.

DARYL

What kind of toast is this?

BAMBI

(SIGHS) Why?

DARYL

Well, because this one's not toasted, and this one isn't even bread.

HE HOLDS UP BAMBI'S HOSPITAL BADGE.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Dr. Bambi Harper? Are you suddenly so embarrassed of me you went back to your maiden name?

BAMBI

No, I've never used your name professionally. It's easier if my NFL clients don't know I'm married to you.

DARYL

Fair enough.

BAMBI TAKES HER BADGE, LICKS THE CRUMBS OFF, ATTACHES IT ON HER SHIRT, THEN SCREAMS AT THE CEILING.

BAMBI

Howie, I swear, if you make me late for work again I'm gonna toss out all your tech and then I'm going to kill you!

DARYL

Yikes.

BAMBI

He eats my brain.

DARYL

(SHRUGS) I can take him to school.

BAMBI

(EUREKA) Wait a minute, you can take him to school!

DARYL

Yeah, I just said that.

BAMBI

Hm. Do you think you could also pick up tomatoes for dinner?

DARYL

Sure. I can do everything around here. I was thinking of --

BAMBI

No.

DARYL

You didn't let me finish. Remodeling the house.

BAMBI

No. You'll start, your suspension will be lifted, and I'll be left in the rubble.

DARYL

That's not true. I mean, sure, there will be a lot of rubble.

BAMBI

No. And anyway, we have a stupid Homeowner's Association run by powerful women who hate joy. They'll never approve anything you want to do.

DARYL

You just don't like the Homeowners Association ladies because they call you "the cheerleader".

BAMBI

They call me the who now?!

DARYL

What? I don't know.

BAMBI

I don't hate those ladies. I just hate the way they are and everything they do, and how they've never taken the time to get to know me, especially that Blondie Mean Face and Latina Big Hair.

DARYL

Wow, you are just a stressed-out ball of cuckoo. But don't worry, for the time being I can do it all around here. First stop, potatoes for dinner.

BAMBI

Tomatoes.

DARYL HEADS FOR THE FRONT DOOR. BAMBI CALLS AFTER HIM.

BAMBI (CONT'D)

And Howie!

DARYL TURNS AROUND AND HEADS UPSTAIRS.

DARYL

Yep yep yep yep.

BAMBI WATCHES HIM GO, WONDERING HOW THIS IS GOING TO WORK.

CUT TO:

E

INT. DARYL'S CAR - LATER
(CALLER, DARYL, HOWIE, RUSS, SKUNKMAN)

DARYL DRIVES HOWIE TO SCHOOL WHILE LISTENING TO SKUNKMAN AND PETE ON SPORTS TALK RADIO.

SKUNKMAN (ON RADIO)

You're on with Skunkman and Pete, San Diego's loudest sports talk show.

CALLER (ON RADIO)

Hi. I'm calling about this Thorkelson joker. He says in his book we need to be more tolerant of other people's views. How stupid is that? You know he lives right here in San Diego. Instead of burning his books, maybe we burn down his house! Also, shout-out to everyone at my parish. Hi-yo! Follow me on Twitter at @FatherTim.

DARYL SNAPS OFF THE RADIO.

HOWIE

Dad, why is this happening?

DARYL

I'm glad you asked. It's called social media outrage.

HOWIE

No, why are you taking me to school?

Did Mom leave you?

DARYL

What? No.

HOWIE

'Cause Mom's super hot, and I don't want a bunch of new dads around.

DARYL

What's wrong with you? You don't call your mom "super hot". It's creepy.

HOWIE

Sorry. And I already know what social media outrage is. We had these bullies at school, so then all of us went on Facebook and YouMad and bullied them. Then we had to have an assembly where some lady who might be the principal lectured us that all bullying was wrong, and then she called us names.

DARYL

(SHAKES HEAD, THEN DAWNS ON HIM) Wait a minute, what did you just say?

HOWIE

I don't know.

DARYL

Car. Call Russ.

WE HEAR A RINGING PHONE OVER THE SPEAKERS. RUSS ANSWERS.

RUSS (ON PHONE)

You ready to apologize?

DARYL

No. Are you still trying to stop the book burning?

RUSS (OVER PHONE)

Yeah. Why?

DARYL

Let them. The sight of burning books is so abhorrent that they'll look like bullies and I'll be the victim. And then when I show up to publicly forgive the kooks, boom, hero, back in the NFL, contract extension, I just did your job, you're welcome.

RUSS (OVER PHONE)

Huh, I'm thinking.

DARYL

Yeah, I can hear your brain cracking.

HOWIE

Hi, Uncle Russ.

RUSS (OVER PHONE)

Wait, who is that? Is this not a secure line?

DARYL

You have one nephew. How many people call you Uncle Russ?

RUSS (OVER PHONE)

I have a complicated life.

HOWIE

Dad, you just passed my school.

DARYL

You changed schools again? When? Why?

HOWIE

I'm not comfortable answering that
without Mom present.

RUSS (OVER PHONE)

That kid changes schools like you
change NFL teams.

DARYL

HOWIE

That's not the same thing. That's not the same thing.

DARYL HANGS UP THE PHONE. THEY BOTH SHAKE THEIR HEADS.

DARYL

HOWIE (CONT'D)

Dummy.

Dummy.

DARYL TURNS TO HOWIE, ANNOYED.

DARYL

And why do you have to be driven to a
school five blocks away?!

HOWIE

Is that a real question? This is why
Mom left you.

DARYL

She didn't leave me!

CUT TO:

H

INT. SUPERMARKET - PRODUCE SECTION - LATER

DARYL LOOKS AT TOMATOES. HE CLEARLY DOESN'T LIKE THE SELECTION. A WOMAN SHOPS NEAR HIM.

DARYL

These tomatoes look weird.

WOMAN

Why don't you leave God alone for once?

THE WOMAN STORMS OFF. DARYL SHAKES HIS HEAD, PULLS OUT HIS PHONE AND TALKS TO IT.

DARYL

Phone, how does one grow tomatoes?

PHONE (AUTOMATED LADY VOICE)

I do not understand the question.

EAGLES FAN (O.C.)

Thorkelson!

DARYL TURNS TO SEE AN EAGLES FAN, EVIDENCED BY HIS JERSEY. THE FAN NAILS DARYL WITH A SNOWBALL AND LAUGHS.

DARYL

Dammit, we live in San Diego, how do you Eagles fans always have snowballs?!

PHONE (AUTOMATED LADY VOICE)

Most Eagles fans keep snowballs in their freezer just waiting for the ideal moment.

CUT TO:

J

INT. KICKER CAMP - GIFT SHOP - LATER

GIL AND RUSS ARE BEHIND THE GIFT SHOP COUNTER AT THE DARYL THORKELSON KICKER CAMP. THE RADIO IS TURNED ON TO THE SKUNKMAN AND PETE SHOW. RUSS IS ON THE PHONE.

SKUNKMAN (ON PHONE)

Hi, you're on with Skunkman and Pete,
San Diego's loudest sports talk show.

RUSS

(HICK ACCENT) Yeah, Skunkman, I hear
y'all talking about this Thorkelson
wang. Well, we'z having a protest at
his Kicker Camp today. Everyone should
bring Thorkelson merchandise to toss in
the bonfire. If you don't got none you
can buy it at the gift shop. I mean, I
assume. They seem very professional.

SKUNKMAN (ON PHONE)

You hear that, folks. Drop everything
and head down to Daryl Thorkelson's
Kicker Camp. You've all seen the dumb
sign right off Interstate 8. Let's
show this jackass we mean business.

GIL

Why are you telling people to come here
to burn books and other stuff?

RUSS

Shhh. (COVER PHONE WITH HAND) It was Daryl's idea. Sort of. He said let them burn books so they look like bullies. I'm just improving on it. I'm like the "Idea Executioner."

GIL

That is not a good nickname.

RUSS

If people are gonna burn things in protest anyway, we might as well turn a profit. We can finally unload all the Daryl Thorkelson merch we never sold -- the jerseys, the "Kickers Do It Through The Uprights" license plates, the bobble-feet, the big foam toes... holy crap those were some bad ideas.

GIL

(UNDER HIS BREATH) Yeah, yours.

THE PHONE RINGS. GIL ANSWERS IT.

GIL (CONT'D)

Hello, Daryl Thorkelson Kicker Camp, where you get a leg up on your dreams.

SKUNKMAN (ON PHONE)

Wait, what was that? Who is this? Why is this the same number as the one we're giving out for the Kicker Camp?

K

EXT. FRONT YARD - LATER
(CASSANDRA, DARYL, ELDEN, GIL, RUSS)

DARYL, LOOKING LIKE A SWEATY MESS, HAS RIPPED UP HIS GARDEN AND ATTEMPTING TO PLANT TOMATOES. ELDEN PUGH-THORKELSON, DARYL'S AFRICAN AMERICAN SON, 17, WALKS UP.

ELDEN

Dad? I stopped by to make sure you're doing okay. Looks like I'm too late.

DARYL

Are you kidding, I'm creating tomatoes!

ELDEN

I'm sure if you want tomatoes people will just throw them at you.

DARYL

Funny. I suppose you're also here to tell me I need to apologize.

ELDEN

Who wants you to apologize?

DARYL

Everyone. They say it's the only chance I have of kicking again. Can you believe that?

ELDEN

Yeah, that's some real adult hollow nonsense. You're gonna do it, right?

DARYL

I've never apologized for anything.

ELDEN

Which is probably why you've played for nine different teams.

DARYL

You used to keep those witty observations to yourself.

ELDEN

Mom says I spout off. She says hanging with you makes me weird.

DARYL

What do you think?

ELDEN

I think you make me weird. But I don't mind. I think it's cool being smarter and more curious than all my friends.

DARYL

Trust me, it's not. (THEN) You should leave before your mom finds out you're here on a non-visitation day.

ELDEN

Right. But she wants you to know that people are still counting on you.

DARYL

That's nice.

ELDEN

Yeah, she wants to make sure just
because you're suspended doesn't mean
the checks are gonna stop.

CASSANDRA (THINK SHERRI SHEPHERD) ZOOMS UP ON HER HOVERBOARD.

CASSANDRA

I told you not to say it that way!

DARYL

Cassandra?

CASSANDRA

You both got a lot of nerve, talking
about me like I'm not here!

DARYL

I didn't know you were here! And you
shouldn't worry about me.

CASSANDRA

I'm worried about me! You know how it
makes me look when people find out your
Elden's dad?! It's like admitting I
once had sex with Howdy Doody! That
was bad enough. But now you have to
sacrilege the Lord? I go to church
every Sunday. I don't need everyone
looking at me like this.

CASSANDRA MAKES AN EXAGGERATED DISAPPROVING FACE.

DARYL

You go to church?

CASSANDRA

Had to, after I got entangled in all
your chalky foolishness. I'm like the
cautionary tale for NFL groupies
getting drunk and foolish. But God
doesn't judge, which I appreciate, and
which I suppose is why you don't have a
lightning bolt frying your bony ass!

CASSANDRA ZOOMS OFF, THEN TURNS AROUND AND COMES BACK.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Dammit, you look pitiful. I worry
about you, Little D, you're not cut out
to be a pariah. Put on a hat, drink
some water, you've always been woeful
in the sun. Tell Bambi I say "hey".

SHE HUGS HIM, THEN ZOOMS OFF AGAIN. ELDEN WAVES BYE TO HIS
DAD.

DARYL

Okay, thanks for coming. And don't
worry, I'll be fine.

DISSOLVE TO:

M

EXT. FRONT YARD - ONE HOUR LATER
(DARYL, LUCIA, MONIQUE)

DARYL IS PASSED OUT IN THE SUN. MORE DIGGING AND MESS HAS OCCURRED. WHERE SEE HIS CELL PHONE VIBRATE NEXT TO HIM. A LADY'S FANCY RHINESTONE PUMP NUDGES HIM AWAKE. HE LOOKS UP AT THREE PUT TOGETHER, STYLISH LADIES -- MONIQUE, LUCIA, VERONICA -- ALL IN THEIR 30S. THEY MAKE UP THE MEAN HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION.

MONIQUE

Hey, football man, what do you think
you're doing?

DARYL

(CROAKS) Water.

MONIQUE HANDS HIM A KATE SPADE TUMBLER. DARYL DRINKS, SPITS.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Blarch! Is that moonshine?!

MONIQUE

I don't know, probably. You can't
plant a vegetable garden.

DARYL

There's nothing in the Homeowners
Association rules that says I can't.

LUCIA

It's a new rule, we voted two minutes
ago, when we thought you were dead.

DARYL

This is my yard, I should be allowed to
do anything I want.

THEY ALL LAUGH.

LUCIA

Bring it up at the next meeting.

THEY LAUGH EVEN HARDER.

DARYL

Forget it, I'll just say the wrong thing and alienate everyone, like I do.

MONIQUE

Wait, why are you sad? You're supposed to be a big deal. Our husbands worship you because you play with balls.

DARYL

Not right now. I got suspended. People don't understand me, they get mad when I say things. I'm not sure why. I'm always right.

THE WOMEN LOOK AT EACH OTHER, CONFUSED.

MONIQUE

You sound like us. People hate us because we love our neighborhood.

DARYL

See, that's just wrong. I'm a very astute observer of humans, and you ladies are heroes. All nine of you.

MONIQUE

Okay, you might have sun stroke.

CUT TO:

P

INT. THORKELSON HOME - KITCHEN - LATER
(BAMBI, CROWD, DARYL, EAGLES FAN, GIL, HOWIE, LUCIA, MONIQUE,
PROTESTOR, RUSS)

DARYL, BACK TO HIS NORMAL SELF, IS DRINKING COCKTAILS WITH
MONIQUE, LUCIA AND VERONICA.

MONIQUE

Our husbands like you more than us.
All because you played a silly game?

DARYL

Precisely. In a way I embody their
dreams, and you their reality.

LUCIA

Well that sucks. You really do say
whatever's on your mind. No wonder you
got fired.

DARYL

I'm not fired, just suspended until I
apologize. And don't get me wrong, I
find all of you delightfully
misunderstood. Like sharks.

LUCIA

That's sweet. Maybe you could go
golfing with our husbands and urge them
to pay attention to us?

DARYL

It would be my absolute pleasure. Only make it Frisbee golf, that's my jam.

(THEN) But here's a little secret your husbands don't want you to know: You, my fine ladies, have all the power.

MONIQUE

Right, because we have boobs.

DARYL

No, although they are tactical weapons, shock and awe. But the real power is wives know things about us that no one else does. It terrifies the male species. I mean, to the public I come off as this cool sports hero.

MONIQUE

LUCIA

Cool?

Hero?

DARYL

But Bambi knows my darkest fears.

MONIQUE

Spiders?

DARYL

No.

LUCIA

Dogs with human eyes?

DARYL

Well, yes, but no.

LUCIA

My husband's scared of old Italian men.
Weird, right? This from the same guy
who likes to dress up as an adult baby.

DARYL

I think we've gone off topic here.

MONIQUE

This is fun. You know what, maybe we
can figure out a way to get approval
for your little tomato garden.

DARYL

Seriously? And what about remodeling
my house?

MONIQUE

Why not, you're one of us now. Tell
you what, my husband has a boat. You
and the cheerleader come sailing with
us Sunday, we can discuss these things.

DARYL

Well, I usually work Sundays, but I
guess not now.

MONIQUE

Great. We go down to Mexico where we
can fish for bluefin tuna with depth
charges.

DARYL

(PUT OFF) Eeee.

THEY CLINK GLASSES (DARYL A LITTLE RELUCTANTLY) AND DRINK AS BAMBI ENTERS. SHE CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT SHE'S LOOKING AT.

MONIQUE

Oh my God, Bambi, you have the most wonderful husband. He's like a big floppy puppy dog you want to smooch up and bake in a pie.

BAMBI SMILES A FAKE SMILE, THEN SHOOTS DARYL A "GET RID OF THEM" LOOK. DARYL IS CONFUSED, SHAKES HIS HEAD: "WHAT?"

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

She wants us to go. Come on, ladies, the cheerleader is a-n-g-r-y.

BAMBI

I know how to spell! And I'm... (LET'S IT GO) Know what, never mind.

MONIQUE

We'll see you both Sunday. Try to wear something presentable.

THE THREE WOMEN SMILE AND EXIT, TAKING THEIR COCKTAILS WITH THEM. BAMBI SPINS ON DARYL.

BAMBI

Sunday?

DARYL

I can explain.

BAMBI WAITS FOR AN EXPLANATION. DARYL OPENS HIS MOUTH TO SAY SOMETHING BUT NOTHING COMES OUT.

BAMBI

Oh my God, it finally happened. You used up all your words.

DARYL

Look, I know some people in the neighborhood have a problem with those ladies --

BAMBI

All people. All.

DARYL

-- but they might be misunderstood. They're going to let us remodel our house and all we have to do is go on a questionable boat trip with them.

BAMBI

I don't want the house remodeled. You've been suspended less than a day and my front yard is dug up and we're boating with my mortal enemies.

DARYL

Yeah, they really don't like you. But I think that's more on them.

BAMBI

And who the hell is that?

DARYL TURNS TO SEE WHERE BAMBI IS POINTING. THE EAGLES FAN FROM THE SUPERMARKET STANDS IN HIS WINDOW.

DARYL

Oh, that's Ted. He chucked a snowball at me and now we're inseparable. He trims hedges to look like gargoyles.

EAGLES FAN

Can I drink from your hose?

BAMBI

Ted, please, we're having a moment
here!

TED LEAVES. BAMBI TURNS BACK TO DARYL.

BAMBI (CONT'D)

I told you I'd stand behind you through
all this, but that I didn't want to be
the only reasonable adult. And right
away you start collecting more weirdos
like you do.

DARYL

I don't collect weirdos.

RUSS AND GIL BURST IN.

RUSS

Remember how you suggested we stage the
protest at the Kicker Camp?

DARYL

No.

RUSS

Well, anyway, it was a bad idea.

BAMBI GLARES AT DARYL.

DARYL

All I said was don't stop the book
burning, let them look like lunatics.

GIL

Don't worry, I think we lost them.

DARYL

Lost whom?

GIL

It's "who" and them!

WE HEAR A LOT OF NOISE AND COMMOTION FROM OUT FRONT.

BAMBI

What the hell is that?

GIL

Raccoons are back?

WE HEAR A PROTESTOR ON A BULLHORN AND AN UNRULY CROWD.

PROTESTOR (ON BULLHORN - O.C.)

Who do we hate?

CROWD (O.C.)

Thorkelson!

PROTESTOR (ON BULLHORN - O.C.)

When do we hate him?

CROWD (O.C.)

Thorkelson!

GIL

I don't think those are raccoons.

BAMBI GOES OVER TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT.

BAMBI

There are whackos out there!

CROWD (O.C.)

Boooooooooooooo!

RUSS

Window's open.

BAMBI SHUTS THE WINDOW.

BAMBI

They're in our yard.

DARYL

My tomatoes!

BAMBI

Missing the point!

RUSS

Let's all calm down and remember what's important. It was Daryl's idea.

DARYL

Hey, you are way off base. It was mostly Howie's idea.

BAMBI

Where is Howie by the way?

DARYL

How would I know?

BAMBI

You had three simple things to do today -- take Howie to school, get a tomato for dinner tonight not seven months from tonight, and pick up Howie.

DARYL

What? You never said pick him up.

BAMBI

It goes without saying.

DARYL

Clearly it doesn't!

BAMBI HURRIES INTO THE LIVING ROOM TOWARD THE FRONT DOOR. BUT BEFORE SHE CAN REACH IT THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND OPENS HOWIE COLLAPSES INTO THE HOUSE. HE'S A COMPLETE MESS AND TERRIFIED, LOOKING MORE LIKE HE CRAWLED THROUGH THE SAHARA THAN WALKING HOME FIVE BLOCKS.

HOWIE

Whyyyyyyyyy?

DARYL

It's only five blocks!

HOWIE

Mama, is that you?

BAMBI PICKS HOWIE UP AND GLARES AT DARYL, AND WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

R

FADE IN:

INT. THORKELSON HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER
(ANGRY HUSBAND, BAMBI, DARYL)

DARYL IS ON THE SOFA. BAMBI COMES DOWNSTAIRS.

BAMBI

So Howie has taken to bed and says he's never going to move again.

DARYL

See, I told you, everything's normal.

BAMBI

I'm not happy with you right now.

DARYL

Really? You hide it super well. Let me ask, are you mad because I almost killed Howie, or because those ladies call you "cheerleader"?

BAMBI

Don't be an idiot. (THEN, EXPLODING) I hate people think I'm a cliché, the cheerleader who married the jock!

DARYL

Well you were a cheerleader. You put yourself through college and look, now you're basically a doctor.

BAMBI

No, I am a doctor. A physical therapist is a doctor. Certainly more than a kicker is a football player.

DARYL

(NODS) Fair enough. (THEN) I remember back before Howie you'd put on your uniform and we'd have a good time. Two four six eight, Daryl did appreciate!

BAMBI SHAKES HER HEAD "NO," TRYING NOT TO SMILE.

BAMBI

Seriously, what are you going to do if you don't get your job back?

DARYL

Football doesn't define who I am. It never has. So why should I care?

BAMBI

Because I care. I didn't before today, but now I'm afraid. All this nonsense can't continue.

DARYL

Yeah I know, you can't be the only "responsible adult", you keep saying that. It's hurtful. Not to me, but to Russ and Gil.

BAMBI

Don't get me started on them. Russ is like a wizard of bad ideas. But at least he's smarter than Gil. Look, I love Gil, he's sweet and loyal and smells like cotton candy.

DARYL

Yeah, he mostly eats cotton candy.

BAMBI

But I'm not sure I'm ready for this chaos to be the rest of my life. I get it, you surround yourself with weirdos because they make you seem more normal.

DARYL

We're back to weirdos again.

BAMBI

Not again. Always. So maybe you should apologize, because at least it's the first step back to your pretend life.

DARYL

Pretend life?

BAMBI

Your problem is you've lived the life of a pampered athlete; you don't know how to act in the real world. It turns out you might not be cut out for it!

DARYL

Give me a break. You grew up a hot girl, and not one single subsection in the entire history of Earth has ever had it easier than hot girls. Do you really truly believe the pool man thinks you "sing like an angel"? You're the delusional one. You've gotten everything you ever wanted!

BAMBI

All I wanted was a tomato with my dinner and did I get that?!

DARYL

In eight months you'll be eating the best tomato you ever had.

BAMBI

If I live that long.

DARYL

Dear God.

BAMBI

Dear who? Thought you didn't believe in him. But I do! I go to church and pray all the time. And it's a bummer believing in God, because now I have to accept the fact that I did something wrong and you're my penance!

DARYL

You're overreacting. Everything is
fine.

WE HEAR SOMEONE POUND ON THE FRONT DOOR. AN ANGRY HUSBAND.

ANGRY HUSBAND (O.C.)

Thorkelson! Did you tell our wives
they have all the power?! Thorkelson!
We know you're in there!

DARYL HITS THE FLOOR.

ANGRY HUSBAND (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Also, I'm really looking forward to our
boat trip.

BAMBI, FURIOUS, STORMS INTO THE BATHROOM. A FRAMED PHOTO
FALLS TO THE FLOOR AS SHE SLAMS THE DOOR. DARYL SITS THERE
DISAPPOINTED AND STUNNED. HE YELLS TO THE DOOR.

DARYL

Well, this is great. Everyone's
abandoning me except the adult baby
pounding on my door! (LOOKS UP AT THE
HEAVENS) How about you? I bet you want
to smite me!

DARYL, STILL LOOKING UP, GETS AN IDEA. WHAT DOES HE HAVE TO
LOSE? HE GETS ON HIS KNEES AND STARTS PRAYING.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Hi, God. It's me. Daryl. I really do
hope you're real, and not just because
you're a forgiving God, but because for
the first time ever I really feel lost.

(MORE)

DARYL (CONT'D)

I'm a fascinating guy, I think deep thoughts which is why teammates didn't always appreciate me, I want life to be an adventure, I'm a splendid writer, but look who I'm talking to, if you really are God, you know all this. Yet the one thing I've never admitted is how much I loved playing in the NFL, and how much I want that all-time scoring record. And I'm super afraid I'm gonna discover that kicking was the only thing I was ever truly great at. So I'm lost and at your mercy. You do that thing where you send people signs of what to do, right? I'd like one of those now. (WAITS FOR IT) Any time now. (WAITS) Any sign at all.

NOTHING HAPPENS. DARYL SHRUGS, GETS BACK TO HIS FEET, DISAPPOINTED. HE NOTICES THE FRAMED PHOTO THAT CRASHED TO THE FLOOR. HE PICKS IT UP. IT'S A WEDDING PHOTO OF HIM AND BAMBI LOOKING SO HAPPY. HE LOOKS BACK TOWARD THE CLOSED BATHROOM DOOR, THEN PULLS OUT HIS PHONE AND CALLS RUSS.

DARYL (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Russ. I'm ready to apologize... No, I don't know where to get a podium!

CUT TO:

T

INT. STUDIO BACKSTAGE AREA - NEXT DAY

(ALONZO, BAMBI, DARYL, GIL, HOWIE, RUSS, TONY GONZALEZ)

BACK WHERE WE STARTED, IN THE WAITING AREA OF "THE CREW."
GIL PILFERS FOOD FROM CRAFT SERVICE. RUSS JOINS BAMBI.

RUSS

They're putting pants on Daryl, which
is like trying to get a cat into a
bathtub. Thanks for getting him to
apologize.

BAMBI

Well, it was smart of you to get him
back on this show. When Tony Gonzalez
forgives you, America forgives you.

RUSS

See sometimes I have good, uh, what do
you call them? Mind... mind-thoughts?
Even if I am a (POINTED) weirdo.

BAMBI

Yeah, about that --

RUSS

I was once the shining star of the
family, the gifted athlete. But I
stopped growing at age fifteen.

BAMBI

Fifteen?

RUSS

Twelve. And Daryl was just a wang who one day discovered he could kick a ball a mile. Next thing I know he's living my dream, playing in my NFL. I was so mad, I was meaner to him than Scar was to Mufasa.

BAMBI

Are those players on the Raiders?

RUSS

Daryl could've cut me out of his life. Instead, he asked me to be his agent.

BAMBI

Yeah, he does that. He brought a homeless guy home for Thanksgiving dinner once. And that man turned out to be the guy who stole our toaster.

RUSS

Daryl is a blowhard, self-centered, and too smart for his own good. He's also one of the highest paid kickers in NFL history. I did that. Russ Thorkelson!

BAMBI

(NODS) He is grossly overpaid.

RUSS

And you've heard the story of Gil?

BAMBI

I know he was equipment manager in college, and Daryl liked him so much he talked the team into letting Gil be the holder on one extra point.

RUSS

Yeah, and of course Gil fumbled and eleven guys jumped on his head. (LAUGHS SO HARD) God, I love that story!

BAMBI

How is that a good story?

RUSS

It's so funny! And did you know that game was the best day of Gil's life? Daryl takes in weirdos and makes them feel part of something big.

BAMBI

But when he takes in weirdos, it means I have to take in the weirdos. How is that fair? I was a cheerleader! No, I was the cheerleader. I could've had the quarterback. I could've had a Manning. A freaking Manning! Everyone loves them, they say the right things. How did I...?

RUSS

Wind up with the weirdo kicker?

BAMBI

He tricked me. I was minding my own
business --

RUSS

Were you?

BAMBI

(REMEMBERING) No, he was minding his
own business, reading HP Lovecraft on
the sidelines and I started flirting
with him. (GASPS) I'm not a responsible
adult, am I? I chose a weirdo
because... I'm a weirdo. (GASPS LOUDER)
I'm one of you!

BAMBI LOOKS OVER AT GIL, WHO IS ATTACKING A TRAY OF SLIDERS.

GIL

Little hamburgers?! What?!

BAMBI

I can't let Daryl apologize.

RUSS

Wait, what happened?

BAMBI

I didn't marry a man who apologizes for
his beliefs just because he's ruining
my life! I need to stop him!

RUSS

No!

BAMBI STARTS FOR THE STAGE. RUSS TRIES TO GRAB HER. ON THE
MONITOR WE SEE THE SHOW HAS COME BACK FROM COMMERCIAL.

DARYL SITS WITH TONY GONZALEZ, ALONZO AND THE REST OF THE PLAYERS ON THE SET OF "THE CREW." THROUGH THE MAGIC OF TELEVISION WE GO FROM THE MONITOR ONTO "THE CREW" SET ITSELF.

TONY GONZALEZ

So, Daryl, I'm surprised you came back to apologize. I say this as a former teammate who put up with your constant jabbering and nonsense for years.

DARYL

Well thank you, Tony Gonzalez. But we were only teammates for one season.

TONY GONZALEZ

Good God, it felt like it never ended!

DARYL

Careful, don't use the "God" word unless you want ninety thousand emails, mostly from people still using AOL.

ALONZO

I'm still on AOL. But my wife is on something called Tinder.

BAMBI (O.C.)

Wait! You don't need to apologize!

A SURPRISED DARYL LOOKS UP TO SEE BAMBI TRYING TO COME ONTO THE SET. RUSS HAS ONE OF HER LEGS AND BAMBI DRAGS HIM, FINALLY SHAKING HIM OFF. DARYL STANDS AND MEETS HER HALFWAY.

TONY GONZALEZ

Hey, you can't just come out here.

This is a professional television program! TV Guide called us "a thing."

BAMBI

I was wrong to tell you to apologize just because I wanted a normal life free of crazies. I don't. I knew what I was getting into, I realize that now. I'm a kook, no different from you. You just can't tell because I'm so hot!

DARYL

Oh baby, I always knew that. (THEN) But I still want to apologize.

TONY GONZALEZ

Yes, someone please apologize. We already titled this episode "The Apology."

DARYL

I'm sorry, Bambi, you were right, I live a pretend life. I have two wonderful sons, Howie and Elden, devoted friends like Gil Bisbee, a cool big brother Russ, and you. I mean it's so good, how can any of it be real?

BAMBI AND DARYL HUG.

TONY GONZALEZ

Wait, you're not apologizing for the anti-God stuff? This is horrible TV.

DARYL

Why apologize to the people who believe in God? If their belief is strong enough they shouldn't be bothered by what some dummy athlete says.

TONY GONZALEZ

You're not an athlete, you're a kicker!

BAMBI

Twenty-five years ago the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles were accused of being anti-Christian because they talked about zen and meditation. Did they apologize? No. They ate pizza. And that's what we're going to do.

DARYL

Ninja Turtles, babe? What a nerd.

TONY GONZALEZ TOUCHES HIS EAR PIECE.

TONY GONZALEZ

Huh, we're just getting word that the Broncos have officially cut you. Hope you like retirement.

THE FULL FORCE OF THIS HITS DARYL AND BAMBI FOR A BEAT.

BAMBI

Let's go, Daryl. I'm ready to ride this journey with you.

DARYL

(EXCITED) We'll be like two immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, one suitcase between them, a whole strange scary world waiting to be discovered, where anything can happen.

BAMBI

No we're not going to do that.

DARYL TAKES BAMBI'S HAND AND ADDRESSES THE STUDIO CAMERA.

DARYL

I don't know what I'm gonna do today, or tomorrow, or for the next fifty years, but I've never been happier!

TONY GONZALEZ

Yeah, we went to commercial a minute ago. Thanks for ruining our show.

DARYL

I think it went really well. It was a good teaching moment.

TONY GONZALEZ

Yeah, you're blowing up on Twitter. They think you're a moron.

AS DARYL AND BAMBI TAKE ALL OF THIS IN, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT