Taxi 22

"Pilot"

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Third Revised Network Draft
January 10, 2014

ACT ONE

INT. CAB - NIGHT

It's rush hour on a cold night and our leading man, WILLY MALLOY (charismatic but contentious, got more miles on him than his cab) is behind the wheel, at the beginning of a twelve hour shift. He picks up a young couple and they climb in.

GUY
Hi. 1275 York please.

WILLY
No problem. Sloan Kettering, huh? Doctor's appointment?

No answer. Willy pulls into traffic. He looks in the rearview mirror.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Somebody pregnant?

WOMAN
How'd you know? I'm wearing a huge coat.

WILLY
I don't miss a beat.

WOMAN
You think I look fat.

WILLY
Hey, I take a lot of models around, they've got nothing on you. You're beautiful.

WOMAN
Thank you.

WILLY
You're very welcome.
(then)
Models don't do it for me. Too bony, too tall, mannish. They've done studies and found that a lot of these models are very close to dudes gene-wise. So if you're into models, you might be a little gay.

GUY
You don't know what you're talking about.

WILLY
Whoa. I've struck a nerve.

GUY
I'm not gay.

WILLY
Hey, no judgments here. I have a gay son. Who, by the way, was super into Kate Moss. Then Randy Moss which broke my heart cause I'm all about the Giants. But back to my original point; models. They don't tip for crap. Also on my "deport now list"? Drunk bankers. Do I come to your work place and puke on the floor?

Reveal a Goth teen boy is now in the backseat.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Not that you asked but today's a big day for me. My boss Nishi is selling me one of his medallions. That's a license from the city to own your own taxi. Which means I'm finally getting my own cab. I'm beside myself. I'll have four drivers working around the clock. I'll just sit back and count the money. And best of all? No more driving.

Reveal he's now talking to an old man.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Because I'm done. I don't typically share this but you look familiar with physical discomfort. I busted my ass. Literally. I broke my tail bone years ago and it never set right. I'd be crying without this donut.

He holds up an air cushion. Reveal he's now talking to another Goth teen boy.

WILLY (CONT'D)
You guys are out in force tonight.
(then)
These medallions aren't cheap. But I've been saving, waiting for one to become available.
(turns to backseat)
Out the window!

Reveal a drunk banker who looks like he's about to hurl scrambling to unroll the window.

WILLY (CONT'D)
There are fifty thousand taxi drivers in the city but only thirteen thousand licenses. And I'm finally getting one.

Reveal yet another Goth kid, starting to light a cigarette.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Hey, Edward Scissor Hands, there's no smoking in here.

INT. CAB - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

It's dawn and Willy is parked in front of a bank, going through his cash and eating an egg sandwich. A woman, REBECCA, opens the door. She's with a golden retriever who's wearing a red "Therapy Dog" vest.

REBECCA
Eleven Greenwich.

WILLY
Hello.

REBECCA
The DMV please. Eleven Greenwich.

WILLY
It's common courtesy to say "hello" when you enter a cab. Especially when you interrupt a breakfast break.

REBECCA
Your light was on.

WILLY
(switches it off)
And now it's off.

REBECCA
Is this about the dog? Because it's a therapy dog. I need him. I suffer from anxiety. By law, you have to give us a ride.

Willy puts down his sandwich, turns around and looks at her.

WILLY
Do I look like the kind of guy who has a problem with a dog? Like I'm a monster? I love that dog. Great coat, big head. He's even pulling off that vest, which is not an easy look.

(MORE)

WILLY (CONT'D)
And, yes, I'm familiar with the city law requiring me to be a pet chauffeur. It comes from the same geniuses downtown who "tiny-timmed" my soda and got rid of trans fat, which apparently is the ingredient that makes food taste like food. But you didn't say "hello", further coarsening the public discourse, which really salts my nuts. I'm big on common courtesy. Ride denied.

The lady gets out of the cab and slams the door.

REBECCA
A-hole.

WILLY
(digging into sandwich)
Guilty as charged.

As Willy eats, we;

EXT. YELLOW CAB PARKING LOT - A LITTLE LATER

Willy pulls into the parking lot of a bustling taxi company. There are several parked cabs, as well as drivers ending their shifts and other drivers waiting to go out. There's also a pick-up soccer game between several Nigerian and Ethiopian drivers. Willy gets out and is immediately approached by the goalie, a Nigerian driver named VALENTINE, who's bent out of shape.

VALENTINE
You're late!

WILLY
You're upset.

Valentine grabs the keys from Willy.

VALENTINE
I should've been on the road an hour ago.

WILLY
What's this really about? Did the Ethiopians score on you again?

He pushes Willy out of the way and gets in the cab.

WILLY (CONT'D)
I'd watch the attitude, Valentine. I'm evaluating which drivers I want to hire when I have my medallion.

Valentine hands him trash out the driver side window.

VALENTINE
You left your disgusting egg sandwich wrappers in here. It reeks.

Valentine pulls out, Willy calls after him.

WILLY
Oh, that smell offends you? Because last night you left curried goat in the backseat.
(then, noticing game)
Hey Omar, you skinny bastard, that was a “hand” ball and you know it.

Willy heads inside.

INT. YELLOW CAB GARAGE/BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Willy walks across a crowded garage to find NISHI, his Pakistani boss and owner of the medallion, browsing on his smart phone. He looks up and sees Willy.

NISHI
Hey, it’s the last white cab driver in New York.

WILLY
And proud of it. Actually, not at all. Stay in school, Nishi.

NISHI
I’m fifty-seven. Do you have my money?

WILLY
(Willy holds up a check)
Boom!

NISHI
What a story. Your family came to this country with nothing, and a hundred years later, you’re almost a small business owner.

WILLY
Almost?

NISHI
My son got into Columbia.

WILLY
Holy crap. He must’ve waged jihad on those SAT’s.

NISHI
You can't say that. But yes, he sent the math section to a paradise of seventy-two virgins.

WILLY
So?

NISHI
So tuition is killing me and I can no longer give you a sweetheart deal on the medallion.

WILLY
But I'm your man. I've been with you for twenty years. I'm basically part of your clan.

NISHI
I live in Astoria. I have no clan.
(then)
I have to charge you the market rate.

WILLY
The market rate!
(then, curious)
What is the market rate?

Nishi writes it down. Willy can't believe it.

WILLY (CONT'D)
That's thirty percent more! Are we in the showers at Rikers? Because this does not feel consensual.
(then, serious)
I barely have enough money as it is.

NISHI
I'll still sell you the medallion. Just get a bank loan for the rest.

INT. DINER - LATER

ROSA (an attractive, earthy, Hispanic waitress) pours a cup of coffee for Willy, who sits at the counter.

ROSA
You need a bank loan? How's your credit?

WILLY
Not stellar. Can I borrow fifty grand?

Rosa points to a tip jar next to the register.

ROSA
You can have whatever's in the jar.

WILLY
(inspects jar)
Three bucks and a Magnum condom.

ROSA
Keep the wrapper and put a normal condom in it. No one will be the wiser.

WILLY
Why don't you get a rich boyfriend already?

ROSA
Why don't you?

WILLY
I'll tell you who should have a rich boyfriend; my son. Then I wouldn't have to go to a bank.

ROSA
He's still dating the bartender?

WILLY
(disappointed)
Andrew.
(then)
We're all having dinner tonight. Including Vanessa.

ROSA
Dinner with the ex. Look out.

WILLY
She's not the ex. No papers have been signed. I've still got a shot.

ROSA
Too bad you're booked tonight. I'm singing at Smalls.

WILLY
Ugh, blues music? It's nothing but guitars and complaining.

ROSA
And one of America's only original art forms.

WILLY
Come on. That music is just black people getting even with us for slavery.
(then, noticing table)
Where's the half-and-half?

ROSA
We're out.

WILLY
Liar.

ROSA
You don't need it.

She grabs a carton of skim milk from the counter and puts it in front of him.

WILLY
Don't make me go into the kitchen and get the good stuff.

ROSA
(calling his bluff)
Go into the kitchen.

WILLY
(beat, then)
Skim's fine.

ROSA
(re: kitchen)
You think Ronnie heard your blues thing, don't you?

Reveal Ronnie, a black short order cook, staring at Willy through kitchen window.

WILLY
It seems like he heard it.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Willy sits at a table with his son, SEAN (smart, somewhat caustic), his dad LEO (ancient, hearing aid wearing, retired cab driver) and his ex-wife VANESSA (attractive, takes no crap).

SEAN
Thanks for coming tonight. I know we don't usually all get together.

WILLY
(to Vanessa)
It's nice.

VANESSA
(ignoring him, to Sean)
What's going on, honey?

SEAN
I have an announcement.

WILLY
Is it about Andrew? Because I noticed he's not here.

SEAN
Yes.

LEO
Is the phase over?

SEAN
Nope, still gay, Grandpa. In fact, I'm going to propose to my boyfriend.

LEO
Tuning out.

Leo turns off his hearing aid.

VANESSA
Ignore him. This is such exciting news, honey!

WILLY
Is it?

SEAN
Here it comes. You don't like Andrew.

WILLY
I always saw you with more of an Anderson Cooper type.

SEAN
A "less gay" gay guy?

WILLY
(waves hands a la Andrew)
Someone less "gesture-y". With money. Plus, he's conceited.

SEAN
He's not conceited, Dad.

Willy pulls out his phone like he's on a call and then holds up one finger indicating "wait".

WILLY
He gave me the “I’m on the phone” finger in my own apartment.
(gesturing dramatically)
Like he’s talking to Obama!

SEAN
Now who’s gesture-y?

Willy stops gesturing. Leo notices Willy on the phone, turns on his hearing aid.

LEO
(re: phone)
Is that your Uncle Tony?

WILLY
(puts down phone)
It’s nobody.

LEO
Really? Because he owes me a call.

WILLY
Then why the hell would he call me? We’re still talking about the boyfriend.

Leo turns off his hearing aid. Willy turns to Sean.

WILLY (CONT’D)
I’m just saying; are the oats sown?

VANESSA
Willy, enough.

WILLY
Because it’s nothing but green-lights out there for you dude-wise. Seriously, who’s stopping the manwich? It’s like the NFL without refs.

SEAN
Get on board, Dad. I love Andrew. And I’m going to surprise him with a flash mob proposal.

VANESSA
Please say we’re in it.

SEAN
Rehearsal is Wednesday night.

She claps.

WILLY
Rehearsal? Is this going to be like one of your musicals?

SEAN
You mean graceful and moving and life affirming? Yes. Andrew will be working the bar at Kincaids. "I Want to Marry You" by Bruno Mars will come over the speakers and bam, you guys and all of our friends will break out into a choreographed dance routine and I'll propose.
(pointedly, to Willy)
Try to stay awake.

WILLY
Are you referencing Hairspray again --

SEAN
I am.

WILLY
-- Because I wasn't the only one who dozed off during that thing.

SEAN
It was the first thing I ever choreographed!

WILLY
It was ten years ago! Let it go. You're like a gay elephant.

VANESSA
I think the proposal sounds amazing.

SEAN
I hope so. I want it to be special because we're not doing a big wedding. We're saving our money for a place. Maybe in Oradell.

WILLY
New Jersey? Something wrong with Queens?

SEAN
Is that a real question?
(then)
You know I've always dreamed of getting out of the city, maybe buying a house with a yard.

VANESSA
It's a great dream.
(to Willy)
And you? Be more supportive.

LEO
(turning on hearing aid)
Is the queer stuff over?

WILLY
(re: Leo)
I'm more supportive than him.

EXT. RESTAURANT - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's after dinner and everyone's left except Willy and Vanessa, who stand outside the restaurant.

WILLY
You really like Andrew?

VANESSA
If my son loves him, then I do.

WILLY
Are you giving a press conference?

VANESSA
I want Sean to be happy. It's called unconditional love.

WILLY
There's nothing wrong with a few conditions. It keeps a kid sharp.

VANESSA
You should write a book on fatherhood.

WILLY
I miss you.

VANESSA
You shouldn't have cheated.

WILLY
I cheated once. That's barely cheating. A lot of wives would've let it go.

VANESSA
Sheila was our neighbor!

WILLY
It was a crime of convenience, not passion. I thought of you the whole time.

VANESSA
It's been years. You need to sign the divorce papers.

WILLY
(changing subjects)
How come "the Load" didn't come tonight?

VANESSA
Don't call him that.

WILLY
It's undeniable. Your rich boyfriend has let himself go.

VANESSA
Derek couldn't make it.

WILLY
Trouble on the Upper West Side?

VANESSA
Nope, it's all good.

A cab pulls up and Willy opens the door for her.

WILLY
If he doesn't treat you right, you let me know.

VANESSA
My hero.

Vanessa closes the door and Willy smiles, still in love with his ex;

EXT. QUEENS SIDEWALK - NEXT DAY

Willy walks down the street, wearing a nice blazer and carrying a briefcase. The following is a montage of Willy at various banks with a series of loan officers.

INT. SAVINGS AND LOAN OFFICE - LATER

Willy sits before a banker, who's reviewing his file.

BANKER #1
I'm sorry but you don't qualify.

INT. SAVINGS AND LOAN OFFICE - LATER

Willy watches a woman looking at his file.

BANKER #2
This is your income per month?

WILLY
Year.

INT. SAVINGS AND LOAN OFFICE - LATER

Willy with a young banker, who's laughing, then;

BANKER #3
No.

EXT. WEST SIDE SAVINGS AND LOAN OFFICE - LATER

A defeated Willy walks into his last stop of the day. He doesn't notice that it's the bank he was stopped in front of at the beginning of the episode.

INT. LOAN OFFICER'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

Willy sits across from TONY (a middle-aged banker) who is going through his file.

TONY
You've had a bankruptcy?

WILLY
Have I?
(off his look)
I have. I got upside down on the house. Adjustable Rate Mortgage. Who are the bastards who came up with those?
(realizing)
I guess it was you guys.
(re: picture)
Hot wife by the way.

TONY
That's my daughter.

WILLY
When I'm nervous, I say stupid things. I guess I'm always nervous.

He laughs, no response.

TONY
Listen, Mr. Malloy, your credit is not great --

WILLY
Can I say something before you shoot me down? I've made some stupid choices in my life.
(MORE)

WILLY (CONT'D)
I got my girlfriend pregnant at eighteen, I didn't go to college, I lost my house, I cheated on my wife who was the same girl I got pregnant. Needless to say, she's not a fan right now. But this medallion, it could really turn things around for me. I just need someone to believe. It's never too late for a comeback, right?

TONY
(beat)
My uncle used to drive a cab.

WILLY
No kidding?

TONY
He put three kids through college. Maybe I can muscle this through. Let me talk to my boss.

WILLY
You're a god!

As Tony crosses off;

INT. SAVINGS AND LOAN OFFICE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Willy is waiting expectantly for Tony when he returns.

TONY
She just wants to sit down for a second but it's a formality. She'll approve you.

WILLY
Beautiful!

A golden retriever wearing a red "Therapy Dog" vest enters. Beat. Willy realizes who he belongs to.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Oh no.

Rebecca, Tony's boss and the woman whom Willy got in an altercation with earlier, enters. She immediately recognizes him.

REBECCA
Oh. It's you.

WILLY
(nervous)
Hey there.

REBECCA
(re: file)
Tony, upon further review...
(to Willy pointedly)
Loan denied.

She smiles and exits. Beat.

WILLY
That woman never says hello.

As Willy's dream is in jeopardy, we;

CUT TO:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT./INT. SEAN'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY

Willy walks down a shabby hallway, carrying the blazer he wore earlier. He knocks. Vanessa answers the door, revealing a cramped studio apartment.

WILLY
Vanessa? Hey there.

VANESSA
Sean's not here.

WILLY
Nobody is saying hello anymore.

VANESSA
He's at the gym with Andrew.

WILLY
What are you doing over here?
(noticing she seems off)
Is something wrong?

VANESSA
I don't want to talk about it.

WILLY
Don't even try to keep secrets.
You know I don't miss a beat.

Willy stands with his back to her as if she's in his cab. He looks over his shoulder.

VANESSA
Don't "rear view mirror" me.

WILLY
You got in a fight with "the Load".

VANESSA
His name's Derek.

WILLY
(turns around)
First guess! It's uncanny. What happened?

VANESSA
I'm not talking to you about it.

WILLY
Sexual problems? Are you comparing? Don't do that to the man.

VANESSA
Why are you here?

WILLY
Sure. Switch the subject.
(re: jacket)
I'm returning this bank meeting blazer. It doesn't work. I'm "O" for the city.
(noticing the wall)
Is this a poster of New Jersey? Who even makes these?

They both look at the poster.

VANESSA
Sean's been obsessed with that place ever since that week he spent in Oradell.

WILLY
Oh yeah. At his buddy's grandma's place. He was so excited to get out of the city.

VANESSA
Because he was getting the hell away from the Gresalfi brothers.

WILLY
They were giving him a hard time? Why?

VANESSA
Why do you think? That was a rough summer for him in the neighborhood. That's why he liked New Jersey so much. It was like a suburban dream.

WILLY
I didn't know that.

VANESSA
You didn't know a lot of stuff.

Willy thinks about this a beat, then smiles;

WILLY
I know we had fun that week he was gone. Remember?

VANESSA
We went dancing at the Avalon.

WILLY
We always had a good time on the dance floor. Don't deny it.

VANESSA
You were okay.

WILLY
Okay? My hips are Latin.

He smiles, she can't help but smile back, remembering better times. There's a moment of connection. For once, Vanessa seems to soften towards him, then; a key in the door. It's Sean.

SEAN
This is weird. Because neither of you live here.

His boyfriend, ANDREW (high energy, dramatic) follows him in.

ANDREW
Hello, hello!

Andrew gives Vanessa a hug, starts to hug Willy, then notices.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Is that my blue blazer?

SEAN
Sorry. He needed one and mine didn't fit him.

ANDREW
(gestures dramatically)
It's fine.
(to Willy)
Did you dry clean it?

WILLY
(gestures dramatically)
I wore it for three hours.

Willy realizes he has a very similar gesture to Andrew, puts his hands down. Sean crosses over.

SEAN
Can I talk to you for a second?

EXT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sean takes Willy aside.

SEAN
You missed the rehearsal for the proposal.

WILLY
I don't need to practice. I've got --

SEAN
-- Don't tell me your hips are Latin.
(then)
This proposal is important to me. I want it to be beautiful.

WILLY
I'll do my part. Have I ever let you down?

SEAN
Yes, Hairspray and --

WILLY
It's hard to be a dad. You'll realize that if you ever have kids with...
(disappointed)
... him.

SEAN
Please give Andrew a chance.

WILLY
I'll try.

SEAN
Yeah?

WILLY
Yeah.

They hug, then Willy waves to Andrew through the open door.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Bye Andrew.

Andrew holds up a finger while he takes a cell call.

ANDREW
(into phone)
Matt? Hey.

WILLY
Unbelievable.

On Willy once again annoyed at his potential son-in-law, we;

INT. DINER - LATER THAT DAY

Rosa hands Willy a to-go bag at the counter.

WILLY
I'm telling you; the way Vanessa looked at me? For the first time, I thought I had a shot with her.

ROSA
You should've kissed her.

WILLY
Just kiss her? Out of the blue?

ROSA
The next time you sense a moment, be bold.

WILLY
You're talking about making the hero move.

ROSA
Yeah but you're doing it so we can't call it that.

WILLY
What if she slaps me? She wears a lot of rings.

ROSA
Then you'll have your answer. Listen, you guys have been separated for two years. I can't listen to you moan anymore.

WILLY
(looking into bag)
Where's the half-and-half?

ROSA
(re: bag)
You already have two egg sandwiches.

WILLY
Exactly. I'm already going down, don't deny me creamy coffee.

As Rosa shakes him off and Willy is creamer-less, we;

INT. YELLOW CAB GARAGE - A LITTLE LATER

Willy enters, carrying his air donut, and finds Valentine with a group of Nigerian relatives.

WILLY
Whoa. You brought the whole village.

VALENTINE
They're potential investors.

WILLY
You guys going in on a cow?

VALENTINE
A medallion actually. Nishi's medallion.

Valentine smiles as Willy takes off to the break room.

INT. BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Willy rushes in to find Nishi reading the Post. Willy waves his air donut at him accusingly.

WILLY
Are you selling to Valentine?

NISHI
Relax. He's just my insurance policy. Did you get my money?

WILLY
Yeah, I got your money. Not yet.

NISHI
Tuition is due. You have three days.

WILLY
Three days?

NISHI
Listen, I have another medallion. I'll be selling it in a couple of years when my next kid goes to college.

WILLY
My ass can't wait two years.
(holding air donut)
Literally, my ass won't make it.
(then, determined)
I'll get you your money.

As Willy heads out on a mission, we;

INT. WEST SIDE SAVINGS AND LOAN OFFICE - LATER

Willy waits outside Rebecca's office.

INT. WEST SIDE SAVINGS AND LOAN OFFICE - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Willy's still waiting. It's the end of the workday. The golden retriever walks out.

WILLY
Hey, there's my guy.

Rebecca follows.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Could I talk to you for a second?

REBECCA
(without breaking stride)
I'm not giving you the loan.

WILLY
It's not about the loan.

She stops.

WILLY (CONT'D)
I'd never miss a payment. I swear.

She starts walking again. Willy follows.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Come on, it was basically approved until you realized it was for me. Haven't you had a dream? You didn't always need a dog, right? There was once hope.
(no response)
I can't drive anymore. It's brutal out there. I busted my tailbone chasing a guy who tried to stiff me.
(no response)
Okay, I fell off a bar stool but it still hurts. Please, I'll do anything.

She stops.

REBECCA
I'm moving to the suburbs with my husband.

WILLY
That's my son's dream. With a different husband.

REBECCA
I've always been in the city so I never got my license.

WILLY
You need to learn how to drive?

REBECCA
My husband won't practice with me because I crashed with him. A couple of times.

WILLY
Twice? That's nothing. That's a slow morning for a Nigerian.
(then)
Grab your coat, lady. We're going driving.

INT. CAB - A LITTLE LATER

Willy is shotgun, Rebecca is behind the wheel and the dog is in back.

WILLY
Alright, just give the gas a little goose and --
(she peals out)
-- too much!

The following is a montage of Rebecca's dangerous driving.

She goes too fast around a turn.

She nearly clips a bike messenger.

She goes way too slow.

She inexplicably stops in the middle of the road.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Why'd you stop?

REBECCA
My heart's racing. I need to pet Steven.

She turns around and rubs her dog. A young man opens the door, thinking it's an available taxi.

WILLY
Believe me guy, you don't want any part of this.

Confused, the guy backs out. Rebecca starts to jerk the car into traffic, narrowly misses a car, jerks it back. Willy notices the dog in the backseat.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Out the window, Steven!

Too late. The dog pukes on the floor.

WILLY (CONT'D)
(re: dog)
Has he ever worked on Wall Street?

REBECCA
I'm sorry.

WILLY
It's okay. Just relax. Deep breath. Not too deep, it really smells. Now ease out. You got this. Just put on the signal and merge.

Rebecca eases into traffic.

WILLY (CONT'D)
See? Nice merge.

Rebecca smiles, she's starting to get it. She boldly switches lane.

SFX: Bus horn.

She just misses a bus and swerves back wildly.

WILLY (CONT'D)
To be clear, if we survive, I'm definitely getting that bank loan.

Rebecca nods as she focuses on the road.

EXT. KINCAID'S RESTAURANT/INT. KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY

Vanessa walks through the back door of an upscale restaurant in Soho. She winds her way through the busy kitchen of cooks and wait staff until she finds Sean and Willy waiting by the door to the dining room. From the dining room we hear "I Think I Want to Marry You" by Bruno Mars. We see through the window in the kitchen door various waiters and customers (who are actually Andrew and Sean's friends) doing a choreographed dance in front of a surprised Andrew, who is sitting on a bar stool in his bartender's uniform. A stressed Sean is engineering the proposal routine from behind the scenes.

SEAN
You're late.

VANESSA
I couldn't get a cab.

WILLY
You should've called me.

VANESSA
Where's Leo?

SEAN
He already went in.

Reveal Leo, in the dining room amidst a bunch of gay dancers, staring straight ahead, in his own world. Willy holds up Leo's hearing aid.

WILLY
He took it completely out.
(then)
Where's the boyfriend?

VANESSA
He's not coming.
(then)
Derek and I broke up. It's for the best.

WILLY
(smiles)
R.I.P. "the Load".

SEAN
(to Vanessa)
But you and Derek were going to dance together?

VANESSA
I'll dance alone.

SEAN
Alone? You're the last dancers anyone will see before I propose. Your choreography is all about partnership and love --

WILLY
-- And forgiveness and new beginnings. She'll dance with me.

SEAN
Good enough. Go! Go!

Sean pushes Willy and Vanessa onto the "dance floor".

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The whole room is dancing in unison. They part for Vanessa and Willy to dance down the middle towards Andrew. They dance beautifully together, they always have. Willy spins his estranged wife next to Andrew and then does a little Victor Cruz victory salsa move. Sean enters. Andrew gasps. Sean walks over to Andrew and gets down on one knee.

SEAN
Andrew, since you came into my life, I've never been happier.
(MORE)

SEAN (CONT'D)
You're brilliant, compassionate, hilarious...

As Sean gives his speech to Andrew, Willy looks down at Vanessa and smiles. She smiles back. Their son is in love.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Every day you make me want to dance and I never want it to end.

Willy puts his arm around Vanessa. She looks up at him, still smiling. It's a moment. He remembers Rosa's words. Be bold. Impetuously, Willy kisses Vanessa. Beat. She slaps him. Sean turns to his parents.

SEAN (CONT'D)
Okay, what's happening?!

WILLY
It was a moment.

VANESSA
The slap was a reflex.

WILLY
Please continue with your proposal.
(to Andrew, not wanting to ruin surprise)
Or whatever this is...

Sean gathers himself.

SEAN
Andrew, you're not only my partner, you're my best friend. Will you marry me?

ANDREW
Yes!

The crowd erupts in celebration. Vanessa grabs Willy.

VANESSA
Outside, now!

EXT. KINCAID'S RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Vanessa drags Willy outside.

WILLY
Vanessa, I blew the timing, I get that. But I'm getting my medallion! We can make this work.

VANESSA
Is that why you think we're not together? Because you didn't make any money?

WILLY
Isn't that why you went with Derek?

VANESSA
That's so insulting.

She slaps him again, Willy grabs his lip.

WILLY
At least take off the class ring.

VANESSA
You want to know why we're not together, Willy?

WILLY
Not if it's really harsh.

VANESSA
You're a selfish bastard who only thinks about himself. It's always what you want. What's good for you. For God's sake, you just ruined your son's proposal.

WILLY
Andrew said yes. It all worked out.

VANESSA
It's over, Willy. For real. Sign the divorce papers.

Vanessa heads back into the party leaving Willy with the knowledge that his marriage is finally done. Beat. Andrew comes out of the restaurant.

WILLY
Hey Andrew, I'm sorry if --

Andrew holds up a finger, reveal he's on his headset.

ANDREW
(into phone)
Mom? I just got engaged!

WILLY
Of course.

Andrew brushes by Willy, who’s left alone on the sidewalk, realizing he’s made a mess of things;

CUT TO:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. YELLOW CAB GARAGE - THE NEXT DAY

Willy enters, carrying his air donut, to find Valentine watching a Vine video on his iPhone with several Ethiopian drivers. The drivers all clap when they see him.

WILLY
What the hell's going on?

VALENTINE
(holding up phone)
I stumbled upon a video of your homosexual son's proposal online.

WILLY
Stumbled? What were your search words?

VALENTINE
(off video)
Oh, the slap is the best. Kapow!

The other drivers react, ad-libbing "No, she didn't.", "Go Pacquiao.", etc.

WILLY
Laugh away. My loan came through. I'm about to give Nishi a check for the medallion.

VALENTINE
But my cousins were just getting together the necessary funds.

WILLY
(to group)
I'll be taking driver applications. Bribes are welcome. I enjoy egg sandwiches and cash.

Willy heads into the break room.

INT. BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nishi is dressed head to toe in Columbia apparel.

WILLY
I forget, where is your son going to college?

NISHI
Time's up. Do you have my dough?

WILLY
Boom! For the second time.

Willy hands him the check and Nishi shakes his hand.

NISHI
It looks like we have a deal.

WILLY
Finally! Yes! My own cab!

Willy holds up his hands in victory and then pops his air cushion with his key. Nishi smiles.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Now do I get an actual medallion? Because I'm all about loud jewelry.

NISHI
This is also a big moment for me, you know.
(Nishi holds up check)
I am sending my son to Columbia. He's wanted to go there all his life...

Nishi starts to get emotional. Willy puts his arm around him.

WILLY
Hold it together. The Ethiopians are gossipy.

NISHI
I'm giving my kid his dream, Willy. Isn't that what it's all about?

As this hits Willy, we;

EXT. NEW JERSEY HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Willy pulls up in his cab in front of a small, but cute suburban house. Sean and Andrew are in the backseat. Willy gets out and opens the door for Sean. Andrew starts to join them. Willy stops him.

WILLY
Give us a minute, please.

Andrew throws up his hands and gets back in the car.

SEAN
Why does he have to stay in the cab?

WILLY
Because he'll ruin the moment.

SEAN
What moment?

WILLY
This moment.

Willy gestures to the house.

SEAN
I'm at a loss.

WILLY
Your Mom said I was a selfish bastard and she wasn't wrong. I haven't been there for you during this whole proposal thing. If I'm honest, I haven't been there for you a lot. We were always so different, I didn't know how to connect. I wanted to watch the Giants, you were coming up with dance routines for that school play with the witches --

SEAN
Wicked. Again, you fell asleep.

WILLY
I could not keep my eyes open.
(off Sean's look, sincere)
But I should've. I should've done a lot of things differently. But hey, it's never too late for a comeback, right?

He tosses Sean some keys and gestures to the house.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Happy wedding, son.

SEAN
You bought us this house?

WILLY
No, those are my cab keys. It's symbolic. But I'm giving you the down payment for your dream house. In the promised land.
(re: around him)
New Jersey.

Willy hands him a check.

SEAN
Isn't this your medallion money?

WILLY
I can wait a couple of years for the next one.

Sean stares at the check.

SEAN
It's too much, Dad.

WILLY
For you? Not even close.

Sean gives his Dad a big hug.

SEAN
Thank you.
(then)
Can Andrew come out of the cab?

WILLY
(still hugging)
Not yet.

As Willy enjoys a nice long hug alone with his son, we;

INT. DINER - A FEW DAYS LATER

Willy sits down at his usual booth. Rosa crosses over.

ROSA
What's new?

WILLY
I just dropped off my divorce papers.

ROSA
I'm sorry, Willy.

WILLY
Hey, it is what it is. Time for a new beginning.

ROSA
I'll get you some half-and-half.

WILLY
Finally.

She heads into the kitchen. She starts singing "I Want a Little Sugar in My Bowl" to herself.

WILLY (CONT'D)
What are you singing?

ROSA (O.S)
Nina Simone. The blues.

WILLY
(calling off)
You've got a nice voice. You should sing more often.

She re-enters with his creamer.

ROSA
I'm always singing around here.

WILLY
I've never noticed.

ROSA
Well, you frequently have your head up your ass.

WILLY
Me? Please. You know I don't miss a beat.

He smiles, she smiles back. As she pours his coffee, Willy watches her. He realizes there's a connection between the two of them; he just never realized it until now. Maybe it really is time for a new beginning.

CUT TO:

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

EXT. YELLOW CAB PARKING LOT - THAT NIGHT

Willy walks through a pick up soccer game between the Nigerians and the Ethiopians. Valentine is in goal. Willy opens the door to his cab, places his air donut on the seat and gingerly gets in. He starts to pull out of the lot when Valentine gestures for Willy to roll down the window. Willy stops but doesn't roll down the window.

VALENTINE
Listen, I don't want any of your egg sandwiches in the cab. They smell it up. It's inhospitable.

WILLY
(through window)
I can't hear you.

Willy pulls an egg sandwich from under the seat.

VALENTINE
You need to listen to me, Willy. I am the boss now. Nishi sold the medallion to me.

Willy takes a big bite of the sandwich, honks the horn and pulls out. Valentine fumes. A ball flies past him into a makeshift goal. The Ethiopians celebrate.

VALENTINE (CONT'D)
No fair, Omar! I wasn't ready.

We follow Willy in his cab as he throws the sandwich wrapper on the floor. Sandwich in hand, he pulls out on the street for another night behind the wheel.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW