BROTHERS-IN-LAW

"Pilot"

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ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT./EXT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT *

NEIL (think Ben Stiller -- tightly wound and intellectually intense) drives. In the back seat is his wife CHESKA (think Christina Applegate: beautiful, even-tempered but emotionally open) and his sister-in-law MADDIE (think Anna Faris: sexy, overdramatic, self-absorbed). Maddie tries to hold still while Cheska works on her lip-liner.

NEIL

You guys don't both have to ride in the back. I feel like a dad, driving teenagers to the mall.

CHESKA

I'm helping Maddie with her make-up.

MADDIE

My toenails are still wet. I'm going to stick 'em out the window.

NEIL

Please don't.

But Maddie rolls down the window and sticks her feet out.

MADDIE

Did you talk to him about tonight?

NEIL

What?

CHESKA

Don't worry. He'll be on best behavior.

NEIL

I'm always on best behavior!

MADDIE

I was just asking. (THEN, TO CHESKA)
Doesn't he have any nicer shirts?

NEIL

Okay, I'm right here. You can ask me questions directly.

MADDIE

(HELLO?) I didn't want to be rude.

CHESKA

Honey, Maddie's just a little stressed out. New boyfriend meeting the family for the first time. You remember what that was like.

MADDIE

I need you to be supportive. I really like this guy. I'm tired of dating. I'm older than Cheska, I should've been married first.

NEIL

You're three minutes older than Cheska.

MADDIE

That's still older!

CHESKA

Neil, you missed Ogden.

NEIL

I'm not taking Ogden. I'm taking Memorial.

MADDIE

Are you insane? Memorial's a parking lot.

CHESKA

Take Pipkin and double back to Ogden.

MADDIE

Get in the left turn lane. What are you doing? We're going to be late!

CHESKA

Go where that guy's going. There! The next one, that's right turn only.

NEIL

Maybe one of you would care to drive? No? Okay.

The girls stifle a chuckle. Neil regains his composure and starts driving again. After a beat:

MADDIE

(TO CHESKA, SOTTO) You've got to get him some new shirts.

CHESKA

I know.

NEIL

I can hear you!

CUT TO:

SCENE B

EXT. PARKING LOT OUTSIDE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Neil, Cheska and Maddie get out of Neil's car. Maddie sprints ahead of them.

MADDIE

I'm going to see if Van's here yet!

And SHE'S GONE. Neil gets his jacket out of the car and locks up. Cheska rubs his back sweetly.

CHESKA

Honey, you've just got to indulge my sister a little. This is a big deal for her.

NEIL *

How big a deal could it be? She's * never even let us meet the guy. We * meet all the guys. *

CHESKA *

Exactly. She thinks we're a jinx. *

NEIL *

Ah. I didn't realize we had jinxing * power. But you know, if she says our * names three times fast -- *

CHESKA *

Neil, let's just make this a good * night for her, okay? *

(MORE)

CHESKA (CONT'D)

And promise me -- if my dad brings up the cell phone thing, just let it go.

NEIL

Of course I will.

She kisses him.

NEIL (CONT'D)

And he <u>will</u> bring it up. Within the first ten minutes, I guarantee it.

CHESKA

And you'll let it go.

NEIL

Yes! I'm just saying, that phone got five stars from everybody. Everybody. I wouldn't have recommended it otherwise. It's not my fault the man refuses to read an instruction manual.

CHESKA

I know. But you need to learn to let these things slide sometimes.

NEIL

I do. And I will. As always.

They pass an Escalade parked across two spots.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Look at the way this guy parked.

CHESKA

See, this would be a perfect thing to just let slide.

Neil finds a scrap of paper in his pocket. Cheska cringes.

CHESKA (CONT'D)

And you're writing a note...

NEIL

Cheska, if I don't, this jerk will think it's perfectly fine to park his monster truck across as many spaces as he wants. Next time, he parks across three spaces. Time after that, he takes up the whole parking lot!

CHESKA

I don't think that would be possible.

NEIL

What do you think, "Dear Cretin" or "Dear Ass"?

CHESKA

(GIVING UP) Ass.

NEIL

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

CUT TO:

SCENE C

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Cheska and Neil enter to find TOM (60s, wields power with such confidence that he never has to raise his voice -- think Tommy Lee Jones) waiting for them. He gives Cheska a big hug and a kiss.

TOM

Hey Pumpkin! I was worried about you.

CHESKA

Sorry we're late, Dad.

NEIL

We're four minutes early.

TOM

I would've called you, but, y'know, my new phone doesn't work.

Neil grits his teeth and smiles. Cheska rubs his shoulder, "That's my man!"

CHESKA

So, where's Van? I can't wait to meet him.

TOM

Don't know. Your sister's tracking him down.

Maddie appears, leading VAN toward them. He's big, he's loud, and he's on his cell phone. (Think Will Ferrell in his gregarious, alpha dog mode.) Maddie points to him and mouths "It's him!"

VAN

(ON PHONE) You're not hearing me, Doug. You've got to trust me on this one. Doug, buddy, you're not hearing me.

NEIL

(SOTTO TO CHESKA) How can that be? Everyone in the restaurant is hearing him.

Cheska shushes Neil as Maddie and Van reach the table.

VAN

(ON PHONE) Have I ever led you wrong? (LAUGHING) You would bring that up, you crazy sonofabitch! Hold on. (CUPS PHONE) Guys, so sorry. Give me two minutes. I've got a sucker on the line, I just need to plant the hook in him. (INTO PHONE) Oh, <u>now</u> you hear me! Let's talk dollars, you cheap bastard.

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

NEIL

Your dad is going to eat this poor guy alive.

<u>CUT TO:</u>

SCENE D

INT. RESTAURANT - TWO HOURS LATER

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

TOM

(LAUGHING) I love this guy!

VAN

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

Tom laughs uproariously as Van flags down the waiter.

VAN (CONT'D)

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

Cheska, Maddie and Neil have glasses of white wine.

NEIL

We're good.

VAN

(REALIZING) Sorry, bro.

MADDIE

Tell Daddy about your company, sweetie.

TOM

You own a company?

NEIL

I own a company.

VAN

(MODEST BRAVADO) It's a small company.

TOM

A company's a company.

NEIL

I have twenty-three full time employees.

TOM

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

NEIL

(DEFENSIVE) It's a tech incubator. We develop concepts.

TOM

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

VAN

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

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

CHESKA

What?

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

CHESKA (CONT'D)

What? Are you choking?

NEIL

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

CHESKA

(ALARMED) Who's got a gun?

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

VAN

Who's got a gun?

NEIL

(FOR CHRIST'S SAKE) <u>You've</u> got a gun!

VAN

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

Cheska playfully punches Neil in the arm.

CHESKA

(TO NEIL) You scared me.

NEIL

<u>I</u> scared you?

Tom pats Van on the back.

TOM

So nice to know that <u>one</u> of my daughters is well protected.

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

<u>CUT TO:</u>

SCENE F

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

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

TOM

How the hell did you do that?

VAN

I'll never tell!

TOM

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

VAN

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

MADDIE

Van's super generous.

TOM

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

NEIL

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

TOM

What's that?

NEIL

Nothing.

TOM

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

CHESKA

No. Let's drop it.

TOM

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

NEIL

Not necessary, Tom. It was my pleasure.

TOM

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

NEIL

Tortoises!

Van puts his arm around Neil and takes him aside. *

VAN *

Neil, I've got a fantastic idea. * Tomorrow night, you and me, dudes' * night out. *

NEIL *

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

VAN *

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

NEIL *

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

VAN *

Five! Four! Three! Two! One! *

(BUZZER SOUND) You're in! We're gonna *

have a blast. *

MADDIE *

(ASIDE, TO CHESKA) Thank god I waited. *

The jinx is over! *

Cheska and Maddie high-five. Neil surrenders. *

NEIL *

Will you be bringing the gun? *

VAN *

Oh, I never go anywhere without *

Shirley. *

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

VAN (CONT'D) *

Huh. Somebody left me a note.

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

VAN (CONT'D)

(READING) "Dear ass -- Bravo on the

parking job. Those of us who park our

cars in a single space can only gape

in admiration at the way your gigantic

ass wagon dominates the parking lot."

TOM

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

VAN

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

TOM

(CONFIDENT) Neil.

NEIL

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

CHESKA

(TO VAN) He’s sorry.

MADDIE

(FURIOUS) He’s <u>really</u> sorry.

VAN

No no, it’s okay. Neil makes a good point. I’m parked completely over the line. And I get like three miles per gallon, which is pathetic. You nailed me, buddy!

NEIL

Well, sorry about the tone. No hard feelings?

VAN

Never! Water, bridge, whoosh!

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

VAN (CONT'D)

(TO TOM) Of course, I need a big truck

to pull my boat.

TOM

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

CHESKA

(TO NEIL) Keep walking!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE G

FADE IN:

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

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

NEIL

I don't want to have a "dudes night out" with a gun wielding maniac. *

CHESKA *

He wasn't wielding the gun. *

NEIL *

Okay, but on a "dudes night out," I guarantee you he'd wield it! That's what people who say "dudes night out" do! *

CHESKA *

It's one night. And it'll make my sister happy. *

NEIL *

I'll make you a deal. The next guy she likes? I'll go out with him two nights. *

CHESKA

C'mon. Van's not so bad. I liked him. *

NEIL

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

CHESKA

Don't say that in front of Wyatt.

NEIL

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

CHESKA

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

NEIL

He <u>hates</u> me. He thinks I'm unworthy of you, he doesn't get what I do, he thinks I'm from Mars. Remember when we announced we were engaged?

CHESKA

He was happy for us.

NEIL

His exact words were "Is there any wiggle room on this?"

CHESKA

He was just a little surprised.

NEIL

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

CHESKA

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

NEIL

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

CHESKA

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

NEIL

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

CHESKA

(ENOUGH!) Look, Maddie's boyfriend made a gesture of friendship to you. Maddie is my sister, you are my husband. So just go out with the guy!

NEIL

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

CHESKA

I doubt it.

NEIL

Your dad hired him to whack me.

CHESKA

Neil -- you of all people should want Maddie to settle down and have a life apart from ours. You're the one who said "marrying a twin is like having two wives but you only get to have sex with one of them."

NEIL

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

CHESKA

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

NEIL

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

CHESKA

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

Cheska smiles and exits.

NEIL

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

CUT TO:

SCENE H

INT./EXT. VAN'S ESCALADE - NIGHT

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

VAN

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

Van swerves and HONKS his horn.

NEIL

I think you just ran somebody off the road.

VAN

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

NEIL

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

VAN

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

CUT TO:

SCENE I

INT. GEISHA ENCOUNTER - MINUTES LATER

A sleek, ultra modern sushi joint, all chrome, glass and neon. The place is full of drunk business men. We find Neil and Van looking at an array of sushi displayed, discreetly, along the leg of a naked woman. Van is thrilled; Neil is nauseated.

VAN

Did I tell you, or did I tell you?

NEIL

You told me.

VAN

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

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

NEIL *

I can't do this.

VAN

What? What are you talking about?

NEIL

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

VAN

'Nuff said. (MOTIONS FOR A WAITER) Ryuichi! We're going to go with regular plates.

RYUICHI

(INCREDULOUS) Seriously?

VAN

I know.

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

NEIL

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

Ryuichi and the woman exit.

VAN

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

NEIL

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

VAN

Maybe not specifically. But if you think about it, the human body is an ecosystem, it's teeming with parasites.

(MORE)

VAN (CONT'D)

I saw a thing on Discovery about the mites that live in your eyebrows, and man oh man, those little dudes are --

NEIL

(ENOUGH!) So, you and Maddie. You guys seem great together.

VAN

Yeah. I'm gonna be blunt with you, Neil. I didn't just bring you here for naked sushi. I need you. You've been part of this family for a long time. You're the inside man. Fill me in. Like, what's Tom's deal?

NEIL

There's not much to tell. Tom's widowed, raised the girls pretty much by himself. He doesn't like me, never has, he thinks I'm a pretentious intellectual with no real-world abilities of any kind, and that Cheska marrying me was the worst mistake of her life.

VAN

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

NEIL

Okay look, I get the man a new cell phone, he refuses to even read the quick-start guide, and then he announces “bluetooth doesn’t work, it’s a scam!”

VAN

Hey, I’m just saying don’t poke the bear. You’ve got to be a salesman! If I want to sell a security system to a guy, I don’t sell him on the product. I sell him on me. (FOR INSTANCE) Hey friend, you like fishing?

NEIL

No.

VAN

No, see, we’re role-playing, Neil. You’re the customer. Work with me. Hey friend, you like fishing?

NEIL

I love it.

VAN

Me too! I was up at Lake Shasta last weekend, the sturgeon were going berserk. You like sturgeon?

NEIL

I like Chilean sea bass.

VAN

Yeah, but those are from Chile.

NEIL

They're actually from Patagonia.

Van stares at him for a beat.

VAN

You're not going to work with me, are you Neil?

NEIL

Look, I appreciate the effort, but there's no point. The fact is that Tom hates me and he always will. You make one mistake with the guy, and he never lets you forget.

VAN

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

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

NEIL

(THROWN) Wow.

VAN

Can you believe it? You and me, buddy. We're gonna be brother-in-laws!

NEIL *

Brothers-in-law. The plural goes... *

never mind. Congratulations. *

VAN *

Thanks, man. We need more sake! *

NEIL *

Boy, you are really moving fast. *

VAN

When you figure out what you want,

you've just gotta go for it, right?

NEIL

Yeah, another reason Tom's going to *

love you. I waited three years to *

propose to Cheska. Every time I saw

Tom, he'd say "Hey, why buy the cow,

right?" Boy, I can't wait to hear him *

now. (AS TOM) "Remind me, Neil. How *

long did it take you to do what Van *

here just did in a couple months. *

Three years, was it?" *

VAN *

You do a good impression! *

NEIL *

Yeah. (AN IDEA) Hey, just curious -- *

you planning on asking Tom for *

Maddie's hand? *

VAN *

What? That's kinda old-fashioned,

isn't it?

A sly smile creeps across Neil's face.

NEIL

I've always thought so.

Neil drains his sake and holds up the bottle.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Ryuichi! More sake!

VAN

That's what I'm talkin' about!

NEIL

Yeah!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE J

FADE IN:

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cheska takes a pyrex container of reheated ravioli out of the microwave. It's hot! Maddie enters. (She has a key.) Cheska indicates the baby monitor on the counter.

CHESKA

(HUSHED) Hey Mad. I just got Wyatt to sleep.

MADDIE

Ooh, let me kiss him goodnight!

CHESKA

No! He's cutting molars. It took me an hour to get him down.

MADDIE

I won't wake him up! He loves his Aunt Maddie.

CHESKA

Yes, because she wakes him up, and tickles him, and reads him a book, and then it's ten o'clock.

MADDIE

C'mon, I need a distraction. I'm kind of freaking out here. Van is out with Neil! Who knows what they're talking about? *

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, what if he tells Van how I ruptured Trent Rowe's testicle with a putter?

CHESKA

(CRINGES) I'd managed to forget that.

MADDIE

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

CHESKA

Neil would never tell that story. He can't even bear to think about it. Come on, you said it yourself, the jinx is over. Calm down, have a glass of wine. I don't want you to wake up Wyatt.

MADDIE

I'm not going to wake up Wyatt.

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

MADDIE (CONT'D)

(MOUTH FULL) Hot hot hot!

The BABY MONITOR LIGHTS UP BRIGHT RED as Wyatt starts crying (off-screen). Oops.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Should I go read him a book?

CHESKA

No!

CUT TO:

SCENE K

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

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

VAN

Neil. C'mon. Relax!

NEIL

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

VAN

That's what speed bumps are for!

Another speed bump. The car jolts upward.

VAN/NEIL

Whoo-hoo!/Please stop!

SFX: VAN'S PHONE RINGS

He answers.

VAN

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

Van skids into a turn.

NEIL

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

VAN

Speed bump!

The car jolts upward again.

VAN/NEIL

Yes!/Stop doing that!

CUT TO:

SCENE L

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cheska and Maddie, each with a fork in hand, are alternating taking bites of the ravioli. They've opened a bottle of wine.

MADDIE

I've never dated a guy like Van before. *
A guy who's so strong and decisive and *
knows exactly what he wants. *

CHESKA *

You seem great together, Mad. And *
he's a huge improvement over what's- *
his-name, the one who kept calling you *
"mommy." *

MADDIE *

(LAUGHS) Jacob. Ew. *

CHESKA *

And the guy with the diaper fetish -- *
who was that? *

MADDIE *

That was Larry. And also Maurice. *
But to my credit, I did get Maurice to *
wear pull-ups. *

They laugh. Then... *

MADDIE (CONT'D) *

If your husband blows this for me, I am *
going to murder him until he is dead. *

CHESKA *

You can't, because then I'd lose a * husband and a sister. *

MADDIE *

I would not get caught. I'd be * stealthy, I'd use some sort of * untraceable poison. It's all good. *

CHESKA *

Well that's a relief. *

MADDIE *

Come on, Chesk. I can't just sit here * waiting. Let's go to a bar and get * hammered, like we used to do before * you became boring married lady. *

CHESKA

And we'd take Wyatt with us? *

MADDIE

Can't you get a babysitter? *

CHESKA

At eleven at night? *

MADDIE

It's eleven?! My god, where are they?! *

The BABY MONITOR LIGHTS UP again.

SFX: BABY CRYING

MADDIE (CONT'D)

That kid is a really light sleeper. *

CUT TO:

SCENE M

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

Van parks the car and turns to Neil.

VAN

This is the place. Wanna come with me?

NEIL

No way! I'm staying in the car.

VAN

Suit yourself.

Van hops out of the car.

NEIL

You can't just leave me in the car!

VAN

Then come with me.

NEIL

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

VAN

Then stay in the car!

NEIL

What, with no protection?!

VAN

Fine.

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

NEIL

Take this thing away from me before I kill somebody!

VAN

Fine! I'll be two minutes.

Van puts the gun back in the glove box and exits. Neil is spooked to be alone. He starts to hyperventilate.

NEIL

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

Neil ducks down below the window.

NEIL (CONT'D)

This is it. This is it for me.

Neil pulls out his cell phone and dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Cheska answers the phone.

CHESKA

Hey, honey. Having fun?

NEIL

(INTENSE) I love you.

CHESKA

(THROWN) I love you too.

NEIL

No, I mean I really love you.

CHESKA

Are you okay?

NEIL

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

MADDIE

What's going on?

CHESKA

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

Maddie grabs the phone from Cheska.

MADDIE

Neil? What happened? Where's Van?

NEIL

I don't know. He ran off.

MADDIE

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

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

NEIL

Gotta go!

END INTERCUT.

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

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

IN THE CAR, Neil panics.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Nooo!

He lays on the CAR HORN.

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

IN THE CAR, Neil freaks out.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Van! Look out!

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

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

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

VAN

(INDISTINCT YELLING!)

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

NEIL

(SCREAMS!)

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

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

NEIL (CONT'D)

What are you doing?!

VAN

It's just Milt! He works with me. (TO MILT) Gina didn't tell you I was taking this call?

MILT

Nope. This guy a friend of yours?

VAN

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

NEIL

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

VAN

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

NEIL

Scarface. That's fresh.

Milt points his gun at Van, smiling.

MILT

You feeling lucky, punk?

Van points his gun at Milt.

VAN

You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me?

NEIL

Okay, ha ha. Put the guns down.

VAN

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

NEIL

Seriously!

Van and Milt keep laughing as we...

CUT TO:

SCENE N

INT. NEIL AND CHESKA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cheska, Maddie and Van are all laughing at Neil.

NEIL

Yes. Ha ha. It's very funny.

MADDIE

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

They all yuk it up. Neil remains stoic.

NEIL

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

VAN

Honestly, though, I appreciate what you did for me.

NEIL

Yeah, I know, I was very entertaining.

VAN

No -- You were trying to save my life. Sure, you threw a loaded gun at the bad guy, which is pretty much the stupidest thing you could possibly do. But it's good to know you've got my back.

MADDIE

(TO VAN) I'll see you back at your place. (THEN, MOUTHING TO NEIL) Thanks for not telling him about...

She makes a golf-swing move. Neil reflexively covers his crotch, grimacing. Maddie gives Van a quick peck, hugs Cheska, and EXITS.

CHESKA

I'm glad that you're alive.

Goodnight, my panicky love.

Cheska wraps her arms around Neil and they share a sweet kiss. Then SHE EXITS TO THE BEDROOM. Van gets a little emotional.

VAN

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

This is awkward for Neil.

NEIL

Well, I'm glad you did. Fun night.

VAN

It was killer! It's funny -- growing up, I never had a brother. But I'm starting to feel like I've got one now.

Van gives Neil a bear hug. Neil can't breathe.

VAN (CONT'D)

(SOTTO) Remember -- mum's the word about the ring.

Van winks at Neil and EXITS AFTER MADDIE. Neil watches him go. He feels like a complete shithead. Cheska re-enters to get the baby monitor.

NEIL

(TO HIMSELF) Dammit.

CHESKA

What?

NEIL

I am an ass.

He EXITS AFTER VAN.

CUT TO:

SCENE O

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

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

NEIL

Van!

Neil looks around. The coast is clear.

NEIL (CONT'D)

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

VAN

(SURPRISED) Really? I thought you said --

NEIL

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

Van mists up.

VAN

You really do have my back!

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

MADDIE

Why don't you two get a room?!

VAN

(CALLING AFTER HER) We might!

CUT TO:

SCENE P

INT. RESTAURANT - DAYS LATER

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

TOM

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

They clink glasses.

VAN

Thank you, Tom.

TOM

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

NEIL

(GRITTED TEETH) So I hear.

Van casually high fives Neil behind Cheska's back.

VAN

So, Neil, what are you doing Sunday?

NEIL

Well, I've got all sorts of --

CHESKA

He's free. Totally free.

Neil gives her a "What are you doing to me?" look.

VAN

Fantastic. Because you and me are playing golf with Tom!

Neil nearly has a stroke.

TOM

Van tells me you're dying to play.

NEIL

Van would know.

Neil smiles for Tom, then pulls Van aside.

NEIL (CONT'D)

What are you thinking?!

VAN

I'm thinking that you and Tom need some quality time together. Trust me, I'm doing you a solid.

NEIL

I have never played golf in my life.

VAN

Seriously? Crap. Okay, Saturday morning, six a.m. You and me, all day golf lesson.

NEIL

Look, I appreciate it, but--

VAN

Don't thank me. It's the least I could do for my best man!

NEIL

Best man?

Maddie squeals with delight and hugs Cheska.

MADDIE

Did you hear that, Chesk? Neil's his

best man!

CHESKA

That is so great!

MADDIE

We can all go tuxedo shopping

together!

MADDIE/CHESKA

(EXCITED SQUEAL!!!)

NEIL

(TO VAN) Are you sure about this?

VAN

I wouldn't have it any other way, bro.

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

NEIL

Shirley's got her safety lock on,

right?

VAN

Of course!

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

VAN (CONT'D)

Now she does.

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

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW