

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

CREDITS ROLL under shots of crisp, early morning D.C. and Georgetown exteriors until the CAMERA finds a certain townhouse that it drifts down to. It moves inside.

INT. MEL AND SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

CARD: December 20th.

SAM BRIGGS, 31, dressed for work, nice-looking, is standing next to a closed door. After a beat, he calls into the door:

SAM
You okay, Mel?

MEL (V.O.)
I'm fine.

The sound of violent VOMITING comes from behind the door.

SAM
Yeah, you sound good.

SFX: Toilet Flushing.

The door opens and MELANIE COOK (MEL), comes out, wiping her mouth. Even looking a little peaked, as she does, she is beautiful. She's 30, she doesn't wear makeup.

MEL
Wow.
(then)
Okay, are we ready?

Sam gestures to FOUR ENORMOUS SUITCASES.

MEL (CONT'D)
Sam, we're only going to be at my parents' for five nights.

SAM
(re: luggage)
Yeah, but with all the Christmas gifts, and who knows what the weather's going to be like, and I wasn't sure if there were certain meals we had to dress for--

MEL
Am I marrying a girl?

SAM

Would you like to? Because I'd be open to that as long as I could be your guys' butler.

Mel studies Sam for a beat --

MEL

You're nervous about seeing my parents.

SAM

Nervous? Why would I be nervous?
(then, like he's just remembering)

Oh, you mean because I got their daughter pregnant out of wedlock? Or because I'm going to ask them for your hand in marriage armed with the knowledge that they despise me? Nah, I'm not nervous.

MEL

They don't despise you.

SAM

You're right. When I burned down their house last time I saw them, I think they were fine with that. I think they thought that was cute.

MEL

You didn't burn it all the way down. You only burned it partially down. And, anyhow, it's been repaired and all is forgiven...
(off Sam's look)
As long as you promise to never go near the grill again.

SAM

I'm a great griller.

MEL

I know, honey. You got distracted.

SAM

I didn't get distracted, I got attacked by a dog.

MEL

Texaco's a herder. A guy he doesn't know starts grilling when the rest of the family's out, he's going to herd that guy. It's his instinct.

SAM

Whose side are you on, mine or Texaco's?

MEL

Go over the choices again.

Mel smiles and puts her arms around Sam.

MEL (CONT'D)

I'm on your side. I'm always on your side. Even when you burn down my ancestral home.

SAM

Partially burn down your ancestral home. Anyway, that's not going to happen this time. This time your parents are going to meet a whole new Sam.

MEL

Well, you know what, even though I love the old Sam unconditionally, it might be nice for my parents to see some other colors.

SAM

How about the color of prudence and the color of responsibility? Would those be pleasing to their eyes?

MEL

Those are their favorite colors.

She kisses him. Then:

MEL (CONT'D)

(re: kiss)

Oh, God, was that vomit-y?

SAM

Little bit.

Sam starts gathering his belongings and Mel starts throwing stuff in a bag.

MEL

You're sure you're okay taking the train out? I really don't mind driving back tonight for you.

SAM

I don't want you driving all that way in the dark.

Sam crosses out of the room.

MEL

(calling after)

Okay, but try to get to my parents' house by nine for dessert. My mom made her cherry pie. I kind of promised her you'd be there for it.

SAM (O.C.)

I don't like pie.

MEL

Sam...

Sam crosses back in.

SAM

I like cake. And so do you. And that's why we love each other.

He puts his arms around her and goes in for a kiss, but then she gags. As she HURRIES off to the bathroom:

SAM (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm sorry, that was Old Sam talking. I'll be there for pie...!

INT. CAP WEEKLY MAGAZINE - NIGHT

Cap Weekly is Washington's version of Entertainment Weekly. It's a light current events magazine, where Sam works as a writer and editor. They're having their annual Holiday Party in the large, modern lobby. Loud music, drunk people. Sam's standing with his best friend and co-worker, ADAM GREEN, 30. Adam's scruffy and seems not to be enjoying himself.

SAM

This is nice.

ADAM

It's awful. You know what would be nice?

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Some acknowledgment that Jews work here, too. And don't say that shrub.

Angle on a low greenish bush.

SAM

You mean the Hannukah bush.

ADAM

There's no such thing as a Hannukah bush.

A WOMAN, 45, walks by.

WOMAN

Merry Christmas, Sam.
(then, off Adam)
I mean, Happy Holidays.

SAM

You, too, Alicia. Have fun in Sun Valley.

She smiles and EXITS.

ADAM

(calling)
Great save, Alicia. I feel much less persecuted.
(then, to Sam)
Why do you know her holiday plans? She works two desks down from me in the Art Department, and until just now, I thought her name was Olivia.

SAM

That's because you artists look inward. We reporters, we're interested in other people. I waited in line for coffee with her on Tuesday. She's kind of funny.

ADAM

Oh, she's hilarious. Everyone in the Art Department calls her Funny Olivia.

SAM

Really?

ADAM

No.
(then)
(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

What am I still doing here? I have a refrigerator full of ham and a VCR full of porn. Why am I not on my couch in my underwear?

SAM

Because maybe you haven't quite hit rock bottom.

SFX: Cell phone ring.

Sam checks his phone, then:

SAM (CONT'D)

Hi, honey.

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE - SAME

Mel's on the phone in her parents' large, living room.
INTERCUT through the call.

MEL

How's the party?

SAM

Amazing. And by 'amazing,' I mean 'pretty dull.'

MEL

So why don't you come on out a little early? You could be here for dinner.

SAM

I'd love to but the plan was arrive for pie, and once a plan's in place, it's a mistake to deviate.

MEL

You're stalling, Sam.

SAM

No, I'm not. I just don't like deviation.

(then)

I've got to stay a little longer, Mel. I don't want to look like I'm not a team player.

Just then, a very attractive, very drunk co-worker, NICKY, comes up to Sam. She's holding a sprig of MISTLETOE.

NICKY
Kiss, kiss, Sam.

With a smile, Sam waves her off.

MEL
Who's that?

SAM
No one, honey.

Nicky holds the sprig over Sam's head and lays a loud, wet kiss as close to his mouth as she can get it. Sam giggles.

SAM (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Nicky!

Nicky heads off with a smile.

MEL
What are you doing?

SAM
Nothing, Mel. Honestly.

MEL
(furious)
Sure, just being a good team player, right? I sure hope having to be here for dessert doesn't intrude on your makeout sessions.

She hangs up.

SAM
Mel. Mel?

He CLOSES his phone.

ADAM
I envy you.

SAM
Shut up, Adam. Mel's just been emotional since she got preg--

ADAM
Since she got what?

SAM
Nothing.

ADAM
She's pregnant!

SAM
Keep your voice down.

ADAM
Do her parents know?

SAM
We're going to tell them this week.

ADAM
Oh, what a nice Christmas gift.
I'm sure they've always wanted a
bastard grandchild.

SAM
We're getting married. We're
telling them that, too.

ADAM
Well, that should ease the blow
since they hate you.

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE

Mel's still in the living room, looking sullen as she wraps a Christmas present. Her parents ENTER. DICK COOK is mid-50s, fit, handsome, serious. ANGELA, also mid-50s, aging well and naturally, always seems slightly tipsy. She's in an apron.

ANGELA
I've finally finished stuffing the
goose.

DICK
Three days later.

ANGELA
It's going to be quite a goose.
And dinner's almost ready. I
forget, did you say your friend
would be joining us or not?

MEL
I said he would be joining us for
dessert.

ANGELA
Oh, good. I'm really proud of this
pie. The cherries have been
soaking in brandy since Wednesday.

DICK
(to Mel)
And so has your mother.

ANGELA
(playful)
Stop it, you.

DICK
Mel, are you okay?

MEL
Yeah, dad, I'm fine.

DICK
Was that your friend on the phone?
Did he upset you. If you want him
to spend Christmas elsewhere and
you don't have the nerve to tell
him, I'd be glad to do it for you.

MEL
No, Dad, I love my friend, whose
name, as you both know, is Sam, and
you both promised to welcome him.

ANGELA
And we do, dear. Of course we do.
Right, Dick?

DICK
(non-committal)
Right.

EXT. CAP WEEKLY MAGAZINE - NIGHT

Sam's standing on the curb, talking into his cell.

SAM
Mel, you're not picking up your
cell. What you heard back there,
it was really nothing. Someone
walking around with mistletoe. How
desperate do you have to be, right?
I should tell Adam to try it.
Anyway, I'm on my way. Can't wait
to dig into your mom's cherry pie.
(then)
And that sounded dirty. Love you.

He hangs up. A sports car comes tearing toward him, brakes
squealing as it SLAMS into the curb. The window rolls down
to reveal Nicky, the drunk girl, in the drivers' seat.

NICKY

Hi, Sam.

SAM

Oh, hey, Nicky. Nicky, are you sure you should be driving?

NICKY

Are you kidding? This car basically drives itself.

She GUNS it and slams into a street sign. Sam looks around to see if anyone else can deal with this, but there's no one.

SAM

(to himself)

Dammit.

EXT. CAP WEEKLY MAGAZINE - MOMENTS LATER

Sam HELPS Nicky into a cab.

SAM

(to cabbie)

We're going to Bethesda.

INT. CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Nicky's sort of leaning on Sam, who looks uncomfortable.

NICKY

My boyfriend broke up with me on Friday.

SAM

Oh, I'm sorry.

NICKY

It's fine. I shouldn't be with a guy like him, anyway. He's like a cowboy, all quiet and big muscles and chiseled...

(looks deeply at Sam)

I should be with a guy like--

SAM

(jumping in)

A lot of people don't know this, but I've actually done a little cowboy slash ranchhand work. Roping, rustling. Some branding.

NICKY

...sometimes I watch you at work
and I think naughty thoughts.

SAM

Listen, Nicky -- okay-- I don't--

She leans in and whispers something into Sam's ear.

SAM (CONT'D)

(somewhat horrified)

Wow, that is naughty.

He gently pushes Nicky away.

SAM (CONT'D)

Nicky, that's very flattering...
and a teensy bit degrading ... but
I'm about to get engaged.

NICKY

(beat)

Oh, God, I feel sick.

SAM

Don't. I think you're great. It's
just, I'm really happy with Mel--

Before he can finish, Nicky VOMITS in Sam's lap.

EXT. BETHESDA NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER

A dark quiet neighborhood. Nicky's lying passed out on the
grass outside the cab. Sam COMES AROUND the other side of
the car, his entire front side covered with vomit. The
CABBIE is leaning into the back seat. He COMES OUT, furious.

CABBIE

I am known the world over for the
cleanliness of my cab, and now
this! Stupid American holiday
parties.

And with that he JUMPS into his cab and SPEEDS off. Sam
TURNS to the PASSED OUT Nicky, looks at his watch. Shit. He
pulls out his cell phone, dials.

INT. COOK KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - SAME

Tight on Mel's cell phone on the kitchen counter, quietly
BUZZING. In the b.g., we see Mel eating dinner in the dining
room with her parents. Mel steals a glance at her watch.

EXT. BETHESDA NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

Sam waits for Mel to answer the phone.

SAM
C'mon, c'mon. Pick up. Pick up!

Nicky lets out a little MOAN. Sam slams the cell shut.

SAM (CONT'D)
(to Nicky)
Do you think you can make it the
rest of the way on your own?

Nicky lifts her head off the ground, looks around weakly, and PLOPS her head back onto the dirt, out cold.

EXT. BETHESDA STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Sam is TRUDGING up hill with Nicky thrown over his shoulder. It starts to RAIN.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE ROW - LATER

Sam has thrown Nicky in a trash can and is WHEELING her up to her front stoop. She sleeps peacefully.

INT. NICKY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sam comes in from the hallway carrying Nicky. He THROWS her down onto the bed, catches his breath and then looks down at his wet, soiled suit, cursing to himself. He looks over to the bathroom then to the passed out Nicky. Checks his watch.

INT. COOK KITCHEN - SAME

We see Angela pulling the cherry pie from the oven. Mel is tucked away in a corner with her cell phone in her hand.

MEL
(sotto)
C'mon, Sam. Where are you?

Dick walks by and smiles at Mel. She smiles back, covering.

INT. NICKY'S BATHROOM - SAME

We see the silhouette of Sam in the shower.

On the dresser, Sam's phone vibrates quietly. It STOPS buzzing just as Sam steps out of the shower onto the bath mat, but then he sees there's NO TOWEL. He checks a cabinet. Nothing. Dammit. He EXITS.

INT. NICKY'S BEDROOM

Sam ENTERS, NAKED, wet, and starts toward a cabinet by Nicky's bed. Nicky suddenly wakes up, sees a naked Sam in front of her and SCREAMS. Sam SCREAMS, too, and COVERS UP.

NICKY

Sam, what are you doing?!

SAM

I was just looking for a towel!

NICKY

(getting up)

Get out, get out, get out!

She starts waving him out of her bedroom and into the hallway. As he BACKS into the hallway:

INT. HALLWAY

She's frantically HERDING him down the hall.

SAM

Nicky, this isn't what you think.

NICKY

Get out or I'll call the police.

SAM

You threw up on me and I was just trying to get cleaned up.

Nicky picks up an umbrella in the hallway and starts POUNDING on Sam. Over his ad-libbed protests:

NICKY

Get out!

At the front door, she SHOVES him out.

EXT. NICKY'S TOWNHOUSE

Sam is pushed out, wet and buck naked. He tries to hold the door open, but it is forced shut. Then, he hears:

VOICES (O.S.)
(singing)
*Good King Wenceslas looked out on
the feast of Steven...*

Sam turns to see a group of YOUNG CAROLERS. He covers up.

SAM
Hi. Merry Christmas.
(then, trying the locked
door, loud whisper)
Nicky, open the door! I wasn't
trying to have sex with you!

NICKY (V.O.)
I'm dialing 9-1-1.

Sam turns back to the carolers.

SAM
Um...could I borrow some clothes?

The carolers HURRY OFF. Nicky's porch light goes out. Sam looks around, then heads over to a TRASH CAN.

INT. COOK DINING ROOM - SAME

Close on the remnants of a cherry pie. Dick and Angela get up, leaving Mel alone at the table, looking hurt.

EXT. THE COOK RESIDENCE - LATER

A cab, lights on, sits idling in the large circular driveway. Sam, IN A DIAPER MADE FROM A TRASH BAG, is THROWING PEBBLES at Mel's bedroom window.

SAM
(loud whisper)
Mel...Mel!...Mel!!!

Sam THROWS one more pebble. Suddenly:

SFX: A dog barking madly.

SAM (CONT'D)
(Newman!)
Texaco!

And all the LIGHTS GO ON IN THE HOUSE. Sam hangs his head and goes to the door. Dick OPENS the door in his bathrobe.

DICK

Sam?

SAM

(cheery)

Hello, Dick. Merry Christmas.
Hope I didn't wake you.

DICK

It's two in the morning.

ANGELA (V.O.)

Dick, who is it?

DICK

(calling)

It's Mel's friend, Sam. In a giant
plastic diaper.

SAM

(re: bag)

Oh, this old thing, funny story--

SFX: Car horn.

Sam looks back at the cab.

SAM (CONT'D)

Dick, could I borrow eighty
dollars? It's for the cab. My
wallet's in my...other pants.

Dick, annoyed, goes off to get the money. Sam steps inside.

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE

The entryway is grand and decorated for Christmas. Sam
ENTERS and looks around. A big GERMAN SHEPHERD (TEXACO)
growls at him, and then starts sniffing at his trash bag.

SAM

(to the dog)

Happy to see you too, Texaco.

Texaco GROWLS menacingly at Sam. Angela COMES DOWN the
stairs, looking confused.

ANGELA

Sam?

SAM

(as if nothing's strange)
Angela, great to see you again!

He goes to kiss her hello. She recoils slightly. There's a brief silence that Sam feels compelled to fill.

SAM (CONT'D)

Good to see Texaco, too. I read somewhere that German Shepherds are some of the smartest creatures on Earth. Not as smart as dolphins but smarter than most monkeys.

ANGELA

Oh.

Mel ENTERS.

MEL

Sam?

SAM

Oh, hi, honey. Just talking about German Shepherds.

He goes to kiss her but she STEPS BACK.

MEL

Where are your clothes?

SAM

(waving it off)
Oh...don't ask.

MEL

I am asking.

SAM

Well...I shared a cab--

MEL

(annoyed)
With that girl you were kissing?

SAM

No! No, with a guy...Mick.

MEL

Mick?

SAM

Yeah, you haven't met him.
He's...the security guard.
Absolutely hammered. I wouldn't let him drive--

DICK
(REAPPEARING)
Should I pay the cabdriver?

SAM
Thanks, Dick.

Dick CROSSES through.

SAM (CONT'D)
(to the ladies)
Anyway, Mick threw up on me in the
cab--
(off their looks)
I know. Yuck. So I showered at
his apartment.

MEL
Didn't he have anything for you to
wear?

SAM
Nothing my size. He's a dwarf.
Well, not technically a dwarf, but,
you know, as good as.

MEL
Your security guard is a dwarf?

SAM
Yeah. I wouldn't want to mess with
him, though. He's vicious.

Dick re-ENTERS.

ANGELA
A vicious dwarf vomited on Sam,
Dick.

DICK
(flat)
Is that right?

SAM
Can I just say how nice and
Christmas-y everything looks.

ANGELA
Um...thank you.

SAM
Yeah, so, if it's all right, I
really need to make a quick trip to
the restroom.

He CROSSES past them.

ANGELA
(calling)
Sam, use the powder room.

SAM
Okey-doke!

FX: The lights go out.

ANGELA
Not again.

SAM
(calling)
Sorry.

ANGELA
(calling)
No, Sam it's not your fault. The power goes out all the time.

DICK
(pointed)
It hasn't been the same since they had to re-wire after the fire.
(then)
I'll go down and fix it.

He EXITS downstairs. Sam EXITS toward the kitchen.

INT. SMALL ROOM/KITCHEN

In the dark, Sam is relieving himself. Suddenly, the lights go on and we see that Sam is NOT in the bathroom. He's in the pantry, which adjoins the kitchen. Angela and Mel appear in the b.g. Sam realizes what he's done as they hurry over.

MEL
Sam!

SAM
I thought it was the powder room!

ANGELA
Oh my God. My goose! You've urinated all over my goose.

SAM
We can wash it off!

Sam picks up the tray with the goose and carries it onto the big kitchen island. As he walks, urine sloshes over the sides and onto the floor. Angela's borderline hysterical:

ANGELA

(re: urine)

You're spilling everywhere. How much have you had to drink?

MEL

I'll get a mop.

ANGELA

Three days I've been working on that goose.

SAM

Angela, I am so, so sorry.

Dick re-ENTERS from downstairs.

DICK

Angela, there's something wrong with that trip switch...

ANGELA

Dick, be careful!

But it's too late. Dick doesn't see the puddle of urine. HIS FEET SLIP and he comes CRASHING DOWN as the screen goes

BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. COOK KITCHEN - MORNING

CARD: December 21st.

Sam is in the kitchen by himself. He has a bowl of cereal. He opens the fridge and takes out the milk. When he closes the fridge, the dog Texaco is right there, STARTLING HIM.

SAM

Ahh.

(then, off Texaco's snarl)

Texaco! You just start herding first thing in the morning, huh?

Sam looks in the fridge and grabs the slice of cherry pie that was left for him. He throws it out the back door. Texaco RUNS out. Sam SLAMS the door shut.

SAM (CONT'D)

I don't think a dolphin would have fallen for that.

Sam sits down with his cereal. Mel ENTERS. She looks pale.

SAM (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Did you just...you know...

MEL

You don't have to whisper. My parents are still at the hospital. And yes.

(then)

Is it possible to vomit so much that you actually throw up the baby?

SAM

Yes. That's common, actually.

(off Mel's smile)

I am so sorry about last night. About everything. About missing dessert, about...the goose...

MEL

(taking his hand)

Hey, listen, I've lived here my whole life and I still get lost in this house. I'm always accidentally peeing in places that aren't bathrooms.

SAM

I'm trying to apologize, here.

MEL

I usually pee in the fridge.

SAM

(smiling)

I'm going to punch you in the face.

Dick and Angela have ENTERED just in time to hear that last line out of context. Sam turns to see Dick GLARING AT HIM, trying to understand what he's heard.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh, hello, guys.

(off Dick's look)

We were just joking around.

DICK

That's very funny.

SAM

No, in context, you would have--

DICK

Yes, tell me the context in which punching my daughter in the face would be funny.

(then)

Who locked the dog outside?

Mel looks at Sam. Sam looks at Dick.

SAM

No idea.

DICK

And I'm sure you have no idea how his nose got covered in cherry pie, either.

Everyone glares at Sam, who shrinks into his seat. Then:

DICK (CONT'D)

The rule here is, Texaco stays inside unless he's doing his business. If he's locked out, he scratches to get in. I just paid \$840 to have the mud-room door re-sanded and re-painted because of a former cleaning person's inability to follow that rule. I don't like wasting money.

MEL

Dad, how are you?

ANGELA

The hospital wanted to keep him for another night, but your father's so stubborn.

DICK

Darling, I'm fine. And I'm not going to miss the Bar Council Christmas Luncheon. I haven't missed one in thirty years, I'm not missing this one.

(then)

I'm just going to feed my birds and then get going.

And Dick's OUT. Angela watches him go.

ANGELA

Oh, it makes me nervous, him out and about after such a big fall. Such a stubborn old coot.

(then, brightening)

That reminds me. Come with me.

Mel and Sam GET UP and FOLLOW Angela out.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(noticing Sam)

Okay, you, too, Sam.

INT. BREAKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

It's a dark little room. Angela goes to the back wall and lifts a black tarp to reveal an enormous PORTRAIT OF DICK, in his judge's robe. He looks regal and scary. Sam GASPS.

ANGELA

It's his Christmas present. Do you love it? It's by the same man who does all the portraits of the Presidents. He's been working on it for over a year. He said it's his masterpiece.

MEL

Dad looks very stern.

ANGELA

I know. Which he can be. But see that little gleam in his eye?

Sam leans in, looking for that gleam. He can't find it.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Your father's playful, too. That's what a good portrait does: it gives the whole sense of a person. Which is what a photo never captures.

MEL

(to Sam)

My mom hates photos.

SAM

(to Angela)

Mel hates them, too. Which makes sense since she's your daughter and you come from the same gene pool. The same photo-hating gene pool. DNA. It's some crazy stuff.

Angela studies Sam for a beat, then--

ANGELA

Yes, well, I think they look like ads for "family." So tacky. I refuse to have them splattered around the house.

(then, re: portrait)

But this, this will tell whoever sees it for the next thousand years something real, something true about the man who lived here.

SAM

(moving side to side)

Look, the eyes seem to follow you.

(then, off their looks)

I love it.

EXT. TOWN OF MANASSAS - DAY

Dick STROLLS along the sidewalk of this small quaint town PAST A SIGN POINTING TO THE TRAIN STATION. He suddenly looks a little shaky. He puts his hand to his head, then against a wall to brace himself. He tries to shake it off, but his knees go wobbly and he FALLS to the ground. His glasses fall a few feet away. Camera PANS up to a sign on the shop he's fallen in front of. It reads: HEWITT'S FUNERAL HOME.

INT. HEWITT'S FUNERAL HOME, FRONT

The FUNERAL DIRECTOR leads a still-shaky Dick in.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Nice and easy, Judge Cook.

A different undertaker brings Dick a glass of water. He takes a sip, then FAINTS again. The funeral director catches him by the shoulders. The glass crashes to the floor.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
(to the undertaker)
Take him to the back.

The undertaker LEADS Dick to the back.

INT. HEWITT'S FUNERAL HOME, BACK

The undertaker sits Dick down on one of the tables.

DICK
Thank you.

Dick lies back. The undertaker PLACES DICK'S GLASSES ON A TRAY near Dick's gurney, then EXITS.

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE - DAY

SFX: Phone ringing.

A cheery, showered Sam comes hurrying into the front hallway.

SAM
(calling)
Angela! Angela!
(then, picking up phone)
Hello, Cook residence.

INT. HEWITT'S FUNERAL HOME

The funeral director is on the phone. INTERCUT throughout.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Hello, it's Hewitt's, the
undertakers. Is Mrs. Cook in?

SAM
No, she's not. But this is Sam,
their daughter Mel's fiance, well
soon-to-be, don't tell anyone.
She's pregnant, too. But that's a
story for a different day. Anyway,
can I help with something?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Yes, well, we've got Mr. Cook. I'm afraid he collapsed in the street.

Sam's face goes ashen.

SAM

(beat)
What?

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

We found him on the sidewalk.

SAM

(upset)
He was fine half an hour ago.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

We've put him in the back room.

SAM

Oh my God.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Hopefully you can get down here as soon as possible.

SAM

(stunned)
Yeah. Yes, of course. Thank you.

He hangs up and takes this in for a beat. Then Angela and Mel ENTER with groceries, laughing. They see Sam, who looks like he's just found out someone's died.

ANGELA

Sam, is everything all right?

SAM

That was Hewitt's on the phone.

ANGELA

The undertakers?

SAM

(beat)
They've got Dick. He collapsed in the street.

ANGELA

I don't understand.

SAM
(beat)
Dick's dead.

INT. HEWITT'S FUNERAL HOME, FRONT

Dick comes in from the back, looking steadier on his feet.

DICK
Thank you, Martin. I'm feeling
much better.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Are you sure, Judge Cook? I just
spoke to someone at your house
...Sam? He's on his way over.

DICK
God no, he's the last person I need
to see now. Got to catch my train.
(then, to the undertakers,
as he EXITS)
Goodbye, gentlemen, I hope not to
need you for a few years yet.

And he's OUT. Watching him go, the FUNERAL DIRECTOR sees
something outside, then turns to the others.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
All right, guys, there's Larry.
Shall we?

They start to gather their things.

Another younger undertaker, LARRY, ENTERS from the street.

LARRY
I'm back.

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Mel is sobbing. Sam walks up to her and gives her a big hug.

SAM
I'm so sorry, Mel.

MEL
I never even got to tell him about
the baby.

SAM
I know.

MEL
If it's a boy, I want to name him
"Dick."

SAM
(doesn't like this name)
Oh. Well...that's something we can
talk about.

We hear Angela WAILING in the background.

SAM (CONT'D)
You know, maybe we should tell your
mom about the baby. That might be
a little good news right now.

ANGELA (O.S.)
Stupid Sam and his stupid urine all
over the floor! Stupid, stupid!
(ENTERING, to Sam)
You killed him! You killed Dick!

Angela EXITS.

SAM
Or maybe we should wait to tell
her.

MEL
Yes.

SAM
Why don't I go to the undertakers
and deal with the paperwork? You
take care of your mom.

Mel nods.

INT. HEWITT'S FUNERAL HOME, FRONT

Sam enters. Larry is going over some paperwork.

SAM
Hello, hi, I'm here on behalf of
Mrs. Cook.
(off Larry's blank look)
Her husband Dick...well, earlier
this morning he...he died.

LARRY
Yes. Yes, I'm sorry I'm so
clueless. I just got back from
vacation. Come on back.

He motions Sam towards the back.

INT. HEWITT'S FUNERAL HOME, BACK

Larry walks back to two cabinets where the bodies are stored.

LARRY

Have you ever identified a body before? There's usually some discoloration. It can be kind of unsettling.

SAM

What? I thought I'd just sign some papers.

LARRY

Oh, no. The body has to be i.d.'d. You squeamish around dead bodies? Here's a secret: I am, too.

SAM

Oh, well...

LARRY

Why did I pick this job, you ask?

SAM

No, I didn't.

LARRY

I have no idea. I just spent the whole week with my cousin who's studying to be a chef...Now that seems like a fun job.

(opening cabinet and unzipping body bag)

All those good smells in the kitchen.

(then)

Is this him?

SAM

(peeking in, quickly)

Nope. Not him.

LARRY

Really? Ugh. Sorry. And now we get to look at another one. Yay.

(opening another bag)

How about this guy? Holy crap what happened to his lips?

SAM
(peeking in, winces)
Uch. No, that's not him, either.
God, I feel sick.

LARRY
Welcome to my world. Constant
nausea. Instead I could be making
sauces and little puff pastries.
People would love me instead of
crossing the street when I walk by.

SFX: The phone rings.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Shoot, let me grab that.
(pointing to a body in
plastic on a gurney)
Must be that one. Be right back.

Larry EXITS. Sam walks to the gurney. He steels himself to
open the bag, but then notices Dick's GLASSES on the tray.
He picks them up, handles them, sadly. Larry RETURNS.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Sorry.
(re: gurney)
So, is that him?

SAM
Yes. These are his glasses.

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE - DICK'S STUDY

Angela and Mel are in Dick's special room, just off the front
hallway. They're standing by a birdcage, watching several
colorful FINCHES flitting around inside.

ANGELA
Your father loved these annoying
birds. He would spend hours with
them. He knew everyone of them by
the sound of its voice.
(then, breaking down)
Such a sweet, sweet man!

Mel starts to cry, too, as Sam ENTERS, cautiously.

SAM
It's done. I said we'd call to
figure out funeral arrangements.

ANGELA

How did he look?

SAM

What? Oh...He looked...Yeah, he looked good. He looked peaceful.

ANGELA

Did he?

SAM

Very. You actually got the feeling, looking at him, that any recent unpleasantness had been long forgiven.

ANGELA

That's a comfort.

(checking watch, to Mel)

It's nearly midnight in Nairobi. If we wait any longer we won't be able to reach your brother until morning. I called your sisters, I don't think I can bear another conversation. Will you call David, Mel?

MEL

Oh, God, I can't. Sam, would you?

SAM

Really? I mean, I've never met him and wouldn't it be sort of weird...
(off their grieving looks)
...yeah, okay.

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE, KITCHEN

Sam's on the phone.

SAM

(into phone)

David? David Cook?...Hi, this is Sam Briggs...I'm your sister Mel's boyfriend...

(louder)

Mel's. Melanie. Yes...Well, I look forward to meeting you, too. What? I'm sorry, this is a bad connection ...Um, well, listen, I've got some bad news about your father...No, no, he's...well, he's passed on...

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)
(little louder)
He's passed away...
(louder)
He's dead...
(louder)
No, no, he's dead!
(shouting)
He's dead!!

Off camera we hear Angela SHRIEK, and then SOB LOUDLY.

SAM (CONT'D)
(still can't be heard)
He's dead!!!!...DEAD!!!
(like he's at a crowded
sports arena)
HE'S DEAD!!!!

As Angela WAILS in the b.g., Mel ENTERS in a hurry.

MEL
Sam! What are you doing?

SAM
He's on a cell. I guess there's
bad coverage there.

She takes the phone from him.

MEL
(annoyed)
Will you run into town and get my
mom some more valium. The pharmacy
closes in fifteen minutes.

SAM
Sure, sure. Sorry, honey.

INT. DICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Dick is driving along in the dark, SINGING a holiday song.

EXT. THE COOK RESIDENCE - SAME

Sam HURRIES outside, JUMPS into the car, and SPEEDS out of
the driveway. He goes about twenty feet then sees something
and SLAMS on the brakes, too late.

SFX: CAR CRASH.

The screen goes BLACK for a second. We come back up on Dick SLUMPED over the steering wheel, passed out, smoke from his radiator billowing up around him.

Sam gets out of his car and comes around to inspect the damage. The bumpers are mangled. Then he comes around to the driver's side and sees:

SAM

Dick!

(then,, overjoyed)

Dick, you're alive. You're alive!

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE, FRONT HALLWAY

An excited Sam DRAGS Dick, who's UNCONSCIOUS, into the house.

SAM

Angela! Angela, I've got Dick!

Angela ENTERS, looking confused and slightly angry.

SAM (CONT'D)

Angela, look what I found?!

ANGELA

(appalled)

Sam!

SAM

(laughing)

It's Dick. He's here.

ANGELA

What are you doing?

SAM

I've got him!

ANGELA

Take him back!

SAM

What?

ANGELA

Take my husband's body back to the undertaker's.

SAM

Oh no, you don't understand.

But Angela's had it. She starts POUNDING on Sam.

ANGELA

Take him back, you sick, sick--

Just then, Dick comes to, very groggily.

DICK

What's going on?

And this STOPS Angela. She SCREAMS and then FAINTS dead away, leaving Sam with two lifeless bodies.

SAM

(after a beat)

Mel!

INT. THE COOK RESIDENCE, MEL'S ROOM

Mel ENTERS. A sad Sam sits on the bed.

MEL

(re: her parents)

They're fine. They actually laughed about it, kind of. Like an internal chuckle. Nearly undetectable.

(sitting)

Look, it's going to get better, I promise.

SAM

What's the matter with me?

MEL

You're nervous. You're nervous because a lot of stuff's happening in our lives. And that's making you do some really stupid things. Really stupid. Really, really--

SAM

Mel--

MEL

But I want you to know something: no matter what you do, I'm still going to love you.

SAM

Why?

MEL

(pulling her arms back)

Hey, I never thought about 'why.'

(MORE)

MEL (CONT'D)
(thinking)
Maybe I don't love you.

She PUNCHES him playfully. That progresses into a little tickling match, and then a long, deep KISS. And from there, it looks like things are going to go further, but Sam STOPS:

SAM
Oh, no. This I'm not doing.
You're evil. Good night.

MEL
Fine. Your loss. Hey, don't kill anybody on the way to your room.

INT. HALLWAY

Outside Dick and Angela's room, the door is opened slightly as Sam PASSES. He hears them talking and STOPS.

DICK (V.O.)
You know I'd say he's a horse's ass but I don't think that's fair to horses or asses.

ANGELA (V.O.)
Keep your voice down, Dick.

Sam's face falls.

DICK (V.O.)
Mel has such good instincts. What could she possibly see in him?

ANGELA (V.O.)
Come on, old man. Come snuggle with me.

But just then, ALL THE LIGHTS IN THE HOUSE GO OUT.

DICK (V.O.)
That's great. Another little gift from our boy, Sam.

ANGELA (V.O.)
We don't need lights for what I have planned.

DICK (V.O.)
Oh, fine.

In the darkness, SAM HAS AN IDEA.

INT. BREAKER ROOM

Sam ENTERS holding a candle. He goes to the big breaker box, but then notices the black tarp in the corner. He can't resist lifting it. Dick's portrait stares at him. After a beat, he sets the candle on the shelf and opens the breaker box. It's massive. Sam has no idea what does what.

SAM
(to himself)
Well, you can't make the power go
more out.

He takes a shot, picking one of the breakers and, miraculously, the lights FLICKER ON.

SAM (CONT'D)
Oh my God. I did it. I did it!
Let's see a horse's ass do that.
(turning to the portrait)
In your face!

What he sees when he turns to the portrait is that he's left the candle too close and Dick's FACE has been charred BLACK.

SAM (CONT'D)
Oh, no. Oh, no, no, no.

He starts to rub on the blackness but nothing's happening. If anything, he's making it worse.

SAM (CONT'D)
Oh, come on. You've got to be
kidding me. Come on!

And as he continues to RUB and the camera PUSHES into the blackness of Dick's face, the MUSIC comes up and we,

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

END OF SHOW