

"Our House"

Written by
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HOME VIDEO - EXT. HOUSE - DAY

NANCY KOLODNY, 34 and extremely pregnant, stands in front of an old Victorian house. Behind her, JAKE, 4, chases after the hapless family dog, BO. Upbeat, Nancy talks to the camera, operated by her husband, DENNIS CONROY, 33.

NANCY

Welcome to our house.

(sings)

OUR HOUSE/ IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET

(then, holding stomach)

And these are the twins. All 65 pounds of them.

DENNIS (O.C.)

Oh, Nance, that's too much.

NANCY

There's two of them, Honey. *Dos*.

DENNIS (O.C.)

They don't weight 30 pounds each. You're not carrying two-year-olds.

NANCY

(re: video)

Turn that off.

DENNIS (O.C.)

Gestational diabetes. Hypertension.
Sweetie: Pre-eclampsia.

Nancy waddles toward camera, playfully stern.

NANCY

You promised to stay off that website.

The camera parries and dodges.

DENNIS

Increased risk to the fetuses -- fetusi?--
of heart defects, kidney and urinary --
extremely expensive camera!

Nancy grabs Dennis, placing a hand over his mouth. As she presses against him, the camera tilts up, catching the lower half of their faces. They are nose-to-nose.

NANCY

You'd better kiss me fast.

FADE TO WHITE

TITLE SEQUENCE (30 SECONDS)

MUSIC: "Burning Down the House" by the Talking Heads (or perhaps the cover by Tom Jones and the Cardigans)

HOME MOVIE, 1974. The CONROY FAMILY (mother ALICE, father DENNY, seven-year-old KATHLEEN, three-year-old PATRICIA, ONE-YEAR-OLD DENNIS and a baby, TANYA) pose in front of the house. It's a movie, but nobody's moving. The toddler makes a break for it. As the father goes after him, THE DRUMS KICK IN and the human figures fade out like ghosts.

The movie takes on a TIME LAPSE look, with trees and bushes growing and shutters changing color, etc. At one point, the entire house turns a hideous mustard color for a couple of seconds before returning to white. Film grain gives way to video around 1981, which gets progressively brighter and sharper.

Meanwhile, spectral glimpses of various family tableaux -- running in sprinklers, first Holy communion, teen boy mowing a lawn, etc. -- play out in the front yard (in real time). Finally, a wedding featuring Dennis and Nancy as the newlyweds DISSOLVES into:

HOME VIDEO, 2006. Nancy, pregnant, poses with Jake. Dennis comes out from behind the camera to pose with them. Just as he arrives, the camera begins listing sideways. Dennis starts back, mouthing an obscenity as the camera falls to the ground.

The screen goes blue.

INT. HOUSE - FRONT STAIRS - MORNING

Crusty-eyed and bushy-haired, Dennis descends in grungy iEL CHE VIVE! T-shirt and not-quite-white cotton briefs.

FLASHBACK - HOME VIDEO, 1981

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD DENNIS descends in a Darth Vader T-shirt and white cotton briefs. He yawns and scratches himself.

BACK TO SCENE

The adult Dennis yawns and scratches himself.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Dennis enters, greeted by Bo the dog. He's surprised to find his 13-year-old red-haired nephews, KEVIN and KEIRAN DUGAN, sitting on the couch. Kevin is the thuggish, stocky one and Kieran the clever, ferrety one.

DENNIS

Gentlemen.

KEVIN/KEIRAN

Hey, Uncle Dennis.

Their eyes never leave the television, which is playing a PETA video. On screen, an animal is being mistreated.

DENNIS

Holy Christ. What's that?

KEVIN

It's for school.

KEIRAN

For a report.

Kevin points to the TV, greatly amused.

KEVIN

Shock the monkey!

KEIRAN

Chimps are apes.

Kevin punches Keiran in the side of head.

DENNIS

Is your house on fire or something?

KEIRAN

Gran always lets us watch stuff here.

DENNIS

Well, this ain't Gran's house no mo', boys. So best you be moseying--

KEVIN

Ho! They electroded his nut sack!

KEIRAN

Cruel and unusual!

Dennis shakes his head, SIGHS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMALL BOY'S VOICE

What's a nut sack?

Dennis turns and sees his son Jake watching the proceedings. He quickly grabs him and exits.

INT. KITCHEN

Nancy unpacks boxes with the help of her auburn-haired niece, NORAH DUGAN, 16.

NORAH

I am so glad you guys moved out here. You are so much cooler than my mom.

NANCY

Your mom is cool. Don't let all that... seeming uncoolness... fool you.

NORAH

I can't talk to her about anything. Like masturbation. She gets all Jesus up my butt if I even bring it up.

Dennis enters, carrying Jake sideways in front of his face, blowing BELLY FARTS on his stomach. The boy GIGGLES UNCONTROLLABLY. (The dog follows them in).

NORAH (CONT'D)

Hey, Uncle Dennis.

Dennis lowers Jake and sees Norah. Mortified, he uses the boy to cover his dingy underpants. Norah is blasé.

NORAH (CONT'D)

I have brothers.

DENNIS

Yes. The cruelty buffs.

NANCY

They were here when I got down.

NORAH

Gran gave them a key after they kept breaking in.

JAKE

They're watching killing animals.

Dennis scoots over to Nancy and kisses her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENNIS

You eat fruit?

NANCY

What if we pulled up this linoleum and just painted the wood floor?

Dennis grabs a banana and places it on her belly.

DENNIS

Yummy folate, for those neural tubes...

Nancy flips him the banana bird, smiling.

JAKE

When you die, that's it.

DENNIS

(to Jake)

You want to take a shower, buddy? Come on, let's take a shower.

Dennis exits, swinging Jake around to cover his butt. Norah turns to Nancy with a big smile.

NORAH

So, Aunt Nancy: Masturbation.

INT. BATHROOM

Dennis turns on the shower, then starts to undress.

JAKE

What's a nut sack?

DENNIS

It's not a nice word. Or phrase.

Naked, Dennis squats and undresses Jake.

JAKE

But what is it?

DENNIS

It's called your scrotum. It's right here, under your penis.

Dennis leads Jake's hand o.c. to his scrotum. Jake feels it and suddenly gets an extremely worried look.

JAKE

What the hell are these?

INT. KITCHEN

Nancy struggles to maintain her "cool aunt" status.

NORAH

My mom says if you start down that road --
"abusing" yourself -- if you start you
won't be able to stop.

NANCY

(jocular)
Hey, I can stop any time.

NORAH

(totally serious)
You can?

INT. SHOWER

Dennis lathers up. Jake gathers the suds as they run down his father's legs, and lathers himself up.

JAKE

Does Mom have a nut sack?

DENNIS

I told you. That's not a nice word.

JAKE

Does she have one?

DENNIS

You know she doesn't. Your mom has
something called a "vulva."

JAKE

(savoring word)
Vulva.

INT. KITCHEN

Nancy is eating a banana.

NORAH

But my big question is, like, do you use
one finger or two fingers?

NANCY

I'm eating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORAH

My friend Britt swears two is the way to go, but I dunno.

NANCY

(swallows hard)

Yeah. I guess you've got to experiment and figure out what works for you.

NORAH

What works for you?

Nancy mulls the importance of being cool. Reprieve comes in the form of LOUD NOISES from another room.

INT. FAMILY ROOM

Nancy waddles in to see Kevin and Keiran knocking each other around, CRASHING into a box labelled "FRAGILE".

NORAH

Mom won't have them in the house.

Dennis rushes in clutching a towel around his waist and carrying a naked Jake under his arm.

Kevin has his hands over Keiran's face and is pushing his head into the box.

KEVIN

Stop saying things!

DENNIS

(loudly)

Go home, gentlemen.

Kevin stalks out. Keiran follows, smirking. Dennis picks up the remote and shuts off the VCR. Then, noticing he's half naked in front of his niece again, he smiles sheepishly and turns to leave. As he does, his towel slips off, exposing his rear. He scurries out.

Norah turns back to Nancy.

NORAH

Your husband has a nice butt.

NANCY

We've had enough icky talk for today, Norah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORAH

Yeah, I should probably go. When do you want me back here?

NANCY

(confused)

I, uh--

NORAH

To help set up for the party.

(off Nancy's look)

Ooo. I think I might have spoiled a surprise.

HOME VIDEO - INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS LANDING

Nancy indicates a door as the camera follows her.

NANCY

And this is Dennis' old room.

DENNIS'S OLD BEDROOM

It hasn't changed since Dennis left for college in 1991. On the walls, a Nirvana "Nevermind" poster and Robbie Conal's Tower-Bush-Atwater triptych co-exists with a bunch of Claudia Schiffer pictures torn from magazines.

NANCY

As you can see, his mother has maintained the site as a shrine to her son, who tragically, grew up and moved out.

The camera swings off Nancy toward Jake, who is taking a small debating trophy off the desk. Dennis's hand reaches out from behind the camera and takes the trophy from Jake, putting it out of reach.

INT. HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Nancy sits with Jake on the bed, dressing him. Dennis pulls on his pants angrily.

NANCY

It's only a party.

DENNIS

It's a precedent. To come in whenever they want, do whatever they want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

I have testicles.

NANCY

Yes you do.

(to Dennis, pointing up)

This molding, in the family room?

DENNIS

Like they still own the place. Which they don't. I seem to remember signing six hundred and twelve pieces of paper...

NANCY

It's nice, what your parents are doing...

DENNIS

That's how they get you. The nice. Because you can't say, "You're being so nice. Cut it out." Or "I really don't appreciate all this concern."

JAKE

You have vulva.

NANCY

(raised eyebrow)

More anatomy lessons from Dr. Dad?

DENNIS

He asked.

NANCY

I agreed to "vagina" but--

DENNIS

He was asking about the...

(vague grasping gesture)

outside.

NANCY

I know we want to be "accurate," but do we have to be specific?

DENNIS

What is he wearing?

Jake is wearing a white satin Mao jacket and pants.

NANCY

Auntie Sister sent it all the way from China.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DENNIS

She also sent him the monkey head. You threw that out.

NANCY

It was a monkey head! You wouldn't even touch it.

DENNIS

It looked AIDSy. Don't you think that outfit's a little... girl-appropriate?

NANCY

I think it's cute.

JAKE

I don't wanna be cute. I wanna be cool.

Dennis gestures toward Jake: "exactly my point." The boy is bouncing on the bed, doing cool moves.

FLASHBACK - HOME MOVIE, 1978 (CRUDE SOUND)

FIVE-YEAR-OLD DENNIS bounces on the bed with his eight and three-year-old sisters to the BEE GEES' "STAYIN' ALIVE." He pulls a cool move on the older girl and she shoves him away. He tumbles awkwardly off the bed.

BACK TO SCENE

Dennis looks concerned.

DENNIS

Don't bounce on the bed, Jake. Emergency room.

Jake happily makes an AMBULANCE SIREN and falls to the bed, dead. Nancy looks at Dennis, unamused.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM

Family members bustle about, preparing for the party. In addition to Norah, they include: PAT DUGAN, 36, Dennis's chain-smoking older sister and mother of Norah, Kevin, Keiran and several other red-headed Dugans; MIKE DUGAN, 36, Pat's husband, a huge, happy, ramshackle dad; DENNY CONROY, 65, Dennis's father, a sweet, agreeable man who for some reason drives Dennis crazy; and ALICE CONROY, 60, his mother, a worrywart like her son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kevin tries to sneak a cookie. Pat CUFFS him.

PAT

Wanna end up fat like your father?

Mike takes a cookie.

MIKE

(off Pat's look, sadly)

It's too late for me.

He gooses her. She looks annoyed, but is not.

INT. HOUSE - STAIRWAY/DINING ROOM

Dennis, Nancy and Jake come down the stairs. Jake runs to his grandfather and hugs him around the legs. Dennis approaches his father, something on his mind.

DENNIS

Listen, Dad--

His father cuts him off with a hug.

DENNY

Smile, son. Why don't you ever smile?

ALICE

You were always such a happy boy.

(worried)

Is everything going okay at work?

Nancy cups the back of Dennis's neck, massages it.

NANCY

It was so nice of you guys to throw this housewarming for us. Wasn't it, Dennis?

DENNIS

Very nice.

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - LATER

The TALKING HEADS' "LITTLE CREATURES" plays ambiently as a FIVE-YEAR-OLD DUGAN GIRL dances. A TEN-YEAR-OLD DUGAN GIRL reads on the couch while an TWO-YEAR-OLD DUGAN BOY wanders around unwatched. SEVERAL OTHER CHILDREN of unknown parentage rummages through Jake's toys.

Kevin and Keiren stand in front of a iMac on a desk in the corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Keiren clicks the mouse and the music changes to SIR MIX-A-LOT'S "BABY GOT BACK." Kevin pushes a key and it gets UNREASONABLY LOUD. They're amused.

Dennis enters, motions the two boys aside, clicks the music back to "Little Creatures," lowers the volume and exits, picking up plates and cups as he goes.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

Nancy and Pat discuss child-rearing, as Alice and Norah hover nearby. Pat, as is her custom, is smoking.

NANCY

...so I hope you don't mind my asking your advice from time to time...

Pat signals "of course" with a wave of her cigarette.

NANCY (CONT'D)

If you know of any good preschools...

PAT

(exhaling smoke)
They're all disease factories.

Dennis sweeps by, frowns extravagantly, and plucks the cigarette from Pat's hand. He continues on. Pat reaches into her purse and pulls out another cigarette.

NANCY

Or if you hear about any nannies...

PAT

(lighting up, shrugs)
People mostly raise their own kids around here.

ALICE

Denny seems so tense. Is he okay about...

She makes a surreptitious gesture to Nancy's stomach.

NANCY

(choking laugh)
The twins? I hope so.

ALICE

(quietly concerned)
I hope so too.

INT. HOUSE - DINING

Guests MINGLE among unpacked moving boxes. Dennis, looking to ditch the cigarette, doesn't notice as he passes a MOUSY WOMAN quietly sipping a glass of wine.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM

Dennis stops. Across the room, his father sits in a chair with Jake, finishing a book.

DENNY

(very animated)

I do so like Green Eggs and Ham! Thank you, Thank you, Sam-I-Am!

Denny closes the book. Jake looks up at him.

JAKE

Granddad, are you going to be dead soon?

GRANDDAD

(chuckles)

I am old.

JAKE

When you die, can I see your bones?

As Dennis watches this, Mike comes up from behind with a beer in each hand.

MIKE

That must bring you back.

FLASHBACK - HOME MOVIE, 1975 (SILENT)

Dennis's father sits in a different chair in the exact same corner of the room, reading his newspaper. An 18-month-old Dennis wildly rides by on a scooter, trying to get his father's attention. He apparently crashes o.c. and re-enters frame crying. His father lowers the paper in annoyance and calls for his wife.

BACK TO SCENE

Dennis takes a drag on the cigarette.

DENNIS

Not really.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike hands him a beer. Dennis takes a swig and absent-mindedly drops the cigarette in the nearly full beer.

A tiny muscular man approaches Dennis.

KEITH
You little Denny?

DENNIS
Dennis.

(In the shot, Mike picks up the two-year-old Dugan boy and puts him on his shoulders.)

KEITH
Keith Rasmussen. Next door. That's my wife, Linda, over there drinking by herself and my kid's running around somewhere. Hope you don't mind us crashing. Usually you invite your neighbors to the housewarming, but feel free to kick my ass out.

DENNIS
No, I.. My parents threw this... thing.

KEITH
(disgusted smirk)
All makes sense. Big Denny Conroy. There's something you and I got in common: We both hate your dad.

DENNIS
(discombobulated)
I don't... Where'd you hear that?

KEITH
Your dad. But listen, I'm hoping you and me, we can have a better relationship. Keep the lawyers out of it.

(The Dugan boy says he wants "Milky." Mike responds "not my department" and puts the boy down.)

Denny approaches, very cordial.

DENNY
Rasmussen.

KEITH
Denny.

Denny SIGHS and walks away. Keith SNORTS.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

Pat, waving her cigarette in Nancy's face, imparts nuggets of maternal wisdom.

PAT

If you go to the emergency room, don't tell them anything. Say you don't know.

(The Dugan toddler climbs on a chair, unbuttons his mother's blouse and begins breast-feeding. She shifts her cigarette to the opposite side of her mouth.)

Denny enters, darkly.

DENNY

Rasmussen's here.

NANCY

Who's Rasmussen?

ALICE

(gestures to the right)
Keith. He lives...

DENNY

He's a capital "A."

ALICE

We think he might be mentally ill.

NANCY

Our next-door neighbor is mentally ill?

DENNY

That bastard's going to kill somebody some day.

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

BETH ORTON'S COVER OF "WILD WORLD" plays as Jake enters and zeroes in on the boy rummaging through his toys.

Jake approaches, ready for a fight or a playdate. The boy looks up, assesses Jake's satin ensemble, and sneers.

BOY

What are you, a girl?

Jake's face falls.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Keith airs his grievances in friendly asshole mode.

KEITH

Hey, you know your apple tree in back?
Keeps dropping rotting fruit into my
yard. I wouldn't say anything, but it's
attracting vermin.

DENNIS

Vermin?

KEITH

Squirrels.

DENNIS

(amused)

You say "vermin," I'm thinking: rats.
Squirrels, that's "fauna."

KEITH

Let's see that smile when one of them
bites your babies.

A PIERCING SOB comes from the other room.

DENNIS

Excuse me. That's my son.

KEITH

Son?

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

Nancy has already picked Jake up when Dennis enters.

DENNIS

What's happened? Jake, you okay?

Jake points at the boy and SOBS. Nancy carries Jake out
of the room. Dennis turns to follow, but stops and turns
back to the boy. The boy stares him down with dead eyes.

BOY

He just started crying.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL

Dennis passes his old bedroom when something catches his eye. Kevin and Keiran emerge from inside the room.

KEVIN

We weren't stealing anything.

They hurry past and descend the stairs o.c.

KEIRAN (O.C.)

Good one, Kev. Ow!

INT. HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Nancy sits on the bed, consoling Jake. Dennis paces.

DENNIS

Apparently, my dad is telling strangers that I hate him...

NANCY

You aren't very nice to him.

DENNIS

What's not very nice is not giving us a little heads up: "Your new neighbor? He's the world's biggest ass."

NANCY

Your mother thinks he's mentally ill.

DENNIS

I'm sorry, world's biggest psychopath.

Nancy wipes Jake's face.

NANCY

Okay, now you go right back down there and tell that boy your outfit is genuine silk all the way from China...

DENNIS

He isn't going to change?

NANCY

Why should he?

DENNIS

To not be made fun of?

CONTINUED:

NANCY

We should embrace his individuality, not encourage him to just fit in.

DENNIS

Nothing wrong with fitting in. You know, it's this kind of individuality embracement that leads to... art school.

NANCY

You're worried about "art school"?

DENNIS

(knows he's on thin ice)

I wouldn't want him going to "art school" any more than want him being black.... Because it's so hard. Uh.

(gives up, searches for new subject matter, blurts out)

Bite my babies?!

Nancy looks at him like he's insane.

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - LATER

Jake converses happily with the other boy as LUNA'S COVER OF "SWEET CHILD OF MINE" plays on the stereo.

Dennis, satisfied, turns to return to the party. He sees Keith monopolizing Mike and some OTHER GUY. Dennis not very artfully dodges past them, trying to escape.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER

Dennis smiles, having eluded capture. There's a SHARP KNOCK on the door. He opens it. It's his younger sister TANYA, scowling. This is not surprising.

DENNIS

(looks at his watch, jocular)

Glad you could make it, sis.

TANYA

Thanks for inviting me, fuckwad.

She hits him on the chest.

TANYA (CONT'D)

I wouldn't have even known about it if I hadn't talked to Mom this morning!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENNIS

This isn't--

TANYA

Dad gives you our house, the least you can do is let me come to the party.

DENNIS

Dad didn't--

She stalks off.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN

Tanya approaches Nancy, still talking to Pat.

NANCY

Tanya! I was hoping--

TANYA

Your husband's a dick.

PAT

So, Tahn, how's the "acting" going?

TANYA

Fuck you, Pat.

NANCY

(changing subject)

So, uh, your sister was just giving me some advice. For the twins.

TANYA

Like hers turned out fabulously. So, Pat, have they started killing serially yet?

PAT

Not yet.

She blows a stream of smoke out the side of her mouth, directly into Nancy's face.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER

Dennis stands in the foyer. He glances up the stairs. Escape. He looks around. Nobody in paying attention to him. He's ready to make his move...

KEITH (O.C.)

Yo, Little Denny!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Keith is SNAPPING his fingers, calling Dennis over.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Dennis joins Keith, the Other Guy and Mike. (Mike is swinging around the three-year-old Dugan girl.)

KEITH

Mikey here tells us your old man gave you this house? Score.

MIKE

(outwardly friendly)
We coulda used the upgrade, but this one's the only begotten son...

KEITH

The inheritance taxes must be huge.

DENNIS

(short, pissy)
Look. I didn't inherit it, okay?

Keith puts up both hands, *whoa*.

FLASHBACK - HOME VIDEO, THE PREVIOUS CHRISTMAS (NIGHT)

Dennis, Nancy and his parents sit in the living room, in the aftermath of another Christmas. Dennis sits on the floor, putting together an Imaginex castle. Denny lifts a glass in toast, not his first of the evening.

DENNY

To our last Christmas in this house!

Nobody else has a drink. Denny downs his.

NANCY

I can't believe you're selling this wonderful old house.

ALICE

It's much too big for us.

DENNY

And we're getting smaller every day.

Alice and Denny share a PRIVATE LAUGH. Nancy looks sad, then suddenly brightens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

What if we bought the house?

Dennis looks up: *wtf?*

NANCY (CONT'D)

We've been talking about getting out of the city.

DENNIS

Tough commute, from Illinois to Manhattan every morning.

NANCY

You can transfer to the Chicago office. They love you there.

(to Alice and Denny)

They love him.

ALICE

Will he still get insurance?

NANCY

And we're going to need a bigger place, when the new baby comes!

ALICE

You're pregnant!

NANCY

(crossing fingers)

Not yet. But we're trying!

ALICE

You're trying! That's wonderful!

Dennis is clearly uncomfortable with this discussion.

DENNY

Trying? You mean...

(vague masturbatory gesture)

with tubes?

DENNIS

Just sexual intercourse so far, Dad. Mostly missionary, some doggy style.

After an uncomfortable beat:

ALICE

Maybe it is time to get away from New York.

BACK TO SCENE

KEITH

If you don't mind my asking, what'd you pay for it? It's okay. I'm a real estate agent.

DENNIS

It's complicated.

BACK TO FLASHBACK

ALICE

We wouldn't dream of selling you the house. Though it would be nice to travel.

DENNY

(flatly)

It's worth \$1.2 on the current market.

DENNIS

Million?

ALICE

And to think we paid \$19,000 for it!

BACK TO SCENE

KEITH

So you, what, tax dodge? You pay them, like a dollar?

Dennis smiles, uncomfortably, saying nothing.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Fine, be a dick. But listen, if you decide to flip it...

He hands Dennis a business card.

KEITH (CONT'D)

You know, you fix this place up, I could get you 800 on the current market.

DENNIS

Thousand?

KEITH

You put some money into it.

HOME VIDEO - UPSTAIRS LANDING

Nancy continues her tour, delighting herself.

NANCY

Great bones! We're going to tear down all this wallpaper...

DENNIS (O.C.)

I grew up with this wallpaper. This is my childhood wallpaper.

NANCY

Looks like it. And over here, this tiny bedroom next to the master, I'm thinking:
(mischievous smile to camera)
What if we turned it into a huge walk-in closet-slash-master bath?

DENNIS (O.C.)

What if we don't?

NANCY

(big smile)
You will love it!

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS LANDING

Nancy has just given the same spiel to Pat, Alice and Tanya, the last of whom is enraged.

TANYA

You're turning my bedroom into a toilet?

ALICE

We were going to do that, but then Tanya, well, she was a surprise.

TANYA

Fuck you, Mom.

Tanya stalks off.

ALICE

What did I say? She knows she was a surprise.

Pat LAUGHS, exhaling smoking into Nancy's face.

CONTINUED:

NANCY

Pat, I, uh, really didn't want to say anything but I wish you wouldn't smoke, you know, around the babies.

PAT

It'll keep the birth weight down. Those big Conroy heads, you'll appreciate it.

ALICE

Your Denny nearly took out the works with him.

(Alice is distracted and wanders off.)

NANCY

Well, I think, I'm just going to have to say, then, that there's no smoking in this house.

PAT

You're going to throw me out of my own house, the house I grew up in?

She laughs again, blowing smoke in Nancy's face.

NANCY

(determined)

I'm sorry but--

PAT

I have a bone to pick with you. What are you doing telling my 16-year-old daughter it's okay to sexually experiment?

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

Keith blathers on. Dennis looks for his escape.

KEITH

Hey, did you know Naperville is ranked the number one place to raise kids in the United States?

DENNIS

Keith, I grew up here.

KEITH

It's a lot different now. Took a lot of hard work and effort.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEITH (CONT'D)

Some people didn't want this to be the number one place to raise kids, didn't feel like taking in their garbage cans, for example.

MIKE

(jocular)

Yeah, don't do that now, and you get a nasty note in your mailbox.

Keith shoots Mike a look.

We hear a boy SHRIEKING. Dennis turns.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS LANDING

Upstairs, Pat continues her offensive against Nancy.

PAT

And giving the girl masturbation tips! I know you're Jewish, but--

NANCY

What does my being--

We hear a boy SHRIEKING. Nancy rushes off, passing Alice, who is caressing the wall.

ALICE

You're not really going to tear down this wallpaper?

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

Keith arrives and discovers Jake, his face covered in blood, SHRIEKING (over ISRAEL KAMAKAWIWO'OLE'S COVER OF "WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD.")

QUICK FLASHES

Dennis at various ages with assorted injuries, all in this family room.

BACK TO SCENE

Dennis looks over from his bloody, sobbing son to the boy from earlier. The knuckles of one hand drips blood.

BOY

He just started bleeding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nancy scurries in and scoops up Jake. Dennis looks again at the boy. He seems unconcerned with what he is done. That's too much. Dennis leans into the boy.

DENNIS

You're lucky you're so small.

INT. HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM

Nancy and Norah tend to Jake's bloody nose.

NANCY

Tilt your head back, baby...

(to Norah, annoyed)

I thought you didn't talk to your mother!

NORAH

She's my mom.

Dennis pokes his head in. Jake looks petrified.

JAKE

Do I have to go to the emergency room?

Dennis considers this. Nancy SIGHS.

NANCY

No, Jake. No emergency room. Head back.

Dennis gets a determined look on his face.

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

He stalks back in -- and right into Keith.

KEITH

Did you threaten to beat up my son?

The boy clings to his father's side.

DENNIS

(unconvincingly)

No.

KEITH

You told him that if he wasn't so small, you'd beat him up!

DENNIS

I didn't say that. And I said "if," which is a restrictive clause. Meaning--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEITH

We all know you're smart, okay? Your old man showed me your report cards. John Wayne Gacy was smart, too!

The guests look uncomfortable. Dennis get defensive.

DENNIS

Did you see what he did to my son? A vicious attack with no provocation!

KEITH

That's not the way I hear it. I hear your son called my son a "vulva."

(disgusted, insinuating)

How does he even know what that is?

DENNIS

We don't believe in cute euphem-- that's not the point. The point is you've got a kid there who needs some kind of medication or therapy or something!

KEITH

No, the fucking point is you were going to beat up a little kid. You sick fuck!

Several children stand around, staring at them. Jake, his nose plugged with tissue, stands next to Keith's son.

KEITH'S SON

Sorry I made your nose bleeding.

JAKE

Sorry I said "vulva" about you.

KEITH'S SON

What's vulva?

Keith gets chesty, puffing up and coming in close. He's a good six inches shorter than Dennis.

KEITH

Maybe if you wanna beat somebody up, you should beat me up. Or am I not small enough for you?

DENNIS

You're plenty small.

KEITH

(finger rapping Dennis' chest)

Seven-o'clock! Playground!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DENNIS
(laughs)
The playground?

Keith grabs his son.

KEITH
Linda!

Linda, half asleep in a chair, looks up. She knows the drill. She finishes her wine and gets up.

KEITH (CONT'D)
(as he exits)
Seven o' clock!

The door SLAMS. Everyone just stands there.

NANCY
(to kids)
Who wants to watch a video?

Nancy starts the video player. The kids all turn to see a monkey being electrocuted.

JAKE
(cheerfully)
Shock the monkey!

Nancy reaches up to turn off the VCR. But she is gripped by a pain in her lower abdomen. She looks to Dennis.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

A black SUV speeds along.

INT. SUV

Dennis and Nancy drive in silence. Nancy looks concerned, but Dennis is utterly stricken. She turns to him.

NANCY
If you're calculating lung development,
I'm going to fucking kill you.

DENNIS
(tiny, choked voice)
Eighteen weeks, Nance...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

What do you want me to do, Dennis? Hold 'em in?

DENNIS

(small)

Uh... if you could.

EXT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE - ESTABLISHING

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM WAITING AREA

Dennis waits. DR. CRANE, Nancy's handsome but perennially distracted obstetrician, approaches.

DR. CRANE

Nancy and the babies are doing fine.

DENNIS

They're okay?

DR. CRANE

Would you like to see them?

Dr. Crain reaches into his smock pocket and removes an impossibly tiny baby, which he places in Dennis' palm.

DR. CRANE (CONT'D)

The boy...

Dennis stares at the miniature baby, which despite being two-and-a-half inches long, GURGLES happily.

Dr. Crain reaches into another pocket, rummaging around.

DR. CRANE (CONT'D)

And the girl's in here... somewhere.

Dennis stares into his empty palm.

PAT (O.C.)

Dennis.

Dennis shakes his nightmare and looks up. Pat and Tanya stand there, concerned. (Pat holds an unlit cigarette.)

PAT (CONT'D)

Norah's with Jake. She's a good babysister. Gets fifteen dollars an hour. Though obviously, this is--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENNIS

Thanks, Pat.

TANYA

I feel terrible, yelling at Nancy and then she... I just, I get so caught up in... I mean, it is our house...

Dennis stands.

DENNIS

It's not "our house." It's my house. My house.

TANYA

I was apologizing, fuckface.

PAT

Language, Tanya. This is a hospital.

TANYA

Like nobody swears in the hospital! And Den, fine, Dad gave you the house. It's yours. You don't have to be an asshole.

DENNIS

Dad didn't give me the house. I bought it, okay? I paid... too much for it.

PAT

And what do you care, Tahn. They've been paying your rent for years.

DENNIS

They pay your rent?!

PAT

Who else is gonna pay it? If Tanya was goooing to pay it, she'd have to... work.

TANYA

Auditioning is work. Real work. Not like squirting out babies all over the... walls and shit!

PAT

As God intended, Missy.

DENNIS

Enough. Tanya, why don't you save all this fury for your shrink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAT

Mom and Dad are paying for that, too.

TANYA

They should. They caused it. You should all be chipping in!

DENNIS

For God's sakes, Tanya! My wife is in there, my babies are dying...

Pat and Tanya both roll their eyes slightly.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

What? I'm overreacting?! They don't even have any myelin around their nerves!

Dennis makes a big sweeping gesture toward the emergency ward. He notices his parents standing before the doors, in earnest conversation with a FEMALE DOCTOR.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Who's he talking to?

PAT

His oncologist.

Dennis looks back. The female doctor hugs his father.

PAT (CONT'D)

Which maybe you would know, if you weren't so caught up in My, My, Me, Me...
(to Tanya)
I'm smoking.

TANYA

I'll join you.

They exit, leaving Dennis feeling like an ass.

INT. HOSPITAL - DOWN THE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Dennis faces his parents.

DENNIS

Cancer, Dad?

DENNY

(dismissive)

Just a touch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE
(downplaying)
He's had it for years.

DENNY
Prostate. Slow bastard. My heart will probably get me before it does.

DENNIS
Why didn't you guys tell me?

ALICE
We didn't want to worry you.

DENNY
You worry too much.

Dennis doesn't know what to do. He drifts into a hug with his father. His father whispers in his ear.

DENNY (CONT'D)
You're the man of the house now. Let's see how you like it.

As father and son separate, Dr. Crane arrives.

DR. CRANE
She's fine. The babies are fine.

ALICE
(crossing herself)
Thank God.

DR. CRANE
She was just experiencing what we call Braxton-Hicks contractions. Which are--

DENNIS
False labor. I had ruled that out, because they don't typically start until 20 weeks...

DR. CRANE
(a little annoyed)
You can see her now.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY WARD

Dennis sits with Nancy in the semi-privacy of their curtained partition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

You know, the one thing this has made me realize is I really have to accelerate our remodeling schedule...

DENNIS

If you can do it from bed, because that's where you're going to be for--

She places her hand over his mouth.

NANCY

Take me home.

He helps her out of bed. They part the curtains and we watch them from behind as they walk to the exit.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Can we stop at Ethan Allen.

DENNIS

Bed.

NANCY

It was nothing.

DENNIS

This time.

NANCY

Maybe now you won't think everything ends in death and dismemberment.

DENNIS

Dad's got cancer.

(adds, casually)

No biggie. I'll tell you about it later.

CREDITS

MUSIC: Shawn Colvin cover of the Talking Heads' "This Must Be The Place (Naive Melody)"

KICKER

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DUSK

Keith stalks back and forth, angrily.