

WORKING CLASS

"Pilot"

Written By

Jill Cargerman

CMT
POLISHED SECOND REWRITE
4/7/10

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. DIAMOND FOODS - EVENING (D-1)

AN UPSCALE GROCERY STORE. CARLI MILLER, 35, PUSHES A SHINY SHOPPING CART. CARLI'S STYLE IS "LESS IS MORE" WHERE COVERAGE IS CONCERNED AND "MORE IS MORE" REGARDING HAIR SPRAY. SHE TAKES IN THE STORE LIKE A TOURIST.

CARLI

Look, guys! They've even got a
cappuccino stand. Makes Food for
Less look like kind of a dump, huh?

CARLI'S THREE KIDS FOLLOW. WILL, AN EARNEST SIX YEAR OLD,
AND PAM, 13, AWKWARD AND BRAINY, STICK CLOSE TO THEIR MOM.
SCOTT, 16, ATHLETIC AND HANDSOME, LAGS BEHIND, SULKING.

PAM

Mom, this place makes me nervous.
It's too fancy.

CARLI

Sweetie, until I can afford a new
tire, we can only shop places we
can drive to on the doughnut.

CARLI CHECKS HER HAIR IN THE REFLECTION ON A FREEZER DOOR.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Besides, we moved here to have a
better life, so we should start
getting used to the finer things.

WILL HOLDS UP A CEREAL BOX.

WILL

Can we get Frosted Mini-Wheats?

CARLI

(OFF PRICE) Six ninety-five? What do they frost them with? Mink?! (THEN) I'm sorry, baby. We'll just have to stick to generic-O's for now. But, trust me, a few spoons of sugar and you'll be flyin' just as high as with the brand name stuff.

CARLI PUTS THE CEREAL BACK, THEN PULLS UP TO A CHECK-OUT STAND.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Scott, help me unload.

SCOTT ROLLS HIS EYES AND RELUCTANTLY STARTS UNLOADING.

SCOTT

This store isn't for poor people.
Everyone's looking at us.

CARLI

Really? And how do they know how much money we have? Do they have x-ray vision that can see into my wallet? I mean, if I could afford a wallet.

AN EXPENSIVELY-DRESSED MAN GETS IN LINE BEHIND THEM. CARLI SMILES AT THE MAN, HANDING A CARD TO THE CHECK OUT GIRL.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(SOTTO, TO SCOTT) Besides, we're not poor. We're just on a budget.

CHECK-OUT GIRL

Your card's been declined.

CARLI

Really? Already? (THEN) Why isn't their slogan: "Everywhere you want to be -- but maxed out after only two trips to the dentist"?

OTHER CUSTOMERS GET IN LINE. THE KIDS ARE MORTIFIED.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Can I write a check?

THE CHECK-OUT GIRL SHAKES HER HEAD. THE ATTRACTIVE MAN MOVES TO THE NEXT CHECK-OUT LINE. CARLI WATCHES HIM GO, DISAPPOINTED, THEN DIGS THROUGH HER PURSE.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Hang on. I think I have a coupon.

CARLI COMES UP EMPTY HANDED EXCEPT FOR LOOSE CANDY.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Nope. (OFFERING) Linty Tic Tac?

(OFF LOOK) Alright, then. Why don't you take out the Hungry Man dinners?

I don't need a "Hungry Man" anyway. I need one who can clean the gutters and give a halfway decent foot massage.

CHECK-OUT GIRL

(OFF REGISTER) Twenty-two seventy.

CARLI PULLS OFF A FEW ITEMS.

CARLI

Okay. What about this? And this.

And that. So what do we got?

CARLI LOOKS AROUND, BUT THE EXPENSIVELY-DRESSED MAN IS GONE.

CHECK-OUT GIRL

Eleven seventy-six?

CARLI

Piece of cake. (LOOKING) Actually
can you take back this piece of cake,
too? There. That should do it!

CHECK-OUT GIRL

You sure? Just bread and toothpaste?

CARLI NODS, THEN TURNS TO THE KIDS SMILING BRIGHTLY. HER
MOTTO: TURN LIFE'S LEMONS INTO A LYNCHBERG LEMONADE.

CARLI

Who wants mint-loaf?!

OFF THE KIDS' REACTIONS, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF COLD OPENING

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. CARLI'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - MORNING (D-2)

THE KITCHEN IS DECORATED WITH FLEA-MARKET FINDS: NO TWO MUGS OR PLATES COORDINATING, MISMATCHED CHAIRS AT THE TABLE. THE EFFECT IS ECLECTIC AND COZY -- WHAT MARTHA STEWART MIGHT DO IF SHE ACTUALLY HAD TO SHOP AT K-MART. CARLI READS THE CLASSIFIEDS. PAM FINISHES BREAKFAST AND WILL DOES HOMEWORK

CARLI

Guess what, guys! Today's going to be a very big day for this household.

PAM

We're paying the electric bill?

CARLI

That would be a big day! But I'm talking about my starting on an exciting new career path --

PAM

You took the job at Hooters?

CARLI

No, Sweetie. (A SCOFF) Please!
(THEN, CONCEDED) I haven't heard back. (ADJUSTING HERSELF) Their loss.

WILL

Can you sign my homework, Mom? We had to do a family tree.

WILL HANDS CARLI A PIECE OF PAPER. SHE LOOKS IT OVER.

CARLI

But this isn't right, Will. Your dad and I aren't married anymore. And Scott and Pam have a different daddy.

WILL

I know, but there weren't enough spaces and I didn't want the other kids to think I wasn't normal.

CARLI

Well, Honey, who wants to be normal when you can be exceptional and special like you are? And aside from a few rotting branches of the old family tree that have long since been lopped off or incarcerated, you have absolutely nothing to be embarrassed about.

WILL SMILES.

CARLI (CONT'D)

We'll sort this out after school.

Okay, baby?

WILL NODS, AS SCOTT ENTERS, IN A FOOTBALL JACKET, A BACKPACK OVER HIS SHOULDER. HE GRABS HIS LUNCH FROM THE FRIDGE.

SCOTT

I'm out of here.

CARLI

Hang on, Scott. Wait for your sister
so you can walk to the bus together.

SCOTT

I'm not taking the bus.

SCOTT HEADS OUT INTO THE LIVING ROOM. CARLI FOLLOWS.

RESET TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

CARLI GRABS SCOTT BY THE ARM. HE STOPS, PUT OUT. CARLI
TURNS HIM AROUND, CHECKING OUT HIS BACK.

CARLI

Well, I see you didn't sprout wings
last night. So I'm kind of wondering
how you're planning to get to school
if you're not taking the bus.

SCOTT

Susie's picking me up.

CARLI

Oh, "Susie" again. So it's getting
serious?

SCOTT

She's just a friend.

CARLI'S INSTINCTS TELL HER OTHERWISE, BUT SHE'S WILLING TO
LET THIS ONE GO FOR NOW.

CARLI

Alright, fine. I guess it's just a
different era and boys and girls can
be friends without getting all... (BIG

CARLI (CONT'D)

QUOTES) "knocked up", like in my day.

(THEN) So why don't you bring her over for dinner some time? You used to introduce all your friends to me before we moved.

SCOTT

I'm not bringing her over here, Mom. She lives in a mansion.

CARLI

Hey, compared to the most of the world, so do we. You don't have to put on your boots to hike to the bathroom, do you? We've got a toilet inside. We're practically royalty!

SCOTT JUST WALKS OFF WITH AN EYE ROLL.

SCOTT

I'll be home after practice.

SCOTT STARTS OUT THE DOOR, STARTLING CARLI'S YOUNGER BROTHER, NICK, 33, AS HE TRIES TO SNEAK IN. THOUGH CLEARLY DISHEVELED FROM A LATE NIGHT, NICK QUICKLY AFFECTS THE AIR OF LAID BACK COOL AND CHARM THAT HAS GOTTEN HIM OUT OF AN IMPRESSIVE NUMBER OF JAMS AND INTO A MORE IMPRESSIVE NUMBER OF BOUDOIRS.

NICK

Hey, Scott. What's up, bud?

SCOTT EXCHANGES A FIST BUMP WITH NICK.

SCOTT

What's up with you, Uncle Nick? (A GRIN) "Away game"?

NICK

(COVERING) No, man. Just thought I'd get up with the sun, take a walk and, you know, embrace the day.

SCOTT

(LAUGHING) Yeah, like that's what you were embracing.

CARLI STARTS SWEEPING NICK AWAY FROM THE DOOR.

CARLI

Okay, you in! (TO SCOTT) And you out.

SCOTT STARTS OUT.

NICK

Oh, hey. Did you finish your paper?

SCOTT

Yeah. It's good. Thanks for your help.

SCOTT EXITS. CARLI SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND TURNS TO NICK, NOT PLEASED.

CARLI

Hang on there! It's bad enough Scott saw you sneaking in. I want to wait before I have to explain to Pam what a "booty call" is. (THEN) You're not sleeping on some buddy's couch anymore, Nick. This is my house.

NICK

It's a rental.

CARLI

You know what I mean. And those kids are your niece and nephews. They look up to you. You can't just stay out every night partying.

NICK

Oh, come on. I've been like a monk since I moved in. And I wasn't partying. I was studying. (A GRIN) At least, at first.

CARLI

Nick. You're thirty-three. You shouldn't be dating college girls.

NICK

Carli, please. Give me some credit. (THEN) She's my teacher.

CARLI

Perfect.

NICK

Hey, blame yourself. You gave me the big "in case the rock star thing doesn't happen, you might want to go back to school" speech.

CARLI

So you could get your Sound Engineering degree and have something

CARLI (CONT'D)

to fall back on, not live out some Van Halen fantasy.

NICK

(PLAYFUL) Can't a guy do both?

CARLI

Sure. If he's double majoring in Getting A Job and Finding His Own Apartment. (THEN) Now go hide in your room 'til the kids leave.

NICK

Gotcha. (SINGING AS HE GOES) "Got it bad, got it bad, I'm hot for teacher!"

NICK HEADS DOWN THE HALLWAY TO HIS ROOM, AS CARLI HEADS INTO THE KITCHEN, SHAKING HER HEAD.

RESET TO:

INT. KITCHEN

CARLI ENTERS, AS PAM AND WILL PULL ON THEIR BACKPACKS.

CARLI

Come on, you two. Time to head out.
No child left behind!

PAM

I hate the bus. Me and Dicky
"Dumpster" are the only kids who sit
alone. It's humiliating!

CARLI

Hey, it takes time to make friends in
a new school. But once everybody

CARLI (CONT'D)

realizes how great you are, they'll
have to get in line to sit with you.

PAM

You have to say that. You're my mom.

CARLI

No, because it's true. Look, we're
all in a new place. I'm scared, too.
I don't have friends here, and I've
got to find a good job. It's not
easy, but you just have to put
yourself out there. That's how I got
an interview today to manage a fancy,
new French cafe.

PAM

Really? Mom, that's great.

CARLI

I know! The owner is meeting me,
personally, over cappuccino at
Diamonds. So you keep that chin up!
Somebody's going to notice you.

PAM

(INSPIRED) Okay!

CARLI GIVES BOTH KIDS A SMOOCH, GUIDING THEM TO THE DOOR.

CARLI

Alright, get going so I can put on
make-up. I want to look really nice
for my interview.

WILL

But you always look pretty, Mommy!

THIS STOPS CARLI IN HER TRACKS, MELTING HER HEART. SHE PULLS
WILL INTO A BIG SLOPPY HUG.

CARLI

Oh, come here, you. (TO HEAVENS) Why
can't all men be six years old?

AND WE...

CUT TO:

ACT ONESCENE B

INT. DIAMOND FOODS - AFTERNOON (D-2)

THE CAPPUCCINO CART IS SET UP WITH A FEW TABLES AND CHAIRS.

CARLI ENTERS FROM THE GROCERY AREA, WEARING A TOO-SLINKY DRESS. SHE SHAKES OFF A CHILL, SMILING AT A MANICURED, HIGHLIGHTED WOMAN CLEARLY IN HER MID-FORTIES DRINKING COFFEE.

CARLI

Watch out. That butcher section'll
freeze your rump roast!

THE WOMAN SMILES POLITELY THEN GOES BACK TO HER MAGAZINE.
CARLI PEAKS IN THE DOUBLE STROLLER NEXT TO HER.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Ooh. Cute twins! And just in the
nick of time, huh? (QUICKLY) Hey, no
judgement here! If my prom date
hadn't taken me to Lorenzo's Oil at
the drive-in, I would've waited, too.
(OFF LOOK) Really slow movie.

THE WOMAN TURNS HER BACK, SHIFTING AWAY.

MAN (O.S.)

Carli?

A DISTINGUISHED SIXTY-SOMETHING MAN, STUART DIAMOND,
ADDRESSES CARLI. SHE STANDS, MAKING SURE HER SKIRT STAYS IN
PLACE ABOVE HER THIGH.

CARLI

In the flesh! And you must be, Stuart.

CARLI SHAKES HIS HAND, CHECKING HIS RING FINGER. TOO BAD,
HE'S TAKEN!

STUART

Please, sit down.

THEY SIT. STUART TAKES SOME PAPERWORK FROM A BRIEFCASE.

STUART (CONT'D)

I'm hoping to fill this position today, so maybe we could just go over the application in the interview?

CARLI

Multi-tasking, great!

STUART

Okay. (OFF APPLICATION) So do you have experience with upscale cuisine?

CARLI

Oh, sure. Not so much in terms of eating it or able to afford it, but I have been known to jazz up a Rice-A-Roni when the occasion calls for it.

STUART SMILES, JOTTING ANOTHER NOTE.

STUART

And how are you under pressure?

CARLI

Rock solid. I've had three kids with the flu and a backed-up toilet. I'm like a Navy SEAL with a plunger!

(THEN) See?

SHE LIFTS UP HER ARMS AND INDICATES HER ARMPITS.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Dry as a bone!

NOW STUART LAUGHS. CARLI SMILES FEELING THIS IS GOING WELL.

STUART

And how about education?

CARLI

I'm in favor of it.

STUART

I mean, what's your level of education?

CARLI'S SMILE FADES. SHE'S BEEN BEEN DREADING THIS QUESTION.

CARLI

I have a degree in Child Development.

STUART

Where'd you get your degree?

CARLI

Um... Illinois.

STUART

Where in Illinois?

CARLI

All over it, really. (OFF LOOK,
CONCEDING) Okay, look, Stuart. I
don't have a degree in Child
Development because I, much too early,
started developing my own child, if
you know what I mean.

STUART

I believe I do. (THEN) So no degree?

CARLI SHAKES HER HEAD. STUART STARTS PUTTING AWAY THE APPLICATION.

STUART (CONT'D)

Well, thank you, Carli. We've got a few other applicants to see, so --

CARLI

Stuart, wait...

SHE PUTS HER HAND ON THE APPLICATION.

CARLI (CONT'D)

This is the 15th interview I've been on where somebody writes me off because I didn't go to college. But I can guarantee that you're not going to find anyone who's going to work harder than me just because they have a diploma. Because while they were at frat parties drinking beer out of funnels and garden hoses, I was already working to support a family, so I've got four years experience on anyone else out there.

STUART CONSIDERS, STILL NOT CONVINCED.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Okay, so my life got a little off track when I was eighteen. That's

CARLI (CONT'D)

what lives do, right? They make turns into dead ends and alleys and cul de sacs -- which is a really pretentious way of saying "circle", by the way -- but then they get back on the right path. Or a better one. (THEN) I mean, your life must gotten even slightly derailed at some point before all this, didn't it, Stuart?

STUART TAKES THIS IN FOR A MOMENT, THEN NODS:

STUART

I thought I was going to get into Princeton, but they didn't accept me and I had to go to Duke.

CARLI IS ABOUT TO GIVE HIM A BIG OLD "BOO-HOO" BUT STOPS HERSELF.

CARLI

Then you get it! See, it's like we're living the same lives practically. (THEN) Everybody's path takes an unexpected turn some time. And Duke saw something in you when Princeton didn't. I need you to be my Duke here, Stuart.

STUART CAN'T HELP BUT SMILE. SHE'S GOT HIM.

STUART

Could you start at nine-fifty?

CARLI

Nine-fifty a week?! Looks like my kid's gonna get his jacuzzi after all!

STUART

I'm sorry. Not nine-fifty a week. Nine-fifty an hour.

CARLI

Oh. (THEN) But that doesn't seem like much to manage a restaurant.

STUART

It's a dollar more than the check-out girls make. And it's more like a take-out counter.

HE INDICATES A CHEESY "PARISIAN" AWNING BEING ERECTED NEARBY.

CARLI

Ah. So we're not just meeting here? This is the place. Basically this is just a fancy deli job?

STUART

We'd like to consider it "upscale in-store dining". Diamond's is a family business and my son's making changes to compete with the new Whole Foods.

CARLI

Look, not that I can afford to be choosy, but I'm hoping for a job where

CARLI (CONT'D)

I can move up. Or at least that
doesn't involve a polyester uniform.

STUART

We have seven stores and we're always
looking for employees to promote to
our Manager Training Program. (THEN)
And if it makes any difference, the
uniform's a cotton-poly blend.

CARLI

Fifty-fifty?

STUART

Sixty-forty.

CARLI

(CONSIDERS, THEN) Don't have to iron it,
but it still breathes! I'll take it.

CARLI THRUSTS OUT HER HAND. STUART LAUGHS AND SHAKES IT.

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT ONESCENE CINT. DIAMOND FOODS - A FEW HOURS LATER (D-2)

CARLI, WEARING A UNIFORM: AN ILL-FITTING CHEF'S COAT AND FLOPPY BERET... STANDS IN FRONT OF THE COMPUTERIZED REGISTER BEHIND THE "CAFE" DISPLAY-CASE. A SHORT, SKINNY, AND PIMPLE-FACED TWENTY-THREE YEAR OLD, JEREMY STANDS WITH CARLI, DEMONSTRATING.

JEREMY

Let's go over it again: if the scanner's down, you enter the item's PLU here on the touch screen --

CARLI

Whoa. Slow down, Spock. I'm not used to all this new technology.

JEREMY

It's basically the same as your home computer.

CARLI

I don't have a home computer. I use the one at the library after the homeless guys are done with it, and let me tell you, you need to wear gloves half the time just to look up the movie schedule.

JEREMY

Well, since we only have a few hours left here 'til quitting time... maybe

JEREMY (CONT'D)

a private tutorial is in order after work, at my bachelor pad.

CARLI

(OFF HIS APPEARANCE) Come on, Jeremy. You still live with your parents, don't you?

JEREMY

No, I don't! (THEN) I live with my grandma. (RE: REGISTER) Anyway, it's all here if you get stuck.

HE HANDS CARLI A HUGE MANUAL AND HEADS OFF WITH A WINK. CARLI LEAFS THROUGH IT, DAUNTED.

CARLI

Isn't there an Old Testament to go along with this?

CARLI FLIPS THROUGH A FEW MORE PAGES.

MAN (O.S.)

Excuse me. Are you free?

CARLI LOOKS UP TO FIND A CUSTOMER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CASE: AN EXTREMELY HANDSOME MAN AROUND CARLI'S AGE. CARLI IS IMMEDIATELY DUMBSTRUCK BY HIM. IT'S A "WOW" MOMENT.

CARLI

"Free"? No. (BIG SMILE) But a halfway decent dinner and a bubble bath has been known to do the trick.

SHE TRIES IN VAIN TO SMOOTH HER UNIFORM AROUND HER CURVES.

HANDSOME MAN

I meant "free" to get me a sandwich.

THE HANDSOME MAN... I MEAN, THIS DUDE IS GORGEOUS... SMILES BACK AT CARLI.

CARLI

Whoa, your teeth are whiter than my sheets!

THE HANDSOME MAN CHUCKLES. CARLI BLUSHES, UNCHARACTERISTICALLY SELF-CONSCIOUS. THERE IS A SLIGHTLY AWKWARD BEAT, AS SHE GRINS AT HIM LIKE A SMITTEN TEENAGER.

HANDSOME MAN

So... my sandwich?

CARLI

Right. No problem! Just let me grab my crib sheet here, Mister, uh...

HANDSOME MAN

Robert. (THEN) Rob.

CARLI PUTS HER HANDS UP.

CARLI

Ooh, don't "rob" me! (GOOFY) I've been "robbed", and I like it!

CARLI LAUGHS AWKWARDLY, WINCING A LITTLE AT HER OWN BAD PUNS. SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HER "CRIB SHEET" AND READS:

CARLI (CONT'D)

(MANGLED) "Bon-jower. Vooz. Ah-vez. Choy-see?" (THEN) That's French for "What do you want?" Not to mention the way I sound after a pitcher of margaritas.

ROB LAUGHS. CARLI STARTS TO RELAX A LITTLE.

CARLI (CONT'D)

I'm Carli, by the way. (FLIRTY) So,
what can I get you?

ROB

What do you recommend?

HE BENDS DOWN TO LOOK IN THE DISPLAY CASE.

CARLI

(TO HERSELF) So many things...

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS, CARLI BENDS OVER TO LOOK IN,
SUGGESTIVELY... THEN REALIZES HER TOO-LARGE UNIFORM IS
COVERING UP HER CLEAVAGE.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Well, I'm just getting familiar with
all this. (POINTING) The turkey's
pretty good, but this blue cheese here
frankly smells like feet...

ROB SMILES AT CARLI, NOT SURE WHAT TO MAKE OF HER.

ROB

I'll try the prosciutto.

HE TAPS ON THE GLASS.

CARLI

Sorry. Didn't quite see that. Would
you mind pointing again? Maybe with
the other hand...

ROB DOES AND CARLI CHECKS OUT HIS LEFT HAND. NO RING! ON
HER SIDE OF THE DISPLAY, CARLI CELEBRATES WITH A SILENT:
"YES!" SHE GRABS THE SANDWICH WITH A SMILE AND SLAPS IT ON
THE COUNTER.

CARLI (CONT'D)

That'll set you back ten-fifty...
which, between you and me, seems a
little high.

ROB

You think?

CARLI

Well, considering it's just dried meat
and you can get beef jerky at any
truck stop for about thirty-nine cents
a stick. Not that I hang out at truck
stops. Anymore.

CARLI WINKS AND SASHAYS OVER TO THE REGISTER, TAPPING THE
SCREEN HAPPILY.

CARLI (CONT'D)

I'll just ring you up here...

SFX: ELECTRONIC BEEPING

CARLI (CONT'D)

Hang on. Don't want to accidentally
launch a missile or something.

CARLI SMILES, THEN TRIES AGAIN.

SFX: MULTIPLE ELECTRONIC BEEPS

CARLI (CONT'D)

(SMILE FADING) Oops. That doesn't
sound right. (AWKWARD) But I'm sure
it's right here somewhere...

CARLI PICKS UP THE MANUAL, FLUSTERED, AND STARTS LEAFING THROUGH IT. CARLI PUSHES A FEW MORE BUTTONS.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(OFF REGISTER) Okay, I'm sorry. I'm pretty sure you don't owe me nine million dollars -- unless you've got it -- so let me get some help here.

CARLI LOOKS AROUND FOR JEREMY, BUT STOPS SHORT SEEING TWO TEENAGERS MAKING-OUT ACROSS THE GROCERY, THE BOY'S HANDS ON THE GIRL'S BUTT, OBLIVIOUS TO HIS SURROUNDINGS.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED) Now that is just inappropriate. Who raised that kid?!

THE COUPLE COMES UP FOR AIR MOMENTARILY AND CARLI GETS A GOOD LOOK AT THE BOY'S FACE -- CLEARLY SEEING THAT IT'S SCOTT.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(REALIZING) Oh my God...

OFF CARLI, WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE D

FADE IN:

INT. DIAMOND FOODS - CONTINUOUS (D-2)

CARLI SEES SCOTT AND SUSIE, A VERY PRETTY, VERY FASHIONABLE GIRL HIS AGE, BREAK THEIR KISS. SUSIE STEPS AWAY AND HEADS UP ONE AISLE. SCOTT HEADS UP ANOTHER.

CARLI TURNS BACK TO ROB.

CARLI

Look, I've just got to go deal with
something real quick...

SHE LOOKS AROUND, BEFORE SLIDING THE PLATE WITH THE SANDWICH ON IT ACROSS THE COUNTER.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Here! This one is on me.

CARLI QUICKLY PULLS A BILL OUT OF HER BRA AND SLAPS IT ON THE REGISTER.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Just have a seat and I'll be right
back!

CARLI HURRIES OUT FROM BEHIND THE COUNTER, WITH A QUICK GLANCE AT ROB'S BUTT, AS SHE GOES. SHE MOUTHS A SILENT "THANK YOU" TO THE HEAVENS.

ANGLE ON: SCOTT GRABBING BAGS OF CHIPS OFF A SHELF, AS CARLI STORMS UP.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Scott, what are you doing here?!
You're supposed to be in that big
building where they teach you stuff.

CARLI (CONT'D)

What is it called again? Oh, yeah.

SCHOOL!

TAKES IN HIS MOM WEARING HER GOOFY BERET AND CHEF'S COAT.

SCOTT

Mom... What are you doing here? And why are you dressed like that?

CARLI

This is my new job, Scott. (THEN)

But here's a better question: what are you doing here?

SCOTT

It's my lunch hour.

CARLI

Well that's obvious because why else would you be eating that girl's face?

SCOTT FLUSHES, HATING THIS.

CARLI (CONT'D)

So that was your "friend" Susie, huh?

SCOTT

Whatever. Look, I gotta go.

SCOTT STARTS OFF. CARLI STOPS HIM.

CARLI

Not so fast. I think it's time I met your "friend" and told her a thing or two about what is appropriate behavior in public, which is not to say that I

CARLI (CONT'D)

condone any of that... bear mauling...
in private either.

CARLI STARTS OFF, LOOKING FOR SUSIE. SCOTT STOPS HER.

SCOTT

No, Mom! (PANICKY) Look, I don't
want her to see you like this.

CARLI

(TAKEN ABACK) Like what? Like
someone who's doing her best to
support this family?

SCOTT PAUSES, NOT QUITE SURE HOW TO ANSWER. THEN:

SCOTT

(JUDGEMENT) Exactly.

SCOTT HEADS OFF, LEAVING CARLI HURT AND STUNG. SHE'S ABOUT
TO GO AFTER HIM, WHEN JEREMY SIDLES UP NEXT TO HER.

JEREMY

Hey, FYI, the management sort of
frowns on you abandoning your station.

CARLI

Right! I'm coming.

CARLI AND JEREMY START BACK TO THE COUNTER.

JEREMY

And, by the by, I saw you using your
womanly wiles to butter up the boss.
But, trust me, it's not going to work.

CARLI

The boss?

JEREMY

Rob.

CARLI

Rob is the boss?

JEREMY

Not only the boss. He's Stuart
Diamond's son. This whole food court
is his baby.

CARLI

(REALIZING THE IMPLICATIONS) Oh, no.

CARLI SAGS. COULD THIS DAY GET ANY WORSE?

JEREMY

Oh, yes! He's also in charge of the
Management Training Program. But
don't get any ideas. The line for the
next promotion starts behind me.

JEREMY TURNS AWAY, HEADING OFF.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

(OFF HIS OWN BUTT, A WINK) Enjoy the
view.

IT JUST GOT WORSE. OFF CARLI...

CUT TO:

ACT TWOSCENE E

INT. KITCHEN - LATER (D-2)

PAM AND WILL DO HOMEWORK AT THE TABLE AFTER DINNER. NICK SITS ON A STOOL PUTTING A NEW STRING ON AN ELECTRIC GUITAR, LOOKING OVER WILL'S SHOULDER.

NICK

Your family tree's going to need more branches there, buddy. Grandpa Ray alone had seven brothers and sisters.

WILL

Seven? Whoa. (GRABBING MORE "BRANCHES") And who did they marry?

NICK

You know what, just leave that out. It was legal in Arkansas at the time and that's all you need to know.

CARLI ENTERS, CARRYING HER UNIFORM.

CARLI

("UPBEAT") Hey, guys! Sorry I'm late.

PAM AND WILL IMMEDIATELY JUMP UP TO GREET HER.

PAM

Mom! Congratulations! Uncle Nick told us you got the job.

WILL

That's awesome, Mom!

PAM AND WILL HUG CARLI. SHE HUGS THEM BACK.

CARLI

Yep! It is awesome! (TO NICK) Hey, could you be the best brother ever and get me a nice, big glass of Chablis to celebrate with? (THEN) Now?

NICK

(READING HER FRUSTRATION) Oh, boy...

NICK GOES TO THE FRIDGE AND DIGS OUT A BOTTLE.

CARLI

But enough about me, let's hear about your days. (TO PAM) Things any better on the bus, Sweetie?

PAM

Well, you were right. Someone finally noticed me. It was Dicky "Dumpster".

CARLI

See! And he turned out to be a really cool guy, didn't he?

PAM

He picked peanut butter out of his braces the whole ride with a protractor.

CARLI

("LEMONS TO LEMONADE") But I bet it made you appreciate how good you had it when you were sitting alone, right?

CARLI RUFFLES PAM'S HAIR AFFECTIONATELY, AS SCOTT ENTERS AND STORMS THROUGH THE KITCHEN TO THE LIVING ROOM.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(TO PAM AND WILL) Be right back.

CARLI FOLLOWS SCOTT.

RESET TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

CARLI CATCHES SCOTT AT THE HALLWAY TO HIS ROOM.

CARLI

Hold on there.

SCOTT STOPS, WITH AN EYE ROLL.

SCOTT

What?

CARLI

Today kind of gave me the idea that maybe you're ashamed about me having to take a job at the grocery store. And I really hope I'm wrong, because I'm finding it hard to believe that I raised that kid.

SCOTT

You don't have to apologize.

CARLI

Oh, I'm not. Trust me. Sit down!

CARLI PUSHES SCOTT DOWN ON THE COUCH. SCOTT SITS.

CARLI (CONT'D)

See, Scott, I have to work. I'm never going to be the mom who gets to sit around all day at home, looking through catalogs to decide what color Camaro I'm going to buy.

SCOTT

No one drives Camaros anymore.

CARLI

Exactly! That's how long it's been since I even thought about buying a brand new car. I've never even taken a vacation. I could have used the money I was saving up for something like that. But I moved us here, to invest in our futures, even if that meant we wouldn't have as much as other families.

SCOTT

As much? We don't have anything.

CARLI

Oh, I'm sorry. It's not raining on your big, fat head, is it? When you're hungry, there's food. Right? (THEN) I work so that you guys can have the advantages I didn't have.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(THEN) And if that's not good enough
for you, Scott, then I'm not the one
you should be ashamed of.

CARLI LET'S THIS SOAK IN, AS SCOTT CONTINUES SULKING -- NOT
WILLING TO CONCEDE.

SCOTT

Can I go now?

CARLI

It's a free country. I mean, it's a
very expensive country but you're free
to go to your room.

SCOTT

So I'm not grounded?

CARLI

("DUH") Like a 747 in a blizzard.

SCOTT HEADS OFF, PASSING NICK AS HE HEADS IN, HOLDING A GLASS
OF WINE AND A BEER. CARLI FLOPS ON THE COUCH, EXHAUSTED,
WITH A GROAN.

NICK

Okay, what happened?

NICK NUDGES CARLI'S FEET. SHE LIFTS THEM OFF THE COUCH SO HE
CAN SIT, THEN FLOPS THEM BACK DOWN AGAIN.

CARLI

Nothing. Everything's fine

NICK HANDS HER THE WINE.

NICK

Come on, Car. I haven't seen you this beaten down since you got didn't make cheerleading in eighth grade.

CARLI

(STILL SMARTING) I was robbed! And there was nobody bigger than me who could anchor that pyramid! (OFF LOOK) Alright. My big, fancy "career move" turns out to be a job at a deli. I flirted with my boss. I'm thirty-five and I still have to wear a uniform to work. My son is ashamed of me. And I can't even work a dumb cash register.

NICK

But the good news is that Mindi Meisner collapsed under all that weight and three cheerleaders had to go to the emergency room, right?

CARLI SIGHS, NOT UPLIFTED. SHE SITS UP TO SIP HER WINE.

CARLI

I should just take a job at Hooters.

NICK

No offense, Carli, but A) they haven't called back, and B) maybe those (OFF CARLI) "ships" have already sailed.

CARLI CONSIDERS FOR A MOMENT, THEN SIGHS, DEFEATED.

CARLI

You're right. After three kids,
"ships" just... sink. (THEN) Am I
doing the right thing, Nick? I
thought moving here was going to be
great for everyone but it's just made
everything harder.

NICK SCOOCHEs OVER AND PUTS AN ARM AROUND CARLI'S SHOULDER.

NICK

Carli, you're the smartest person I
know. You did the right thing and
you're going to make this work. You
want to know why? Because that would
leave me to hold this family
together... and the last thing I was
responsible for was that new SUV I
borrowed from my buddy to take ice
fishing --

CARLI

(SHAKING HER HEAD, STILL IN DISBELIEF)
In March.

NICK

In my defense, it was a really cold
day. (THEN) Okay, so you have to
wear a uniform. You're always fixing

NICK (CONT'D)

up your own clothes. I'm sure you can do something to make it better. Scott's a good kid. He'll come around. And hitting on your boss, well... ignore it and hope he has a really, really bad memory.

CARLI

But what about this register? The manual is like a hundred pages long.

NICK

I'm a college boy. I'll help you out.

NICK GETS UP AND HOLDS OUT HIS HAND FOR CARLI.

NICK (CONT'D)

Now prepare yourself because I'm going to say something I've never said before.

CARLI

"I'd rather wait until our second date?"

NICK

Ha. (THEN, OFF LOOK) "Let's study."

CARLI CONSIDERS FOR A MOMENT, THEN GIVES NICK HER HAND AND LET'S HERSELF BE PULLED UP. NICK HEADS OFF TO THE KITCHEN. CARLI FOLLOWS, AS WE...

CUT TO:

ACT TWOSCENE H

INT. DIAMOND FOODS - AFTERNOON (D-3)

CARLI'S BEHIND THE COUNTER, RINGING UP A SALE FOR AN OLDER, EXPENSIVELY-DRESSED WOMAN, AS JEREMY OBSERVES THE EXCHANGE LOUNGING AGAINST THE DISPLAY CASE NEARBY.

CARLI

One (PERFECTLY PRONOUNCED) Nicoise
salad. (THEN) Sounds a lot classier
than a can of tuna on lettuce, huh?

THE LADY LAUGHS AND PUTS A FIVE IN CARLI'S TIP JAR.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Hey, thanks! Now I'm only ninety-nine
thousand, nine hundred and ninety-five
dollars away from my Rolls Royce.

THE WOMAN LAUGHS AND HEADS OFF.

JEREMY

(OFF REGISTER) Impressive. You're a
worthy adversary. That is so sexy.

CARLI SCOFFS AND STARTS OUT FROM BEHIND THE COUNTER.

CARLI

Jeremy, seriously. I'm just trying
not to get fired here...

JEREMY

Well, I'd worry less about being
"fired" and more about being so hot in
that uniform you burst into flames.

CARLI COMES OUT INTO THE CAFE AREA TO WIPE DOWN TABLES.
REVEAL: CARLI'S UNIFORM IS EMBELLISHED AND TAILORED TO BE LOW-CUT AND FORM FITTING. HER BERET IS WORN AT A JAUNTY TILT.

CARLI

I thought the top button was just a little high, but then I thought "who needs a top button at all"? And I figured, as long as I had the Bedazzler out already...

CARLI SHOWS OFF THE MINI-SKIRT SHE'S CREATED OUT OF HER FORMERLY BAGGY UNIFORM PANTS.

JEREMY

You look like a really trashy Barbie Doll.

CARLI

(FLATTERED) Thank you. (THEN, NOTICING) Well, look who's here...

JEREMY FOLLOWS CARLI'S GAZE. SCOTT HAS JUST ENTERED THE STORE WITH SUSIE.

JEREMY

Who's that? Your boyfriend? Because I think I can take him --

CARLI

Oh, scoot!

SHE SHOOS JEREMY AWAY, AS SCOTT BRINGS SUSIE OVER.

SCOTT

(PAINED) Susie, this is my mom. Mom, this is Susie.

SUSIE

It's great to meet you, Mrs. Miller.

CARLI CHECKS OUT SUSIE, WHO SMILES POLITELY BACK AT HER -- THEN SCOTT, TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HIS MOTIVATION HERE.

CARLI

(TO SUSIE) Mrs. Miller is my second ex-husband's mom. You can call me Carli.

CARLI PUTS OUT HER HAND. SUSIE SHAKES IT.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Nice to finally meet you, Susie.

SUSIE

Thank you, Carli. (THEN) I wanted to come in and apologize for Scott and I kissing like that in the store yesterday. It was inappropriate, and it won't happen again.

CARLI

I'm glad to hear that.

NOW CARLI SCRUTINIZES SCOTT MORE INTENSELY: CLEARLY THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN MEETS THE EYE. SCOTT SHIFTS UNCOMFORTABLY.

SUSIE

And, while I totally respect that fact that Scott is grounded, I am having a birthday party on Saturday night...

CARLI

(GETTING IT) Ahh. There it is!

SUSIE

So I was wondering if maybe you could
let Scott just go to the party.

CARLI SHOOTS SCOTT A LOOK, ON TO HIM, THEN:

CARLI

Are your parents going to be home?

SUSIE

Of course.

CARLI

And no drinking?

SCOTT

Mom--

SUSIE

(TO SCOTT) It's okay. (TO CARLI) I
mean, I know some parents let their
kids drink -- but my parents are
always, like: "What is this, Europe?"
So definitely no drinking. (THEN) It
would mean a lot to me if he could be
there.

SUSIE SMILES BRIGHTLY. SCOTT LOOKS TO CARLI, EXPECTANTLY.
CARLI CONSIDERS, KNOWING HOW HARD THIS IS FOR HIM.

CARLI

Okay. I guess that would be fine.
(TO SUSIE) I'll just need your mom
and dad's number so I can call up
introduce myself first.

SUSIE

Oh. Actually... their number's
unlisted. (SIGNIFICANTLY) They're
lawyers.

CARLI REGISTERS THIS.

CARLI

They're lawyers?! I see. Well, I
sell sandwiches. And I'll need that
number before I can let Scott go.

CARLI SMILES AT SUSIE, BUT HER EYES MAKE IT CLEAR SHE'S NOT
BACKING DOWN. SUSIE TURNS TO SCOTT, HER SMILE TIGHT.

SUSIE

Can I talk to you privately?

SCOTT NODS AND STEPS A FEW FEET AWAY WITH SUSIE. CARLI
STRAINS TO LISTEN IN.

SCOTT

She's not going to back down. Just
give it to her.

SUSIE

Scott, my parents wouldn't be
comfortable giving out their number to
just anyone.

SCOTT REGISTERS THIS, SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK.

SCOTT

She's not "just anyone". She's my
mom.

SUSIE

It's not going to happen, Scott.

HE WANTS TO LET THIS GO, BUT... JUST CAN'T.

SCOTT

Then I'm not going to your party,

Susie.

SUSIE

Come on. You're being ridiculous.

SCOTT

No, you're being ridiculous. And a

total snob.

SUSIE TAKES THIS IN, A LITTLE EMBARRASSED AND A LOT ANNOYED. SHE LOOKS FROM SCOTT TO CARLI, WHO QUICKLY TRIES TO COVER FOR HER EAVESDROPPING.

SUSIE

Whatever, Scott. Maybe you should

take the bus back.

SUSIE TURNS ON HER HEEL AND GOES, LEAVING SCOTT STANDING THERE... REALIZING WHAT HE'S JUST DONE. CARLI COMES AROUND THE COUNTER TO JOIN HIM.

CARLI

What was that all about?

SCOTT

Nothing.

A BEAT, AS CARLI TRIES TO RESIST, BUT:

CARLI

(BEAMING) You did the right thing,
didn't you?

SCOTT IGNORES HER, WANTING NOTHING MORE THAN TO NOT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

CARLI (CONT'D)

You're a good person, Scott. And I'm proud of you. (THEN) How about a hug? 'Cause I could do it quick.

SCOTT

(OVER IT) I'm going back to school.

SCOTT STARTS OFF. NOW CARLI OFFICIALLY CANNOT CONTAIN HER JOY.

CARLI

(CALLING AFTER HIM) And he even likes school! Looks like someone did an excellent job raising that kid! Who was that again?! Oh yeah, I did!

SHE LIFTS HER ARMS UP IN VICTORY.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(OFF UNDERARMS, ADDED TRIUMPH) Dry as a bone!

CARLI SMILES, WATCHING SCOTT HEAD OUT, ENJOYING THIS "LEMONADE" MOMENT -- THEN NOTICES ROB APPROACHING.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(SMILE FADING) Oh, no...

AS ROB STEPS UP, CARLI MEETS HIM.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(QUICKLY) Look, before you fire me, I just want you to know that I didn't know you were the boss when I flirted

CARLI (CONT'D)

with you. (REALIZING) Which is not to say I'm going to be hitting on customers. I mean, unless they look like you. But I've been studying all night and I want you to know that if you give me another chance, I--

ROB

I'm not firing you, Carli.

CARLI

You're not?

ROB

No. (OFF LOOK) I'm just here to pay you back. For my sandwich.

ROB TAKES OUT A BILL AND PUTS IT ON THE COUNTER. CARLI TAKES THIS IN A MOMENT, A LITTLE TAKEN ABACK. THEN:

CARLI

Well, what the hell kind of businessman are you? I almost nuked your register yesterday. And I told you your prices were too high--

ROB

I'm an intuitive one. And I've had three customers compliment the great service they got here today.

THIS STOPS CARLI IN HER TRACKS. SHE GRINS, PLEASED.

CARLI

Really? (BIG SMILE) So... you want to
keep me around?

ROB

Absolutely. Although the, uh... mini-
skirt may not meet safety guidelines.

ROB CAN'T RESIST A GLANCE AT CARLI'S LEGS. CARLI CATCHES HIS
EYE, BUSTING HIM. THEY SMILE, A LITTLE AWKWARDLY, THEN:

WOMAN (O.S.)

Rob? Are you ready?

CARLI AND ROB TURN TO SEE A PILATES-SKINNY AND TASTEFULLY
ACCESSORIZED YOUNG WOMAN WAITING IMPATIENTLY NEARBY.

ROB

Be right there, Babe. (THEN, TO
CARLI) So... keep up the good work.

HE TURNS AWAY AND JOINS THE WOMAN, WHO SNUGGLES INTO HIS ARM
AS THEY HEAD OFF. CARLI SIGHS, A LITTLE CRESTFALLEN,
WATCHING THEM GO. AFTER A BEAT, SHE REALIZES A PIMPLY ARM IS
SNAKING AROUND HER WAIST.

JEREMY

That's right. Cry it out. I'm cool
being the rebound guy.

JEREMY TRIES TO PUT HIS ARM AROUND CARLI, BUT SHE DEFTLY
TAKES HIS ARM AND TURNS HIM AWAY, IN AN ALMOST DANCE-LIKE
MOVE... SO HE'S SUDDENLY STANDING THREE FEET AWAY AGAIN.

CARLI

Jeremy, you have to be this tall...

SHE INDICATES A SPOT SOMEWHERE ABOVE HER SHOULDER BUT CLEARLY
OVER JEREMY'S HEAD.

CARLI (CONT'D)

To ride this ride. (THEN)

CARLI (CONT'D)

I can see you're going to be a project. But with a little guidance... (OFF SCENT WHERE HIS ARM WAS) and a lot less Paco Rabonne... we might just be able to shape you up enough to find you a good woman.

JEREMY

Already found one. (THEN) And when I get promoted, I'm going to treat you in the manner to which you should become accustomed.

JEREMY GIVES CARLI A WINK AND STARTS OFF.

CARLI

That's assuming I don't get promoted first.

JEREMY TURNS BACK, AGHAST.

CARLI (CONT'D)

(A GRIN) That's right, Little Man. Game on.

AND CARLI HAPPILY HEADS BACK TO WORK, LEAVING JEREMY FLABBERGHASTED, AS WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (D-3)

PAM AND WILL FINISH THEIR HOMEWORK AT THE TABLE. NICK PUTS PIZZA BOXES IN THE TRASH, AS CARLI LOOKS OVER WILL'S SHOULDER.

CARLI

(TO WILL) See? How easy was that?

Your family tree's all done!

NICK TAKES A LOOK, AS SCOTT ENTERS GRABBING A FEW SNACKS FROM THE FRIDGE.

NICK

(TO WILL) Good job, buddy. It looks really... unique.

WILL

But it doesn't even look like a tree.

WILL HOLDS IT UP: THE "TREE" HAS GROWN INTO A HUGE KNOT OF INTERSECTING BRANCHES THAT SPRAWL ONTO OTHER SHEETS OF PAPER.

CARLI

Of course it does. Here!

CARLI TURNS THE WORKSHEET UPSIDE DOWN. SUDDENLY IT MAKES SENSE. THE ORIGINAL "ROOTS" NOW LOOK LIKE A SMALL TREE -- AND THE CRAZY SWIRL OF BRANCHES LOOKS LIKE THE ROOTS.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Doesn't matter how tall a tree grows.

It's only as strong as it's roots are deep.

WILL

You're so smart, Mom!

CARLI HEART MELTS. SHE GRABS HER BABY BOY UP IN A BIG HUG

CARLI

You're never leaving! Get used to it.

SCOTT

I'm heading to study group--

CARLI GRABS SCOTT, TOO, AGAINST HIS WILL.

CARLI

And this one's going to study group!

Does it get any better than this?

PAM

Mom, did you start early on the

Chablis?

CARLI LAUGHS, ENJOYING THE MOMENT, AND PULLS PAM IN, TOO.

CARLI

And this one is so clever and witty!

THE KIDS SQUIRM, PROTESTING. CARLI LET'S THEM GO.

CARLI (CONT'D)

Alright! (THEN) Just remember who it
is that's doing such a great job of
raising you up.

SCOTT

(TEASING) Uncle Nick?

CARLI

No! (THEN, RAISING ARMS) This guy!

AS CARLI CELEBRATES, ENJOYING THE MOMENT, WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW