

TWO DOLLAR BEER
(So What, Now What)

Pilot Episode/rewrite

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TWO DOLLAR BEER- COLD OPEN

EXT. PORCH DAY

(MOLLY, LUKE, CAROL, BURT, MITCHELL, DAVE, DONNA)

A WORKING CLASS WOODEN HOME WITH A LARGE PORCH IN FRONT. WE OPEN AND FIND; LUKE STELTER, 24, A SLIGHTLY GRIZZLED EX HIGH SCHOOL JOCK. HANDSOME. COMPLICATED. (THINKS TOO MUCH.) LUKE'S ALWAYS SURE HE'S RIGHT AND FOR THE MOST PART, USUALLY ISN'T. (*NOTE; THE 'USUALLY ISN'T USUALLY COMES AT A STEEP PRICE.)

WITH LUKE IS HIS GIRLFRIEND; MOLLY HANSEN, 23. SWEET. CUTE. A MIDWESTERN GIRL. HAS A CERTAIN SIMPLE SIDE ABOUT HER, SOFT, LIKEABLE. A GIANT HEART. A LITTLE LOST. NOT STUPID, NOT AT ALL. JUST A BIT OF DREAMER WHO NEVER REALLY KNOWS WHAT IT IS SHE'S DREAMING ABOUT.

THE THIRD PERSON WE MEET ON THIS BIG OLD WOODEN PORCH IS; CAROL TAYLOR 23; BLACK WITH A RACK. I'M SORRY, DON'T HATE ME BUT IT'S TRUE. THIS GIRL IS TRULY HOT. SHE'S GOT A GREAT HEAD OF HAIR AND AN AWESOME BODY AND YES, SHE'S ALSO SMART AS CAN BE. (RECEIVED A FULL SCHOLARSHIP TO U OF M IN ANN ARBOR AND GRADUATED WITH HONORS.) CAROL IS INCREDIBLY INTELLIGENT AND LIGHTENING QUICK. EXCEPT WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONSHIPS... THEN FOR SOME REASON IT JUST BECOMES HER AND THOSE TITS.

SO.. WE HAVE LUKE, MOLLY, CAROL.... IT'S ELEVEN IN THE MORNING.. THEY'RE FACING EACH OTHER ON THE PORCH, STARING DOWN A SIX PACK OF BEER ON THE FLOOR IN BETWEEN THEM.

MOLLY

Is it too early to start drinking?

LUKE

...Hell no, it's what?... a tad before noon?

MOLLY

It's ten-fifteen.

CAROL

Not too early for me. I have an excuse. I'm suffering from a broken heart. I need to numb the madness.

MOLLY

You always have a broken heart Carol.
One after another since kindergarten.

CAROL

True, and sadly, I didn't understand
the power of beer until fifth grade.

SHE REACHES DOWN, GRABS A BOTTLE. CRACKS IT OPEN.

LUKE

What about me? What's my excuse?

CAROL

You're in parental hell. Your father's
inside having a crap-fest. Petulantly
threatening to move he and your mom
above the garage when all you ever did
was save their asses from losing this
house. You have a heavy cross to bear.

LUKE AGREES. LEANS DOWN, GRABS A BEER FROM THE SIX PACK.

MOLLY

What's my cross to bear?

CAROL

(Ponders, then) You live with the fact
that you regularly have sex with him.

MOLLY LOOKS AT LUKE. CAROL'S RIGHT. LEANS DOWN. GRABS A
BOTTLE. LUKE WINKS. SLYLY SMILES. JUST THEN...BURT BALOW, 22,
A GOOD LOOKING, YET ODDLY SIMPLE, STRANGELY DRESSED YOUNG GUY
COMES UP THE PORCH FROM THE BACKYARD, LIMPING.

CAROL (CONT'D)

...And you used to have sex with him.

MOLLY CONCURS, REACHES DOWN, PULLS THE WHOLE SIX BACK OVER TO
HER SIDE OF THE PORCH.. CLAIMS IT ALL.

TITLE SMASHES ACROSS THE SCREEN. TWO DOLLAR BEER

CREDITS ROLL OVER; THE ENTIRE CAST GIVING A TOUR OF DETROIT
MICHIGAN- THE MOTOR CITY-MOTOWN-TIGERTOWN-HOCKEYTOWN..

ACT ONEEXT. LUKE'S HOUSE - DAY

(BURT, LUKE, MOLLY, CAROL, MITCHELL, DAVE, DONNA)

LUKE, MOLLY, BURT, CAROL ARE STILL ON THE PORCH. FROM INSIDE THOUGH, WE NOW HEAR SOMEONE, A MAN, YELLING, RANTING. (NONE OF IT REALLY MAKES SENSE.) BURT LISTENS TO THE LOUD MURMUR FROM INSIDE.

BURT

...lot of yelling in there all morning... (confused) Is it a holiday?

LUKE

He's yelling about me. We're deep into it today. It's about the house again.

MOLLY

(to Burt) ..Why are you limping? Did you come over through the backyards?

BURT

..I was... working out in my basement, dropped a weight. On my leg.

IN A SERIES OF SPLIT SCREENS (STACKED RECTANGULAR BOXES OVERLAID ON TOP OF OUR SCENE UP THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE SCREEN); WE SEE; BURT ,IN HIS BASEMENT, WORKING OUT WITH WEIGHTS, DROPS ONE ON HIS LEG.

MOLLY

..You don't work out... never have.

ANOTHER SERIES OF SPLIT SCREEN BOXES SHOWS THE TRUTH; BURT RUNS THROUGH A NEIGHBOR'S BACKYARD CROSSING OVER TO LUKE'S HOUSE AND HOPS A FENCE, MISSES HIS JUMP, LANDING SQUARE ONTO HIS MID-SECTION, DOUBLING HIM OVER. SPLIT SCREENS FADES AWAY AS HE FALLS TO THE GROUND IN A HEAP.

BURT

...I was working out on the fence between the yards. Navy Seal stuff.

MOLLY

(Knows better) I'm going inside. If I don't survive, speak well of me.

SHE OPENS THE DOOR, THE YELLING GETS LOUDER. SHE GOES IN.

BURT

Have you seen Mitchell? He's gone a lot lately. He never leaves the house. I'm thinking maybe he got a job.

CAROL

Not a chance, he's Mitchell..

'POP-UP.' A DISC POPS UP ON SCREEN. (A CIRCULAR OVER-LAY) SHOWS MITCHELL SWEENEY, 23, WILD HEAD OF HAIR, UNSHAVEN, A TOTAL MESS. THE WORLD'S GROUCHIEST GUY. THE DISC FADES AWAY.

LUKE

(Oblivious; Points inside) I had the nerve to ask them if they'd give Molly and I the master bedroom.

SIDE BOXES; QUICK JUMP SHOTS; THE HOUSE WITH A 'FOR SALE' SIGN. SPRING. WINTER. SUMMER. SPRING. WINTER. SUMMER.

LUKE (CONT'D)

I mean I did buy the house off them two years ago. They were gonna lose it. Had it on the market three years. No one wanted a broken down house in Detroit. Pardon me for not wanting to live with Molly in the bedroom I grew up in.

BURT

All the years you spent masturbating
in there. Must be weird to now have to
share it with a live woman.

LUKE

Bingo.

LUKE'S FATHER, DAVE STELTER, 53. STEPS OUT FROM INSIDE THE
HOUSE. GLARES AT THE GUYS. JUST A STRAINED, TAUT, DARK,
GLARE... AND THEN DAVE TURNS AND GOES BACK INSIDE.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Wow. See how uptight he is? Face all
scrunched. Gonna pop out an eyeball.

CAROL

Take someone's eyeball out with his
eyeball.

BURT

(Nudges Luke)..Get a brew? At the bar?

CAROL

It's ten thirty in the morning.

BURT

I like to be early. Get a good seat.

MITCHELL COMES UP ONTO THE PORCH FROM THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE.
(BURT JUMPS)

MITCHELL

Want to know the worse thing about
this financial crisis? I've lost half
of my money and I'm still married.

BURT

You scared the hell out of me. Don't sneak up on people. Now I'm all unsettled.

LUKE

He didn't sneak up, it's that dead tree. Sits there. Blocks the view.

THERE IS IN FACT A GIANT OLD MAPLE TREE THAT IS VERY 'DEAD' ON THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE. MITCHELL LOOKS OVER.

MITCHELL

You're right. Tree sucks. Cut it down.

CAROL

I agree. Lose it. (Re;Mitchell) You need all the advance warning you can get when this one's coming over.

LUKE

I'd love to but my old man doesn't want it cut down. He tried... years ago, went downtown, got mind-bent by some government pencil pusher. City stepped in, saved the tree.

SIDE SCREENS; RECTANGLE OVERLAYS; THE DETROIT PERMIT OFFICE. DAVE IS AT THE DESK OF A CROTCHETY GOVERNMENT DWEEB WHO'S GIVING HIM FORMS TO FILL OUT.

MITCHELL

That's rich. City can't protect it's auto industry, but it knows how to protect dead trees.

CAROL

Don't rev him up, he's in one his moods. So's big Dave. They're fighting about the house again.

BURT

He asked his parents if he and Molly could have the master bedroom.

MITCHELL

Typical; People with nothing fighting over everything. Someone truly needs to just off the whole human race.

LUKE

(To Mitchell) Where have you been going?.. You're off somewhere in the mornings. I can't see where with that damn tree in my way, but your car's gone early.

LUKE STARES MITCHELL DOWN.

MITCHELL

...I don't want to talk about it.

DAVE COMES OUT AGAIN WITH LUKE'S MOTHER, DONNA, A FORMER HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADER. (A LONG TIME 'FORMER') NEITHER LOOK HAPPY.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Morning Mister S.

DAVE

ZIP IT!! (to Luke) Your mother and I made a decision. We're moving above the garage.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

It's a rat hole but it was good enough
when we built it for your mother's
'mentally challenged' cousin Ellen..

POP UP DISC; 'MENTALLY CHALLENGED' COUSIN ELLEN. CRAZY MAKE-
UP. BAD HAIR. MISSING TEETH. SHE SMILES. DISC DISAPPEARS.

LUKE

You're overreacting dad. All I asked..

DAVE

Close it!! (To Burt, Mitchell, Carol)
I expect you all to help with the
moving of our stuff up to the garage.

BURT

We were gonna go get a beer.

DONNA

(Sweetly) Dave asked you nicely to zip
it.

BURT

Didn't know he was talking to me.

DONNA

(Again, nods sweetly) He was.

DAVE SNEERS, HE AND DONNA GO BACK INSIDE.

LUKE

..Good, let em move up to the garage.
It's where the 'mentally challenged'
people in my family belong anyway.
This is my house.. my master bedroom..

CAROL

Your dead tree..

LUKE

Exactly! City's not dealing with some ex-auto worker now. Dead tree gets in my way, I kill it.

BURT

Okay.. Let's go get a beer.

LUKE

No beer. No. No! We have things to do. My old man's about to get a little life lesson. ...This is good.....

CAROL

How is it 'good'? What did I miss?

LUKE

It's good because now I have a plan!

CAROL

Oh great, Luke has a plan.. set your watches, one of you is hours away from an alley beating. (To Burt) I know damn well you remember that one.

LUKE

(Ignores her) C'mon you two, let's move out..

MITCHELL

(to Carol) And you wonder why I hate people?

MITCHELL AND BURT RELUCTANTLY FOLLOW LUKE OFF OF THE PORCH.

ACT TWOACT TWO - SCENE A

INT. CITY OF DETROIT PERMIT OFFICE - DAY
(LUKE, CITY DWEEB, BURT, MITCHELL)

LUKE, BURT, AND MITCHEL COME DOWN A LONG AISLE, FIND CUBICLE #11. LUKE CHECKS THE PAPER. HE'S IN THE RIGHT SPACE. A CITY WORKER IS AT HIS DESK ON HIS COMPUTER. LUKE STEPS IN.

LUKE

Excuse me? I'm here for a permit to
cut down a tree.

THE CITY WORKER TURNS AROUND. IT'S THE SAME CITY DWEEB PENCIL
PUSHER FROM THE FLASHBACK, ONLY NOW OLDER. THE MAN JUST
STARES AT HIM. NO RESPONSE. POINTS TO THE CHAIRS IN FRONT OF
THE DESK. THEY SIT.

CITY DWEEB

Do you have the application?

LUKE HANDS HIM THE APPLICATION. HE LOOKS IT OVER. MAKES AN
ODD SOUND.

LUKE

This is on Wixom road. Off of Hunter.

CITY DWEEB

Have you applied to have this tree cut
down before?

LUKE

What? Who? ...No...

BURT

(nudges him) Yes you have.

LUKE

.. No. No. We haven't.

THE DWEEB STARES AT BURT.

MITCHELL

He's not with us.

BURT

(raises his finger) I'm handicapped.

A 'POP-UP' OF HIS FINGER APPEARS. HE IS IN FACT MISSING A TINY PART OF HIS SMALLEST FINGER'S TIP.

BURT (CONT'D)

I lost it working at Ford's. Settled for a worker's comp 'early out' program. Now I don't work. Also didn't have to go to Iraq. (Off the Dweeb's face) I miss my fingertip but I've enjoyed the perks ..Have I said too much?

THE POP UP OF BURT'S FINGER FADES AWAY. THE DWEEB SPINS QUICKLY IN HIS SEAT. HIS FINGERS FLY OVER THE KEYS OF HIS COMPUTER. HE STOPS. READS. SPINS BACK AROUND.

CITY DWEEB

This application has been filed once.
This needs to be a re-application.

LUKE

The original was forever ago.

CITY DWEEB

No. I was here. I remember it.

MITCHELL

Well what can we say? You're...old.
You're very, very, old.

BURT

What was Abe Lincoln like in person?

I'm just curious.

CITY DWEEB

...Who is the owner of the house?

LUKE

Me. That's me. I'm the owner.

CITY DWEEB

The home is in your name?

LUKE

Yes.. as I said.. I'm the owner.

THE DWEEB REACHES ACROSS HANDS LUKE A RE-APPLICATION.

CITY DWEEB

Fill this out. You'll receive a reply
within seven business days.

MITCHELL

Do you people purposely make this all
a pain in the ass?

CITY DWEEB

Yes. We do. Thank you for asking.

SPLIT SCREENS BOXES; MITCHELL JUMPS THE DESK, BEATS THE HELL
OUT OF HIM.

IN REALITY; THE DWEEB TURNS BACK TO HIS COMPUTER AND OUR
THREE GUYS SIT THERE IN AWE AT HIS ARROGANCE.

IN THE SIDE SCREEN FANTASY, THEY'RE ALL THREE NOW BEATING THE
HELL OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT DWEEB.

ACT TWO - SCENE B

INT. BOWLING ALLEY BAR - NIGHT
(LUKE, MOLLY, BURT, FAKHRI, CAROL)

A BAR IN THE BACK OF THE BOWLING ALLEY. LUKE AND BURT ARE SITTING WITH FAKHRI SWEENEY, 23 AN IRANIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN IN A WELL PRESSED NURSE'S UNIFORM.

LUKE

C'mon Fakhri I've known you most your life, I know when you hold back information. Mitchell's your husband, you're protecting him. There's a mystery here and I want to get to the bottom of it.

FAKHRI

Why don't you just ask him?

LUKE

I did. I get nothing. Just a dead tree trunk between me and the truth?

FAKHRI

What could that possibly mean?

BURT

It's American. You wouldn't understand.

CAROL COMES FROM BEHIND THE BAR WITH A BARMAID'S UNIFORM ON.

CAROL

This is the tree at your place that you went to the city about last week?

LUKE

The tree I'm bringing down. The tree
on my land.

FAKHRI

Did you fill out the forms yet?

LUKE

I applied but I'm not waiting. The
whole thing is just a joke. Anyway's
stop changing the subject.

BURT

Yeah that may work over there in Ali-
Baba- ville, but it doesn't fly here.

MOLLY WALKS UP. A BARMAID UNIFORM AND A TRAY IN HER HANDS.

MOLLY

Let me guess, They're pounding her
about Mitchell's alleged employment?

CAROL

Yeah and she's good too, not giving an
inch which is driving them crazy.

LUKE

Fine I'll just have Burt continue
following him. ... What Fak??
Flashbacks of the Shah's secret
police?

FAKHRI

How many times do I have to tell you I
moved here when I was two and the Shah
had been gone for years?

CAROL

(Off Burt's blank stare) Obviously gonna have to hit that one a couple more times.

FAKHRI

I can hit it a thousand times. He still won't hear it.

BURT

(ignores them) He's been at the Home Depot a lot lately Fakhri. Buying stuff.. ammonia, weird oils... buckets and things..

LUKE

..Fakhri, if you have my best friend since third grade building some kind of a nuclear device..

FAKHRI

(finally) He's happy! All right?? For the first time in a long time. He's alive and fulfilled and believe it or not, he's been drinking less. This whole thing he's going through could actually be transformational...

So...please, let it be, all of you!!

SILENCE. THE GROUP IS STUNNED.

LUKE

I'll give you the benefit of the doubt
on the whole transformational thing,
he may even be happy, but there's no
way in hell Mitchell's drinking less.

GENERAL AGREEMENT. 'NOT A SHOT IN HELL'.

ACT TWO SCENE C

INT. LUKE'S KITCHEN - DAY
(DAVE, LUKE)

LUKE IS SITTING AT THE TABLE. READING A MAGAZINE. DAVE, WALKS
IN THE BACK DOOR. PICKS UP LUKE'S MAGAZINE.

DAVE

'Entrepreneur monthly'. Had a friend
who read this when I was at Buick.
Read it on the crapper during lunch
break. Filled himself with a head full
of hope. Quit the factory, raised
money, opened a chain of Burger Kings.

LUKE

All right, well, that's a good story.

DAVE

Then he flushed the toilet came back
out and screwed ashtrays into Regal's
til they closed down the plant. May
well as been reading Playboy in there.
Know what I mean?

LUKE

...So, you still mad at me?

DAVE

Not me so much.. It's more mom. She hates your guts. Watch your back.

LUKE

You know dad, I did buy the house two years ago. ...I had this odd notion that at some point you'd move out!

DAVE

Have you read a paper lately? There's nowhere to go.

LUKE

Okay...well, turns out I do have somewhere to go, it's called work.

(Dave sneers) Don't do that...

QUICK POP UPS; EACH SHOW FIVE MALL KIOSKS; ALL STAFFED BY CUTE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS. 'BUTANE BOX' 'CELL PHONE CUPBOARD' 'SWEATER CITY' ' HAT HEAVEN' ETC. ETC...EACH DISC HAS THE GIRLS LOOKING INTO CAMERA AND GIGGLING.

LUKE (CONT'D)

It's a job running five kiosks at that mall. It's a business. It makes me my own man. Not a puppet to a company. To a city.

DAVE

Just like that lawn mowing service you were gonna start till you figured out the grass only grows half the damn year.

LUKE

Okay so it had flaws as a business plan. I spotted them, and I moved on and now I got a better job.

DAVE

How could it be a job when you never leave the house? Don't even have a 'home office' like all the other phonies do.

LUKE

(Holds up HIS BLACKBERRY) I don't need an office. I have this.

DAVE LOOKS AT IT LIKE IT'S AN ALIEN LIFE FORCE.

DAVE

Saw that thing on the news. Supposed to melt your brain or something. I think it's working.

LUKE

You know what dad, have a little faith in me. It's not advertising, not car commercials, not cushy like I was planning on, but I'm eeking out a living, got two grand socked away, let's not forget, I'm the one paying the bills here.

DAVE

Don't you start.

LUKE

I'm the one that pays all the taxes!

DAVE

I said don't start!

LUKE

(stands) I'm tearing that tree down!

DAVE

(toe to toe) The hell you are!

LUKE

It's gone. It's out of here!

DAVE

I'm warning you Luke! That tree stays right where it is! You don't want to deal with the city I warn you.

LUKE

Oh I'm done dealing with the city.

DAVE

Have some faith in me damn it. You don't want to start this all up with them again.

LUKE

Yeah? Well..guess who's name this house is under? ..Mine. Luke's house. Luke's tree. Luke the idiot dreamer with the kiosks at the mall, this is all his...(arms spread wide) This is all... Luketown....Lukeyland.

DAVE LOOKS AT HIM. LOSE HIS BLUSTER.

DAVE

...in that case I'll just grab a couple of beers for the road home. Up the steps to 'retard-ville'.

WITHOUT WAITING FOR AN ANSWER HE TAKES A SIX PACK FROM THE FRIDGE. LEAVES. LUKE WANTS TO CHASE AFTER, BUT DOESN'T. WALKS OVER BOLTS THE BACK DOOR SHUT. THAT'LL TEACH HIM. ..THE SIDE DOOR OF THE LIVING ROOM OPENS. DAVE WALKS BACK IN. OPENS UP A CUPBOARD. GRABS A BAG OF CHIPS. SALUTES. LEAVES.

ACT THREE

ACT THREE SCENE A

EXT. LUKE'S PORCH - LATE AFTERNOON
(MOLLY, BURT, LUKE, FAKHRI, CAROL)

LUKE, BURT, AND BURT ARE ON THE PORCH. DRINKING BEERS. ...CONTEMPLATING.

MOLLY

What makes you think you can get away with tearing it down without a permit when your father couldn't?

BURT

He's smarter than his dad. Something most men don't like to admit, but we do, we get smarter.

LUKE

Each generation picks up more. The son exceeds the father in knowledge and understanding.

BURT

..It makes sense. That's why the world's getting so much better.

THEY ALL SILENTLY AGREE. SIP THEIR BEERS. FAKHRI COMES OUT OF THE HOUSE. (IN HER NURSES UNIFORM AGAIN.)

MOLLY

Is she out?

FAKHRI

Still as a bird on a calm early ocean.

LUKE

(to Burt) Iranian proverb?

BURT

Either that or she's got what your Aunt Ellen had.

MOLLY

Okay guys, the baby is asleep in there so you need to keep it quiet.

FAKHRI

Thank you for doing this Molly. I was lucky to get an additional shift.

LUKE

...Why can't Mitchell watch the kid? Or is he off on his hush-hush mission that you don't want to talk about?

FAKHRI

(Laughs) I have to get to the hospital. Thanks again Molly, I worship the very ground you walk on...

(gives her a kiss)

BURT

(to Luke) Another proverb?

LUKE

Who knows, I just like it when they
kiss.

BURT AGREES. FAKHRI LEAVES. CAROL COMES UP FROM THE SIDE THE
HOUSE. OUT OF BREATH. LIMPING.

LUKE (CONT'D)

You come in through the backyards?

BURT

I showed her the route.

SIDE SCREEN BOXES; BACKYARD CAROL COMES OVER THE FENCE,
DOESN'T MAKE IT, LANDS ON HER CROTCH, FALLS TO THE GROUND.

CAROL

..What's going on? I feel tension.

MOLLY

Luke's worked up about the tree.

CAROL

He wouldn't be Luke if he wasn't. (to
Molly) Can we talk? Inside? Privately?

BURT

The rich guy dumping you?

LUKE

This month's rich guy. Owns a Diary
Queen this one.

CAROL

Maybe I'm dumping him.

LUKE

How many messages did you leave for
him in the last twenty four hours?

...The truth.

CAROL

(Embarrassed) Seven. I need him to call me back so I can tell how.. almost.. close to over we are.

LUKE

(Fist up for a knuckle-bump) Way to mind-meld a man.

CAROL IGNORES HIM, FOLLOWS MOLLY INSIDE. BURT TURNS TO LUKE.

BURT

I wish I was good with people the way Carol is. No offense but I'd probably still be married to Molly if I were.

LUKE

Next time do me a solid and keep it all together.

ACT THREE - SCENE C

INT. BOWLING ALLEY BAR

(CAROL, MITCHELL, MOLLY, LUKE, BURT)

MITCHELL UP AT THE BAR WITH CAROL. MITCHELL IS CLEANED UP HERE. CLEAN SHAVEN. DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE SAW EARLIER. (STILL SULKING THOUGH. HE'S MITCHELL.)

CAROL

Word is you have a job.

MITCHELL

I heard that rumor myself. I hope I'm making good money.

CAROL

Someone better be. Least you didn't get out of U of M with a four-point only to tend bar at a bowling alley.

MITCHELL

(Darkly sarcastic) Yeah. Lucky me. I'm not you.

MOLLY COMES OVER FROM BEHIND THE BAR.

MOLLY

Diet coke Mitch. Proud of you by the way. Not drinking.

LUKE AND BURT COME IN. LUKE SLINKS ONTO A STOOL.

MITCHELL

Still the tree?

LUKE

... What ever happened to personal liberty? Ethan Allen and all that garbage? ...This is the end of days.

MITCHELL

..Okay (checks his watch) I better go.

LUKE

Go WHERE MAN?? Talk to me. What happened to the good old negative, hateful Mitchell? I'm giving you good stuff to chew on here. Good, dreary, negative, dank, thoughts.

CAROL

I was feeding him too, earlier.
Couldn't get him to bite on a thing.

LUKE

Where are you off to man??

MITCHELL WANTS TO TELL THEM WHAT HE'S UP TO. CAN'T BRING
HIMSELF TO IT. LEAVES. LUKE STANDS UP. TRIES TO CALM HIMSELF.
CAN'T. IT'S ALL TOO MUCH FOR HIM. LUKE TURNS TO THE LADIES.

CAROL

We're not even close to interested.

LUKE

...Well I am.. I'm interested.

CAROL

Of course you are. You're an ape. A
rock fell from a tree. Hit you on the
head. You're confused.

BURT

I don't get that.

LUKE

(to Burt) C'mon, we're gonna follow
him. That's all there is to it.

LUKE LEAVES. BURT FOLLOWS HIM. THE LADIES WATCH THEM GO.

CAROL

What do you do when he gets in one of
these crazy moods?

MOLLY

Well, if it's convenient...I go down
on him.. that sometimes helps.

CAROL

And if it's not convenient?

MOLLY

...I start making plans on how I'll
post bail.

ACT FOUR

ACT FOUR SCENE A

EXT. BLOOMFIELD HILLS MANSION - DAY

(BURT, LUKE)

LUKE AND BURT PARK THE CAR ACROSS THE STREET FROM A LARGE,
EXPENSIVE HOME. GET OUT. WALK ACROSS THE YARD.

BURT

This is the nicest house I've ever
seen.

LUKE

Did you see he had a key to the front
door? This is getting creepy?

BURT

Could Mitchell possibly be leading a
second life?

LUKE

He's barely muddling through the first
one.

THEY GET TO THE WINDOW, SQUEEZE INTO THE BUSHES. PEER INSIDE
AND SEE; MITCHELL; VACUUMING A FLOOR. THEY'RE BLOWN AWAY.

LUKE (CONT'D)

What the hell? He's working??...

THEY GET REAL QUIET AS THEY SEE AN OLDER, ELEGANT WOMAN IN HER SEVENTIES COME IN AND GIVE MITCHELL SOME DIRECTION ON HIS VACUUMING. HE LISTENS. SHE LEAVES THE ROOM. MITCHELL CONTINUES VACUUMING.

BURT

Maybe she's running one of those
M.I.L.F. websites and he's working off
free membership.

ACT FOUR- SCENE B

EXT. BLOOMFIELD HILLS MANSION - LATER
(MITCHELL, BURT, LUKE)

LUKE AND BURT WAIT IN THE BUSHES AS THE OLDER LADY DRIVES AWAY IN A NEW CADILLAC. ONCE SHE'S GONE, THEY RUN THROUGH TO THE BACKYARD, GO UP ONTO A BACK STOOP, PEER INTO THE WINDOW AND SEE; MITCHELL ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES SCRUBBING THE FLOOR. THEY ARE TRULY BLOWN AWAY. LUKE KNOCKS. MITCHELL LOOKS UP. SEES THEM. HE TURNS BRIGHT RED. ISN'T SURE WHAT TO DO. FINALLY GETS UP. COMES TO THE DOOR.

MITCHELL

Why are you here?

BURT

Why are you here? Are you a prisoner?

MITCHELL

(reluctantly) This is my job.

LUKE

No, really, what's the scam?

MITCHELL

There is no scam. I was at the grocery store for Fakhri a few months back. She wanted some Arab type soup I had to come way up here to get it. I overheard Mrs. Berman, at the next counter.

SIDE SCREEN BOXES; INSIDE A GROCERY STORE. MITCHELL IS LISTENING TO THE OLDER RICH WOMAN TALK TO THE CHECKOUT LADY.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

She was going on and on in a typical Republican tirade how she couldn't find good help. A good maid.

OUTSIDE THE STORE. MITCHELL COMES UP TO MRS. BERMAN'S CAR.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

I got in her face. Walked right up and told her I could do the job.

LUKE

You lied. Typical Democratic tirade.

MITCHELL

The words just came out of my mouth.

She took a shot with me.

INSIDE THE MANSION VARIOUS QUICK SHOTS; MITCHELL, CLEANING, SCRUBBING, FOLDING, POLISHING.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

She's gone most days all day. It's just me, alone with my soaps. No people, just me.. alone.. It's heaven.

MITCHELL IRONS AS HE WATCHES 'ALL MY CHILDREN'. HE'S REALLY SUCKED IN. MORE CLEANING. POLISHING.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

I leave here at the end of the day and this place is spotless. I mean it. It's perfect and when it is, it's odd, but I feel clean myself.

LUKE

This is insane. What's the angle
Mitchell?? I know you too damn well.

MITCHELL

Yeah? You think so, but maybe you
don't.

HE WALKS OVER TO A BRASS HOOD ABOVE A STOVE.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

This morning, I came in, I don't know,
someone cooked bacon.. there was
grease, a film on this thing..it was
god awful.. I worked all morning,
here, in the quiet.. Sun came up...
birds were chirping in the yard...Look
at it now. It's shiny like a virgin
baby's bottom?

LUKE

As opposed to 'non-virgin baby'? A
slut baby? It's a whack analogy...
You're losing it... this is not you.

MITCHELL

It is me damn it!!.. Not just anyone
could've done what I did to this
stove! I gave it new life! I was
patient, I was... pure in my intent.
Don't you get that man?? It's huge!
(calms)I have to go. I have a du-
vet in the dryer.

HE SLAMS THE DOOR. LUKE AND BURT ARE BLOWN AWAY.

BURT

Who was that we were just talking to?

LUKE

And what the hell is a du-vet?

ACT FIVE

ACT FIVE SCENE A

EXT. LUKE'S PORCH - DAY

(BURT, LUKE, MOLLY, CAROL, FAKHRI, MITCHELL)

LUKE, MOLLY, AND CAROL AND FAKHRI ARE ON THE FRONT PORCH, LOOKING OUT TO THE TREE. BURT AND MITCHELL ARE COMING FROM THE BACK BOTH CARRYING AN END OF A GIANT CHEST OF TOOLS.

BURT

You're dad's got a serious tool chest.

LUKE

Of course he does, he's man with all of the answers.

MOLLY

Luke, I think this is a bad idea just chopping that tree down like this. You're gonna get a fine.

LUKE

No, Burt's right, that wood is worth a fortune. It'll more than pay any stupid fine they throw at me.. Hey, it's MY house!!

HE LOOKS OVER AT HER. CAN FEEL SHE'S HURT BY THAT COMMENT.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Our house. It's our house...our house.

MOLLY

Thank you.

LUKE

I need you to back me here Molly. I need to make a statement to my father. To the city. To the universe.

CAROL

Oh that's not good. All the big nut jobs always want to make a statement to the universe.

MOLLY KNOWS LUKE IS SERIOUS. GIVES HIM A KISS.

MOLLY

Okay, fine, I'll back you... But if we do this, if we're truly blowing the law off, there's an old lady at work that I want you to kill with me.

CAROL

And I want to firebomb a Dairy queen.

FAKHRI

And I'm not sure, but I may want you to bitch-slap Mitchell.

BURT OPENS THE TOOL CHEST. AN AX. LUKE COMES OFF OF THE PORCH. TAKES THE AX. GIGGLES.

LUKE

Time to show Big Dave who's the
boss.... Sorry tree, nothing personal,
there's just a new sheriff in town.

MITCHELL

Either that or a new village idiot.

LUKE

Well, at least I let my friends in on
my life.

MITCHELL

Yeah, sure, against their will.

LUKE IGNORES THE COMMENT, GOES TO THE TREE TAKES A WIDE
VIOLENT SWING OF THE AX AT THE SIDE OF THE TRUNK. THE AX GOES
DEEP. LUKE TRIES TO PULL IT OUT. HE CAN'T. IT'S STUCK.

LUKE

...little help...

MITCHELL AND BURT COME OVER. THEY ALL TRY TO GET THE AX OUT.
NO LUCK. IT'S GOOD AND STUCK. JAMMED. LUKE GOES OVER TO THE
TOOL BOX. PULLS OUT AN OLD SAW. LAUGHS.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Trusty old saw. Saws like these built
the first small towns of America.

GOES TO THE TREE. STARTS TO SAW INTO IT'S SIDE. HE STOPS.
IT'S STUCK. OUT OF NOWHERE. HE CAN'T MOVE IT. STEPS BACK. IT
JUST SITS THERE STICKING OUT OF THE TREE, JUST ABOVE THE AX.

MOLLY

Must have had a lot of spare saws back
then.

MITCHELL AND BURT BOTH TRY. NOTHING. MITCHELL GOES TO THE
BOX. PULLS OUT A CROWBAR. RUNS TO THE TREE, JAMS IT IN. IT
WEDGES DEEP... THEN.. IT'S STUCK TOO. WON'T BUDGE. JUST
HANGING THERE WITH THE OTHER TOOLS.

BURT GRABS AN ICE PICK, ATTACKS THE TREE, DIGS IT IN DEEP. AGAIN, IT'S STUCK. THEY ALL STEP BACK. SEE ALL THE TOOLS HANGING OFF OF THE TREE.

MITCHELL

This tree is a serious little bitch!!

LUKE

Who do we know with a power saw?

MITCHELL

Wait.. My boss has a power saw! I saw it in her garage. It's either that or a major league vibrator.

POP-UP.. MRS. BERMAN HOLDING UP A POWER SAW IN HER BACK YARD.

CAROL

What does it say about our society when the manliest man we know is an old Republican woman with a Black and Decker vibrator?

ACT FIVE SCENE B

EXT. LUKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

(MITCHELL, MRS. BERMAN, LUKE, BURT, FAKHRI)

THE TREE IS GONE. THE WOOD STACKED IN PILES. MOLLY, CAROL AND DONNA ARE SWEEPING UP THE SAWDUST. MRS. BERMAN, WITH GOGGLES ON, IS PUTTING HER GIANT POWER SAW AWAY IN IT'S CASE.

MITCHELL

Thank you for doing this Mrs. Berman.

MRS. BERMAN

No problem. I'll just skip pilates this week. Anyway, dead wood like that is nice and soft.

LUKE

Yeah well, we're still gonna make a small fortune selling it.

MRS. BERMAN

Fiddlesticks. My husband was in lumber. Dead wood's not worth a penny.

BURT

(to Luke) I could've told you that.

MRS. BERMAN TAKES OFF HER GOGGLES, CLOSES THE CASE UP.

MRS. BERMAN

...Nine o'clock Monday morning Mitchell. Want to pull the drapes down for a spring clean.

MITCHELL LOOKS AT LUKE. BEGS HIM NOT TO MAKE A JOKE. MAKES A HIDDEN FIST. LUKE GETS IT.

MITCHELL

Yes... m'am.. Bright and early.

THE WHOLE GROUP DOES THEIR BEST TO BITE THEIR TONGUES. NOT BURST OUT LAUGHING. MRS.BERMAN HEADS DOWN TO THE STREET. THEY WATCH HER GO.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

....did her parquet floors yesterday, came home, felt wonderful, slept like a baby.

FAKHRI

How is it then that I can't get you to pick up your underwear?

ACT FIVE SCENE CEXT. LUKE'S HOUSE/PORCH- NIGHT

(CAROL, FAKHRI, BURT, LUKE, DAVE)

THE WHOLE GANG ON THE PORCH, UNDER THE MOONLIGHT. DRINKING BEERS. RELAXED. REFRESHED. TOGETHER.

CAROL

...That was a lot of work today.

It felt nice.

FAKHRI

Hard work as a life goal is
fundamentally soul enriching.

BURT

She's like an Iranian fortune cookie
this one.

LUKE LOOKS OUT TO THE STREET, CALMLY REFLECTS

LUKE

Well my goal is to not work too hard.
To work clean, to be creative, to come
up with a system to do just enough to
pay my bills and enjoy my life...

FAKHRI

...My goal is to be a fine nurse, to
serve the people that cross my path,
to live the American dream, and of
course not to let my husband's hate
and stink rub off of me in any
tangible way...

THE GROUP AGREES THAT THAT'S A 'GREAT GOAL'.

CAROL

..I don't need the guy, or the job the
truth is I just want to be happy...

GENERAL AGREEMENT; 'PERFECT GOAL'. 'ALL THAT MATTERS'

BURT

...my goal is to surf less porn.

LUKE

Good goal. Probably not doable.

EVERYONE AGREES. 'NOT AT ALL DOABLE.' THEY SIT QUIETLY ON THE PORCH, SIP THEIR BEERS. STARE OUT TO THE STREET. DAVE AND DONNA WALK UP THE DRIVE. STOP AT THE SPOT WHERE THE TREE ONCE STOOD. DAVE TAKES A BEAT. LOOKS AT THE STUMP. THEY COME UP ONTO THE PORCH, DAVE GOES OVER TO LUKE.

DAVE

I have to say I'm proud of you Luke.
You're your own man. Answer to your
own rules. Exactly the kind of boy I
always wanted you to be.

LUKE

Listen dad, I'm sorry if I've been..

DAVE

No.. No. No... You've been fine....

PULLS HIM FOR A HUG. GIVES LUKE A KISS ON THE FOREHEAD.

LUKE

... Who was that you were talking to
down at the curb? I couldn't see.

POP UP; DAVE TALKING TO THE CITY DWEEB AT HIS CAR.

DAVE

...ahhh man from the city. I went down
years ago and applied.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

Once I was in the system they slapped me a fine for having a dead tree. I didn't pay. Fine's been accruing all this time. He just wanted to check who's name the house is under for this invoice.

DAVE HANDS LUKE AN ENVELOPE. LUKE OPENS THE ENVELOPE.

LUKE

...Two thousand dollars??

DAVE

By the way, we're moving back inside in the morning. Every night we spend up in that garage your mother looks more and more like her crazy cousin Ellen.

POP-UP; DONNA, LOOKING INTO THE CAMERA. CRAZY HAIR, WILD TEETH, TRULY DOES LOOK LIKE 'NUTTY COUSIN ELLEN'.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You can have the master bedroom. It's yours... take it and run with it..
(to 'the gang') Need all hands on deck bright and early moving furniture.

BURT

But I'm handicapped!

THE POP-UP OF HIS FINGERTIP APPEARS AGAIN.

DAVE

We're all handicapped little guy. From here on in, the joke's on us.

DAVE AND DONNA HEAD INTO THE HOUSE.

LUKE

...My father is either really deep, or
he's really stupid.

CAROL

He could be both. (Smiles) You are.

LUKE LOOKS AT HIS FRIENDS. AT THE INVOICE. AT MOLLY. LOOKS
OVER AT THE STUMP THAT USED TO BE THE DEAD TREE.

LUKE

Want to know the sad part? ...I think

I miss the tree.

EVERYONE AGREES. THEY ALL MISS THE TREE. MORE BEER.

.....CREDITS ROLL.