I'M NOT DEAD YET

"The Signs Tell You Everything" (Pilot)

Written by

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WRITER'S FIRST DRAFT

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COLD OPEN

1 EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING 1

Emerging in SLOW MOTION comes a man in his best suit (which is ten years out of style) with a peacock of a woman. She is all big hair, big nails, big jewelry, big makeup, big heels. He is shorter. Unimposing. Average. They are arm-in-arm. An arriving couple glances sideways at them as a soothing, Morgan Freeman-voiced NARRATOR says:

NARRATOR (V.O.)
When a shorter man dines out with a woman who wears a lot of makeup, people make assumptions. Assumptions like, "he probably has money." And, "she probably has chlamydia." But this man isn't wealthy, and this woman isn't a prostitute. Sandy Lazarus and his wife, Sharon, have just finished a celebratory meal in honor of his 40th birthday.

What he said: this is SANDY LAZARUS (40) and his wife, SHARON LAZARUS (late 30's). He's a Matthew Broderick type, she a Jennifer Coolidge sort.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Now, expensive dinners aren't the ordinary thing for Sandy, as he himself is *most* ordinary. In fact, the most unusual thing about Sandy is probably just how ordinary he is. But, this ordinary man's life is about to take a turn for the *extra*-ordinary.
(a beat)
By which I mean, "unusual" not "more ordinary" -- since that would be hard to do. And, not so interesting.

RESUME SPEED as they reach the VALET stand. Sandy hands over the ticket and some money and the Valet scampers off.

SANDY
That was some dinner. I felt a little guilty eating it.

SHARON
It's your birthday, live a little.

1 CONTINUED: 1

SANDY
Everyone has birthdays, Sharon. I'm hardly special.

SHARON
You're special to *me*.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
This was their dynamic: Sandy, who believed he was a nothing, and Sharon, to whom he was everything.

SHARON
You have to celebrate every so often. Enjoy life -- *especially* now you're forty.

SANDY
Right. So, then how come we couldn't get dessert?

SHARON
Because you're forty, you can't eat that crap anymore.
(then)
But you want a taste of something sweet, I might have a little something-something for you at home.

She gives him a wink. He misses it.

SANDY
(thinks, then)
Frozen yogurt?

SHARON
No.

She winks again, harder. This time he sees it.

SANDY
(realizing)
Oh.

The VALET delivers the car (which we don't fully see yet).

VALET
Nice ride. Haven't driven one of these in a long time.

Sandy avoids eye contact. Hands the guy a bill.

1 CONTINUED: 1

VALET (CONT'D)
And a *dollar*, too. How *will* I spend it?

Sandy, all too aware he's being mocked, goes back into his wallet. Twenties. He quickly hands the one over and gets in.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
This was Sandy's dynamic with everyone else: in a dog-eat-dog world, he was a fire hydrant. Though what it was about him that made him such an obvious target was hard to say.

WIDEN TO REVEAL Sandy's car: a cheap compact sedan plastered bumper-to-bumper with "CHESTER WEST'S DRIVING SCHOOL", a big sign on top, and CAUTION: STUDENT DRIVER on the back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Unless he was driving.

2 INT. SANDY'S CAR - NIGHT 2

Sandy approaches their house.

SANDY
I wonder if the kids are okay.

SHARON
The kids are at your Dad's.

SANDY
That's why I'm wondering.

Pulling into their driveway they see their neighbor, BROOKS (40ish, obnoxious, David Cross-y), walking his dog. They watch as the dog squats on their lawn.

SHARON
Maybe he'll pick it up.

SANDY
He's not going to pick it up.

SHARON
He might.

SANDY
I've asked him a thousand times and he never does. I should say something.

2 CONTINUED: 2

But the tone in his voice isn't determined, it's defeated. And knowing how much he hates conflict, Sharon gives him his out:

SHARON
No. It's your birthday. You can say something tomorrow.

Sandy watches the dog finish. Brooks moves on.

SANDY
Yeah. Sure.

3 INT. LAZARUS HOME - NIGHT 3

Sandy and Sharon enter their darkened home.

SANDY
So, when can I get a little of that sweet something-something?

SHARON
(sexy)
You wait here and I'll get it ready.

She exits to the kitchen. Sandy waits a moment, then starts hastily removing his clothes: shirt... shoes... his pants are around his ankles when Sharon, carrying a birthday cake, enters back from the kitchen. Suddenly the lights come on as FRIENDS, FAMILY, and CO-WORKERS leap out of hiding.

EVERYONE
SURPRISE!

Sandy nearly leaps out of the skin he realizes is mostly exposed save for his tightie-whities. He goes to pull up his pants -- then stiffens, straightening up and reaching for his heart as his face FREEZES, a contorted expression of pain/horror/embarrassment. He COLLAPSES.

4 INT. CHESTER WEST'S DRIVING SCHOOL - THE NEXT DAY 4

Nothing fancy: a few desks, some filing cabinets, a water cooler, a sad little ficus, and one actual private office to the side that says LEN WHINER, PRESIDENT on the door. Sandy comes in the front door and heads for his desk, past co-workers who keep their distance, some of them whispering to each other. LI HARVEY (40ish, think Ken Jeong), Sandy's one work buddy, comes over.

LI HARVEY
What the *what* are you doing here?

4 CONTINUED: 4

SANDY
I'm fine, Li. The doctors said I just passed out.

LI HARVEY
Still. People probably want you taking some time after all that trauma.

SANDY
I don't need any time. I feel great.

LI HARVEY
Not *your* trauma, *their* trauma from seeing you in your jockeys.

SANDY
Oh.

LI HARVEY
And not new jockeys, either. Those things looked pretty grey.

SANDY
Okay.

Sandy's attention turns to the assignment board.

LI HARVEY
I'm just saying: consider a little fresh fruit on your loom.

SANDY
I said okay.

The assignment board is a large whiteboard with the names of the instructors and their daily schedule which is filled with the names of students. But Sandy's schedule has been totally erased, his students reassigned to other instructors.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Hey, what happened to all my students?

LI HARVEY
Whiner reassigned them.

LEN
It's pronounced "winner."

Sandy turns to see LEN WHINER (late 30's, smarmy) who's emerged from his office.

4 CONTINUED: 4

LI HARVEY
That's what I said. Winner.

LEN
That's not what it sounded like.

LI HARVEY
Why, 'cause I'm Asian? I can't pronounce the letter 'I'?

LEN
That's not what I said.

LI HARVEY
Well that's what it sounded like.

Li gives Len a look as he strategically retreats.

SANDY
You reassigned all my students?

LEN
Hey, I didn't know if you were dead or whatever; sort of forced me to make an assumption.

SANDY
So you assumed I *died*?

LEN
You have a heart attack then you don't call, I connected the dots.

SANDY
But I'm *not* dead. And I *didn't* have a heart attack, it was a transitory syncopal episode.

LEN
That sounds worse.

SANDY
It just means I passed out.

LEN
Well, when you came to you should have told me that so I didn't have to go shuffling everything around.

SANDY
It's not *that* shuffled. Mostly it looks like you gave all my best students to Lisa.

4 CONTINUED: 4

Sandy and Len gaze over at LISA, the office hottie.

LEN
Well, Lisa's earned it.

SANDY
She's been here three weeks, how's she earned it?

Len gives Sandy a wink.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Really?

LEN
Oh yeah. I've had my hands at ten *and* two.

Len mimes holding a steering wheel, then opens and closes his hands as though squeezing a woman's breasts. He drops a hand, leaving one up for a high-five.

LEN (CONT'D)
Come on now.

Sandy reluctantly gives Len a very weak high-five, then surreptitiously wipes that hand on his pants.

SANDY
So can I get my students back?

LEN
Sorry, man but my hands are tied.

SANDY
In what way?

LEN
In the way that I had to completely rearrange the assignment board because of *you*, Lazarus. But I tell you what, you want a student? You can take Mr. Bill.

SANDY
Mr. Bill? Mr. Bill always goes to the new person in the office. I've been here six years. I graduate more students than any other instructor.

4 CONTINUED: 4

LEN
(shrugs)
Take it or leave it, Lazarus.

5 INT. SANDY'S CAR - DAY 5

Sandy gives a lesson to MR. BILL (90ish, crotchety) who can barely see over the steering wheel. The only thing thicker than Mr. Bill's New York accent is his glasses. At a red light, Mr. Bill has stopped well back of the car in front of him. The car behind them honks.

SANDY
You can pull up, Mr. Bill.

MR. BILL
I'm fine here.

SANDY
It's better if--

MR. BILL
(yells)
Don't you tell me, Andy, I said I'm fine here!

SANDY
(a beat, then)
It's Sandy.

MR. BILL
What?

SANDY
My name is Sandy.

MR. BILL
What'd I call you?

SANDY
Andy.

MR. BILL
Then what's the problem?

SANDY
My name is Sandy.

MR. BILL
(yells)
That's what I said!

5 CONTINUED: 5

SANDY
No, you said Andy.

MR. BILL
You said Andy!

Sandy sighs. This isn't going anywhere.

SANDY
It's green.

MR. BILL
I can see. Andy.

Mr. Bill drives on as Sandy keeps his eyes on the road.

SANDY
Let's stay in one lane, Mr. Bill. Those yellow lines aren't just a suggestion. Good. The thing about driving is, once you have the basics down, the rest is just paying attention. To traffic, to the lane markers, to the signs. Parking, driving, whatever -- you'll never go wrong if you just do what the signs say.

The car begins to drift into the next lane.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Signal, Mr. Bill. You need to signal. Mr. Bill?

He turns and is horrified to see Mr. Bill is totally asleep.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

6 INT. LAZARUS HOME - AFTERNOON, A FEW DAYS LATER 6

Sandy's birthday party 2.0 -- but no surprises this time. In fact, it's totally sedate. Moving through we see the same faces as before, including Sandy's daughter, MELANIE (13, goth/punk), who's bored out of her mind. A passing adult drops a snack plate and a half-empty beer on a nearby table. Melanie quickly makes sure no one's looking, then downs the beer. Across the room we see Sandy's son, ARTIE (9, adorable). He has headphones on, deejaying from an iPod.

SHARON
Attention everyone! Attention! Artie, volume please?

Artie turns down the music and hands her a cordless mic.

SHARON (CONT'D)
I just want to thank everyone again for being here -- *again* -- to wish my sweet Sandy a happy birthday. So, if anyone wants to say a few words? Anyone?

People look around, avoiding eye contact with her.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Okay, well maybe someone will think of something during the little presentation the kids and I have put together. Melanie, Artie?

Artie and a very reluctant Melanie join Sharon. She sets down the mic. A dance track kicks in. They strike a pose.

FREEZE FRAME. ANGLE ON Melanie.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Just so you know, Melanie hasn't always been like this. It wasn't so long ago her favorite animal was a unicorn and her favorite color was rainbow. But when her best friend betrayed her by dating the young man she had a crush on, well, something inside her died. Now Melanie hates unicorns and rainbows. And her best friend.

ANGLE ON Artie.

(MORE)

6 CONTINUED: 6

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And then there's Artie, who *has* always been like this, which is to say, mute. Never even cried as a baby. And though Sandy and Sharon took him to five kinds of doctors with six kinds of degrees, none of them could find anything wrong with him either mentally or physically. He gets good grades, he loves baseball, and *no one* beats him at charades. In fact, aside from not speaking, Artie might just be the most well-adjusted member of the Lazarus family.

RESUME SPEED as the three perform a hip-hop dance -- which is cute until it gets a *little* too sexual, what with the chest thrusts, gang signs, crotch grabs, and mimed ass slaps. They finish to polite/uncomfortable applause. Melanie quickly disappears back into the crowd as Sharon picks up the mic.

SHARON
So, did that inspire any thoughts in anyone?

Oh, it did. But none they'll admit publicly. And then Sandy's father IRV (60ish, perpetually obliviously insensitive) steps forward.

IRV
I have a few.

SHARON
No, Irv. Wait for the less-important people to go. Anyone?

FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sharon's reluctance to let her father-in-law speak was due to his lengthy history of cringeworthy speeches.

FLASHBACK TO:

7 INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - 15 YEARS AGO 7

It's Sharon and Sandy's wedding. Irv makes a toast.

7 CONTINUED: 7

IRV
I never thought Sandy would meet anyone whose standards were low enough to marry him. And then he met Sharon.

Sandy buries his face in his hands.

FLASHBACK TO:

8 INT. TEMPLE BETH EL SOCIAL HALL - 27 YEARS AGO 8

It's Sandy's Bar Mitzvah party. Irv makes a toast.

IRV
Today, he is a man. So, hopefully this means a little pubic hair soon.

Sandy buries his face in his hands.

FLASHBACK TO:

9 INT. IRV'S HOUSE - 40 YEARS AGO 9

It's Sandy's Bris. Irv makes a toast.

IRV
There was so little to work with, I thought we might have to choose between circumcision and converting.

Baby Sandy buries his face in his hands.

BACK TO SCENE.

Irv toasts.

IRV (CONT'D)
At age forty a man ought to have a good relationship with his father or a good reason not to. Sandy, you and I have never been so close. Which is why I've never told you something I should have, a long time ago. Sandy...

People smile, anticipating the tender words to come.

IRV (CONT'D)
You're adopted.

9 CONTINUED: 9

People snicker -- but Irv isn't joking.

IRV (CONT'D)
Now, who your real father is, I can't say. But, I think it's safe to assume he's not so well-endowed. Anyway, happy birthday, son. Or, I guess I should say,
(air quotes)
"son."

Everyone looks at Sandy, who is speechless. And then, once again, his face suddenly contorts and he COLLAPSES.

10 INT. HOSPITAL CORONARY CARE UNIT - DAY 10

Sandy rests in bed. Sharon holds his hand while Irv, Artie, and Melanie sit nearby. Cardiologist PHIL DOCTER (40ish, jovial, African-American) enters. His is also the voice of our Narrator.

DR. DOCTER
Hello. I'm Dr. Phillip Docter, Chief of Cardiology.

IRV
Dr. Docter? People call you that?

DR. DOCTER
That or Dr. Phil.

SANDY
Do you have a pref--

DR. DOCTER
No, it pretty much sucks either way. So, Mr. Lazarus, your chart indicates this is your second cardiac episode this week.

SANDY
I thought I just passed out the first time.

DR. DOCTER
You did. But your EKG now tells us there was more to it than we first thought. Mr. Lazarus, you have a rare heart condition called Long QT syndrome.

10 CONTINUED: 10

DR. DOCTER (CONT'D)
It's a genetic disorder that can cause an irregular heartbeat, leading to palpitations, fainting, and sometimes...
(off Sandy's concern)
uh...

SHARON
"Uh"? What's "uh"?

DR. DOCTER
The good news is that with beta-blockers, Long QT is manageable.

IRV
And, that now you have something long.

SANDY
Thanks, Dad.

SHARON
Why didn't they find this the first time he came in?

DR. DOCTER
Because then there was no reason to look. He got surprised, he fainted. Believe it or not, the ER has seen worse.

IRV
So how do you get this Long QT thing? Growing up, he would never wash his hands after he peed -- could that be it?

DR. DOCTER
No. Long QT is genetic.

IRV
Genetic. So *that's* what happened to his father.

DR. DOCTER
Aren't you his father?

IRV
(proudly)
Nope, he's adopted!

10 CONTINUED: 10

SANDY
You said you didn't know anything about my biological father.

IRV
I don't. Other than that he suddenly dropped dead at 40, which is why you got put up for adoption.

SHARON
Is that what "uh" is? That my husband could suddenly drop dead?

DR. DOCTER
Uh... yes.

Sharon freaks out, which makes the kids freak out, which makes Sandy freak out, which makes Irv yell at everyone to stop freaking out.

DR. DOCTER (CONT'D)
Calm down. Please. Everyone.
(no one does)
If you don't calm down he could die!

Well that does it. Silence.

MELANIE
Say what?

DR. DOCTER
With Long QT, stress, shock, surprise, even strenuous exercise can trigger a sudden, massive coronary.

A beat as everyone stays very deliberately calm.

SHARON
Well, fortunately he already doesn't exercise.

SANDY
Who knew that would pay off?

DR. DOCTER
What about stress?

SANDY
Eh. I'd say I'm pretty easygoing.

10 CONTINUED: 10

SHARON
It's true. Sandy doesn't let things get to him -- he just lets life roll off his back.

SANDY
Are there any other triggers?

DR. DOCTER
Well, sometimes... sleeping.

IRV
(yells)
Sleeping?!

Irv's outburst startles everyone -- especially Sandy, who clutches his chest as his face suddenly contorts. There is a collective stillness, a holding-of-breath... and then:

SANDY
(a little surprised)
I'm okay.

And a collective exhale.

11 INT. SANDY'S CAR - DAY 11

Sharon drives the instructor-mobile, kids in the back, as Sandy stares out the window. They pass a yellow 'PEDESTRIAN CROSSING' sign -- only the figure in it isn't walking, he's clutching his heart. And then, in a second one, the figure is laying on the ground.

This is weird. Now they pass an orange 'MEN WORKING' sign -- but this one says 'MAN UP'. Again: weird.

SANDY
Did you see that?

SHARON
See what?

SANDY
The signs. They're... changed. There, look at that one.

He points to a sign that says 'DO NOT KEEP LIVING LIKE THIS.'

SHARON
"Do Not Block Intersection"?

They go through the intersection.

11 CONTINUED: 11

SANDY
That's not what it said.

SHARON
I'm pretty sure it did. What do you think it said?

SANDY
I... never mind.

MELANIE
Maybe you're going crazy, too.

SHARON
Melanie!

Sharon scolds Melanie, Melanie snaps back at her, and it quickly devolves into a fight. The car approaches some roadwork and an electronic roadwork sign. Sandy is relieved to see it just says, 'CAUTION: OPEN TRENCH'.

But then it changes to: 'YOU'RE NOT GOING CRAZY.' Unnerved, Sandy closes his eyes, hoping that when he opens them the sign will be back to normal.

He opens them. It says, 'I PROMISE.'

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

12 INT. SANDY'S HOUSE - DAY 12

In MONTAGE we see Sandy's morning:

IN HIS BEDROOM he wakes and glances at the TIME magazine on his nightstand. Normal. No strange messages. Good.

IN HIS BATHROOM: He swallows a vitamin and brushes his teeth, looking back and forth between the pill bottle and the toothpaste tube. Again, no strange messages.

IN HIS BEDROOM: Getting dressed he looks at the label on his underwear. It too stays the same. He's starting to relax.

IN THE KITCHEN: He pours a bowl of Frosted Flakes, eyeing Tony the Tiger's message of "They're Great!" Nothing strange about it. He pours the milk, smiling, now confident that whatever those strange messages were about, they're gone.

But as he brings a spoonful of cereal to his mouth, he freezes. Following his gaze to the morning paper we see the word 'SANDY' in huge print above the fold. Oh no. Holding his breath, Sandy gently unfolds it to reveal 'BEACHES ARE WAITING FOR YOU IN HAWAII.' It's just an ad. He exhales.

13 INT. SANDY'S CAR - DAY 13

Once again Sandy gives Mr. Bill a driving lesson. They're going way too slow and cars are honking. A soccer mom passes them, giving them the finger.

SANDY
Why don't we signal and check our mirrors?

MR. BILL
What for?

SANDY
So we can get over and let the cars behind us pass.

MR. BILL
F them, Andy. If they wanted to be in front of me they should've left earlier.

SANDY
It's Sandy.

13 CONTINUED: 13

MR. BILL
Really? This again?

SANDY
Mr. Bill--

MR. BILL
You're distracting me, Andy. You want me to crash?

SANDY
No, but--

MR. BILL
Then shut up.

Sandy clams up. His jaw clenches. They approach an intersection. But where 'PREPARE TO STOP' would be painted on the street, it says, 'MAKE IT STOP.'

MR. BILL (CONT'D)
You know what I hate about people, Andy?

Mr. Bill drives on as he continues talking -- but whatever he's saying dissolves into a muddled CACOPHONY as Sandy starts noticing *all* the signs around him are changed, bearing messages like YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO TAKE THIS?', 'GROW A PAIR', 'WHERE DOES IT END?' 'BE A MAN.' And now his own words come back to him:

SANDY (V.O.)
"You'll never go wrong if you just do what the signs say."

Sandy's eyes narrow. His nostrils flare. His breathing deepens. He's seething. He turns to Mr. Bill, whose muddled speech becomes clear just as he says:

MR. BILL
Right, Andy?

SANDY
It has an 'S.'

MR. BILL
What does?

SANDY
My name. My name is Sandy. Not Andy. Sandy.
(his anger rising with each word)
(MORE)

13 CONTINUED: 13

SANDY (CONT'D)
As in beach. As in Koufax. As in Duncan. As in "Sir, I am going to shove a sharp stick up your-"

14 INT. CHESTER WEST'S DRIVING SCHOOL - DAY 14

A furious Len lays into Sandy.

LEN
...ask me for a student, and not only do I give you one, I give you our most... distinguished one -- and then you verbally abuse him. Mr. Bill has been with this driving school since it was founded, Lazarus, and *you* screwed that up.
(a beat)
So. Anything to say?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
At times like this Sandy usually just whispered an apology or shook his head or just stared at his shoes until it was all over.

LEN
(mutters)
Idiot.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But in that moment, something grew inside him. Something that hadn't been there before: Balls.
(a beat)
Not literal balls, of course. Those he had.

Sandy, who's been avoiding eye contact with Len, makes it.

SANDY
(softly)
He should be able to drive by now.

LEN
Excuse me?

SANDY
Mr. Bill should be able to drive by now. But he can't, and he probably never will. But you know that, and yet you keep taking his money. And that's wrong.

14 CONTINUED: 14

As Sandy continues, the whole office gradually turns its attention to him.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Also, giving my best students to Lisa was wrong -- even if she is sleeping with you.

LISA
What? I am not!

And now MUSIC slowly begins to swell, telling us this is Sandy's moment of victory.

SANDY
Telling me you were sleeping with Lisa was wrong. Not replacing the office coffee maker after that Legionnaire's scare was wrong. Making us pronounce your name 'winner' is wrong. W-H-I-N-E-R is *whiner*. Period. If you stopped thinking of yourself all the time and started thinking more about your employees, Len, it'd make you a better person and this office a better place.

The music peaks, and we all know what comes next: a gradually building applause that begins with one person beginning to slowly clap. And that person is Li Harvey.

Only no one joins in. Len glares at Li.

LI HARVEY
There was a fly.

He claps a few more times, as he attempts to kill the "fly" while moving away. Len looks back at Sandy.

LEN
Lazarus, you're fired.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

15 INT. “REMEMBER THE MANE” HAIR SALON - DAY 15

Sharon, who works here part-time as a hairdresser, is the only white face among the mostly African-American employees and customers. A woman, BEV (50ish) sits in Sharon’s chair getting her hair done. Sandy enters, sneaks up behind Sharon and kisses the back of her neck.

SHARON
Sandy! What a nice surprise. Bev, this is my husband, Sandy.

BEV
Nice to meet you.

SHARON
What are you doing here?

SANDY
(smiling)
I just quit my job.

SHARON
Sandy. Seriously, what are you doing here?

SANDY
I am serious. I had to. You know how Len treated me. It wasn’t right.

SHARON
But Len’s never treated you right.

SANDY
Exactly. I should’ve done this a long time ago.

SHARON
No, but... Sandy, I’m part time here. How are we going to live?

SANDY
It’s not about the money.

BEV
It is when you want groceries.

15 CONTINUED: 15

SANDY
Len was a terrible boss and a worse person who played favorites and discriminated against anyone he didn't like. *I* was discriminated against.
(to the whole place)
Who here is against discrimination?

A general assent comes from the all-minority employees and customers.

SHARON
But... couldn't you have been against it without quitting?

SANDY
Forget the quitting part. I don't even think I used that word.

BEV
How about "terrible boss"? You use those words?

Sandy considers how to answer this.

SHARON
Sandy, did you quit or were you fired?

SANDY
Quit. Fired. Those are--

BEV
Answer the question.

SANDY
Honey. Look at me. What do you see?

BEV
(under her breath)
Someone about to watch a whole lot of daytime television.

Sandy is smiling -- and for the first time he looks honestly happy. Sharon looks at him, unsure.

SHARON
I... I don't know, baby.

SANDY
Happy. I'm happy.

15 CONTINUED: 15

A beat. Sharon reaches for him -- but as he goes to take her hand she moves past it and feels his forehead.

SHARON
I think you might be sick.

16 INT. SANDY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 16

Sandy sits on the couch, a thermometer in his mouth. Sharon takes it out and looks at it.

SHARON
Ninety eight point six. I'm calling Dr. Docter.

SANDY
Ninety eight six is normal.

SHARON
That's what worries me. A fever would at least explain why you're acting this way.

SANDY
I'm not acting at all. I'm being me.

SHARON
Yes. And *you* have a heart condition. You're on medication. Maybe that's what this is, a side effect.

She goes for the phone. He follows.

SANDY
It's not a side effect. I feel great. In fact, I feel more alive than I have in years.

He takes the phone from her.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Let's make love.

SHARON
No. Sandy. Not with you like this. Plus, it's light out.

SANDY
So? What are we, vampires?

16 CONTINUED: 16

He kisses her on the neck. Part of her is reluctant -- but part of her is finding him -- and this -- irresistible.

SHARON
Sandy. Oh. Oh, my god. Okay. But fast.

SANDY
Always.

They start to undress, when suddenly Sharon freezes.

SHARON
Kids.

SANDY
When do they get home?

Sandy follows Sharon's gaze to the door where his kids are standing.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Oh. Hi kids.

If Artie weren't already speechless, he would be. Melanie, meanwhile, is holding up her phone at them. Sandy and Sharon re-button themselves.

SHARON
Melanie, what are you doing?

MELANIE
I *was* gonna make some YouTube money before you stopped.

Artie looks at his watch, then at Sandy and shrugs, silently asking why he's home in the middle of the day.

SANDY
Melanie, Artie, come here. Sit down.

They cross and sit on the couch.

SANDY (CONT'D)
When the doctor first told me I had a heart condition, I felt like I'd been given a death sentence. But then I started to see it differently. To see... signs, you might say.
(MORE)

16 CONTINUED: 16

SANDY (CONT'D)
And then today I realized that what I've got doesn't have to be a death sentence -- it can be a *life* sentence.

MELANIE
Like going to prison?

SANDY
Like *getting out* of prison.

MELANIE
Then that's not a life sentence, that's like parole or something.

SHARON
Melanie.

MELANIE
What? It's different.

SANDY
The point is, I'm *free* now. Free to stand up for myself instead of always backing down. Free to speak my mind instead of swallowing my words. Free to do what *I* want instead of what everyone wants from me.
(to Sharon)
Letting life roll off your back isn't not stressing, it's not *living*. And from now on, I'm going to *live*.

MELANIE
So you're what, like getting a motorcycle or something?

SANDY
No.
(then)
Although...

SHARON
He's not getting a motorcycle. What your father's saying is, he quit his job.

MELANIE
To do what?

16 CONTINUED: 16

SANDY
Nothing. I quit because it wasn't the right place for me.

MELANIE
So we're poor now?

SANDY
It isn't about the money.

MELANIE
It is if you're poor! We're poor. You made us poor! I hate you!

She runs from the room, crying. Sandy looks at Sharon, who sighs.

SHARON
I'll go talk to her.

She exits. Sandy sits next to Artie.

SANDY
It's going to be okay, Artie, don't worry. Are you worried?

Artie shrugs, then indicates "a little" with his fingers.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Well that wasn't my plan.

Artie looks quizzically at Sandy.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Okay, I didn't have a plan. But I sure didn't want to stress you guys out. Just lower *my* stress so I don't...

Artie clutches his heart and makes a "dead" face.

SANDY (CONT'D)
I *was* trying not to say it.

Artie makes a "sorry" face.

SANDY (CONT'D)
It's okay. I pretty much think about it constantly, anyway.

Artie makes a sad face.

16 CONTINUED: 16

SANDY (CONT'D)
Yeah, but it's also motivational. Knowing you could go at any moment makes you want to be a better person. A better son. A better husband. A better dad. So in that way, it's actually a good thing.

Artie smiles.

SANDY (CONT'D)
I don't want us to end up like me and your Grampa Irv have, okay? I want us to be close.

Artie hugs him. It's a tender moment. The hug continues.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Especially now that I'm defective, just like you.

Artie rolls his eyes. So much for tenderness.

17 EXT. SANDY'S HOUSE - DAY 17

In the driveway Sandy peels the Chester West Driving School stuff off his car, tossing it in the trash. Turning, he sees an elderly man walking along the sidewalk: it's Mr. Bill.

MR. BILL
You should live closer to a bus stop.

SANDY
You should learn to drive.

MR. BILL
I was trying to. But then my idiot instructor got himself fired.

SANDY
I heard he got fired because some old crank complained about him.

MR. BILL
That old crank complained about *all* the instructors.
(then)
So you're done teaching, huh?

SANDY
I guess so. For now, at least.

17 CONTINUED: 17

MR. BILL
Well, if that changes, you let me know. I like you. But more importantly, I hate the bus.

SANDY
Okay. I will, thanks.

Mr. Bill turns and shuffles away.

SANDY (CONT'D)
See you later, Mr. Bill.

MR. BILL
See you later.
(then)
Sandy.

Sandy thinks as he watches Mr. Bill shuffle off. He smiles.

MELANIE (O.S.)
You want a hand?

Sandy turns to see his daughter by the car.

SANDY
I'd love one.

They resume stripping the car of its decals and signage as Artie comes out of the house, followed by Sharon, who has a tray with a pitcher of lemonade and glasses on it.

PULL OUT and OVER the scene. Cue the HAPPY ENDING MUSIC.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sometimes things change people.
And sometimes people change things.
For Sandy, the... now hold on,
what is that dog doing there?

Stop the music. Sure enough, Brooks' dog is on Sandy's lawn, sniffing around, looking for a place to go. We PUSH BACK IN as Sandy calls over to Brooks, who's come out of his house.

SANDY
Get your dog off my lawn, Brooks.

BROOKS
But it's his spot.

SANDY
Not anymore.

17 CONTINUED: 17

The dog squats.

BROOKS
Eh, there he goes. Too late. You know, I feed him organic. Just consider it fertilizer.

Sandy glares, then walks over to Brooks' lawn.

SANDY
Consider *this* fertilizer.

He drops his pants and squats. Jaws drop. Melanie gets her phone out to video the scene -- but Sharon snatches it away. Sandy smiles triumphantly at his family. And Sharon *tries* to smile back, but the truth is, she's just not sure what to make of this new man she's married to, squatting on the neighbor's lawn, totally unashamed.

SANDY (CONT'D)
Sharon. I need some paper.

Re-cue the HAPPY ENDING MUSIC as we PULL BACK, past a street sign, that, instead of parking restrictions, says:

THE END