

"SWINGTOWN"

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"SWINGTOWN"

PILOT

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. DC-10 COCKPIT - 30,000 FEET - DAY

TIGHT on thick masculine lips cut below a full, manicured mustache. A big steady hand lowers the cockpit mic into frame.

PILOT'S VOICE

Listen up, folks. Time to stub out those cigarettes and finish your cocktails, I've just initiated our descent into O'Hare. It's hot and muggy down there, so I hope your Bicentennial plans include--

Lips tweak slightly; finger releases the talk button.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Too rough?

We PULL BACK to reveal the chiseled jaw, ice blue eyes, and wavy brown hair of the man at the helm of the AMERICAN AIRLINES wide body-- TOM DECKER (late 30s), sexy and virile as a KOOL cigarette pitchman... Decker's in his element at 30,000, but not in uniform, rather a ribbed white tank, stained down the front with coffee. An older, tenured STEWARDESS gently dabs under his tee with a damp cloth. He gives her a "we're good here" look, pushes the mic button again.

TOM DECKER

-- Include a dip in the lake...  
(cuts his routine short)  
Tighten up those seat belts, good people, I'll have you at the gate in thirty.

Decker returns the microphone to the console.

STEWARDESS

It'll blister.

DECKER

It's not that bad. How's, uh...

STEWARDESS

Tammy. Young, useless, in tears,  
of course. I'll check in back for  
some burn cream.

As the stewardess exits the cockpit, the CO-PILOT grins...

INT. CABIN OUTSIDE COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Decker emerges from the flight deck into first class. Catches the eye of a LEGGY PASSENGER in a loud mini skirt. LEGS notes Tom's casual attire with a raised eyebrow as she brings a cigarette to her frosted pink lips for a final drag, stubs it with a sexy smile. Decker grins at the flirtation, but turns his attention towards the GENTLE SOBS emanating from the coffee station. They're coming from TAMMY, the young, useless stewardess-in-training, scrubbing the coffee stain on Tom's captain's shirt, uselessly.

DECKER

You okay, Tammy?

Tammy spins, face streaked with mascara, mortified.

TAMMY

Oh my God, I'm so embarrassed. I  
just hate myself.

DECKER

Take it easy, it was an accident.

Tammy goes back to scrubbing the stain.

TAMMY

Your shirt is ruined.

DECKER

(steps close)  
It's okay, I have plenty.

Decker puts his hand on Tammy's, so solid and soothing, she almost loses her balance. **UNDER: "YOUR LOVE/IS LIFTING ME HIIIGHER/THAN I'VE EVER/BEEN LIFTED BEFORE..."** Rita Coolidge coos the intro to her 70's remake of the R&B classic as Tammy sniffles back her tears, notes his handsome gold wedding band...

TAMMY

(the shirt)  
Your wife is going to kill me.

Decker moves in, presses his lips close to Tammy's ear...

DECKER

My wife is going to love you.

Tammy looks up, blinking innocently. And suddenly we're...

EXT. SKY - DAY

Decker's plane jets towards the city of big shoulders, Miss Coolidge's voice lifting us higher and higher even as the CAMERA DIPS lower and lower, RUSHING across the Illinois farmland towards the city grid, ZOOMING BEYOND CHICAGO to the NORTHERN SUBURBS. In a flash, we ZERO IN on the lush lawns and old money mansions, until we SETTLE on a handsome mid-century nuzzled amongst the more established lake front properties...

INT. DECKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

CU on Tammy's NAME TAG on her stripped off uniform, mingled on the white shag carpet with Decker's Captain's cap. Also on the plush pile are head and wristband tennis accessories next to a white pleated tennis skirt. Rita Coolidge's song continues on as we trail past the discarded garments and make our way to the king sized water bed, a collection of legs, arms, fingers... A BEAT LATER, a tan pair of LEGS swings to the floor, and the frame is filled with the lithe, naked body of a WOMAN. She casually dons a terry cloth robe, heads for the door-- In soft focus behind her, DECKER and young TAMMY resume the position...

INT. DECKER HOUSE - DAY

Fingers sporting fire engine red nails and a diamond wedding band empty a pink can of TAB into a tumbler... TRINA DECKER'S tan, beautiful face fills the frame as she takes a sip, steps past the wet bar into the living room, stops at the stacked stone fireplace to regard a large portrait of herself in an American Airlines stewardess uniform, folded inside the arms of Captain Decker, also in uniform. Something catches her eye outside the picture window. Across the street, two men and a woman step out the front door of a HANDSOME RED BRICK HOME with a CENTURY 21 "SOLD" sign in front of it.

EXT. RED BRICK HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

A SET OF HOUSE KEYS drops into the open hand of an ambitious looking guy in a sharp blue business suit, BRUCE MILLER (30s).

Standing next to him, a strawberry blonde American beauty, SUSAN MILLER (30s), and an old school REALTOR in a gold blazer. The realtor notably addresses his comments exclusively to Bruce. Susan nobly tolerates the slight.

REALTOR  
Congratulations, Bruce.

BRUCE  
That's it?

REALTOR  
Everything but the mortgage.

Bruce takes a deep, proud breath, looks to his wife. They share a smile, beaming up at their new home. Then kiss. Long enough so as to make the realtor a little uncomfortable. The realtor clears his throat. Bruce and Susan break apart.

BRUCE  
Sorry, got caught up in the moment, there.

REALTOR  
No, no. Wish my little lady were still as enthusiastic.

He nods knowingly to Bruce.

SUSAN MILLER  
(a disarming smile)  
I can't imagine why she wouldn't be.

REALTOR  
Yes, well... I have work to take care of back at the office, so...

BRUCE  
I hear you, pal... Someone's gotta pay for all this, right?

The Realtor pats Bruce on the shoulder.

REALTOR  
It's a big move for a couple like yourselves. Let me know when you and the missus have that house warming.

Bruce chuckles, Susan elbows him, playfully: "The missus?" They watch as the realtor yanks out the "FOR SALE" sign in the yard, stuffs it in the trunk of his car. And as a warm summer rain starts sprinkling down, Bruce and Susan duck into the shelter of their front awning...

INT. DECKER HOUSE - DAY

Trina stands at the picture window, fixated on Bruce and Susan across the street. Tom enters, with Tammy, dressed. Trina stays at the window, doesn't turn around.

TOM DECKER

I'm gonna give our guest a lift home.

TAMMY

(awkward, to Trina)  
It was nice meeting you, Mrs. Decker... You're really, um...

TRINA

(pleasantly dismissive)  
You, too.

Tom walks up to his wife at the window.

TOM DECKER

What's so interesting?

Trina indicates Bruce and Susan across the street.

TRINA

Our new neighbors.

Tom glances over to see Bruce and Susan, arm in arm, waving at the realtor from the stoop as he drives off. Susan "playing up" the happy wife, a big Stepford smile plastered on her face... When the realtor drives off, Tom tickles her. They laugh together, fall into another kiss...

TOM DECKER

They look happy.

TRINA

I was just thinking the same thing.

Tom kisses the back of Trina's neck.

TOM DECKER

Bet we could give 'em a run for their money.

Trina grins as Decker grabs his keys off the table, escorts Tammy out the door... OFF Trina, watching her new neighbors, the hint of a mischievous smile crossing her lips...

EXT. MILLER HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bruce and Susan in the shelter of their front stoop as the sky opens up, and the rain starts coming down.

BRUCE

(the rain)

Here it comes. Drop me back at the train?

SUSAN MILLER

Sure you can't take the rest of the day off? There's still a ton of packing to do.

BRUCE

I'll be as quick as I can. Plus, I gotta get a check over to the loan officer by five.

Beat. Susan looks at her husband. Bruce smiles confidently at his wife, kisses her again. She relaxes. Takes a deep breath. Bruce fishes out his car keys, lifts his suit coat over Susan to protect her from the rain.

BRUCE

Ready on three? One--

SUSAN MILLER

Three!

And with a laugh, Susan grabs Bruce's keys, and breaks free, races out into the rain towards the driveway. And as Bruce chases happily after his wife, we...

CRANE UP on the young couple outside their dream home, a view of Lake Michigan peeking out beyond the more expensive properties across the street, where the rain drops dance their intricate patterns on the surface of the water...

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. MILLER HOUSE (OLD NEIGHBORHOOD) - KITCHEN - DAY

CU on a kitchen radio, the unmistakable crackle of an AM radio broadcast.

DJ STU SAXTON (V.O.)

You're dialed into Stu Saxton on AM 89. It's a wet and wild Friday afternoon, and time for Wings to take us on a little run with the band. Hope you're staying dry out there, people...

And as Linda McCartney's distinctive keyboards intro "Band On The Run," reveal SUSAN MILLER, regarding the crummy weather through the window of a modest kitchen as she hand washes a dinner plate.

SUSAN

This rain better be gone by tomorrow.

Susan passes the wet plate to JILL THOMPSON, 36, too pale for mid-summer, currently working the conservative Dorothy Hamill bob. Jill dries the dish, puts it in a brown box, as Paul McCartney croons... "STUCK INSIDE THESE FOUR WALLS..."

JILL THOMPSON

Your lips to God's ear. I'm the one who switched the block party from Sunday to Saturday.

Not at all what Susan was talking about, but she smiles anyway. This is a true friendship.

SUSAN

No one can hold a sparkler to your block parties, Jill. Only thing you can't organize is the weather.

JILL THOMPSON

You watch, Barb Phillips will use it against me to take over the whole event next year.

Susan seals the box of dishes with packing tape, writes "FRAGILE - KITCHEN DISHES" on the side with a black marker.



JILL THOMPSON

You're not even coming, are you? Why Bruce had to pick this weekend to up and move you, I'll never understand.

SUSAN

Just the way things worked out in escrow and with his new job. You know he's been talking about making this move for as long as we've lived here. Not that I ever doubted him, but still, it's hard to believe it's all really happening.

JILL THOMPSON

Never knew you were so miserable in this house.

SUSAN

We weren't. But don't you ever get the feeling there's a whole other thing happening out there? Like an energy shift we're missing out on?

JILL THOMPSON

You know that whole biorhythm fad shot straight over my head.

SUSAN

Biorhythms are personal. This is bigger. You really don't feel it?

JILL THOMPSON

Guess I'm not as in tune as you are. I suppose Roger and I will just have to live out our boring little lives, throwing our boring little block parties without you.

Jill fights back her emotions. It's a bit of a show. We get the feeling this woman isn't entirely stable.

SUSAN

Jill... It's only a few miles away. Technically, we're still neighbors.

JILL

You're moving to a lakeside mansion, might as well be another planet. It's obvious I don't even speak the language.

SUSAN

It's hardly a mansion.

JILL

Then Roger and I live in a shack. Just lie and say you'll come for a burger?

SUSAN

I think we can manage a burger.

As Jill manages a smile, her son, RICK THOMPSON (13), young rebel in a KISS ARMY tee, enters from outside, shakes off the rain.

SUSAN

Hey, Rick. Is it easing up out there at all?

RICKY

Why, do I look dry?

SUSAN

Wishful thinking. BJ's in the basement.

He starts for the basement door...

JILL

Wipe your feet, Ricky.

RICK

What's the diff? They're outta here tomorrow.

JILL

Richard William Thompson--

Rick moves to the basement door, heads down.

JILL

I swear, that boy challenges me on every little thing.

SUSAN

At least yours speaks. I hardly know what BJ's thinking at all anymore.

With that, McCartney turns prophet as the song switches gears... "WELL THE RAIN EXPLODED WITH A MIGHTY CRASH" and indeed, a thunder cloud rumbles nearby...

INT. MILLER BASEMENT - DAY

Condensation builds on the cement walls as A TOY CAR zips through the worn orange loop of a HOT WHEELS race track.

The car careens from the ping pong table into an open trash bag as BRUCE MILLER, JR takes apart the rest of the track. BJ is a good looking mop haired kid, even in that awkward mid puberty phase. Quiet and considered, but not sullen...

RICK (O.S.)

Zip it up, gaywad, I'm coming down.

BJ looks up to see Rick descending the basement stairs. We widen to see the dank room piled high with discarded toys, furniture, golf clubs, open boxes, etc. Lotta work to do.

RICK

This place is the rat's ass.

BJ MILLER

I thought you were gonna help out.

RICK

Sorry, man, ran into Betsy Burdis buying the new Foghat, asked me to come over for a listen...

BJ MILLER

(disbelief)

Betsy Burdis.

RICK

That's not all she wanted. If her mom hadn't come home, we'd probably have gone all the way.

BJ MILLER

Uh huh.

Rick picks a BARBIE DOLL out of a trash bag.

RICK

Sure you're ready to toss this?  
Probably the closest you'll get to a  
naked chick this side of high school.

Rick finds a pair of MICKEY MOUSE ears, puts them on. BJ measures a look at his friend. He's holding a secret.

BJ MILLER

Can you be cool if I show you something?

RICK

Better not be your wang.

BJ scrambles over the basement crap to a musty corner, opens a large box revealing... stacks of STAG MAGS: PLAYBOYS, OUIS, GENESIS, PENTHOUSE. A veritable goldmine of wack material.

RICK  
Holy mother...

BJ MILLER  
They're my dad's.

RICK  
I didn't think they were your mom's.

Rick opens a PLAYBOY to the centerfold, eyes drinking in the naked image... Wheels in his head starting to turn...

RICK  
You know how much we could make selling these to 6th graders?

BJ MILLER  
Forget it. My dad would kill me.

RICK  
We don't even have to sell them, we could just charge per look. If we time it right, your dad'll think the movers stole 'em.

BJ MILLER  
C'mon, you said you'd be cool--

RICK  
You have yourself to blame, buddy. Help me figure out a plan to haul these over to my house.

OFF BJ, resistance, futile...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASS ROOM - DAY

CU ON the blackboard, an essay question written in chalk:

**IN HONOR OF THE NATION'S 200TH BIRTHDAY, EXPLAIN HOW KIRKEGAARD VIEWED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREEDOM AND DESPAIR, DRAWING FROM ONE LITERARY EXAMPLE, AND ONE OF YOUR OWN PERSONAL AMERICAN EXPERIENCES. (FIVE PAGE MINIMUM)**

We PULL AWAY from the board. The rain continues pouring down outside the windows while a dozen or so students frantically scribble in their blue essay books. All except one doe eyed, fresh faced 16 year old, LAURIE MILLER (BRUCE AND SUSAN'S DAUGHTER). If Juliette Lewis could hop in a time machine to reprise her turn opposite DeNiro in "Cape Fear," now would be the time.

A strand of soft auburn hair peaks out from below Laurie's faded red headband as she closes her essay book, smiles at the 27 year old behind the teacher's desk, DOUG STEPHENS, good looking, square.

MR. STEPHENS

Just another few minutes, guys.

Laurie steps into the clogs under her desk, strides to the front of the room.

MR. STEPHENS

I know some of you are heading out of town for the long weekend, so we'll hold off talking about your essays until everyone's back on Tuesday.

Laurie drops her blue book on the desk.

MR. STEPHENS

Looking forward to it, Laurie.

She smiles, lingers a beat.

LAURIE MILLER

I'm not going any where.

MR. STEPHENS

Hmm?

LAURIE MILLER

This weekend. My family's moving. So I guess technically I am going *somewhere*. Just a few blocks, but still. My dad's such a capitalist.

Mr. Stephens laughs a little, as the bell RINGS.

MR. STEPHENS

That's it everyone, bring 'em up.

Laurie rolls her eyes at herself as the rest of the students bring up their exams, pushing her out of the way a bit.

LAURIE MILLER

Mr. Stephens?... Have a good weekend.

MR. STEPHENS

You, too. Good luck with the move.

He smiles for her. Makes her rainy day. "GOLDEN YEARS" by David Bowie, KICKS IN as Laurie smiles back, carrying us to--

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Laurie PUSHES open the exit. Still raining, she doesn't care. "DON'T LET ME HEAR YOU SAY LIFE'S TAKING YOU NOWHERE ANGEL/COME GET UP MY BABY..." Laurie heads down to the sidewalk where a rusty VW BEACH VAN pulls along side, beeps. In the driver's seat, LOGAN RHODE, 18, shaggy haired, handsome stoner. His big dog, Schooner next to him. Logan rolls down the window.

LAURIE MILLER

What are you doing here, Logan?

LOGAN

Giving you a ride if you hop in.  
Wasting a day off if you don't.

Laurie sighs, gets in the van. He kisses her, she tastes pot on his lips.

LAURIE MILLER

You're stoned.

LOGAN

Uh-huh.

Logan sparks a half smoked joint from the ashtray, offers it to her. A beat. She takes it from him, inhales deeply, as Bowie rises again... "THERE'S MY BABY/LOST THAT'S ALL/ONCE I'M BEGGING YOU SAVE HER LITTLE SOUL..." which plays over to--

EXT. SAXTON HOME - GARAGE - DAY

SAMANTHA SAXTON (13), disturbingly pretty the way Brooke Shields was around the same age, standing next to her bike in the center of an open garage door, staring out across the driveway as the rain continues pounding the black top. She has a back pack on, and a determined look in her eye. A thunder clap and the rain comes harder, but Samantha steels herself. Knows freedom is out there, if she can muster the courage to go for it. Bowie sings on "I'LL STICK WITH YOU BABY FOR A THOUSAND YEARS/NOTHING'S GONNA TOUCH YOU IN THESE GOLDEN YEARS..." Samantha reflexively touches a MAN'S GOLD WEDDING BAND hanging on a chain around her neck. Then puts a foot on the pedal, and pushes herself out into the rain. "GOLDEN YEARS, GOLD WHOP WHOP WHOP." Half way down the drive--

WOMAN (O.S.)

Samantha!

Samantha slides to a stop at the sound of THE VOICE, a powerful draw.

She turns, looks back to her house to see a WOMAN in a silk nightgown in the shadows of a second floor window, wearing a large pair of FOSTER GRANT sunglasses. This is GAIL SAXTON, Samantha's mother, in the throes of a big time OCD moment.

GAIL

I need you to run to the A&P right away, we're out of tin foil.

Samantha just stares up at her mother. This is the situation Samantha wants so desperately to escape. And this person, the reason she always stays. Gail shuts her window. Samantha glances back towards the street, only a few yards away. A beat, and she turns her bike around, rides back into the garage, and dumps it. Heads into the house. And as the garage door closes behind her, shutting off her escape route. For now...

INT. DECKER HOUSE - DAY

Trina Decker sits on the couch in the sunken living room, smoking a cigarette, absently watching an episode of "LOVE AMERICAN STYLE" on the TV/Stereo console. Tom Decker enters the front door, drops his keys on the counter. He's carrying a brown bag of carry out Chinese.

TOM DECKER

Sorry that took so long, kid lives way out in Schaumburg at her parents house, believe that?

TRINA

Yes.

Trina joins Decker at the bar as he unloads the food.

TRINA

What was her name? Cammy? Cathy?

TOM DECKER

Something like that.

TRINA

She had a name tag.

TOM DECKER

(grins)

Tammy. But she'll probably be fired after her performance today, or at least demoted to commuter service.

TRINA

Seems to me you enjoyed her performance fine.

TOM DECKER

I wasn't alone there, was I?

(off her)

Hey... There's only one stewardess  
for me, you know that.

TRINA

(playfully)

Jerk... Could we just keep it in  
our age bracket for a while?

TOM DECKER

Done.

He folds Trina into his arms, nibbles her neck playfully. However unconventional, these two love each other. Tom pulls at Trina's robe. Pushes her up against the wet bar, kisses her passionately. This guy is a machine. So is she, by the way... UNDER: "CLOSER TO ME" by Seals and Croft... "Darling, if you want me to be/Closer to you/Get closer to me..."

INT. MILLER BEDROOM - OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Seals and Croft sing on as Susan boxes up the photos on her bedroom dresser: school portraits of BJ and Laurie; a picture of the Miller family posed in front of the fireplace, Christmas 1975; a photo of herself and BRUCE on their wedding day, barely out of high school. Susan pauses, nostalgic.

BRUCE (O.C.)

Honey?!

SUSAN MILLER

Upstairs...

Susan wraps the picture in newspaper, drops it in a box. A moment later, Bruce appears in the door, approaches Susan, plants a big kiss on his wife.

BRUCE (O.C.)

Told you I'd be quick. Even had a  
set of keys made for you and the  
kids. They around?

SUSAN

BJ's next door, Laurie's not back yet.

BRUCE

Let's head over without 'em. Might  
be the only time we're sure to have  
the new house all to ourselves...



SUSAN

Bruce, look at this mess. We'll never be boxed up by tomorrow.

BRUCE

Sure we will, we'll hit the ground running in the morning.

He dangles the shiny new house keys.

BRUCE

Don't make me beg.

Beat. Bruce raises his hands up like dog paws, pants and whimpers a little. It's pretty irresistible. Susan smiles--

INT. SAXTON HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Samantha walks down the upstairs hallway carrying a brown paper grocery bag. She slows her pace as she approaches a closed door. Puts her ear to the door. Hears nothing.

SAMANTHA

Mom?

No answer. Beat. She reaches for the door knob.

GAIL (O.S.)

Just leave it by the door.

Samantha yanks her hand back. Puts the grocery bag at the threshold. It's packed full of REYNOLDS WRAP. At least a dozen rolls. Samantha touches the wedding band on her necklace as she heads back the way she came, quickening her pace to a run...

EXT. FOREST PRESERVE - DAY

Logan's beach van, nestled under some trees near the ravine.

INT. LOGAN'S BEACH VAN - PARKED - DAY

"I WANT YOU/SHOW ME THE WAY..." Peter Frampton wafts from the dash as Schooner gnaws a bone in the front seat. MOVE past the happy dog, into the van to find LAURIE, flat backed on some beach towels next to LOGAN, making out. Logan flips on top of her, shaking his stringy hair out of his eyes. As he reaches down to unbutton Laurie's jean shorts..

LAURIE MILLER

You better have a rubber this time.

Logan reaches in his pocket, pulls out a condom, grins.

LOGAN

"Ribbed... for her pleasure."

Laurie rolls her eyes, as Logan tears into the package...

INT. RICK THOMPSON'S ROOM - DAY

TIGHT ON BJ behind a PLAYBOY, opened to a CENTERFOLD. PULL BACK TO SEE RICK peering over at his pal, ignoring the magazine in his own hands. The bedroom floor is strewn with OUI'S, PLAYBOYS, PENTHOUSES...

RICK

She looks like your sister.

BJ MILLER

Does not.

RICK

Laurie could totally be in one of these if she wanted to.

BJ MILLER

That's sick.

RICK

I'm not the one with a boner for my sister.

A KNOCK on the bedroom door.

MAN'S VOICE

Whachya doing, Ricky?

RICK

Uh... Go away, dad--

The boys scramble to hide the magazines, some under the bed, the rest back in the large moving box, now marked "TOYS."

MAN'S VOICE

Why is this door locked?

Rick folds the box, gestures for BJ to sit on it. Rick then opens the door, and in steps his father, ROGER THOMPSON (JILL'S HUSBAND), late 30s, a jock in his day, just starting to go soft, wearing the suburban commuter rainy day uniform.

ROGER THOMPSON  
Everything okay in here?

RICK  
Fine. What do you want?

ROGER THOMPSON  
You can't give a hello to the old  
man after work?

RICK  
Hi. Can you go now?

ROGER THOMPSON  
How you doing, BJ? Ready for the  
big move?

BJ shrugs. JILL appears in the door behind her husband.

JILL  
Your mother called, she's running late  
with dinner, I'll set a place for you.

ROGER THOMPSON  
Your lucky day, pal. That's my wife's  
famous Sloppy Joes I smell, am I right?

JILL  
Every Friday. Go wash up.

As Jill heads down the stairs, Roger notices A PLAYBOY peeking  
out from under the bed. Rick and BJ see him see it. Uh-oh.  
Roger bends down, picks up the mag. Lowers his voice...

ROGER THOMPSON  
Where in heck did you get this?

RICK  
Nowhere. Some kid.

A beat. Is he mad? Hard to read... until an expression  
resembling pride, maybe a bit of relief, crosses Roger's face.

ROGER THOMPSON  
Don't let your mother catch you  
with this, she'd have a coronary on  
the spot.

Roger rolls it up, hands the magazine back to Rick, notably  
leaving the door OPEN as he goes. BJ looks to Rick, impressed  
by his friend's father. OFF Rick, not as impressed...

INT. MILLER'S NEW HOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING

A rain soaked Samantha PEERS out from a 2nd floor bedroom veranda. Trees partially obstruct the view of her own house NEXT DOOR. She stares ahead, expressionless and undetected, fingering the WEDDING BAND on the chain around her neck. Across the lot, we see her mother, Gail, applying the REYNOLDS WRAP to the inside of her bedroom windows, blocking out the outside world, even as night descends.

Samantha STEPS BACK from the veranda doors, into the room that has been her hideout these last several weeks. But like everything in Samantha's world, this was temporary refuge--

THE SOUND OF BRUCE AND SUSAN entering the front foyer echoes through the empty house, violating Samantha's secret sanctuary. Samantha seems more annoyed than frightened...

BRUCE (O.S.)

Wait wait wait! Let's do this right.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Bruce--

Samantha cracks the bedroom door, squats low for a better view. From her angle, Samantha sees a rain drenched Bruce carrying his wife across the threshold downstairs, like newly weds--

DOWNSTAIRS WITH BRUCE AND SUSAN

Bruce brings his wife into the living room. It's large, open, a far cry from their current home.

BRUCE

Welcome home, Mrs. Miller.

SUSAN

I swear, if your back goes out...

He puts her down, kisses her. Unbuckles his pants.

SUSAN

Bruce, no, I'm a mess.

BRUCE

Who's complaining?...

Bruce slips his hands up her wet shirt.

SUSAN

The windows.

BRUCE

Okay, pick whatever room you want.  
They're all ours...

Susan breaks free, towards the back of the house. Bruce peels off his wet shirt and gives chase, as we--

FOLLOW the cat and mouse through the first floor, the SUN ROOM, THE EMPTY KITCHEN, THE FORMAL DINING ROOM. Susan CHARGES up the master stair case. Bruce trips on his way up. Susan reaches the top of the stairs, the room where Samantha has been watching. SWINGS open the door...

IT'S NOW EMPTY. Bruce stumbles in behind Susan, grabs his wife and kisses her passionately...

SUSAN

Bruce... Please... Bruce no...

BRUCE

What? What is the problem?

SUSAN

Nothing, I just... Give me a minute to catch up.

BRUCE

What does that mean?

SUSAN

It's easier for you to get there, you know that. And not always as easy to keep you there once I join in...

BRUCE

(beat)  
Low blow.

Just then, the WIND blows open the veranda doors, revealing a large climbing tree just beyond the rail, Samantha's escape route moments before... Bruce steps out. WE NOTICE SAMANTHA'S BROKEN NECKLACE, THE MAN'S WEDDING BAND just inside the door. Bruce does not. He shuts, locks the doors,

SUSAN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that.

BRUCE

How did you mean it?

Susan stares at him, searching for the right words, when--

DING DONG. The doorbell rings. Off the two of them...

INT. MILLER HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

DING DONG. The front door opens to Trina and Tom on the front stoop, Susan on the other side. THEY'RE WEARING MATCHING VELOUR RUNNING SWEATS. We notice the RAIN HAS STOPPED. Trina takes note of Bruce finding his shirt in the living room...

TRINA

... I think we're interrupting.

SUSAN

No, my husband was just... We were--

TOM DECKER

We'll come back.

SUSAN

It's fine, really. I'm Susan.

TRINA

Trina Decker, my husband Tom. Finally stopped raining, so we thought we'd head out for a run, saw you pull up.

Bruce approaches as Trina gestures to their more expensive home on the LAKE FRONT side of the street. Bruce extends his hand.

BRUCE

Bruce Miller.

TIGHT ON Bruce and Tom's mutually firm hand shake. Trina offers a bottle of champagne.

TRINA

Welcome to the neighborhood.

BRUCE

Dom Perignon...

SUSAN

I'm afraid we don't have any glasses.

TRINA

Tell you what, if you want to share, bring it to our party tomorrow night.

TOM DECKER

Come either way, set off a few fireworks, make some new friends... whatever you're into.

SUSAN  
(not sure what that means)  
Tomorrow's going to be a long day--

BRUCE  
We'll try to make it.

Susan looks at Bruce. Trina is intrigued by their dynamic.

TRINA  
Great, then hopefully we'll see you  
both tomorrow night. We'll let you  
two get back to... enjoying your  
new home.

BRUCE  
Good to meet you Tom, Trina.  
(the champagne)  
Thanks.

TOM DECKER  
You bet, it's nice to have some  
fresh faces on the block.

The four regard each other, sizing one another up. Bruce to Tom, Tom to Susan, Susan to Trina. Trina seems to take special interest in Susan, as a thought occurs to her...

TRINA  
I'm guessing you have children?

SUSAN  
Two.

Trina smiles as if to say "how inconvenient."

TRINA  
If you decide to come, you might  
want to get a sitter. This party  
will go late.

And with a suggestive smile, Trina and Tom head off down the path, start to jog, off on their nightly run. AS Bruce and Susan, WATCH THEM GO from the doorway of their new home...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MILLER'S OLD HOUSE - MORNING

MOVING DAY. MOVERS take large ticket items from the bright and sunny living room. The edge of a dining table scrapes the wall, Susan hurries up, appropriately stressed on a day like today...

SUSAN

Excuse me, you just hit the wall.  
(off the Movers, so?)  
Could you be a little more careful,  
please?

And as the movers lumber their way out the door to the large MOVING VAN parked in front of the house, Bruce comes downstairs, lugging a box.

SUSAN

They're scratching everything to pieces.

BRUCE

We're insured. Besides, most of this junk is going straight to the new basement, anyway.

SUSAN

That table is an antique. It belonged to my grandmother.

BRUCE

Whatever you say, we'll find a place for it.

SUSAN

Yeah, the dining room.

And as Susan marches towards the kitchen, we JUMP--

UPSTAIRS--

BJ carries a box past an open door where he hears soft, slightly off key singing.

LAURIE MILLER (O.S.)

... 'Doctor, my eyes/Tell me what  
is wrong'



BJ pushes open the door to find Laurie in her empty room, sitting in front of her stereo, headphones on, singing along with Jackson Browne's "Doctor My Eyes" next to a box of albums. BJ watches, like he's committing the moment to memory.

LAURIE MILLER

'Was I unwise to leave them open for so long--'

Laurie catches BJ staring. Takes off her headphones.

LAURIE MILLER

What?

BJ

Nothing.

LAURIE MILLER

Don't be a creep.

He lingers. There's affection here, if across a great divide.

LAURIE MILLER

What, BJ?

BJ

It's weird to think some other family's gonna live here. In our rooms.

LAURIE MILLER

It's just a house. Wood, wires, stucco.

BJ

You don't care?

LAURIE MILLER

What would be the point?

BJ

(beat)

I'm gonna miss it.

Laurie looks at her brother, sees him needing to feel connected to her... to something. She throws him a bone.

LAURIE MILLER

Yeah, me too.

And for the first time since we met him, BJ manages a smile.

EXT. MILLER'S OLD HOUSE - BLOCK PARTY - DAY

The street is blocked off at either end with streamers, balloons, and signs declaring the "CHESTNUT STREET BICENTENNIAL BLOCK PARTY: SATURDAY 12PM-???" People mill here and there, setting up the event. Jill draws a poster for the "ALL AMERICAN APPLE PIE CONTEST." She tapes it to a red white and blue picnic table, then GLARES disapprovingly at the MOVING VAN across the street. She crosses to the BBQ area where Roger dumps bags of charcoal into a half dozen Webers.

JILL THOMPSON

The street was supposed to be empty by 10am. It's clearly posted.

ROGER THOMPSON

Looks like they're almost packed up. I'll see if they need some help.

JILL THOMPSON

Stay put. I don't know why I bothered with the parking signs in the first place.

Across the street, Bruce exits the house with BJ. They help lift a large box up to a Mover in the truck, as Jill approaches.

JILL THOMPSON

Sure been at this a while, maybe you should have gotten an earlier start.

Jill smiles, passive aggression at its purest. Bruce smiles back, not taking the bait.

BRUCE

Don't worry, Jill, we'll be out of your hair soon enough.

JILL THOMPSON

Susan is one of the pie judges, we don't want the entries rotting in the sun all day.

BRUCE

Think Sue might be sitting this year out. At least no one will complain you girls have it rigged...

BJ looks over to Rick and a group of YOUNG BOYS filling water balloons with a garden hose in front of the Thompson house. Bruce notices BJ watching them, tousles his son's hair.

BRUCE

Go say a quick goodbye, but hustle  
up, we're at T-minus sixty...

BJ nods, heads across the street to the Thompson's.

JILL THOMPSON

You have to at least stop by, Bruce.  
You're the defending water melon seed  
spitting champ.

BRUCE

Always best to go out on a high note.

And with a warm, if slightly patronizing squeeze of Jill's  
shoulder, Bruce heads back inside, leaving Jill by the truck.

EXT. THOMPSON HOUSE - DAY

Rick ties off a water balloon, hands it to an OPIE LOOKING  
KID, who's cradling a dozen or so balloons in his arms.

OPIE KID

Paul Moran said you did Betsy Burdis.

As Rick fastens another balloon to the hose...

RICK

Yeah, so?

OPIE KID

Kick ass, she's gonna be in high  
school next year...

One of the balloons falls to the ground, Opie tries to grab  
it, but just drops the rest in the effort.

RICK

Go get a bucket or something.

As Opie heads off, BJ approaches..

BJ

We're leaving soon.

RICK

Cool.

Not exactly the warmest send off. BJ just stands there, then--

BJ

See you later.

BJ turns, heads back towards the moving van. Rick watches him go a beat, then calls after him.

RICK

Beej.

(BJ turns)

Want to sneak into a movie later?

BJ

(beat)

Okay.

RICK

It sucks you're moving, you know that?

BJ

Yeah.

That's about as good as these two friends can do with good bye. And as BJ heads out... UNDER, the slow groove of Lou Rawls' "YOU'LL NEVER FIND/ANOTHER LOVE LIKE MINE," carrying us to...

EXT. DECKER HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

A red clay tennis court to one side, a grassy hill leading to a small private beach on Lake Michigan beyond that. Off the patio is a sleek, modern pool. Trina swims its length with strong, measured strokes. As she tags the wall in the shallow end, Tom grabs her hand, breaking her stride.

TOM DECKER

I'm heading to Schaeffer's to pick up the booze. You need anything while I'm out?

TRINA

Aspirin. And a pack of 100's.

Tom grabs a towel off a deck chair, wraps it around Trina as she steps out of the pool. As she dries...

TRINA

What did you think of the new neighbors?

TOM DECKER

Nice enough. Good looking. My guess is he hit big in the market, not huge.

TRINA

Perhaps she inherited a fortune from her rich, dead father.

TOM DECKER

Then we'd have more in common with them than I thought.

TRINA

Think they'll show tonight?

TOM DECKER

Why, you interested?

TRINA

I don't know yet.

TOM DECKER

Seemed a little straight and narrow. Might be a hard sell.

TRINA

Easy is boring.

As Trina heads in, OFF Tom watching his one of a kind wife as Lou Rawls croons on, "YOU'RE GONNA MISS MY LOVING..."

INT. MILLER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The house is completely empty. Susan checks the kitchen drawers for forgotten items. Sees a calendar pinned to the wall peeled back to JULY 1976. The 3rd is circled in red pen: MOVING DAY! The next block simply reads: INDEPENDENCE DAY. The phone on the wall next to Susan RINGS, startling her as it echoes into the empty room. She picks up the receiver.

SUSAN

Hello?... Hi, Logan, looks like you get the honor of the last phone call in the old house. Hold on.

Susan yells up the stairs.

SUSAN

Laurie?... Logan's on the phone--

Laurie bounds into the kitchen, carrying her box of record albums. Plops it on the counter as Susan hands her the phone.

LAURIE MILLER

Hey, what's happening?... We're at the bitter end, mercifully...

Laurie looks at Susan, watching and listening.

LAURIE MILLER

I don't know. I can't really talk right now... Can we figure that out later?... Because I'm standing in the kitchen with my mom staring at me.

Laurie hangs up, walks past Susan, who stops her with her arm.

SUSAN

What is it you think you can't say in front of me?

LAURIE MILLER

Mom, can you just not, please?

SUSAN

No, I can't just not. He's an older boy, and I want to know if things are getting serious.

LAURIE MILLER

Logan hasn't read a book since he left high school. He can barely hold a five minute conversation with me.

SUSAN

I'm not worried about the conversation.

LAURIE MILLER

Look, I get that I'm the same age you were when dad knocked you up, but you don't have to worry. I'm smarter than that.

SUSAN

I know you are. I just want you kids to have happy, healthy lives. It keeps me up at night.

LAURIE MILLER

Don't you have better things to do at night?

On that, Bruce STEPS INTO the kitchen.

BRUCE

That's everything, I sent the truck ahead.

LAURIE MILLER

(beat, a thought)

Dad, what's the last book you read?

BRUCE

The last book? I thumbed through the shark parts of "Jaws," does that count?

Laurie looks at her mother, dead pan.

LAURIE MILLER

What do you think, Mom, does that count?

Susan looks at Laurie a beat, gets her point. Then smiles at Bruce.

SUSAN MILLER

Yep.

BRUCE

BJ!

BJ steps in from the hall, joins the family in the kitchen. The room seems way too cramped with all of them in there.

BRUCE

There you are.

(pats the wall)

Anyone have any final words for the old casa?

(no one speaks up)

Me neither. Let's hit it.

SUSAN

Bruce, just hold on a second...

BRUCE

What?

SUSAN

Well, for one thing, I promised the Thompsons we'd stop by the block party for a while. I think that would be a nice way to say goodbye.

BRUCE

Already talked to Jill, we're off the hook.

SUSAN

What did you say to her?

BRUCE

That we're moving.

SUSAN

I'm going to check upstairs, make sure I didn't leave anything behind.

BRUCE

It's empty, I promise.

As Susan heads for the stairs, she glances at Laurie. Laurie receives the message: Her mother needs a minute.

BRUCE

There's nothing up there, I double checked--

Bruce sighs, follows after his wife.

LAURIE MILLER

Actually, dad, could you carry this for me? It's kinda heavy.

Laurie shoves her box of records at Bruce. He takes them.

BRUCE

I swear, between you and your mother, sometimes...

And as Bruce heads off with the box, Laurie looks to BJ.

LAURIE MILLER

I call the room farthest from them.

And with that, Laurie also makes her exit. OFF BJ, alone in the old house for the last time...

INT. MILLER HOUSE - OLD MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Susan enters the bedroom, shuts the door behind her. Looks at the empty space where she and Bruce have slept for so many years. And to her surprise, she finds herself crying. Susan tries to shake it off, but the tears just battle their way out...

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

BJ sits next to Laurie on the white leather upholstery of a Maroon Cadillac Eldorado as Bruce fumbles through the eight tracks in the glove compartment. He chuckles when he finds the wholly appropriate song to play.

BRUCE

Here we go...



Pops it in the dash. And we hear Chicago, "SATURDAY IN THE PARK/EVERY DAY'S THE FOURTH OF JULY.."

LAURIE MILLER

Are you trying to be ironic?

BRUCE

That's your department, I just like the song.

Bruce flips the safety catches on the convertible roof. A press of a button, and the top comes down, revealing...

The CHESTNUT STREET BLOCK PARTY in full swing beyond the driveway. As American as America gets. A man on a MEGAPHONE announces the winner of the hotdog eating contest. The father/son three legged race is about to start...

A picnic table blocks the end of the Miller's driveway. Bruce gets out, approaches the plus sized FAMILY seated, eating BBQ.

BRUCE

Sorry, Jerr, gotta get my car out.

The dad gives Bruce an irritated look.

JERRY

Sure picked a hell of a day to move.

No love lost here. As they collect their plates...

BRUCE

Thanks. Thank you.  
(as they go)  
Jerk off.

Bruce struggles to push the picnic table out of the way.

ROGER THOMPSON (O.S.)

Need a hand, big shot?

Roger steps over, wearing his "Kiss the Chef" apron, grabs one end of the table. As the two men carry it out of the way...

BRUCE

You're about the only guy I'm gonna miss around here. Wish we could take you with us.

ROGER THOMPSON

(as they shake hands)

If you want to back out, I'll make sure you don't run over any babies.

Bruce laughs, heads back to the car...

BRUCE

What the hell is keeping your mother?

Bruce LEANS ON THE HORN until Susan steps out the front door, pulled together as best she can. She locks it. Takes a deep breath, DROPS the house key through the mail slot.

On her way to the car, Susan's intercepted by JILL, big eyes filled with tears...

JILL

This is just terrible, isn't it? I feel so empty.

SUSAN

It isn't goodbye, Jill, not really.

JILL

I know I'm being ridiculous. But we've been best friends for so long.

SUSAN

Nothing's going to change that.

BRUCE

(calling from the car)  
Everybody's waiting, Sue...

Jill grabs Susan in a bear hug.

JILL

Call me, okay?

Susan smiles and nods, squeezes Jill's hands, then heads down to her family waiting in the car. As she gets in...

BRUCE

What'd I say, nothing there, huh?

SUSAN MILLER

(smiles for him)  
You were right.

She puts her hand on his. He kisses her.

LAURIE MILLER

Can we go, please? This is so humiliating...

On that, Bruce backs the car out of the driveway for the last time, while Roger clears a path behind...

In the SIDE VIEW MIRROR, SUSAN WATCHES ROGER. HE FINDS HER GAZE. She smiles warmly. He smiles back, but there's an unexpected sense of LONGING in his look...

BJ glances over to the THOMPSON HOUSE where Rick and a group of boys is now gathered in the front yard, whipping water balloons at each other. Rick raises his hand to his pal, "see you."

Roger unhitches the streamers blocking off the street, making room for Bruce's Caddie to pass.

With that, the Millers BREAK FREE from Chestnut Street, heading East towards the lake, its deep, fresh waters. And as the optimistic refrain from "SATURDAY IN THE PARK" bleeds out...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. MILLER HOUSE - NEW NEIGHBORHOOD - DUSK

The garage attached at the side of the house is OPEN. BJ's inside, exploring. Finds a milk crate of dusty old sports equipment, left by the previous occupants: Badminton net, deflated soccer ball, wooden skateboard... He picks up a warped tennis racket, bounces a ball a few times. It scampers away, down the drive. As BJ chases after, he hears VOICES coming from behind the side of the house.

GIRL (O.S.)

We should be at the beach. Nick and those guys are already down there.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

So go.

BJ investigates, finds SAMANTHA and her friend AMANDA (12) digging through the Ivy near the tree directly below the bedroom facing Samantha's house. BJ stays hidden from view.

AMANDA

Why do you think it's even here?

SAMANTHA

Because it has to be.

AMANDA

Then what, we find it, and you're just going to run away? What about the beach?

Samantha ignores her, keeps searching, madly.

AMANDA

You're acting as crazy as your mom.

SAMANTHA

Don't say that.

AMANDA

It's probably in your genetic code or something.

SAMANTHA

Shut up, Amanda--

AMANDA

Calm down, psycho, I'm only kidding.

Samantha's not, she PUSHES her--

SAMANTHA

Get out! Get out of here!

AMANDA

Fine. I hope you do run away. I hope you get kidnapped.

With that, Amanda storms right past where BJ's hiding, through the bushes to Samantha's driveway. Hops on her bike, and pedals away... OFF BJ...

INT. NEW HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DUSK

Susan plugs a phone into a wall jack, places it on a night stand. As she unravels the twisted handset, she hears the dial tone. Thinks a moment, then punches a few numbers.

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Jill puts leftovers from the BBQ into freezer bags. The wall phone rings. She rinses her hands, answers.

JILL

Hello?

SUSAN

It's Susan. Just wanted to see if you went home with that blue ribbon.

JILL

Nope, Barb Phillips' husband took your place on the pie panel. So, guess who won... Talk about rigged.

SUSAN

(laughs)

Well, at least it didn't rain. I am so sorry, Jill, I feel like I let you down.

JILL

It wasn't your fault. How's it going over there?

SUSAN

I keep thinking we had to have more stuff. This place is so big.

Susan steps into the new walk-in closet. Stares at the unused space where more clothes should be.

JILL

What are you doing for dinner?

SUSAN

God, I haven't even thought about it.

Bruce steps into frame, holding Trina and Tom's champagne bottle, with two glasses.

SUSAN

Bruce just walked in. He wanted to apologize for missing the party, too.

Bruce gives Susan a look as he POPS the cork...

JILL

Well... Tell him I understand. It was a big day.

SUSAN

I'll call you later.

Jill hangs up, looks through her kitchen window to ROGER, disassembling the WEBER GRILLS OUTSIDE, sighs deeply...

BACK WITH SUSAN AND BRUCE, as she hangs up the phone.

BRUCE

How's old Jill, slit her wrists yet?

SUSAN

That's not funny.

BRUCE

You're right, way too messy for her.

Susan can't help but grin as he pours the champagne.

BRUCE

Things are pretty damn good for us right now, don't you think?

(hands her a glass)

Here's to you and me enjoying every minute of it.

Susan smiles. They clink glasses, drink.

BRUCE

God I love you. I feel like the luckiest guy in the world right now.

He moves in eagerly for a kiss, then catches himself, remembering their confrontation the night before. Susan smiles, understanding, meets him half way. The kiss is surprisingly passionate, until... Laurie pops her head in the door.

LAURIE MILLER

Oookay... I'm going out.

BRUCE

Hold on there, little lady. With a boy?

LAURIE MILLER

Lots of them. It's a party.

BRUCE

No drinking.

LAURIE MILLER

No problem, I'm only into the heavy stuff now anyway.

And as Laurie strides down the stairs, Bruce has an idea...

BRUCE

Lets go to the neighbor's party tonight. Start things off right.

SUSAN

We can't just leave BJ by himself.

BRUCE

He's a big boy, he'll be fine.

As if on cue, BJ pops his head in...

BJ

Okay if I go to the movies?

BRUCE

(grins at the timing)  
Absolutely, my treat.

Bruce peels a five off his wallet, hands it to BJ.

BRUCE

Big date?

BJ

Just Rick.

BRUCE  
Don't you have any other friends  
than that kid?

SUSAN  
Do you need a ride, honey?

BJ  
We're gonna bike.

As BJ, heads out...

BRUCE  
See how all that worked out?

And as Bruce pours the champagne, OFF Susan, smiling...

EXT. LAKESHORE BEACH - DUSK

Laurie, Logan, and Schooner, walk across the parking lot on their way to the LAKESHORE BEACH OFFICE/SNACK STAND. A handful of bottle rockets and firecrackers can be heard popping off nearby, a prelude to the evening ahead. Logan carries a cooler of MILWAUKEE'S BEST.

LAURIE  
Did you bring bug spray? I don't  
want to get eaten alive.

LOGAN  
So stay close to the fire. If any  
one's eating you tonight, it'll be me.

LAURIE  
You're a pig.

LOGAN  
You like it.

He nudges her, as they arrive at the OFFICE. Logan pulls out his keys, unlocks the door, ducks inside. Laurie ambles to the cement patio off the long stretch of pristine shoreline. More than a football field separates her from the water, the beach stretching a mile in both directions. A few late day stragglers enjoy the last moments of daylight at the plastic tables. Skoo jumps up to inspect a trash can.

LAURIE  
Schooner, get down... Gross.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Can't help himself.



Laurie turns, surprised to see her summer school teacher, DOUG STEPHENS seated at a nearby table.

MR. STEPHENS

Dog's are scavengers by nature,  
it's in his biology.

LAURIE

What are you doing here, Mr. Stephens?

MR. STEPHENS

Still a public beach, last I checked...

LAURIE

No. I mean, yeah, but... you don't  
think it's weird running into a student  
here? Okay, not weird, just...

MR. STEPHENS

Out of context.

LAURIE

Right.

MR. STEPHENS

I should warn you, I also go to the  
supermarket, post office, and the  
occasional Dylan concert...

LAURIE

Dylan, really?

MR. STEPHENS

(smiles disarmingly)  
Anything that happens outside the  
classroom is none of my business.  
Or anyone else's, for that matter.

LAURIE

Did you read my essay yet?

MR. STEPHENS

I did.

LAURIE

Doesn't sound like an "A."

MR. STEPHENS

You didn't follow the assignment.

LAURIE MILLER

Why, because "Tropic Of Cancer"  
isn't approved source material?

MR. STEPHENS

No, Henry Miller is a master, and an appropriate example. The problem is you were supposed to choose one literary illustration and one from your own experience. So unless you had a personal relationship with Anais Nin, you didn't answer the essay question.

LAURIE

Anais Nin is so much more interesting than I am. Nothing I've done comes close to what she writes about.

MR. STEPHENS

(dry, not salacious)

You'll have to work on that.

A gorgeous, age appropriate AFRICAN WOMAN with a large afro sits next to Doug, hands him an ice cream sandwich. They kiss.

MR. STEPHENS

Anane this is Laurie. Laurie's a student of mine.

LAURIE

Ah-na-nay?

ANANE

(thick accent)

It's Ghanian.

How cool. Laurie considers Anane, her exotic beauty...

MR. STEPHENS

We met in Peace Corps. Today's her last day in the states.

LAURIE

You picked a good one.

A yellow pick up truck with "**North Shore Beach Patrol**" stamped on the doors pulls up in the sand. Logan whistles for Skoo from the driver's seat. Honks the horn happily. Doug looks over Laurie's shoulder at Logan as Skoo hops in back of the truck... Laurie turns...

MR. STEPHENS

Your boyfriend?

LAURIE

Yeah. Not really...

(turns back)

Nice to meet you, Anane, have a safe trip home to Africa.

MR. STEPHENS

Happy Independence Day, Laurie.

Make the most of it...

Anane gives Doug a raised brow as Laurie heads to the truck. Laurie pauses briefly to glance back at her teacher as she hops in the passenger seat. Mr. Stephens is watching her, too. And as the truck spits sand, peels off down the beach...

INT. MILLER HOUSE - NIGHT

Bruce is at the mirror in the front foyer. Freshly shaved, casual tan slacks, handsome blue button down. He tucks his shirt in tight, loosens his top buttons. You can practically smell the Aqua Velva as he plucks a nose hair...

SUSAN (O.S.)

My makeup bag went missing, so I had to borrow from Laurie's...

Bruce looks up to see Susan descending the stairs in a white terry cocktail dress, hair done, dark lashes, blue shadow.

BRUCE

Let me get a look at you.

Bruce takes Susan's hand, spins her around.

SUSAN

Am I ridiculous?

BRUCE

Are you kidding?...

Susan smiles. With a little effort, things seem to have shifted fundamentally for the better between these two...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Knock knock.

At the screen door is the unexpected sight of JILL and ROGER THOMPSON. Bruce looks over, shit...

SUSAN

Hi, guys... what are you doing here?

JILL

Thought you might want the extra bratts  
and burgers from the cookout.

BRUCE

Leftovers. Now that's a house warming gift.

ROGER THOMPSON

Hey, we also brought a six pack.

Roger offers up a six of St. Paulie Girl. Bruce smiles.

BRUCE

Just dicking with you, Rog, much  
appreciated. Wish we knew you were  
coming, we were just stepping out.

JILL

So it seems. When you said you didn't  
have plans I thought...

SUSAN

The new neighbors invited us over  
for a drink, that's all.

JILL

Well, don't let us stand in your way.  
Out with the old, in with the new--

SUSAN

The invitation seemed open enough,  
didn't it, Bruce?

Bruce can't believe what just fell out of Susan's mouth.

SUSAN

Why don't you join us, we won't know  
a soul over there.

JILL

Are you sure?

(Susan nods, Bruce smiles lamely)

I suppose if Roger could borrow one  
of Bruce's shirts. Unless barbecue  
stains are suddenly in fashion...

And OFF Bruce, pinching Susan's hand...

EXT. DECKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Bruce, Susan, Jill, and Roger (now in one of Bruce's summer  
shirts) wait at the front door in awkward silence.

Roger smacks a mosquito on his neck. Jill looks disapprovingly at her husband.

JILL

Couldn't you have put on some after shave? You smell like lighter fluid.

The door SWINGS open. TOM is on the other side in a tight, red, white, and blue collared shirt, highball in hand.

TOM DECKER

Hey, hey, it's the new kids in town. Susan, and...

BRUCE

Bruce.

TOM DECKER

Bruce.  
(another firm handshake)  
We were hoping you'd make it.

SUSAN

Hope you don't mind, we brought some old friends.

BRUCE

Old neighbors, actually. They surprised us as we were walking out.

TOM DECKER

More the merrier. Come on in...

Tom steps aside to let them enter...

INT. DECKER HOUSE - NIGHT

A RUSH OF ENERGY, colored lights, and "SUZIE Q" by CCR, HITS Susan, Bruce, Roger, and Jill like a freight train. GREAT LOOKING couples are everywhere, drinking, laughing, groping. And OFF the four old neighbors standing on the precipice of this exciting, and unsettling new adventure...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. DECKER HOUSE - NIGHT

PICK UP where we left off, as Susan, Bruce, Jill, and Roger stand at the entry, taking in the party. A sexy WOMAN shows a line of couples how to "Hustle" in the living room. Through the doors beyond the yard partition, we see several people in the pool. The drinks are flowing, the party is charged with sexual energy. It's intoxicating. Bruce takes it all in like a kid on Christmas. Susan looks like she's stepped into a FUNHOUSE, a little wary, but along for the ride. Jill is all judgmental smiles. And poor Roger just wishes he were someplace else. Decker shuts the door behind them.

TOM DECKER

We got drinks in the den and on the patio. Anything else you want, don't be shy, it's floating around.

We move past Tom into THE KITCHEN, where a group is gathered around the center island, talking over the music. A FEATHERED WOMAN yaps at AM RADIO CELEBRITY, STU SAXTON (late 30s), manly voice, face for radio, sporting low sideburns and a collection of gold chains inside his open paisley. Next to Stu, his wife, Gail Saxton (Samantha's mother)-- all cleaned up, suffering the conversation. She's still wearing her FOSTER-GRANT sunglasses.

FEATHERED BLONDE

I listen to your show all the time, Stu, it's like you live inside my radio and I have this whole private relationship with you.

(to Gail)

No offense.

(back to Stu)

So I feel like I can tell you there's this song you play that I can't stand. "Baby, baby, don't get hooked on me." Like a woman today has nothing better to do than play addict to a macho egomaniac like Mac Davis. You should break that record in half and toss it in the garbage.

STU SAXTON

If it's on the list, I have to play it.

FEATHERED BLONDE

I think I'd quit in protest. Don't you think Stu should quit, Gail?

GAIL

I need to use the ladies room.

STU takes note of Gail grabbing her handbag off the counter. WE FOLLOW Gail out of the kitchen, into the...

LIVING ROOM,

Where Gail passes by... TRINA, ON THE COUCH, next to BUD GREEN, a sexy HAIRY GUY who takes his grooming and fashion cues from "DEEP THROAT."

BUD GREEN

You and Tommy D really have it figured out, Trine.

TRINA nods as if she's paying attention, but really, her EYE IS FOCUSED at the entrance to the room, where Bruce, Susan, Jill, and Roger stand. Bud puts his hand on Trina's leg.

BUD GREEN

He doesn't know how lucky he's got it with you.

Trina stands, leaving Bud mid-move, approaches Susan and Bruce.

TRINA

Hi, Susan... You two get settled in okay?

SUSAN

Best we could. Our old furniture barely fills half the new house.

BRUCE

Maybe you could give my wife some decorating tips.

TRINA

Sure, call a decorator.

Susan laughs. Trina looks to Tom.

TOM DECKER

Who's up for a Wallbanger?

BRUCE

Sounds like a winner.

SUSAN  
Gimlet for me.

JILL  
I'll just have a Chablis.

As Tom leads Bruce and Roger off...

SUSAN  
Trina, this is Jill. Jill is my--

JILL  
If you say "old" neighbor again, I  
swear I'll go home and hang myself.

SUSAN  
I was going to say my friend who  
used to live across the street.

JILL  
That lug of a guy who just lumbered  
off without introducing himself is  
my husband, Roger. I apologize for  
his manners.

Trina gives Jill her patented pleasant, dismissive smile.

TRINA  
How about a tour?

SUSAN  
Sure.

JILL  
You two go. I'll just wait here  
for my husband.

And as Trina takes Susan's hand and leads her off...

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - THE OMEN - NIGHT

BJ and Rick sit together near the back of the packed theater,  
watching the horror flick with the unique glee of teenage  
boys. Rick shovels a handful of Milk Duds into his mouth.

ON THE SCREEN a plate glass window SHOOTs off the back of a  
crashing truck, SLICES DAVID WARNER'S HEAD clean off. Rick  
grabs BJ's arm--

RICK  
Oh, man! Did you see that?



BJ  
(happily grossed out)  
That was sick.

BJ looks down at Rick's hand, still gripping his arm. Rick doesn't release it. Instead...

RICK  
Want some?

Rick turns BJ's wrist over, pours some Milk Dud's into BJ's open hand. As BJ pops the candy into his mouth, OFF RICK, stealing a glance at his friend in the dark...

EXT. BEACH BONFIRE - NIGHT

A dozen or so teenagers gather around the blazing bonfire, drinking and smoking, carefree kids on a warm summer night. Tom Petty's "AMERICAN GIRL" plays from Logan's beach patrol truck. Logan leans against the rear window in the flatbed drinking a can of beer, Skoo on his knee. Laurie sits next to him, lost in the stars. Two guys light off a bottle rocket. It goes swooshing into the night, annoying her...

LOGAN  
Cool.

LAURIE  
Maybe if you're a sixth grader.

LOGAN  
Just how far up your butt does that stick go?

LAURIE  
Sorry, warm beer and bottle rockets don't really do it for me. Go hang out with the drunk pyros if you're so into it.

LOGAN  
What's with you? All of a sudden it's like you're too cool to hang.

LAURIE  
Too bored is more like it.

LOGAN  
Why, cuz your daddy bought a fancy house? Big deal.

LAURIE

You would think that. You don't know me at all. Come to think of it? You don't know anything about anything.

LOGAN

Know enough to get in your pants every night.

LAURIE

Screw you.

Laurie jumps off the truck.

LOGAN

Where are you going?

She doesn't answer, just heads down beach towards the water.

LOGAN

Laurie!

At the shore, Laurie peels off her shirt, her bra, her shorts, DIVES into the dark, lapping waves. Freedom...

INT. DECKER HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gail, sunglasses off, SNORTS a small line off the night stand. Taps an empty glass vile, gums the dusting of coke that falls out. The DOOR opens, and in steps Trina, Susan in tow.

GAIL

Trina, thank God, do you have any coke?

TRINA

Never when I host. I'm sure Bud Green has plenty. But watch out, he's more handsy than usual. Have you two met? Gail Saxton, Susan Miller. Susan just moved into the house next door to you.

GAIL

Do you have any coke?

SUSAN

Sorry.

TRINA

I think Stu's looking for you.

GAIL

Big surprise.

Gail puts her sunglasses back on, and heads out. And as Susan watches her go...

TRINA

She's harmless. Miserable, but harmless. I keep saying they should open up their marriage like everyone else, but Stu's a little uptight.

SUSAN

You and Tom have an open marriage?

TRINA

Don't you?

Susan's both amused and flustered at the thought...

SUSAN

No-- I think Bruce would go ape if I cheated on him.

TRINA

It's not cheating. The opposite, actually.

SUSAN

How is having sex with other people not cheating?

TRINA

Because everything's already on the table. There's no sneaking around, no lies. Ever since we got into it, Tom and I have reached this whole other level of intimacy. Never mind the incredible sex.

Trina retrieves a pill box from her bureau, pops a pill, chases it with her cocktail.

TRINA

Quaalude?

SUSAN

Never had one of those either.

TRINA

Then I insist. It'll take the edge off.

Susan takes the pill. Holds it in her hand a moment.

SUSAN

Truth is, Bruce and I got married straight out of high school. We were already raising our family when the whole Woodstock, counter culture thing began.

TRINA

Happy to tell you the train's still boarding.

Trina hands Susan a drink. Susan hesitates, then pops the pill, and washes it down. Trina smiles genially.

TRINA

You should talk it over with Bruce. Opening our relationship is the best thing that ever happened to me and Tom.

Trina means this, believes the doctrine. And as Trina heads back to the party, leaving Susan to soak it all in...

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The movie has let out. BJ and Rick head to their bikes.

RICK

I can't believe Damien's dad was actually gonna kill him.

BJ

He was the devil.

RICK

You think your dad would kill you if you were possessed?

BJ

Definitely.

RICK

Mine would puss out.

RICK

You wanna sleep over tonight?

BJ considers the offer when, SLAM! A ferocious SHOVE, sends Rick TOPPLING over the bikes. Rick looks up to see BETSY BURDIS, a pretty, but FURIOUS young teenage girl above him. Her posse of girlfriends form a circle behind...

BETSY  
Douche bag! Lying little prick!

RICK  
Betsy, Jeez--

BETSY  
Don't you say my name.

BETSY KICKS Rick in the groin. The face.

BJ  
Hey--

But Betsy's seeing red, SHOVES BJ into the brick wall, cutting his elbow. Starts wailing on Rick...

BETSY  
You told your faggot friends you did it with me?

She kicks Rick HARD in the chest, the groin again...

RICK  
No--

BETSY  
Say you made it up, say you're a liar!  
(a kick to the head)  
Say it!

RICK  
I made it up, I'm sorry!--

BETSY  
(kick)  
You don't even know me, you little bastard! If you ever even say my name again, I swear, you're dead.

Betsy spits on him and marches off. Her girl crew, almost as astonished as BJ, shuffles off after her. BJ leans down to his crumpled friend...

BJ  
I'll get someone.

RICK  
Don't...

BJ  
You're bleeding.

And crying. From humiliation as much as pain.

RICK  
Just leave me alone.

But BJ stays where he is, unsure how to handle this.

RICK  
Are you deaf?! Leave me alone!

If Rick is going to save any dignity, BJ realizes he needs to go. A beat, and he hops on his bike. Rides away, fast as he can.

EXT. PARTY - POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Bruce and Tom stand poolside with a zapped BUD GREEN. Roger and Jill stand off to the side of the conversation.

BUD GREEN  
I can get you into the Pump Room,  
the Chop House... you want a  
membership at the Playboy Club,  
give me a call. Mile High Club,  
talk to this guy.

Bud slaps Tom on the back, then leans into Bruce, guy-like.

BUD GREEN  
But I can get you the girl.

They laugh. Jill looks disgusted.

JILL  
I'm going to look for Susan.

ROGER THOMPSON  
I'll stay right here.

JILL  
You better.

Jill heads off, as Gail, back in sunglasses, approaches, loops her arm through Bud's, WHISPERS IN HIS EAR... Bud grins as Gail walks off.

BUD GREEN  
Think I'm gonna head to the basement.

BRUCE  
What's in the basement?

TOM DECKER

Play room...

Bruce watches as Bud catches up with Gail, and they head into the house. Nearby, Gail's husband, Stu, also catches them. Shakes his head, dumps his drink, and marches off.

TOM DECKER

(checks his watch)

Gimme a hand with the fireworks?

And as Tom leads Bruce across the lawn, Roger stays put, just like he said he would. At the glass doors leading to the living room, SUSAN appears, scans the back yard. Roger sees her, just as she catches his gaze, approaches...

ROGER THOMPSON

Your new neighbors are really something.

SUSAN

I'll say.

KABOOM! A bright, colorful firework explodes into the sky at the edge of the yard. It startles Susan, she jumps a bit. Roger reflexively steadies her, a chivalrous, masculine gesture. As Susan laughs at her own skittishness...

INT. DECKER HOUSE - NIGHT

Jill spots Trina heading outside, where the guests have started assembling for the fireworks display...

JILL

Trina. I was trying to find Susan, have you seen her?

TRINA

She was heading towards the basement. Down the hall, second door on the left.

Jill smiles, thanks. Trina smiles too, but for an entirely different reason... And as Jill heads towards the hallway...

EXT. THE PARTY - OUTSIDE - NIGHT

Fireworks blast off over the lake as Bruce ambles over to Susan and Roger. Roger takes a subtle step to the side as Bruce leans into his wife, squeezes her hand...

BRUCE

Having fun?

SUSAN

Trina gave me a quaalude.

BRUCE

You're kidding. How do you feel?

SUSAN

So far so good. You won't believe what she suggested.

BRUCE

Actually, I bet Tom suggested the same thing.

(looks at her)

Crazy, right?

Susan doesn't answer. Maybe it's not so crazy after all...

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Jill opens the basement door, steps down. The vocal gyrations of Donna Summers' "LOVE TO LOVE YOU" accompanying other sexy voices. Lots of them. Sighs of pleasure. The dim, colorful glow of lava lamps light Jill's way as she descends the stairs. Takes a moment for her eyes to adjust. When they do, Jill abruptly stops in her tracks, stunned. We can only imagine what she sees. A naked man steps in front of her. It's Bud.

BUD GREEN

Kick off your shoes, join the party.

To Jill's horror, Bud's talking to her. She snaps out of her shock, darts back up the stairs...

EXT. PARTY - NIGHT

Bruce holds up a sparkler, uses it to light the fuse on a 6'x 6' pyrotechnic effigy of the American Flag, stationed in the middle of the yard. Trina walks up with a sparkler of her own, kisses Tom deeply as the flag explodes into Red White and Blue sparkles...

The guests outside, inspired, spontaneously join together in singing our NATIONAL ANTHEM. "Oh, Say Can You See!..."

SEVERAL YARDS AWAY, ROGER WATCHES Susan and Bruce talking. We can't HEAR them over the sound of the song...



"Whose Broad Stripes, And Bright Stars..." Jill comes storming through the crowd, grabs Roger by the hand.

JILL  
We're leaving. Right now--

Jill sees Susan and Bruce, diverts course towards them.

ROGER THOMPSON  
What's wrong?--

JILL  
You won't believe what kind of party this is.

Bruce and Susan look at each other. But Jill is focused behind them, wild eyed, on Trina and Tom.

JILL  
We don't belong here. You have no idea what kind of people these are.

Jill reaches for Susan, but she's feeling the quaalude now.

JILL  
Susan, I'm not kidding, they're sick...

Susan looks to Bruce. He takes his wife's hand, turns to Jill.

BRUCE  
We're gonna stay.

Jill looks at her "best friend" with confusion and disbelief, then betrayal and judgment. She yanks Roger away, leaving Bruce and Susan behind, bathed in the blazing glory of the American Flag. "And The Home Of The Braaaaaave!"...

INT. MILLER HOUSE - BJ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BJ enters his bedroom, flips on the light. Dried blood from the cut on his elbow streaked down his arm. He protects the wound as he lifts his tee shirt over his head.

SAMANTHA (O.C.)  
Where is it?

BJ spins, bare chested, to see Samantha sitting on his bed. He looks to the open veranda doors, her way in.

SAMANTHA  
My ring. I know you have it.

BJ simply reaches into his pocket, retrieves the wedding band and broken chain. Hands it over. As she heads for the veranda...

BJ  
Are you going to run away now?

SAMANTHA  
(stares him down)  
You should mind your own business.

BJ  
You're in my room.  
(beat)  
That looks like a wedding ring.

SAMANTHA  
It was. My dad's.

BJ  
Is he dead?

SAMANTHA  
I don't know. Or care.

Samantha crosses over the porch rail, grabs hold of the tree.

BJ  
Then why do you keep it?

SAMANTHA  
To remind me not to do anything  
stupid. Like get married. Or talk  
to people like you.

With that, Samantha hits the ground, and doesn't look back. Darts across the yard, leaving BJ on the veranda, watching her go.

INT. DECKER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A BIG, FAMILIAR HAND lowers a needle onto a spinning 33. Pull back to reveal Tom at the stereo as the hypnotic, synthetic opening to Gary Wright's "DREAMWEAVER" begins. The party is winding down now, most of the guests have either paired off or gone home. A few couples dance slow, making out here and there. Follow Tom back to the couch where Susan is stretched out, a content smile on her face. Bruce sits at the other end, rubbing her feet. Trina sips on her drink in a nearby chair, watching...

TOM DECKER  
Any one need a drink?

SUSAN  
(smiling, rolling)  
Mmm. I'm good...

TRINA  
Bruce?

BRUCE  
No, thanks.

Bruce isn't sure how this works, waits to see what happens next. Trina gives Tom a look, and Tom has no problem taking the lead. He kneels, lays his hands on Susan's shoulders, starts to rub them. Bruce watches, suddenly a lot less confident than we've seen him. Tom slides his fingers down to Susan's hands.

TOM  
You have great hands. Soft...

Trina gets off her perch, kneels down in front of the couch, takes Susan's hand, links her fingers through. Susan smiles modestly. She may be in an altered state, but far from unconscious... Bruce looks over to his wife with this man and woman he barely knows, fighting the urge to get territorial. Until Trina takes Susan's hand, places it on Bruce's leg. Susan gives it a squeeze. Bruce relaxes a little...

TRINA  
Why don't the four of us go some  
place a little quieter?

Bruce looks to Susan, wants to make sure she's on board. She is. Bruce helps Susan up from the couch. Trina takes Tom's hand, and leads the group down the hall, towards the bedroom. No turning back, now...

INT. SAXTON HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

"DREAMWEAVER" rolls on. In shadow, we see Samantha stuffing a backpack with whatever's in the pantry. Soup cans, Pop Tarts--

STU SAXTON  
Hope it was worth it.

THE KITCHEN LIGHT FLIPS ON. Samantha turns to see Stu standing in the archway.

STU SAXTON  
Samantha...

Samantha looks at him, assesses the situation...

SAMANTHA

Where's my mom?

STU SAXTON

She's... not home yet. What are you doing?

Samantha zips up her back pack, heads to the garage door.

SAMANTHA

I'm leaving her.

Stu stands there, impotent, watching his step daughter go...

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jill on her knees, yellow gloves on, scrubbing the oven with a sponge. Roger steps into frame behind her.

ROGER THOMPSON

Why don't you come to bed?

JILL

Because we live in a pig sty.

He gently puts his hands on her shoulders...

JILL

Don't. Touch me--

A BANGING from beyond the back door interrupts.

JILL

What on earth?

Roger looks to Jill, now in man-of-the-house mode. Opens the door to find RICK, hunched on the other side, gripping the rail. His face black, blue, and bloody.

JILL

Oh my God, Ricky!

ROGER THOMPSON

Get some towels.

And as Rick collapses into his father's arms...

INT. BJ'S ROOM - NIGHT

The VERANDA DOORS are OPEN. "DREAMWEAVER" continues, as we find BJ, out on the balcony, sitting with his arms and legs dangling through the slats, gazing out across the yard... He becomes alert as the garage door OPENS next door. Through the trees BJ can just make out SAMANTHA, on her bike, heading down the center of the driveway, into the street. As BJ watches her go, he HEARS another noise... the sound of the front door opening quietly downstairs. His parents are home. And as BJ turns his head, we MOVE...

EXT. MILLER HOUSE - NIGHT

OFF BJ, beyond his own yard, across the street to TOM AND TRINA'S HOUSE, past the pool and tennis court, until we're over LAKE MICHIGAN, moving quickly now towards the HORIZON... And as the slightest hint of RED becomes PINK, then ORANGE, then YELLOW, the synthetic chords from the final refrain to "DREAMWEAVER" play out, and DAWN breaks on Independence Day.

CUT TO:

INT. DECKER HOUSE - MORNING

Golden light filters into the living room. A few glasses and overflowing ash trays still in evidence from the party the night before. On the turntable a record spins, and Johnny Nash's soulful voice spouts out: "I CAN SEE CLEARLY NOW, THE RAIN IS GONE." Tom is in sweat pants, bare chested, whistling along with the song as he mixes bananas, yogurt, and granola in a blender. A beat later, Trina crosses into the room in a robe. Tom looks at his wife, smiles. It's still a little early, but she manages a grin back at him as she passes through, HEADS out the glass doors into the back yard, DROPS the towel, and DIVES into the pool. After a long time under water, her head pops up on the other end. And as Trina begins the cool, measured strokes of her morning routine...

INT. THOMPSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

"I CAN SEE ALL OBSTACLES IN MY WAY..." TIGHT ON a perfectly round egg, frying sunny side up. WE PULL BACK to reveal JILL, looking every bit the happy homemaker, in a proper summer dress and apron. She FLIPS the egg over with the precision of a gourmet CHEF, then slides it onto a plate to join some golden brown sausage and toast. Brings it over to the kitchen table where ROGER sits patiently with RICK, who's holding a steak to his black eye.

Jill smiles as she places the plate in front of her son. Roger and Rick exchange a glance, know it's best not to rock this fragile boat. As the song continues... "LOOK ALL AROUND/THERE'S NOTHING BUT BLUE SKIES..." OFF father and son, as Jill sits down to breakfast with her family...

INT. MILLER BEDROOM - MORNING

Susan collapses onto the bed next to Bruce, out of breath. Bruce is panting next to her. They both lay there, thoroughly spent, staring up at the ceiling in silence. Their expressions morph from exhausted bliss to pensive thoughtfulness. Susan lets out a deep breath, looks over at her husband. Bruce looks back at Susan, connecting to her, deeply. After a moment, he smiles, disarmingly. So does she. Then a chuckle. In a moment, they are both laughing out loud. Susan buries her head into the nape of Bruce's neck, convulsing with laughter. Bruce is the first to regain control. And as he does...

BRUCE

I'm going to take a shower.

A quick kiss, and Bruce is out of bed. Susan watches as he disappears into the bathroom, shuts the door behind him. Left in the stillness of the unfamiliar room, the intimacy and safety of the moment gone, along with the laughter, Susan tries hard to keep the specter of regret at bay... "IT'S GONNA BE A BRIGHT/BRIGHT/BRIGHT/BRIGHT SUN SHINY DAY..."

FADE OUT:

THE END