

BROTHERS-IN-LAW

"Pilot"

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Network Draft  
March 23, 2012

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An Escalade is parked across two spots. (We only see maybe four spots. This is an indoor "outdoor" set.) NEIL (tightly wound, and -- as is very evident right now -- intellectually intense) stares at the car, shaking his head. His wife CHESKA (beautiful, put-together, and -- as is very evident right now -- indefatigable) tries to move him along.

NEIL

Look at the way this guy parked.

CHESKA

It's ridiculous. Now come on, we don't want to be late.

NEIL

I know. (THEN) I'm sorry, I've got to write this guy a note.

CHESKA

Please don't write a note.

NEIL

You know it's going to eat at me all through dinner. If I don't write a note, this jerk will think it's perfectly fine to park his monster truck across as many spaces as he wants. So next time, he parks across three spaces.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

Time after that, he takes up the whole parking lot!

CHESKA

I don't think that would be possible.

NEIL

Do you have a piece of paper? An envelope, anything.

CHESKA

No! Come on. Maddie's inside, all she's been talking about is us meeting the new boyfriend. My dad's probably in there by now...

Neil fishes a napkin out of his pocket.

NEIL

Ah, a napkin. Good. What do you think, "Dear Cretin" or "Dear Ass"?

CHESKA

I'm not going to help you with this.

NEIL

Your sister is waiting.

CHESKA

(SURRENDERING) Ass.

NEIL

(WRITING) Ass. Perfect. See? You're good at this.

CUT TO:

SCENE B

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Maddie (Cheska's fraternal twin sister, physically similar but emotionally poles apart) rushes up to Neil and Cheska, who are just now entering. They're in the waiting area.

MADDIE

Oh my god, are you okay? You didn't answer any of my texts!

CHESKA

My phone was in my bag. Are you okay?

MADDIE

No! I thought you were dead on the side of the road. I thought I was going to be introducing my boyfriend to my dead sister.

NEIL

We're actually four minutes early.

Cheska has dug her phone out of her bag.

CHESKA

You sent me sixteen texts!

MADDIE

I'm just so excited for you to meet Van!

CHESKA

So are we. Where is he?

MADDIE

I'll get him.

Maddie excitedly crosses off-screen. Neil shakes his head.

NEIL

Sixteen texts?

CHESKA

I know, but we have to cut her some slack. Look at what she's been through in the last couple of years. Kevin broke her heart. Then there was Josh, and Dylan, and Jacob, who kept calling her "mommy." And the guy with the diaper fetish...

NEIL

That was Larry. And also Maurice.

CHESKA

Actually, she made some real progress with Maurice. By the time they broke up, she'd gotten him into pull-ups.

Maddie reappears, leading VAN toward them. He's big, he's loud, and he's on his cell phone. Maddie points to him and mouths "It's him!"

VAN

(ON PHONE) You're not hearing me, Doug.

You've got to trust me on this one.

Doug, buddy, you're not hearing me.

NEIL

(SOTTO TO CHESKA) How can that be?

Everyone in the restaurant is hearing  
him.

Cheska shushes Neil as Maddie and Van reach the table.

VAN

(ON PHONE) Have I ever led you wrong?

(LAUGHING) You would bring that up,  
you crazy sonofabitch! Hold on.

Van cups the phone.

MADDIE

Van, this is Cheska, and her husband  
Neil.

VAN

The twin sister! Ahh! Come here!

Van plants a big kiss on Cheska's cheek, and vigorously  
shakes Neil's hand.

VAN (CONT'D)

Doctor!

NEIL

I'm not a doctor.

VAN

(RE: PHONE) I seal the deal with this  
sucker, dinner's on me. (INTO PHONE)

Oh, now you hear me! Let's talk  
dollars, you cheap bastard.

Van winks at them, then crosses off to continue his  
conversation. Maddie turns to Cheska.

MADDIE

What do you think?

CHESKA

I just met him for half a second.

MADDIE

You hate him.

CHESKA

(IMMEDIATELY) I love him!

MADDIE

(DON'T BE SILLY) You just met him for  
half a second. (THEN) Oh, Daddy's  
here. (CALLING) Daddy! I want you to  
meet Van!

Maddie crosses off to intercept TOM (Cheska and Maddie's father, 60s, wields power with such confidence that he never has to raise his voice). Neil turns to Cheska, shaking his head with a hint of a smirk.

NEIL

Hoo boy. Your dad is going to eat  
this poor guy alive.

CUT TO:

SCENE C

INT. RESTAURANT - TWO HOURS LATER

Tom is sitting across from Van, and the two of them are nursing scotches and laughing their asses off. Neil, who's sitting next to Tom, can't believe what he's seeing.

TOM

(LAUGHING) I love this guy!

VAN

So Kobe lands right in my lap, and I turn to Jack and I say "I didn't even have to buy him dinner first!"

Tom laughs uproariously as Van flags down the waiter.

VAN (CONT'D)

Another round of Johnnie Blue, neat, for me and my friend Tom. How are you ladies doing with the white wine?

Cheska, Maddie and Neil have glasses of white wine.

NEIL

We're good.

VAN

(REALIZING) Sorry, doctor.

MADDIE

Tell Daddy about your company, sweetie.

TOM

You own a company?

NEIL

I own a company.

VAN

(MODEST BRAVADO) It's a small company.

TOM

A company's a company.

NEIL

I have twenty-three full time  
employees.

TOM

Uh huh. Tell him what your company  
makes, Neil.

NEIL

(DEFENSIVE) It doesn't make anything. It's  
a tech incubator. We develop concepts.

TOM

(ROLLING HIS EYES) Right. So how much  
do you charge for a box of "concepts"?

VAN

Me, I'm in the home security game. I  
sell the systems, I provide the patrols,  
one-stop shopping for peace of mind.

As he says this, Van casually crosses his legs, revealing a  
gun in his ankle holster. Neil's eyes go wide. Does he say  
something? He nudges Cheska.

CHESKA

What?

Neil tries to indicate "Look at his ankle!" No dice.

CHESKA (CONT'D)

What? Are you choking?

NEIL

(SOTTO) No! He's got a gun.

CHESKA

(ALARMED) Who's got a gun?

She looks around the restaurant, freaked. Van jumps up, ready to whip out his gun.

VAN

Who's got a gun?

NEIL

(FOR CHRIST'S SAKE) You've got a gun!

VAN

Oh. Yes, I do have a gun. Don't worry, it's fully licensed. All part of being in the security business.

Cheska playfully punches Neil in the arm.

CHESKA

(TO NEIL) You scared me.

NEIL

I scared you?

Tom pats Van on the back.

TOM

So nice to know that one of my daughters is well protected.

Van smiles -- aw shucks. Neil grinds his teeth.

CUT TO:

SCENE D

INT. RESTAURANT - MEN'S ROOM - LATER

Neil enters and crosses to a urinal. He's about to get down to business when Van enters.

VAN

Neil!

NEIL

Van.

Van goes to the urinal right next to Neil, to his discomfort.

VAN

Whoa! This water's cold!

Neil stares straight ahead, trying to focus.

VAN (CONT'D)

That's a joke. You're supposed to say  
"Deep, too." Like as if your--

NEIL

No, I know the joke. But these are  
waterless urinals so it doesn't make  
sense.

VAN

Good point. (LOOKS DOWN, BEAT) Huh,  
guess I didn't have to go.

NEIL

Then why are you in here?

VAN

I wanted to talk to you, buddy!

Van slaps him warmly on the shoulder. Neil recoils.

NEIL

Please don't touch me while I'm  
urinating.

VAN

Sorry! Didn't know you had a weird  
thing about it. Look, I've never met  
anybody in Maddie's family until  
tonight. You've been part of them a  
long time. I need you to give me some  
intel on how things work. Where the  
bodies are buried.

NEIL

Sorry, but that would take hours.

Neil zips up and crosses to the sink.

VAN

Not a problem -- I've got hours!  
Dudes' night out. Tomorrow night.

NEIL

(OH SHIT) Tomorrow night? Gee, I --

VAN

You've got five seconds to come up  
with a good excuse.

NEIL

Well, um, it's Thursday, so--

VAN

Five! Four! Three! Two! One!

(BUZZER SOUND) You're in! We're gonna  
have a blast.

NEIL

(SURRENDERING) Will you be bringing  
the gun?

VAN

Oh, I never go anywhere without  
Shirley.

CUT TO:

SCENE E

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Tom emerges from the restaurant with his arm around Van, loving him. Cheska, Maddie and Neil follow them.

TOM

How the hell did you do that?

VAN

I'll never tell!

TOM

Did you slip the waitress your credit card on the way in?

VAN

Hey, it's not important. It was my pleasure.

TOM

You've got yourself a tricky one here, Maddie!

NEIL

(TO CHESKA) I paid for his trip to the Galapagos, but this is a big deal.

TOM

What's that?

NEIL

Nothing.

TOM

(TO CHESKA) Did he bring up the Galapagos again?

CHESKA

No. Let's drop it.

TOM

I'm just going to write him a check  
for it. How much, Neil?

NEIL

Not necessary, Tom. It was my  
pleasure.

TOM

(TO VAN) It wasn't my pleasure.  
Eleven hours on a plane to look at  
turtles.

NEIL

Tortoises!

CHESKA/MADDIE

Please, not again!/Oh for god's  
sake...

Van hits the "unlock" button on his keychain, and the poorly  
parked Escalade's lights flash. Neil flinches.

VAN

Huh. Somebody left me a note.

Cheska shoots Neil a look; Neil shrugs, "What do you want  
from me?"

VAN (CONT'D)

(READING) "Dear ass -- Bravo on the  
parking job.

(MORE)

VAN (CONT'D)

Those of us who park our cars in a single space can only gape in admiration at the way your gigantic ass wagon dominates the parking lot."

TOM

What kind of namby pamby jerk leaves a note on a car?

VAN

(READING) "P.S. -- Thank you for keeping America addicted to foreign oil, you gas-guzzling Neanderthal."

TOM

(CONFIDENT) Neil.

NEIL

("OFFENDED") Why would you jump to that?

CHESKA

(TO VAN) He's sorry.

NEIL

Nice to know you've got my back, Cheska.

VAN

No no, it's okay. Neil makes a good point. I'm parked completely over the line.

(MORE)

VAN (CONT'D)

And I get like three miles per gallon,  
which is pathetic. You nailed me,  
buddy!

NEIL

Well, sorry about the tone. No hard  
feelings?

VAN

Never! Water, bridge, whoosh!

He shakes Neil's hand. Neil and Cheska turn to leave.

VAN (CONT'D)

(TO TOM) Of course, I need a big truck  
to pull my boat.

TOM

He's got a boat! You hear that, Neil?

CHESKA

(TO NEIL) Keep walking!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE F

FADE IN:

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Neil is making coffee, which for him involves hand-grinding the beans, heating the milk, and measuring everything out precisely. Cheska tends to Wyatt, their 18-month-old son, who sits in a high chair and never says anything ever.

NEIL

Look, of course I want your sister to be happy! But when guys with guns corner me in men's rooms...

CHESKA

You're being dramatic. I liked Van.

NEIL

Not as much as your dad did. He was about to climb over the table and make sweet love to Van right there on the calamari.

CHESKA

Don't say that in front of Wyatt.

NEIL

The kid calls me "doggy." Do you really think he gets gay innuendo?

CHESKA

Look -- Don't feel so threatened. Daddy loves you, too.

NEIL

I would only add to that that he in fact hates me.

CHESKA

He doesn't hate you.

NEIL

He does. He thinks I'm unworthy of you, he doesn't get what I do, he thinks I'm from Mars. Remember when we announced we were engaged?

CHESKA

He was happy for us.

NEIL

His exact response was "Is there any wiggle room on this?"

CHESKA

He was just a little surprised.

NEIL

Right, because I didn't ask him for your hand. How is that a crime? It's so archaic! This isn't the middle ages. He doesn't own you. You aren't chattel.

CHESKA

My dad's a traditional guy. He likes the ceremony of it.

NEIL

So you agree I should have asked.  
Fine. You have the same status as a  
goat or a plow.

CHESKA

Hey, I've let it go. You're the one  
dwelling on it.

NEIL

He dwells on it! He brings it up every  
chance he gets. I ask him to pass the  
salt, he says "How nice of you to ask."  
Who says that about salt?

CHESKA

(ENOUGH!) Look, Maddie's boyfriend made  
a gesture of friendship to you. It was  
nice. Just go out with the guy!

NEIL

Come on, we're both thinking the same  
thing.

CHESKA

I doubt it.

NEIL

Your dad hired him to whack me.

CHESKA

Neil -- we need to encourage Maddie's  
relationship.

(MORE)

CHESKA (CONT'D)

Don't you want her to have a life of her own so she's not always in the middle of ours? I mean, you're the one who said marrying a twin is like having two wives but you only get to have sex with one of them.

NEIL

Again, that wasn't supposed to mean I wanted to have sex with your sister.

CHESKA

Then why did you say you only "get to" have sex with one of them?

NEIL

Would you prefer I'd said I only "have to" have sex with one of them?

CHESKA

If you don't stop complaining and just go out with Van, you're going to be having sex with yourself.

Cheska exits.

NEIL

(CALLING AFTER HER) Okay, now who's talking dirty in front of the baby?

CUT TO:

SCENE G

INT./EXT. VAN'S ESCALADE - NIGHT

The Escalade's engine roars as Van drives with one hand, casually swerving from lane to lane. Neil grips the armrest in white-knuckled terror.

VAN

And boom, the guy goes down like a ton of bricks. That's the biggest difference between mixed martial arts and ultimate fighting -- more brain injuries.

NEIL

I think you just ran somebody off the road.

VAN

Yeah. People in this town do not know how to drive, am I right?

NEIL

(POINTING OUT WINDOW) You just passed the steak house.

VAN

Oh, we're going someplace much more fun than the steak house.

CUT TO:

SCENE H

INT. GEISHA ENCOUNTER - MINUTES LATER

A sleek, ultra modern sushi joint, all chrome, glass and neon. The place is full of drunk business men.

We find Neil and Van looking at an array of sushi displayed, discreetly, along the leg of a naked woman. Van is thrilled; Neil is nauseated.

VAN

Did I tell you, or did I tell you?

NEIL

You told me.

VAN

I can't believe it took civilization  
3000 years to invent the naked lady  
table. It seems like such a no-  
brainer!

Van grabs a piece of sushi from the naked leg and chows down. Yum! Neil picks up his chopsticks tentatively. He tries to grab a piece of sushi, but he can't bring himself to do it.

VAN (CONT'D)

Dig in!

NEIL

I can't do this.

VAN

What? What are you talking about?

NEIL

It's just -- this is not my thing.  
Public nudity, and food mingled with  
body hair, and -- it's just not  
sanitary! (TO THE HUMAN TABLE) Nothing  
against you, miss, I'm sure you're very  
clean.

VAN

'Nuff said.

Van motions a waiter over.

VAN (CONT'D)

Ryuichi! We're going to go with  
regular plates.

RYUICHI

(INCREDULOUS) Seriously?

VAN

I know.

Van scrapes all the sushi off the woman's leg onto a plate.

NEIL

(TO RYUICHI) Can I just get a miso  
soup? And I'd like it in a bowl, I  
don't want to eat it out of somebody's  
mouth.

Ryuichi writes it down, shaking his head sadly.

RYUICHI

One soup, no mouth.

NEIL

My god, they actually have that?

Ryuichi and the woman exit.

VAN

You know, Neil, you can't live your life in a plastic bubble. It's not good for your immune system.

NEIL

Granted. But no one at the American Medical Association recommends eating eel off a foot.

VAN

Maybe not specifically. But if you think about it, the human body is an ecosystem, it's teeming with parasites. I saw a thing on Discovery about the mites that live in your eyebrows, and man oh man, those dudes are --

NEIL

(CHANGING THE SUBJECT!) Hey, so you wanted to know about Maddie and Cheska's family?

VAN

Yes! Right. Look, you're the inside man. I'm the new guy. I just want to get the lay of the land. Like, what's Tom's deal?

NEIL

Well, I don't know how much I can tell you. You know Tom raised the girls pretty much by himself. He doesn't like me, never has, he thinks I'm a pretentious intellectual with no real-world abilities of any kind, and that Cheska marrying me was the worst mistake of her life.

VAN

That's crazy. Although I gotta say, I think you may be your own worst enemy. I mean, Maddie told me about that whole bluetooth thing.

NEIL

(INSTANTLY ENRAGED) The man buys a cell phone, he refuses to even read the quick-start guide, and then he announces "bluetooth doesn't work, it's a scam!"

VAN

Hey, I'm just saying why poke the bear?

NEIL

(CALMING DOWN) Because this is the fifth freaking phone I've recommended for the bear. But whatever.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

The man hates me and he loves you, so  
I don't know what I can do for you.

VAN

Well, I just want to make sure I don't  
screw anything up. See, I'm about to  
make a bold move.

Van pulls out a ring box and opens it, revealing a big-ass  
engagement ring.

NEIL

(THROWN) Wow. You're moving fast.

VAN

When I figure out what I want, I just  
go for it, y'know?

NEIL

I waited three years to propose to  
Cheska. Every time I saw Tom, he'd  
say "Hey, why buy the cow, right?" So  
you've got nothing to worry about.  
You're batting a thousand with Tom.  
And I'm batting about a two.

VAN

Not a big baseball fan, are you?

NEIL

No. Much to Tom's chagrin.

VAN

Well, tomorrow night, me and you are  
going to be brother-in-laws to be.

NEIL

Wow, that's really fast. (CASUAL) Hey,  
are you by any chance going to ask Tom  
for Maddie's hand?

VAN

Nah. That's kinda old-fashioned,  
isn't it?

A sly smile creeps across Neil's face.

NEIL

Oh yeah, I definitely think so.

Neil drains the sake and holds up the bottle.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Ryuichi! More sake!

VAN

That's what I'm talkin' about !

NEIL

Yeah!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE I

FADE IN:

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cheska takes a pyrex container of reheated ravioli out of the microwave. It's hot!

SFX: THE PHONE RINGS

Cheska tosses the hot container onto the counter and tries to "shake off" the burn while grabbing the phone.

CHESKA

(INTO PHONE) Hello?

MADDIE (O.S.)

What is it? What's wrong?

CHESKA

I just burned my fingers, that's all.

MADDIE (O.S.)

I thought maybe you'd heard from Neil about his dinner with Van. Is it weird that he hasn't called? It's weird, isn't it?

Cheska runs her fingers under cold water.

CHESKA

No. Neil doesn't usually call with updates mid-dinner.

MADDIE (O.S.)

Okay. Okay. That's good. What are you doing now? Want some company?

CHESKA

Honestly, I just got Wyatt to sleep, I haven't eaten a thing, I just need a little veg time.

MADDIE (O.S.)

Totally get it. (BEAT) I'm standing outside your door.

CHESKA

Maddie!

Maddie enters. (She has a key.)

MADDIE

(HUSHED) I promise I won't wake Wyatt up!

Maddie notices the pyrex bowl of ravioli. She grabs one with her fingers, pops it in her mouth and shrieks in pain.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

(MOUTH FULL) Hot hot hot!

Offstage, Wyatt starts crying. Oops.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

(DEFENSIVE) It's very hot.

CUT TO:

SCENE J

INT./EXT. VAN'S ESCALADE - NIGHT - DRIVING

Van swerves, with Neil braced in a crash-ready position.

VAN

Neil. C'mon. Relax!

NEIL

I can't. You got air on that speed bump.

VAN

That's what speed bumps are for!

Another speed bump. The car jolts upward.

VAN/NEIL

Whoo-hoo!/Please stop!

SFX: VAN'S PHONE RINGS

He answers.

VAN

What's up, Gina? Dang it. No, I got it. (HANGS UP) One of my clients' alarms is reporting a break-in, and there's no patrols in the area, so we're just gonna pop by and check it out.

Van skids into a turn.

NEIL

Wait, what? Why are we driving toward an armed robbery? We should be driving away from it!

VAN

Speed bump!

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31.

The car jolts upward again.

VAN/NEIL

Yes!/Stop doing that!

CUT TO:

SCENE K

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cheska and Maddie, each with a fork in hand, are alternating taking bites of the ravioli.

MADDIE

I honestly think Van could be the one.

CHESKA

Really?

MADDIE

What does that mean?

CHESKA

Nothing. Just asking.

MADDIE

But you didn't say (FLAT) "Really?"  
like you were just asking. You said  
(INSINUATING) "Really?" like "You  
could really be that delusional?"

CHESKA

It was just the word "really."

MADDIE

You don't remember what it's like  
being single! It's hard. And I'm  
older. I'm the one who should have  
gotten married first.

CHESKA

You're three minutes older.

MADDIE

That's still older. You really could be more supportive.

CHESKA

I'm trying. Believe me, I want this to work for you. Neil and I both do.

MADDIE

Augh, Neil! I can't believe I let Van go out with him. What if he tells Van about how I stalked Kevin after he broke up with me?

CHESKA

Neil wouldn't tell him about that.

MADDIE

I didn't stalk Kevin! We happened to wind up at the same ski resort a couple of times. People go skiing!

CHESKA

You said "stalk"!

MADDIE

And you didn't exactly object.

CHESKA

And you don't ski.

MADDIE

Or what if he tells Van about how I ruptured Trent Rowe's testicle with a putter?

CHESKA

(CRINGES) I'd managed to forget that.

MADDIE

It was not my fault! Who breaks up  
with a person at Mini Golf?

CHESKA

Neil would never tell that story. He  
can't even bear to think about it.  
You're being paranoid.

MADDIE

You're right. I've got to get out of  
here. Let's go to a bar and get hammered!

CHESKA

(WTF?) Wyatt is asleep in the other room.

MADDIE

Well, call a sitter.

CHESKA

You can't just magically make a  
babysitter appear at 10:30 at night!

MADDIE

It's 10:30?! Oh my god, where are  
they?!

SFX: BABY CRYING

Cheska looks at Maddie: WTF?

MADDIE (CONT'D)

That kid is a really light sleeper.

CUT TO:

SCENE 1

INT./EXT. VAN'S ESCALADE/SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Van parks the car and turns to Neil.

VAN

This is the place. Wanna come with  
me?

NEIL

No way! I'm staying in the car.

VAN

Suit yourself.

Van hops out of the car.

NEIL

You can't just leave me in the car!

VAN

Then come with me.

NEIL

Are you crazy? I'm not going in  
there!

VAN

Then stay in the car!

NEIL

What, with no protection?!

VAN

Fine.

Van reaches into the glove box, pulls out a pistol and hands  
it to Neil. Neil panics instantly.

NEIL

Take this thing away from me before I  
kill somebody!

VAN

Fine! I'll be two minutes.

Van puts the gun back in the glove box and exits.

Neil is spooked to be alone. He starts to hyperventilate.

NEIL

(TO HIMSELF) Calm down, Neil. Just  
breathe. I'm sure everything's fine.  
Oh, who am I kidding?! This is how  
people get murdered all the time.

Neil ducks down below the window.

NEIL (CONT'D)

This is it. This is it for me.

Neil pulls out his cell phone and dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Cheska answers the phone.

CHESKA

Hey, honey. Having fun?

NEIL

(INTENSE) I love you.

CHESKA

(THROWN) I love you too.

NEIL

No, I mean I really love you.

CHESKA

Are you okay?

NEIL

I am. And I'm ready for whatever comes.

MADDIE

What's going on?

CHESKA

(SHUSHES MADDIE) Neil, what's going  
on?

Maddie grabs the phone from Cheska.

MADDIE

Neil? What happened? Where's Van?

NEIL

I don't know. He ran out.

MADDIE

(TO CHESKA) I knew it. Neil scared  
him away!

Neil sits up and looks around. He sees something in the  
distance. His eyes go wide.

NEIL

Gotta go!

END INTERCUT.

...as Neil hangs up and peers out the window.

ANGLE ON: THE HOUSE, where a DARK FIGURE skulks through the  
bushes. We can't make it out, but it's clearly not Van.

IN THE CAR, Neil panics.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Nooo!

He lays on the CAR HORN.

AT THE HOUSE, the Dark Figure turns toward the sound. We WHIP PAN to the other side of the house, where Van emerges.

IN THE CAR, Neil freaks out.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Van! Look out!

Neil reaches into the glove box. He grabs the gun! Then he jumps out of the car.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Neil emerges from the car. Van is running at him.

VAN

(INDISTINCT YELLING!)

Neil looks the other way. The Dark Figure is running toward him. They're converging on Neil from different directions, each with a gun in his hand!

NEIL

(SCREAMS!)

Neil panics! He hurls his gun at the Dark Figure. It misses him and lands uselessly on the grass.

By now, Van is just a few feet away. He sees the Dark Figure for the first time. Van bursts out laughing.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What are you doing?!

VAN

It's just Milt! He works with me. (TO

MILT) Gina didn't tell you I was

taking this call?

MILT

Nope. This guy a friend of yours?

VAN

(LAUGHING) Yup. Neil, why are you  
throwing guns at Milt?

NEIL

I thought Milt was a murderer! Now  
would you please put the guns away?

VAN

What, this gun? (TEASING) You want me  
to put away my little friend?

NEIL

Scarface. That's fresh.

Milt points his gun at Van, smiling.

MILT

You feeling lucky, punk?

Van points his gun at Milt.

VAN

Are you talking to me? Are you  
talking to me?

NEIL

Okay, ha ha. Put the guns down.

VAN

I aim to kill you in about one minute,  
Ned!

NEIL

Seriously!

CUT TO:

SCENE M

INT./EXT. VAN'S ESCALADE - DRIVING - MOMENTS LATER

Van drives. Neil is starting to calm down.

VAN

So hey, Neil -- I want you to know, I appreciate what you did back there.

NEIL

Yeah, I know, I was very entertaining.

VAN

You were trying to save my life. Sure, you threw a loaded gun at the bad guy, which is pretty much the stupidest thing you could possibly do. But it's good to know you've got my back.

NEIL

Well, you're welcome. And for the record, you were misquoting "Taxi Driver."

VAN

I wouldn't mess with me. I've seen it ten times.

NEIL

I've seen it fifteen.

VAN

(IMPRESSED) Really?

NEIL

It's not "Are you talkin' to me?"

It's "You talkin' to me?" No "are."

VAN

"You talkin' to me?" Yeah, that's  
right.

Neil smiles, proud.

NEIL

Damn right it's right. "Then who the  
hell else are you talkin' to?"

VAN

"You talkin' to me?"

VAN/NEIL

"Well I'm the only one here."

CUT TO:

SCENE N

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Cheska opens the door, revealing Neil and Van. Cheska throws her arms around Neil.

CHESKA

Oh thank god! I was so worried! You sounded like you were scared for your life!

MADDIE

(PLAYING IT COOL) I don't know what she was going on about. I told her there was nothing wrong. (TO VAN) Let me get my stuff.

Maddie crosses off.

VAN

Trust me, Chesk. Our boy Neil was never in danger.

Cheska takes a deep breath.

CHESKA

Well, Neil thinks he's in danger every time it rains two days in a row.

Cheska and Van laugh. Neil remains stoic.

NEIL

Yes. Laugh. Mudslides don't kill 30,000 people a year.

CHESKA

I'm just glad that you're alive. (TO  
VAN) Pardon me, Van, but Wyatt will be  
up and ready to play at five a.m. I'm  
glad you two had fun. (TO NEIL)  
Goodnight, my panicky love.

She and Neil share a sweet kiss. Then SHE EXITS UPSTAIRS.  
Van gets a little emotional.

VAN

See that? What you two have? That's  
what I want. Before I met Maddie, I  
wasn't sure I was ever going to find it.

NEIL

(HONEST) Well... I'm glad for you.  
It's pretty special.

But before he can even finish the word "special," Van grabs  
Neil in a bear hug. Maddie re-enters on this. She's  
overjoyed to see it.

MADDIE

See? I knew you two would be besties!  
(TO VAN) Meet you at your place.

Maddie gives Van a quick peck, and SHE EXITS.

VAN

See you there! (SOTTO TO NEIL) Remember  
-- mum's the word about the ring.

Van winks at Neil and EXITS AFTER MADDIE. Neil watches him  
go. He feels like a complete shithead. Dammit! After a  
beat, he EXITS AFTER VAN.

CUT TO:

SCENE 0

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Van is just about to get into his Escalade when Neil catches up with him.

NEIL

Van!

Neil looks around. The coast is clear.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Look, whatever you do, do not propose to Maddie until you ask Tom for his blessing.

VAN

(SURPRISED) Really? I thought you said --

NEIL

I know what I said. Just trust me -- you'll regret it if you don't.

Van mists up.

VAN

You really do have my back!

Van embraces Neil again, even tighter this time. Neil struggles to breathe. Just then, Maddie pulls out in her own car. She rolls down the window.

MADDIE

Why don't you two get a room?!

VAN

(CALLING AFTER HER) We might!

CUT TO:

SCENE P

INT. RESTAURANT - DAYS LATER

The whole gang is back: Neil, Cheska, Maddie, Van and Tom. Maddie is flashing her shiny new rock around as Tom pours champagne.

TOM

A toast! To Maddie and Van. Welcome  
to the family, son.

They clink glasses.

VAN

Thank you, Tom.

TOM

You know, Van came to me and asked for  
my blessing. That's called "class."

NEIL

(GRITTED TEETH) So I hear.

MADDIE

He showed up at Daddy's house on  
Saturday in a suit and tie.

TOM

And with a box of the best Cuban  
cigars I've ever tasted.

NEIL

(ENOUGH ALREADY) Well done, Van.

VAN

What can I say? I'm a man who  
believes in tradition.

Van casually high fives Neil behind Cheska's back.

MADDIE

My god, Cheska. We have so much to do. We have to pick a caterer, and find a place, do we want to have it at the church? (TO TOM) Do I have to start going to church?!

TOM

Yes.

MADDIE

Oh Jesus.

CHESKA

And there's the dress, and the band, and the flowers. We're going to be so busy.

VAN

Don't worry, ladies. Me and Neil will be your humble servants every step of the way. (TO NEIL) We're going to be spending a lot of time together, bro!

NEIL

(KILL ME NOW) Yes we will.

VAN

I love this guy!

Van reaches over and puts his arm around Neil. He crosses his legs, revealing his gun in its ankle holster. Neil stiffens.

NEIL

Shirley's got her safety lock on,  
right?

VAN

Of course!

Van, unsure, reaches down and clicks a lever on the gun.

VAN (CONT'D)

Now she does.

And as everybody but Neil goes back to partying and drinking,  
we...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW