

MY MOTHER' S CURSE

by

Dan Fogelman

Fogelman Draft 6/5/07

OPEN ON SKY BLUE:

As a QUOTATION types across screen...

**"ALL WOMEN BECOME LIKE THEIR MOTHERS. THAT IS THEIR TRAGEDY. NO MAN DOES. THAT'S HIS."**

**- Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Ernest.**

A line of clouds slide in, wiping away the quote. The clouds settle bottom-frame: a FLOOR OF CLOUDS.

NARRATOR

When I was a little boy, my mother used to tuck me into bed every night. And every night she'd tell me the same story.

A PEARLY GATE appears. It swings open. We ENTER, following an unseen MOTHER'S POV.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She told me that if she ever went to Heaven, and met God...

A WHITE-HAIRED MAN materializes, motions toward...

AN INFINITE LINE OF FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOYS.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And God lined up all the little boys in the world, and told her she could only pick one...

The POV walks the line. ADORABLE FIVE YEAR OLD'S make puppy dog eyes. They continue getting passed, until...

A BOY. Really cute. The POV'S HAND enters frame, POINTS.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She'd pick me every time.

The boy JUMPS, thrilled! He steps forward.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Every night she told me the story. And as I grew older, from child to boy...

A LINEUP OF TEN YEAR OLD'S. The BOY holds a basketball, stands with friends. The POV picks him again. He smiles.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And boy to teenager...

A LINEUP OF TEENAGERS. The POV selects HER BOY (reading Kafka, smoking a joint). He rolls his eyes, steps forth.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A fear began to materialize in my mind.  
I began to fear that I had not, in fact,  
turned out to be a very good son.

A LINEUP OF HEAVY COLLEGE GUYS. Again, the POV picks her BOY. He downs a beer, tosses it, and steps forward.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

I feared if my mother actually went to  
heaven, and met God, she'd still pick me.  
But she'd be making the wrong choice.

A FINAL LINEUP of THIRTY-YEAR OLD MEN. The POV scans, settling on our now fully EVOLVED YOUNG MAN. He's wearing a suit and is on a cell phone, pre-occupied.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

So ironically, my mother's bed-time  
story, meant to make me feel special...

The young man shakes his head at her ("don't pick me").

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Would make me feel guilty for the rest of  
my life. And looking back, I can't help  
but wonder if maybe, just maybe...

She POINTS at him.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

That wasn't her intention all along.

**CUE TITLE CARD: MY MOTHER'S CURSE. (ROLL CREDITS)**

INT. BEDROOM (NEW JERSEY) - MORNING

A WOMAN lies on one side of a king-sized bed, sleeping. The other side is empty, sheets untouched. She's asleep in a seated position. A book on lap. Glasses on nose. Three M&M wrappers litter her body.

An alarm: CUEING the soft 50's song: *The Great Pretender*.

Waking, she begins removing the M&M wrappers. She stops, discovering a leftover M&M. She hesitates then... pops it in her mouth.

And so we meet JOYCE BREWSTER, 56.

PAN TO THE NIGHTSTAND. Her almost ancient alarm clock reads 8: 30 AM. Next to it...

A SINGLE PHOTO. Large and framed. It shows Joyce with the YOUNG MAN from our recent montage...

INT. BEDROOM (CALIFORNIA) - MORNING

The same PHOTO on a different nightstand. This photo is smaller and less prominent, set amidst other photos of the YOUNG MAN: with friends, on vacation, etc.

BESIDE THE PHOTOS: an iPod alarm clock reads 5:30 AM. It goes off: CUEING Kanye West's rap, *The New Workout Plan*.

PAN to the bed, where the YOUNG MAN lies on his back, already awake. A NAKED GIRL'S arm is draped over his chest. As he tries to extricate himself she STIRS.

NAKED GIRL  
(groggy)  
Mmmmm. I love you.

She wraps half her naked body over his and returns to sleep. He looks completely smothered.

And so we meet ANDY BREWSTER, 29.

INT. JOYCE'S BEDROOM - LATER

RE-CUE: *The Great Pretender*.

Joyce primped at a mirror, wearing a sweatshirt. She puts on a pair of CLIP-ON EARRINGS and removes her GLASSES (which split open/close over the nose, a magnetic miracle. When "open" they simply hang around her neck.)

She pulls her eyes toward her ears, a pseudo face-lift. She SIGHED. Re-clicks her glasses into place.

INT. ANDY'S BEDROOM - LATER

RE-CUE: *The New Workout Plan*.

Andy stands at his own mirror in a suit, looking sharp. He feels his gut. All good. He notices something hanging from his suit-sleeve: a PRICE TAG reading \$1200.

He takes a deep breath, then rips it off and tosses it in the garbage.

INT. JOYCE'S KITCHEN - LATER

RE-CUE: *The Great Pretender*.

Another price, this time on a COUPON ("two dozen eggs for three dollars"). A scissor clips the coupon.

PULL BACK to reveal Joyce clipping away while eating eggs. Outside the window, it's a cold, dreary, New Jersey winter day. Joyce puts the paper aside, revealing...

A POST-IT NOTE: "Andy, United 45, 4:36 PM tomorrow."

Joyce smiles to herself, picks up a phone.

INT. ANDY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Andy drives his BMW, beset on all sides by palm trees and sun, a perfect California morning. He's listening to Kanye, bobbing to it. His CELL PHONE begins ringing. He looks at it: "Mom." He pauses, thinks about it, then...

He turns up the SONG, drowning out the RING.

**END MUSIC (END CREDITS).**

INT. WAITING ROOM - LATER

Andy sits, holding a BOX and rehearsing to himself.

ANDY

Hello, my name is Andrew Brewster.

(then, ala James Bond)

The name's Brewster. Andrew Brewster.

Okay, let's not do that.

An OFF-SCREEN GIGGLE. A CUTE RECEPTIONIST looks on.

RECEPTIONIST

First sales pitch?

ANDY

How could you tell?

RECEPTIONIST

Don't be nervous. It's a good room.

(whispering, conspiratorial)

You got the nice ones. They bring me coffee sometimes after lunch.

ANDY

Good to know.

He returns to his prep. Conversation over... until:

RECEPTIONIST

Megan by the way.

ANDY

Oh, hi. Nice to meet you.

She looks away.

MEGAN

Okaaay. That was embarrassing.

ANDY

What? Why?

MEGAN

My friend made me promise the next time I saw a cute guy I'd make the first move.

ANDY

Oh.

MEGAN

(dying)

Telling you my name. That was my first move.

Andy suddenly gets it.

ANDY

Ohhhh. I'm sorry. I was just... I spent five years developing what's in this box and... I wasn't paying attention. You seem really nice but--

MEGAN

You're not interested.

ANDY

Yes. I mean, no. I have a...

(swallowing it)

Girl friend.

MEGAN

You say that the same way you'd say "I have cancer."

ANDY

Yes, it feels that way sometimes.

He looks away. Then, unable to help himself...

ANDY (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong. She's very nice. My girl friend. Bethany.

The receptionist nods. Andy pauses, can't help himself:

ANDY (CONT'D)

She's starting to say "I love you." My girl friend. She's saying it a lot.

MEGAN

And what do you say?

ANDY

I've been rotating between three things. Usually I just go with "Thank you." Sometimes, "Awww, that's nice." And once in a while I just pat her on the head.

MEGAN

Wow. That's the darkest thing I've ever heard.

ANDY

Yeah, it's pretty bad. Anyway, that's why I'm not interested. If it's any consolation, you're better off.

MEGAN

Yeah, I'm getting that.

A MAN sticks his head out the door.

MAN

We're ready.

He EXISTS. Andy stands, gathers his box. He turns to Megan, awkwardly tries to find the right exit line.

ANDY

It's not you it's me.

MEGAN

Wow.

ANDY

Yep.

Awkwardly, he heads in.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

TIGHT ON ANDY, at the end of a long conference table.

VOICE (O. S.)

What do you have for us, Mr. Brewster?

ANDY

What I have, Sir, is a product that you fine folk at Ralph's Grocery desperately need on your shelves.

AT THE OTHER END sit TWO CORPORATE SUITS. Stone-faced. Andy smiles, strangely confident. After a long beat...

SUIT #1

Would you care to tell us what it is?

ANDY

Really? You mean you don't just want to place an order?

The suits share a look, then... chuckle. Andy smiles. His skill and charm while pitching is masterful.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Fair enough. I'm a UCLA grad and I've--

SUIT #1

Careful, USC alum over here.

ANDY

Good to know. I'll use small words.

They LAUGH. He's got them. Andy continues...

ANDY (CONT'D)

After school, I spent five years working at the chemist at the EPA. While there, I heard thousands of complaints about reactions children were having after ingesting household cleaning products. So I began using my free time in the lab to develop a completely safe, organic, cleaning supply.

He REACHES into the box, pulls out a BOTTLE.

ANDY (CONT'D)

It's called...

("ta-da")

Organic!

No reaction. Andy pulls out a pot of dirt, pours it on the table, and rubs it in. He SPRAYS ORGANICLEAN over the mess and wipes it clean.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Cleans like a dream. Smells nice too.

SUIT #2

So do the household name brands we carry.

Andy reaches into his box, pulls out a bottle of WI NDEX.

ANDY

Like Wi ndex?

Andy pulls out a shot glass, pours himself a SHOT OF ORGANICLEAN. He DOWNS it. His audience looks startled.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Organiclean is one hundred percent non-toxic. Completely organic, totally safe

Using a dropper he drips it in his eyes like Visione...

ANDY (CONT'D)

You can flavor your golden retriever's food with it, put it in your baby's bottle. So I'll put it to you in a way even a USC grad can understand...

Andy opens the bottle of Wi ndex. Pours a WI NDEX SHOT.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Can you say the same thing about Wi ndex?

He slides the Wi ndex shot across the table. It stops in front of them. They look at each other, smile.

SUIT #1

Very impressive.

ANDY

I have an extensive business plan as well as investors, insurance --

SUIT #1

Unfortunately, we just don't have any shelf space for this in our stores.

Andy stops, caught off-stride for the first time.

SUIT #1 (CONT'D)

We have existing deals with major brands--

ANDY  
(desperate)  
Whose products are toxic and harmful --

SUIT #1  
As well as established organic companies.  
But still, very impressive. If you  
develop some brand recognition...

His voice FADES into WALLA.

ON ANDY

Gutted. He nods and smiles, but clearly this was not the outcome he'd expected. For the first time, he looks like a lost little boy.

GI RL (O. S.)  
Screw them.

INT. SUSHI RESTAURANT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Andy sits at the SUSHI BAR with his girl friend, BETHANY, 27. She's the naked girl who snuggled with him earlier.

BETHANY  
The next two weeks you'll pitch your cute  
little ass off all over the country.  
Everyone is gonna love you.

ANDY  
Thank you.

BETHANY  
You know how I know? Because I love you.

She smiles at him, huge. Andy hesitates, then:

ANDY  
Thank you.

BETHANY  
Oh, I almost forgot! If you're back in  
time, Pete and Shelly are doing a co-ed  
wedding shower two weeks from Saturday.

ANDY  
(dying)  
Awesome.

She holds out sushi. He waves her off. She eats it.

BETHANY

What a boyfriend. Doesn't like sushi, takes me here anyway. God, I love you.

ANDY

Awww. That's nice.

Bethany smiles, turns to a SUSHI CHEF behind the bar.

BETHANY

Can I get this wrapped to go?

SUSHI CHEF

WRAPPED TO GO!

The OTHER CHEF'S REPEAT in kind...

CHEFS

WRAPPED TO GO!

Bethany turns back to Andy, notices the look on his face.

BETHANY

The "I love you's" are freaking you out, aren't they? Am I saying it too much?

She clearly is.

ANDY

No, of course not.

She smiles. Andy takes a DEEP BREATH, treading carefully.

ANDY (CONT'D)

But since you mention it: have you noticed how I respond when you say it?

BETHANY

(unconcerned)

You say "thank you." Or "Awww, that's nice." Or you pat my head.

Andy shakes his head, confused. She takes his hand.

BETHANY (CONT'D)

Listen, Andy. I am completely in love with you-- Andy, don't.

She grabs his hand, which was instinctively heading toward her head. He puts it down.

BETHANY (CONT' D)

Clearly you've got serious commitment issues. You said so when we met. I'm giving you time. I can wait.

He takes a DEEP BREATH, tries a different tact.

ANDY

The thing is: I really need to focus on the business right now.

BETHANY

And I'm totally supportive of that.

ANDY

Yes. Yes, you are. Which is great.  
(then)

But if things don't work out on this trip, I have to start all over and then--

BETHANY

Then we'll figure it out together.

She smiles. He doesn't.

ANDY

I'm gonna be honest, Beth. You're an amazing girl. And I'm sure many men - men far better than me - would be head over heels in love with you. But I'm not really interested in being in love. Not even sure I'm capable of it. I mean, the idea of caring about someone more than you care about yourself, of not being able to sleep unless they're with you? It kind of makes me want to throw up.

BETHANY

In time you'll --

ANDY

I won't. I've been here before. I'm content with my life. I'm trying to get this company off the ground. That's really important to me. So is having time to hang out with the guys. And if you're waiting for me to fall completely in love with you... you might be waiting a very, very long time.

She nods, finally getting it. Then...

BETHANY  
Gi ve me a ti me frame. How long?

ANDY  
Real ly long.

BETHANY  
More than three years?

ANDY  
Much more.

She goes to respond, then stops. After a beat:

BETHANY  
What are you sayi ng?

Jesus, is she kidding? Andy takes a deep breath.

ANDY  
I 'm wasti ng your time, Beth. I think we  
need to take a break. Up. We need to  
take a... break up.

Now she gets it. She turns forward, away from him.

ANDY (CONT' D)  
I don' t want this to end badl y.

Bethany immedi ately starts getti ng louder.

BETHANY  
How do you want i t to end, Andy! ? Shoul d  
I be psyched! ? Do you want me to start  
doi ng j umpi ng-j acks and juggl e edamame! ?

SUSHI CHEF  
EDAMAME!

CHEFS  
EDAMAME! ! !

He tries WAVI NG THEM OFF, turns back to Bethany:

ANDY  
You know I 'm a huge fan of yours.

BETHANY  
A HUGE FAN! ? What am I, a fucki ng rock  
and rol l band?

SUSHI CHEF  
ROCKI N' ROLL!

CHEFS  
ROCKIN' ROLL!!!

Andy has lost control. Bethany is on her feet.

BETHANY  
You're so pathetic!

ANDY  
Maybe we should go outside... oh shit.

Bethany is up on her chair, a woman possessed.

BETHANY  
I'd like to introduce you all to Andrew Brewster. He's twenty-nine, from New Jersey, and like most upper middle class boys from New Jersey, he has three-to-five go-to sexual moves he rotates between on a nightly basis.

LAUGHTER. Andy, giving up, toasts the crowd with SAKE.

BETHANY (CONT'D)  
Keep your panties on, Girls! Because even if you feign interest in his fantasy football team, Andy will never fall for you. He's incapable. He's...  
(to Chefs)  
Say it with me, Boys: COMMIMENT-PHOBIC.

CHEFS  
(confused)  
COMMIMENT-PHOBIC!

BETHANY  
I don't know what causes it. Maybe it's his obsession with succeeding in the uber-fascinating world of cleaning supplies. Or maybe it's the high school girl friend who broke his heart. Her name's Jessica and boy, is she fun to talk about! Whatever it is: be sure never to say "I love you." Andy just says "thank you."

Bethany gets down, steps up face-to-face with Andy.

BETHANY (CONT'D)  
Anything to say for yourself?

ANDY  
It's not you it's me?

BETHANY

Please, Andy. You don't know why you're like this any more than I do. Figure it out before you get fat.

She turns, walks away.

ANDY

Bethany?

She stops. He knows it's a bad idea before he says it...

ANDY (CONT'D)

What about your sushi?

She gives him the finger, EXITS. Andy turns to the bar. The Chef hands him a STYROFOAM CONTAINER. Awkward.

SUSHI CHEF

(weakly)

Wrapped to Go!

CHEFS

(equally weak)

Wrapped to Go!

INT. ANDY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Andy walks into his apartment, exhausted. He trudges toward the ANSWERING MACHINE, stopping at his garbage can where he picks up the discarded price tag from his expensive suit. As he stares at it, he hits PLAY.

JOYCE (O.S.)

Hi Honey, Mommy. You weren't answering your cell. I wanted to check I had the right flight time for tomo--

Andy skips it. Next message.

JOYCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mommy again. Forgot to tell you: I hear you can bring a ziplock bag with hair gel on the plane-

Andy skips it again. Another message.

JOYCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I was thinking: if you don't have ziplock bags--

He skips over this one as well.

MACHINE  
No more messages.

Andy closes his eyes, spent.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - NEXT DAY

TIGHT ON ANDY, eyes still closed. He's praying, clutching the armrests.

ANDY  
Please God, let me survive. If you help me, I swear I'll try to be a better man.

PULL BACK: an OLDER WOMAN watches him.

OLDER WOMAN  
Nervous flier?

Andy continues looking forward.

ANDY  
No.

INT. NEWARK AIRPORT - LATER

Hordes of people, waiting for loved ones. Andy ENTERS and takes a BREATH, bracing himself. Then...

JOYCE (O.S.)  
ANDY!!!

Her voice pierces. People look over their shoulders, trying to find the source.

JOYCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
ANDY!!!! ANDY!!! I'M OVER HERE!

*A note to reader: as Andy interacts with Joyce, please keep in mind your interaction with your own mother. When it's your mother, your fuse is always shorter than it should be. Don't blame poor Andy. We all do it.*

She BURSTS through! It's like Andy has returned from 'Nam. She PEPPERS him with kisses. Andy looks uneasy.

ANDY  
Okay, okay. Ma? Ma, stop. Ma!

He holds her back at arm's length. She clicks her glasses on, getting a better look.

JOYCE

Look at you! You look just like a man!

ANDY

Thank you I think.

An OLDER WOMAN looks on, Joyce turns to her.

JOYCE

I sn't he handsome?

OLDER WOMAN

Very.

ANDY

(to older woman)

I've had work done.

JOYCE

(to Andy)

You're wearing a sportsjacket! How did you even know how to buy a sportsjacket?

ANDY

I took a class.

(re: her glasses)

Those are... unusual.

She UNCLICKS, demonstrating.

JOYCE

They're magnetic. This way I can always find them. Neat, right?

(then)

Your hair's so long.

She LI CKS her finger, presses down his hair. Andy reacts instantly, brushing her hand away. She barely notices.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I don't want to waste a minute. I know I only get you for the weekend.

ANDY

Yep. The entire weekend. Just me and you.

They start walking. Joyce begins fanning herself.

JOYCE

Is it hot in here, or is it just me?

ANDY

It's just you.

JOYCE

You have no idea how awful menopause is.

ANDY

No, but maybe one day.

Joyce removes her jacket, thrilled by his mere presence.

JOYCE

That sportsjacket!

ANDY

(calm but strong)

Ma, I need you to stop with the  
sportsjacket, okay?

She nods, stopping herself. Then...

JOYCE

I made chicken!

INT. JOYCE'S KITCHEN - LATER

A feast of CHICKEN sits on the table, an absurd amount  
for two people. Andy looks around...THE KITCHEN: chock-full of FROG KNACKS: BOBBLE  
HEADS, STATUES, NAPKIN HOLDERS, SALT SHAKERS. All frogs.

ANDY

You got more frogs since Thanksgiving.

JOYCE

You wouldn't believe how many places sell  
frogs.

ANDY

Well, you seem to have found them all.

Joyce looks at his plate, half-full. Then at hers, empty.

JOYCE

Look at this. How am I finished already?

ANDY

You're a human garbage disposal, Ma. I  
really don't know where you put it.

She SHRUGS, content watching him eat. A beat, then...

JOYCE

Do you want more chicken?

ANDY

No, I'm good. Thanks.

JOYCE

It's your favorite.

ANDY

It is. I'm just getting full.

A beat of silence.

JOYCE

A little piece.

MORE CHICKEN on his plate. Andy smiles, trying patience. Pleased, Joyce downs a BOTTLE OF WATER, goes to the sink:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I drink six bottles of water a day now.  
It was on Oprah.

She begins re-filling her bottle at the sink. She rescrews the top on, puts it into the fridge.

ANDY

What did you just do?

JOYCE

It's silly to pay six dollars for a case  
of bottles when one can last forever.

Andy looks at his OWN HALF-EMPTY BOTTLE of water, now grossed out. He pushes it aside. Joyce sits back down.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

So... you're really going to drive cross  
country for these meetings?

ANDY

All the way to Vegas.

JOYCE

Renting a car will be very expensive.

ANDY

Yes, but it will be faster than walking.

The sarcasm brings silence. Joyce tries a new topic.

JOYCE  
And how are things with Bethany?

ANDY  
They're okay.

JOYCE  
What happened?

ANDY  
Nothing.

JOYCE  
I'm your mother. I know when you're lying.

ANDY  
I'm not lying.  
(changing course)  
What about you? Are you, you know, seeing anyone?

JOYCE  
Don't be disgusting, Andy.

And that ends that topic. She looks at his plate.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
I wish you'd eat more chicken.

Andy STANDS, willing himself not to lose it.

ANDY  
Okay, I think I'm gonna call it a night.

Joyce turns, surprised. That quick?

JOYCE  
I got out the old home movies. I thought we could watch them. Wouldn't that be fun?

ANDY  
Yeah, I'm just wiped, Ma. I should get to bed, get my clock adjusted.

Joyce smiles weakly, disappointed. Andy smiles weakly, knowing he's disappointed her. A true mother-son dynamic.

INT. ANDY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Andy ENTERS his bedroom, carrying his suitcase.

It's like a SHRI NE to Andrew Brewster. PHOTOS of Andy line shelves and dressers. He looks at one:

A PROM PHOTO: young Andy with a PRETTY GI RL.

Andy approaches his BED. It bears the baseball sheets a ten year old might use, as well as an old stuffed animal. In the center of the bed: a SHOPPI NG BAG.

JOYCE (O. S.)

I picked up underwear for you at the Gap.

Joyce stands at the door.

JOYCE (CONT' D)

You don't have to try it on now, I know you're tired.

ANDY

Thanks.

Joyce stands there. Andy doesn't know what she wants.

ANDY (CONT' D)

Okay. Well, good night, Ma.

JOYCE

Andy?

ANDY

Yes?

JOYCE

Just... if you could try on the underwear sometime in the next two days--

ANDY

Okay, Ma.

JOYCE

Because if it doesn't fit we can exchange it while you're here--

ANDY

(stronger)

Okay, Ma! Jesus!

She stops, smiles weakl y.

JOYCE

Right. Sorry. Good night, Sweetie.

Joyce EXITS. Andy sits, guilty. He feels something, reaches beneath him. He'd sat on the stuffed animal.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Andy tosses and turns in the small twin bed. He looks to his nightstand: the same original PHOTO of he and Joyce.

He SIGHs, guilty. Lies there for a moment. Gets up.

INT. JOYCE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Her door is OPEN a crack. Andy speaks as he ENTERS.

ANDY

I'm sorry I snapped, it's been a rough--

REVEAL JOYCE

Sleeping, in her seated position. Glasses still on. Two M&M wrappers in her lap. To her side, a small TV:

ON THE TELEVISION

An old HOME MOVIE. A YOUNG JOYCE sits in a chair holding a BABY, completely absorbed. A MAN (off camera) directs.

MAN (O. S.)

How long do you want me to film this?

JOYCE

Just a few more minutes, please.

MAN (O. S.)

Would you at least talk or something?

She never stops looking at BABY ANDY.

JOYCE

He's perfect, isn't he?

MAN (O. S.)

Okay, that's it.

The camera goes off.

ON ANDY

Now even more guilty. He SHUTS OFF the TV. He approaches Joyce, removes the M&M's from her lap, unclucks her reading glasses, and turns off the light.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

JOYCE sits at the table, reading the PAPER. Andy ENTERS.

ANDY

I'm sorry I was short last night, Ma.

She WAVES him off.

JOYCE

We can return the underwear. You probably buy your own underwear now.

(then)

So, what do you want to do today?

ANDY

I don't know. Whatever you want.

JOYCE

Well, maybe we'll go to the mall to return the underwear.

Andy cracks his neck, trying patience.

ANDY

What do you do on a normal Saturday?

JOYCE

I usually hit garage sales in the morning, I look for frogs. And there's a gas station in Marlborough with cheap gas, so I try and get there to fill up. If there's time, at night I go to a movie.

Andy perks up.

ANDY

Yeah? Who with?

JOYCE

Well, sometimes Ruth if Jerry's tired. Usually I just go by myself.

There it is: the saddest image of all time. Andy's mother spends her weekends hunting for cheap gasoline and going by herself to the movies.

ANDY

I can't believe I'm saying this but: you really need to meet some men, Ma.

JOYCE

I was married twenty years, Andy. I did my time. I'll be damned if I'm going to spend Saturday night at some pathetic singles event that they advertise in the paper like a garage sale.

Andy SIGHS, Looks at her PAPER. The spark of an idea.

INT. RESTAURANT/BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Andy and Joyce ENTER a HALL outside the bar. Joyce wears a DRESS, looking nice... and really uncomfortable. There's a folding table set up. A chipper HEAVY-SET WOMAN sits behind it, checking people in. Andy APPROACHES.

ANDY

We're here for the "Mature Singles" Event.

She looks confused by Andy. She quickly covers.

WOMAN

Welcome! My name is Jane and--

Joyce steps forward, almost militant.

JOYCE

How much does this thing cost?

JANE

It's twenty dollars a person--

Instantly, Joyce turns to go. Andy stops her. She GROANS.

JOYCE

For forty dollars Steve McQueen better be back from the dead in there.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

They ENTER the SMALL BAR. The crowd is entirely FIFTY to SIXTY YEAR OLD'S. Men on one side, women on the other. It's like a junior high dance... with "mature singles."

ANDY

You want a drink? A nice glass of wine?

JOYCE

Water. The free kind. And you too. We've wasted enough money already.

ANDY

Well this is gonna be fun.

Andy approaches the bar. TWO EARLY 50's WOMEN notice him. They're dressed to the hilt, drinking appetitively. Tipsy.

WOMAN #1

Hi, I'm...  
 (pointing at name-tag)  
 Marjorie And this is...  
 (at hers)  
 Ruth.

ANDY

Hi.

MARJORIE

And you must be...  
 (at his)  
 Andrew.

The women GIGGLE, trying, one would guess, to flirt. Andy is suddenly really uncomfortable.

MARJORIE (CONT'D)

How long you been with "Mature Singles?"

ANDY

I'm just here for my Mom. First time.

RUTH

Ooooh, a virgin.

Marjorie and Ruth LAUGH and CLINK glasses. Andy looks nauseous. He tries waving over a BARTENDER to no avail.

MARJORIE

Jimmy! Andrew here needs a drink.

The bartender NODS. Andy turns, looks back toward...

ON JOYCE

Across the bar. Talking to a MAN.

BACK TO ANDY

Huh. That's good. Ruth notices.

RUTH

Leave her be. The sharks already smell blood. You're not going anywhere.

Ruth PUSHES Andy down into a BARSTOOL. .

BACK TO JOYCE

Across the room, mid-conversation with a BALD MAN.

BALD MAN

Anyway, my youngest and I are close, but I haven't spoken to the oldest in a few years. What else? I'm in real estate--

JOYCE

I'm not interested.

BALD MAN

Oh... can I ask why?

JOYCE

What kind of man doesn't talk to his daughter because she sided with her mother in a divorce? She's the child, be a parent for God's sake!

JUMP-CUTS:

As Joyce turns down various suitors:

A GOOD-LOOKING MAN:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Divorced three times and you're back for more? What the hell is wrong with you?

A DORKY MAN:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Honestly, if I was your first wife I'd probably have been frigid as well.

A TOUPEE MAN:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Only thing more absurd than a man your age driving a Porsche is that hairpiece.

MEANWHILE:

Andy sits at the bar, doing shots with his new friends. A GROUP OF OLDER WOMEN have gathered around him. He seems to be enjoying the attention... and getting drunk.

ANDY

So, I ended things with her. It just wasn't happening, you know? It never seems to happen for me.

The women COO. A HAND enters, grabs Andy. It's JANE, the check-in lady.

JANE

I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

MARJORIE

Relax, Jane. We're just having some fun with the boy. He's more entertaining than the usual nannies.

JANE

It's not him. It's his mother.

ON JOYCE:

HOLDING COURT in front of a large group of MEN AND WOMEN.

JOYCE

The only reason these men are here is because they're not rich or attractive enough to date someone young enough to be their daughter.

Women NOD in agreement. MEN look uncomfortable. Andy approaches, puts his hand on his mother's shoulder.

ANDY

Okay, Ma. Time to go.

He begins leading her away. She turns back.

JOYCE

They're damaged goods, Ladies. You're buying broken floor samples for half off and hoping no one will notice the nicks and scratches and stains.

ANDY

It's nice meeting you all --

JOYCE

Show me one man in here you find interesting, there's a woman out there who can't stand him. It's a fact.

Andy pushes his mother out of the room. We stay in there for a beat. After a moment, a MAN approaches TWO WOMEN.

MAN  
She was a prize, huh?

WOMAN #1  
Get away from me.

WOMAN #2  
Bastard.

JOYCE'S KITCHEN - LATER

Andy and Joyce sit, eating ICE CREAM in silence.

ANDY  
That went well, I think.

Joyce goes to the sink, RE-FILLS her WATER BOTTLE.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
You'll never meet anybody like this, Ma.

JOYCE  
You know what it comes down to, Andy?  
M&M's in bed. For twenty years I couldn't  
enjoy my M&M's. I hid them under my  
pillow, waiting for your father to fall  
asleep so he couldn't judge me. I will  
never hide M&M's again.

(then)  
And you're one to give relationship  
advice. Now: what happened with Bethany?  
And don't lie to me, I'm your mother.

Andy gives up, exhausted.

ANDY  
She just... wasn't the one.  
(off her look)  
What do you want me to tell you, Ma?

JOYCE  
That at some point I'm going to have a  
daughter-in-law, preferably one whose  
parents are dead so I don't have to share  
my grandchildren.

ANDY  
Maybe I'm not wired for that, Ma. I  
mean, I appreciate what some of my  
friends have - marriage, kids - but...  
it's like jazz.  
(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

I recognize that it's amazing music, but it still gives me a headache.

(off her look)

Maybe I just enjoy eating my M&M's alone in bed, too.

JOYCE

Oh please.

ANDY

What? Why is okay for you and not for me?

JOYCE

Because I've lived my life, Andy. I had my marriage, my family. I went to the

dance and now I'm tired. But you?

You're just skipping the dance entirely.

ANDY

I'm told I have commitment issues.

JOYCE

That's true, you do. One very big issue.

ANDY

Bethany says I'm obsessed with my work.

JOYCE

Nope. That's not it.

Andy pauses, confused.

ANDY

Also my high school relationship with Jessica.

JOYCE

Uh uh. Wrong issue.

(then)

I guess it's time. You want to know what's wrong with you, Andy?

Andy looks at her, waiting:

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I cursed you.

Andy half-smiles, unsure.

ANDY

I'm sorry... you cursed me?

*Note to reader: As Joyce tells her story, we never leave her. It is told in one continuous shot, requiring no flashbacks, no cutaways. Story-telling at its purest.*

JOYCE

I was cross-eyed when I was little. Kids were relentless. Joyce-Eye. That was my name. Eventually it got fixed, but... I always felt like Joyce-Eye, you know?

She pauses, lost for a moment. Takes a SIP of water.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Boys started talking to me, but I was so shy. Never had a date. Never went to prom. When I turned eighteen, I left. I moved to Manhattan, got a job, and I thought: "Look Joyce! You're living in New York, everything is going to change!" But it didn't. I was in this strange city, no friends. I think about it now...

She stops. A moment of reflection.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I dreaded vacation time. Two weeks with nothing to do. One day I decided I'd go some place hot and at least it would feel like... like I was doing something. So I borrowed Grandma's car and drove to Florida. That became my vacation. One week a year, every year. Sad, right? A nineteen year old girl going on vacation by herself? But I kept going. Twenty years old. Twenty-one. And then...

She smiles, lost in the memory.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I met a boy, Andy. And he was just so... nice. And he invited me to dinner and we talked and talked and I remember - God, I can't believe I remember this - there was a band at the restaurant and he got me to go on stage with him and sing. In front of the entire restaurant. Little Joyce-Eye. I was SINGING.

She pauses. She's now almost speaking to herself.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

And he told me I was beautiful. He was the first man who ever told me that.

(MORE)

## JOYCE (CONT' D)

He said that he was embarrassed being out with me because I was too beautiful for him. Turned out, he lived in Manhattan. A music exec. So we started seeing each other. And I was happy. God, I'd never been so... happy.

(a beat, then)

But I knew something wasn't right. He worked too much, he had pictures of an old girl friend around. But I didn't care. I just loved being around him.

(a beat, then)

I did want a family, though. A baby. That was all I really ever wanted. And eventually your father came along. This larger than life charmer. He told me...

She LAUGHS.

## JOYCE (CONT' D)

He told me he was going to marry me on our first date. On our third he told me he loved me. Someone actually loved me! I liked the boy from Florida too much to stop dating him, though. I'd never had a boyfriend, now I had two! Your father proposed within like a month. I said yes. I figured, he's nice. He loves me. What else do I need? God, I was so young.

She shakes her head, continues.

## JOYCE (CONT' D)

I went to the other boy and said: "I met somebody, and he asked me to marry him," hoping, I guess, I don't know - I guess I was hoping he'd say, "No, Joyce! You can't marry him! I'll marry you."

(a beat)

But he didn't. He told me I was "wonderful" but he couldn't offer me a commitment. He told me I should marry your father. And I told him I couldn't see him anymore. I never saw him again.

She looks at the table for a moment, studying it.

## JOYCE (CONT' D)

I married your father. We started fighting, about stupid things. I knew things weren't right... but I made my bed, you know? After a year or so, I got pregnant.

(MORE)

JOYCE (CONT' D)

And when we found out we were going to have a boy, we started going through names, as you do. You want your child's name to remind you of something positive, you know?

(then, matter-of-fact)

So I named you Andy, after the boy from Florida.

ON ANDY

Shock isn't the right word. Yes, the mouth hanging open, the inability to speak, it presents itself as shock. But this is more. This is a world crashing upon itself and being rebuilt in the span of one story. It's your mother as a human being, it's your father as the anti-hero, it's learning about your namesake... and, a curse:

JOYCE (CONT' D)

You remind me of him sometimes, Andy. I really do believe you've been cursed with the same fear of commitment as he was; the thing that prevented me from finding up with the man who may have been the love of my life.

Andy can't move. He opens his mouth, nothing comes out.

JOYCE (CONT' D)

(nonchalant)

You want more ice cream?

Andy NODS, stunned. She goes to the fridge. Finally...

ANDY

Holy shit.

JOYCE

Andy!

ANDY

Does Dad know?

JOYCE

It's not exactly something I felt I could share.

ANDY

Holy shit.

JOYCE

Stop that!

Andy continues taking it in.

ANDY

He's not... he's not my father is he?

JOYCE

Oh please.

Andy RUBS his HEAD.

ANDY

What was his last name?

JOYCE

Margolis. Andy Margolis from J&amp;R Records.

Joyce STANDS.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Anyhow that's what's wrong with you. I cursed you.

Andy stares off into space, taking it all in.

INT. ANDY'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Andy lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. Sleep is not happening. He gets up, walks into...

INT. JOYCE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where Joyce, once again, lies in her seated sleeping position, snoring. Her glasses on, a book on her chest. Andy reaches down, grabs an M&amp;M wrapper. Looks at it.

INT. ANDY'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Andy lies on his side, not having slept. He's staring at the same M&amp;M Wrapper: the candy wrapper has become a symbol of everything - his mother's lonely existence. His commitment issues. It's as if it's judging him. He reaches down, pulls out his laptop.

ON SCREEN:

He GOOGLES listings for the name "ANDREW MARGOLIS." There are way TOO MANY. He thinks, tries "J&amp;R RECORDS." A LISTING in New York City. It has a WEB-SITE. He clicks on it. A PHONE NUMBER.

He looks out his door, the coast is clear. He takes out his CELL (SPEAKERPHONE). Dials. It RINGS.

WOMAN (O. S.)  
J&R Records.

ANDY  
Hi . . . I ' m trying to track down someone  
who may have worked there years ago?  
Name' s Andy, or Andrew, Margol i s.

WOMAN (O. S.)  
Hol d on. . . okay, I see an Andrew Margol i s  
i n our San Franci sco offi ces.

ANDY  
No ki ddi ng? And how long ago was that?

WOMAN (O. S.)  
No, Si r. Mr. Margol i s i s an executive VP  
i n our San Franci sco offi ce. Currently.

Andy almost drops the phone. No freaki n' way.

WOMAN (O. S.) (CONT' D)  
Woul d you like to be connected?

ANDY  
Uh, yeah, okay.

The phone starts RI NGI NG. Andy looks over his shoul der,  
as i f fearing someone i s pl ayi ng a practical joke on hi m.

MAN (O. S.)  
J&R Records.

ANDY  
Yeah, uh, Andrew Margol i s' offi ce pl ease?

Hol d musi c. Andy' s mouth drops. Can i t be thi s si mple?  
A phone RI NGS. After a few rings. . .

WOMAN (O. S.)  
Andrew Margol i s' offi ce.

ANDY  
Jesus! Seriou sly?  
(then)  
I ' m sorry, hi . Is, uh, Andrew i n?

WOMAN (O. S.)  
Mr. Margol i s i s on vacati on until a week  
from Monday. Thi s i s Becky.

ANDY

Oh. Okay. Becky, I'm an... old friend of his. I'm trying to track him down.

BECKY (O. S.)

I can leave a message. Your name please?

Andy pauses, then...

ANDY

Frank. Franklin. Frank Franklin.  
(then, double-checking)  
This is Andrew Margolis who used to be at the New York office, right?

BECKY (O. S.)

He transferred out here three years ago.

ANDY

Jesus!

Confused silence. Andy figures out what to ask...

ANDY (CONT'D)

So, uh, ol' Andy finally took the wife on vacation, huh?

BECKY (O. S.)

Uh, Mr. Margolis isn't married, Sir.

ANDY

No freakin' way.  
(then, covering)  
Still hasn't settled down, huh?

BECKY (O. S.)

Everyone's tried, trust me.

ANDY

And where's Andy living out there? Bet he's got a nice spread in his old age.

BECKY (O. S.)

(getting uncomfortable)  
Nob Hill. Sir, is there a specific message you'd like to leave?

ANDY

No. Week from Monday, right? I'll--

Joyce ENTERS. Andy quickly shuts the phone.

JOYCE  
You want an omel ette?

ANDY  
Fantastic.

She EXITS. One she's gone, Andy grabs the COMPUTER.

ON SCREEN:

He GOOGLES again. This time, he adds: SAN FRANCISCO.

BAM. A listing! Andrew Margolis is in Nob Hill. He scribbles down the info and DIALS. It RINGS a few times.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
It's Andrew. I'm gone till Monday, I leave a message or try Becky at the office.

Andy slams down the phone. It's HIM!

ANDY  
Holy shit.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Andy sits eating breakfast, ravenous. Joyce watches him.

JOYCE  
I've never seen you eat like this. It does my heart good.

Joyce grabs a bunch of BUSINESS CARDS scattered around the table, heads to the garbage with them. Andy notices.

ANDY  
What's that?

JOYCE  
Business cards from those men last night. As if a business card will convince me they're not revolting.

She tosses them in the garbage and stops at the kitchen counter, rearranging THREE BOBBLE HEAD FROGS in a perfectly straight line. Andy watches. There's an innate sadness in the simultaneous move of tossing away the business cards and arranging the frogs.

ANDY  
I want to ask you something, Ma.

He braces himself for what he's about to ask.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Thing is: I leave tomorrow for this trip  
and...

Is he really going to do this?

ANDY (CONT'D)

I was thinking... maybe you'd want to  
come?

JOYCE

Huh?

ANDY

It's a lot of driving. I could use  
company.

Joyce isn't quite understanding this.

JOYCE

You want to drive cross-country? In a  
car? With your mother?

Andy NODS, nauseous.

ANDY

You won't be gone long. I have to be in  
San Francisco in eight days. My last  
meeting is in San Francisco now.

JOYCE

Andy, if this is you worrying about me--

ANDY

It's not. It's just... we never get to  
spend time together.

(a beat)

I want to get to know you better.

Music to a mother's ears. But she's still confused.

JOYCE

You want to spend a week in a car? With  
me?

Andy looks like he might throw up.

ANDY

Yes.

Joyce thinks about it.

JOYCE  
I'd have to cancel my mail.

ANDY  
Okay.

JOYCE  
I'll miss book club.

ANDY  
(losing it)  
Ma, do you want to come or not!?

The moment of choice. She jumps up!

JOYCE  
This will be so much fun!

She PEPPERS him with kisses.

ON ANDY

Horri fied and smothered. What the hell has he done?

INT. JOYCE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Joyce packs a gargantuan suitcase, filled with clothing, books, M&M's. She stuffs empty water bottles on top.

PULL BACK to Andy, sitting on the corner of the bed watching. Horri fied. He's got MAPS in front of him.

Joyce puts her weight down on it, manages to close it.

ANDY  
You're only going to be gone a week, Ma.

JOYCE  
I require layers. You know me with my hot flashes.

ANDY  
I do.

JOYCE  
Menopause is not fun, Andy.

ANDY  
Can you please not say that word?

JOYCE  
Menopause?

ANDY

That's the one.

JOYCE

Why?

ANDY

It's out of my comfort zone.

She SHRUGS, pulls out a second monstrous bag and begins filling it. Andy looks away in horror, turns to his map.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I've got three meetings tomorrow: Babies R' Us, Linens and Things, and Pathmark.

JOYCE

I love Pathmark.

ANDY

I'll let them know. Next day, I've got a meeting in Roanoke, Virginia.

Joyce tries making it sounds exotic.

JOYCE

Roanoke.

Andy looks at her, confused. Presses on.

ANDY

Wal mart is next. That's the big one. To make it to Little Rock in time we need to get to about Tennessee by Tuesday--

JOYCE

You know who lives in Tennessee, right?

ANDY

I do. After that--

JOYCE

Jessica. In Memphis. Diana just visited her. She said it was lovely.

Andy takes a DEEP BREATH, ignores her.

ANDY

I'm sure it is. From Arkansas, we head to Santa Fe. One pitch, then Vegas.

JOYCE

A mom and her baby boy in Vegas.

ANDY

I think that's their new slogan. QVC is having an open call there, so I registered. It's a longshot.

JOYCE

I once bought a frog on QVC.

ANDY

Well, hopefully that will help. Then San Francisco, then we're done.

JOYCE

What meeting is in San Francisco?

Andy stops. There's no store. Only Andy Margolis.

ANDY

A small chain. Not a big deal.

Joyce zips up her rapidly expanding second suitcase.

JOYCE

What did I forget?

ANDY

I think you have everything. Literally.

INT. HERTZ RENTAL CAR - NEXT MORNING

Andy and Joyce wait in line, her luggage piled in front.

JOYCE

Andy?

ANDY

Yes, Ma?

JOYCE

Ask them if they take Triple A.

ANDY

Okay.

JOYCE

Because sometimes if you have Triple A you can get a nice discount.

ANDY

I'll ask.

A HERTZ AGENT MOTIONS for them to step up. They approach. The agent is young and exceedingly chipper.

AGENT

Hi, I'm Mark, I'll be assisting you today! Do you have a reservation?

ANDY

I do. Last name Brewster.

Mark TYPES away.

MARK

There you are. I just need a valid license and credit card.

Andy digs in his wallet. Joyce nudges Andy, mouths the words "Triple A." He waves her off, "give me a second."

ANDY

I wanted to double-check that I'm getting an SUV with a GPS system.

MARK

I've got you in a Dodge Durango, GPS included, returning in San Francisco.

Joyce grabs Andy, who spars.

JOYCE

Do you really need to spend for an SUV?

ANDY

We could hit snow, Ma.

MARK

That comes out to \$112 dollars a day--

JOYCE

(under her breath)

Ask him about Triple A.

Andy motions "wait a second." He's trying to listen.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Eight days, for a total, including tax, drop-off fee, and mileage... \$1432.41

Before Andy can open his mouth...

JOYCE (CONT'D)

WE HAVE TRIPLE A.

MARK

Oh, good! That actually saves you  
fifteen percent off.

Joyce smiles at Andy: you see?

MARK (CONT'D)

And brings it down to... \$1212.12.

JOYCE

I still don't think we need an SUV.

ANDY

Ma, please. It could snow. Plus we need  
a GPS.

JOYCE

Small cars are fine in snow. And maybe  
they'll have GPS.

ANDY

They won't have GPS, Ma!

MARK

Actually, many of our economy cars do  
come equipped with GPS. And they handle  
relatively well in snow.

Andy looks up. Mark beams at him.

ANDY

Thank you, Mark.

INT. FORD FOCUS - MINUTES LATER

Joyce's luggage fills the backseat of the TINY FORD FOCUS. Joyce drives. Andy looks miserable, cramped. He begins inputting an address in the GPS SYSTEM.

ANDY

You sure you don't mind driving?

JOYCE

Work on your presentation. I've got my  
book-on-tape. Let me just get organized.

Andy looks up.

ON JOYCE

Who begins her driving preparation. It's like watching an astronaut prepare for liftoff.

(1) She OPENS a small SQUARE BAG: it holds TWO BOTTLED WATERS. (2) She PLACES ONE BOTTLE in each of the two CUP HOLDERS. (3) She REACHES back, picks up a BOOK-ON-TAPE CASING. (4) She OPENS the CASING, revealing SIXTEEN CASSETTES. (5) She CLICKS ON her READING GLASSES from around her neck, finds the correct tape. (6) She UNCLICKS her reading glasses, GRABS a pair of SUNGLASSES from the dash. (7) She REMOVES a BLUETOOTH HEADSET from her purse. (8) She PUSHES a button on it, listens. Frowns. (9) She REMOVES her SUNGLASSES, clicks back on the READING GLASSES, ANALYZES the bluetooth. (10) Problem corrected, she UNCLICKS the reading glasses. Sunglasses back on.

ON ANDY

Watching her, horrified. Finally...

ANDY  
Expecting an important call?

JOYCE  
There's a hands-free law in New Jersey now.

ANDY  
Oh. Okay.

He finishes inputting an address in the GPS SYSTEM.

GPS  
(robotic)  
Finding destination.

Joyce acts as if she's discovered a new form of life.

JOYCE  
LOOK AT THAT! IT TALKS!

Andy looks at her, confused. She pops in the BOOK-ON-TAPE.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
It's called *Middlesex*. It's about a hermaphrodite. Oprah loved it.

ANDY  
Well, then I'm sure I will.

JOYCE  
Here we go. The adventure begins!

Joyce POPS IN the TAPE, starts the car, and pulls out.

## BOOK ON TAPE

This begins Tape One, Side A, of  
Michigan...

(then)

I was born twice: first, as a baby girl,  
on a remarkably smogless Detroit day in  
January of 1960, and then again, as a  
teenage boy--

## JOYCE

Is it me, or is it very hot in here?

## ANDY

Let's just assume it's always just you.

## GPS

Turn right in two hundred feet.

Joyce SCREAMS, surprised by the GPS.

INT. FORD FOCUS - LATER

Joyce DRIVES on the highway. Andy tries reading his paperwork, but is distracted by...

THE-BOOK-ON-TAPE.

One VOICE does every character, driving Andy nuts. And the sexual content is clearly making him uncomfortable.

## BOOK-ON-TAPE

She had never rested her head in a man's lap before. She'd never slept like spoons, encircled by a man's arms; she'd never experienced a man getting hard against her--

Andy EJECTS the tape, unable to take anymore.

## ANDY

Why don't we take a little break?

Joyce shrugs. They drive in silence. Then...

## ANDY (CONT'D)

So... I've been thinking about Andy Margolis, Ma. Aren't you at all curious what happened to him?

## JOYCE

It's in the past, Andy.

ANDY

But you woul dn't want to see him? I bet  
I could track him down on the net.

JOYCE

Don' t you dare. He' s probabl y fat and  
bal d and mi ddl e-aged and obnoxi ous now.  
I like remembering him how he was when--

THE GPS i nterrupts...

GPS

Exi t hi ghway i n one mi le.

Joyce SCREAMS, swerves the car. A car bl asts a HORN.

ANDY

MA!

JOYCE

TURN THAT THI NG OFF! IT  
COMES OUT OF NOWHERE!

GPS (CONT' D)

Exi t i n .5 Mi les.

ANDY

Ma, you have to merge to  
the right.

JOYCE

I can' t concentrate wi th  
that thi ng yell ing at me!

GPS (CONT' D)

Exi t i n 500 feet.

JOYCE

That exit i s not 500 feet. It was when i t said i t.

ANDY

GPS (CONT' D)  
Exi t, 100 feet.

JOYCE

I' m tell ing you that' s not  
far enough!

ANDY

Ma, get off here!

GPS (CONT' D)

Exi t, now.

JOYCE

IT' S NOT ONE HUNDRED FEET! IT IS! GET OFF!

ANDY

GPS (CONT' D)  
EXIT, EXIT!

JOYCE

SHUT UP!

ANDY

MA!

Joyce SWERVES onto the exit ramp. A car blasts a HORN.

CUT TO:

INT. BABIES R' US WAITING ROOM - LATER

They sit in silence, next to each other. A long beat.

ANDY

I think I'll drive the rest of the way.

Silence. Joyce looks at a PRETTY RECEPTIONIST.

JOYCE

The receptionist is pretty.

ANDY

I'm focusing here, Ma.

Joyce looks disappointed, not sure what to do. She LICKS her finger, presses down a piece of his hair. As usual he bats her hand away without looking up.

JOYCE

Your show is going to be great.

ANDY

Pitch, Ma. It's called a pitch.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Brewster? They're ready for you.

Andy STANDS, heads to a door. Joyce's voice stops him.

JOYCE

Good luck, Sweetheart!

Andy turns slowly, dying.

ANDY

Thank you, Ma.

He EXITS.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE WAITING ROOM - LATER

Andy RE-ENTERS, finds Joyce standing up front, talking the receptionist's ear off. He doesn't look happy.

JOYCE

How d i t go?

Andy shakes his head. Not well. Joyce frowns, covers...

JOYCE (CONT'D)

We still have a lot more meetings.

ANDY

Yes. "We" do.

Andy turns to go. Joyce stops him.

JOYCE

I was telling Amanda here about our little adventure. How you wanted to spend time with your mother.

AMANDA

I think what you're doing is great. I'd love to take a trip with my Mom.

Andy smiles weakly, clearly not in the mood.

JOYCE

Amanda is single, Andy.

Andy closes his eyes.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

She thinks you're cute.

ANDY

Oh God.

Amanda is looking at him, expectant. Andy realizes.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Amanda, I'm sorry. You seem like a very nice girl, you know, in the two plus seconds I've spoken to you. But you want no part of me. I spend the bulk of my time thinking about organic cleaning supplies. Relationship-wise all I want is someone to hang out with on Friday nights when my friends are busy. And even if you decide you're fine with that, you won't be fine with it in eight months which is when I'd start feeling bad and break up with you. Nothing to do with you, it's me.

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT' D)

In fact, that's exactly what I'd say to you in eight months when I'd break up with you. "It's not you, it's me." So really, you're better off.

Andy turns, EXITS. Joyce looks at Amanda.

JOYCE

He's got issues. I cursed him.

Amanda looks upset. We hold for a beat, until . . .

Andy RE-ENTERS FRAME, puts a BUSINESS CARD on her desk.

ANDY

Your bosses asked me to leave my contact info with you just in case.

She just glares at him.

ANDY (CONT' D)

They really did ask that. This isn't me trying to get you to call me.

Nothing from her. Andy is dying.

ANDY (CONT' D)

You should take that trip with your mom. It's really great. Really.

As Andy sheepishly EXITS we CUE Aretha Franklin's "Freeway of Love" and begin . . .

A MONTAGE:

- ALINEN'S AND THINGS corporate office.
- Joyce sits in a waiting room, drinking a bottle of water. She spots a water purifier in the corner.
- Andy does shots of Organi clean in front of stone-faced SUI TS. They shake their heads "no."
- Joyce stands at the water purifier, filling four empty water bottles. A RECEPTIONIST watches, confused. Andy exits his meeting, sees her, and pulls her away.
- PATHMARK offices.
- Andy emerges from a meeting. Joyce looks up. His expression tells the story. Another no. She goes to fix his hair, he stops her.
- The Focus passes a sign: "Welcome to Philadelphia."

- Joyce turns over a cassette of the book on tape. Andy watches, losing patience.
- Another sign: "Leaving Maryl and, 12 miles."
- Joyce fans herself, mid hot flash. Andy watches, shakes his head. She motions: no big deal.
- Another sign: "Leaving Maryl and, 9 miles."
- Joyce has her head out the window, cooling herself like a dog.
- A gas station. Joyce pumps gas. Around the corner, Andy quickly steals drags of a cigarette.
- Finally, the car pulls off the highway.

## INT. HOLIDAY INN (VIRGINIA) - EVENING

Joyce ENTERS. She's carrying a water bottle in one hand, a purse in the other. After a beat...

Andy ENTERS FRAME. He's schlepping both of her enormous bags, his own suitcase, and his laptop (around his neck). He drops the luggage, unable to carry anything anymore. He goes to the counter and approaches a CLERK (MAN).

ANDY  
(exhausted)  
Do you have rooms available?

The Clerk tries sizing the odd couple up. He looks from Andy to Joyce (who is busy looking at a stand in front of a small gift shop).

JOYCE  
Andy, look! They have clip on frog  
earrings!

As she tries them on, the clerk WINKS at Andy. At first Andy doesn't get it. The clerk NODS at Joyce, smiles lasciviously. Andy is horrified.

ANDY  
I need two rooms. One for me, one for my  
Mom.

The phrase "I need two rooms" gets Joyce's attention. She joins at the counter, stopping him.

JOYCE

Andy, don't be ridiculous--

ANDY

Ma, please don't start. I don't mind paying for it. I need my own room.

Joyce does not look happy.

INT. ROOM - LATER

Andy lies in bed, practicing his presentation.

ANDY

Sir, this isn't just showmanship. I have investors and FDA approval. This is the kind of product you need--

JOYCE (O. S.)

Oooh, that sounds very good, Honey.

REVEAL Joyce, lying in an ADJACENT BED in the incredibly small room. She's reading and eating M&amp;M's.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

FDA approval! That sounds very professional.

Andy puts down his paperwork. It's pointless.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I'm having such a nice time. I never get to stay in nice places.

(then)

You know they have free continental breakfast?

ANDY

(exhausted)

I'm glad you're enjoying yourself, Ma.

She notices his depression, changes tone.

JOYCE

Everything will work out, Andy.

ANDY

I don't know what I'm going to do if doesn't, Ma. I've spent five years on this. I quit my job.

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

I invested everything I had, completely overextended myself. If this thing fails: I have... nothing.

JOYCE

You'll always have your mommy.

ANDY

Yes, well, there's always that.

Silence. What should she say? She TOSSES HIM a pack of M&M's. That's her solution.

Andy looks at the snack. Giving up, he digs in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Light creeps in. We REVEAL Andy and Joyce, asleep in their separate beds, both covered in M&M wrappers

Andy gets up, tries creeping to the bathroom, hoping not to wake Joyce. Of course, that's impossible...

JOYCE

Don't use the conditioner. I want to keep that.

ANDY

Okay.

JOYCE

You can take one of my books in if you have to make.

Andy doesn't even know how to respond to that. He stands there for beat, then trudges into the bathroom.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT (VIRGINIA) - LATER

Andy and Joyce EXIT an office building and walk to the car. Andy looks completely deflated. Another failure.

INT. FORD FOCUS - CONTINUOUS

They sit into the Focus. Andy takes a deep breath.

JOYCE

(optimistic)

We still have Walmart, right?

ANDY  
(dejected)  
Yeah.

Andy starts the car, pulls out.

JOYCE  
How far is Arkansas?

ANDY  
It's a hike. We need to get to about  
Memphis by tonight.

Before Joyce can start, he cuts her off preemptively.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
Ma, please don't start with Jessica.

JOYCE  
I didn't say anything. You're very  
tense, Andy. You need to relax.

She looks to the GPS, has an idea.

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
I was reading the GPS manual. Did you  
know it has nine different voices? One  
of them is English.

ANDY  
Go nuts, Ma.

Joyce starts tinkering with the GPS. Different voices  
and instructions click on and off. Finally...

GPS  
(with robotic English accent)  
Make right in 500 feet.

Joyce SQUEALS in delight.

JOYCE  
I did it!

Andy looks at her. She's beaming. He can't help but  
smile, tension diffused... for the moment.

ANDY  
Good work, Magellan. Let's get to  
Tennessee.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

FROM ABOVE the car continues, southbound. Out of Virginia, into Tennessee. Bristol, then Knoxville.

As they do, it starts getting really dark, cloudy.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Andy drives, Joyce is listening to the book on tape...

BOOK ON TAPE

The corset seemed to possess its own set of hands. One was softly rubbing her between the legs. Two more cupped her breasts--

Andy hits EJECT. Joyce rolls her eyes. Andy looks upwards.

ANDY

It's getting kind of dark, isn't it?

Joyce un-clicks on her glasses, looks upwards.

ANDY (CONT'D)

It's twenty-eight degrees out. I hope it doesn't snow.

JOYCE

We're in Tennessee, Andy. It doesn't snow in Tennessee.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - TWO HOURS LATER

A torrential BLIZZARD. From OVERHEAD, we spot our Ford Focus driving along slowly, surrounded only by giant trucks and SUV's. It looks about the size of a bicycle.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Andy is clutching the wheel, desperately trying to keep the car in control. He can't see more than two feet in front of him. Tense silence fills the car.

ANDY

(muttering)

I can't believe I didn't get an SUV.  
What the hell was I thinking?

JOYCE

(gentle)

Andy?

ANDY

Yes, Ma?

JOYCE

Just drive slow. Don't worry about what  
the truckers think.

ANDY

I'm not worried about what the truckers  
think, Ma.

A PASSING TRUCK SPLATTERS SNOW over the windshield. It  
freezes instantly.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Jesus!

Andy applies the wipers, but it's useless. He squints,  
trying to see through the ice. Joyce watches. She wants  
to say something but bites her tongue. Finally...

JOYCE

If you squirt wiper fluid it might melt  
the ice on the windshield.

Andy is tense, and past the point of holding back.

ANDY

That's brilliant, Ma! Yes, I should  
squirt more water on the windshield so it  
can freeze!

She doesn't respond, holding back. Again, she fails...

JOYCE

Sometimes the wiper fluid is warmer than  
ice--

ANDY

You want me to squirt the fluid, Ma!  
Will that stop you from talking? Fine,  
I'll squirt the fluid!

He squirts it. Immediately, the wipers clear the windshield. As always, Mom is right. No "I told you so" necessary. She simply smiles.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Well that must feel good.

It does, but Joyce doesn't say it. She changes topics.

JOYCE

Well, the good news is we're almost to Memphis like you wanted. Maybe we should call Jessica, see if she knows a place--

Out of nowhere, The car starts SHAKING.

ANDY

Oh, you've got to be kidding me!

JOYCE

Okay, we won't call Jessica.

ANDY

We have a flat.

Andy BANGS on the wheel, losing it.

ANDY (CONT'D)

God dammit! Son of a--

Andy turns off the highway.

EXT. EXIT RAMP - CONTINUOUS

The Ford Focus EXITS slowly, but comes to a stop in the middle of the ramp because...

ON THE RAMP

A huge TRUCK just sits there. It's not moving.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Andy and Joyce sit in confused silence, looking at the stopped truck. It's dirty, bears Tennessee plates, and we can faintly make out the BARE ARM of a MAN, smoking a cigarette out the driver's side window.

JOYCE

He's not moving.

ANDY  
I see that, Ma.

The HAND MOTIONS out the truck window. It looks like he's telling them to move back?

JOYCE  
Where does he want us to go?

ANDY  
I don't know, Ma.

Silence. They just sit there.

JOYCE  
Maybe you should give him a little honk.

ANDY  
I don't want to honk.

Silence again. Nothing. No movement.

JOYCE  
I don't see why you don't just give a little honk?

ANDY  
Because we're not in Princeton, New Jersey, Ma! We're in the backwoods of Tennessee!

Silence. A long beat. Joyce COUGHS.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
Don't.

JOYCE  
I didn't say anything.

A long beat of silence. Finally...

JOYCE (CONT'D)  
I wonder how long we'll sit here if we don't honk.

Andy, falling apart, submits and HONKS the HORN.

ON THE TRUCK

Where a MAN leaps from the truck. In the middle of the snowstorm, he's wearing a WIFE-BEATER. He's got long hair and is storming from the truck towards them.

ANDY

Well, Mom. It's been fun.

The man marches towards them, SCREAMING and WAVING furiously. It's clear now: he wants them to back up.

ON ANDY

Who waves politely at him as if to say, "Sorry, my bad." He backs the car down off the ramp toward the highway.

The trucker throws down his cigarette, gets back in the truck, and backs down off the RAMP. As he passes the Focus, he's still SCREAMING and GESTICULATING.

Simultaneously, Andy and Joyce wave politely at him.

EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The Focus RATTLES to a stop in a large parking lot. There are barely any other cars there. It's immediately clear that they have pulled over with a flat in the worst possible place in Tennessee.

They EXIT the car, begin examining tires.

ANDY

I don't see it on my side.

JOYCE

It looks okay over here.

Andy RUBS his head, looks around. It's the middle of nowhere. You couldn't even call the place a REST STOP.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

There's a restaurant over there. Maybe we can call Triple A and wait inside.

Joyce squints, trying to figure out what THE UNSEEN PLACE is. She clicks on her glasses, but still struggles.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Ooh, does that say Tapas? I love tapas!

Andy looks like death warmed over.

ANDY

No, Ma. It doesn't say tapas.

CUT TO:

## INT. TOPLESS BAR - LATER

Andy and Joyce sit at the bar. In the foreground, BEATEN-UP STRIPPERS dance listlessly for a few random PATRONS.

Andy puts his head down on the bar, a beaten man. A HALF-DRESSED BARTENDER (she's seen better days) approaches.

BARTENDER

You all get caught in the storm?

JOYCE

Yes. Something's wrong with our car.  
We're waiting for Triple A.

BARTENDER

A drink while you're waiting?

Still face-down on the bar, Andy answers...

ANDY

A Bud, please?

BARTENDER

(to Joyce)  
And for you, Sweetie?

JOYCE

Do you have green tea?

Andy MOANS from his face-down position.

BARTENDER

Let me see what I can find.

Joyce LOOKS AROUND, taking in the strip club.

JOYCE

You know, when I was younger, your father tried to make me go to one of these places with him, thought it'd be "sexy."

Andy looks up from his face-down position as a little bit of vomit reaches the back of his throat.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Speaking of sex: it's not that, is it?

ANDY

Excuse me?

JOYCE

Why you can't settle down? Is it the idea of being physical with only one person for the rest of your life?

ANDY

Ma, I'm in a pretty fragile state right now. I can't do this.

JOYCE

I just worry is all.

ANDY

Please don't worry.

JOYCE

I'm your mother. It's my job to worry. When you were a baby, about two months old, your penis started turning purple.

ANDY

Please stop.

JOYCE

Dr. Kirschner said you were fine and that I shouldn't worry. But I swear I checked your penis every day until you were four.

ANDY

I'm begging you--

JOYCE

And to this day, God help me if I don't lie in bed every night and worry that you have problems. Down there.

ANDY

Wow.

JOYCE

Andy?

ANDY

What?

JOYCE

You'd tell me if your penis ever started turning purple again, right?

ANDY

Ma! I don't want to talk about my purple penis!

The bartender stands in front of them with drinks. She looks at them askew.

BARTENDER

The roads are something awful. Could take Triple A a while. Our girl Moonlight is pretty good with cars. Want me to ask her to take a look?

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Andy and Joyce stand with the bikini-clad BARTENDER (who wears a coat over her bikini). Toward the front of the car, a half-naked STRIPPER (also in a heavy coat) walks around in stilettos, examining the car.

ANDY

(calling out)

Nothing looks wrong with the tires. I'm wondering if maybe it's the fan belt or something.

Clearly he has no idea what he's talking about.

JOYCE

This is very nice of you, Moonlight. I wish you were wearing a warmer coat.

Moonlight STANDS up, examination complete.

MOONLIGHT

Well, I see your problem.

ANDY

Is it the fan belt?

MOONLIGHT

You got ice frozen up all around the tires. It's blockin' the wheels, making it feel like you got a flat.

Moonlight takes off one of her stilettos, begins CHOPPING AWAY at ice around the tires. The bartender smirks.

BARTENDER

Well, at least it ain't the fan belt.

Andy feels like an idiot. He approaches Moonlight. Hands her CASH. She WINKS, stuffs it in her G-STRING.

MOONLIGHT

You wanna private dance? Maybe one for  
your girl?

ANDY

Thank you. Another time, maybe.

She SHRUGS, heads inside. The bartender talks to Joyce.

BARTENDER

They're saying you shouldn't get on the  
highway right now. You staying local?

Andy is impatient already, ready to go.

ANDY

We're just gonna find a hotel nearby.

BARTENDER

Gonna be tough finding something in this.  
Everyone's already pulled off the road.  
Anyone you can crash with in Memphis?

Joyce looks to Andy. He looks like he's going to cry.  
In fact, you can almost hear the faint sound of...

INT. LARGE SUV - LATER

CRYING. From a BABY. The baby is in a carseat. Andy and Joyce sit next to the baby, in the back.

JOYCE

We really appreciate you guys picking us  
up, Jessica.

UP FRONT, a PRETTY GIRL (from Andy's PROM PICTURE).  
Jessica. The ex. Next to her, a HANDSOME GUY.

ANDY

Rob, I hope this wasn't a huge pain.

ROB

Not at all. We're nearby.

Awkward silence. Andy watches as Rob puts his free hand on Jessica's neck and starts rubbing. Andy blinks, as if trying to wake himself from a bad dream.

JOYCE

So, Jessica! Your mother fills me in  
occasionally. How've you been?

JESSICA

Pregnant, Mrs. B. Feels like I've been pregnant for the last decade. I'm due again in April. I don't know how I keep getting pregnant.

ROB

I do.

They LAUGH. Andy could vomit. Joyce looks at the baby.

JOYCE

He is so adorable. Isn't he adorable, Andy? He looks just like Jessica!

Andy looks at the BABY. It spits up on him.

INT. LARGE LIVING ROOM - LATER

In a really nice house. Impressive for a young couple. Everyone sits in the living room. Rob with Jessica on one couch. Andy with Joyce on another. Andy can't take his eyes off Rob's hand, currently massaging Jessica's thigh.

ANDY

So. Rob. Looks like you're doing pretty well, huh?

ROB

We like it here. Took a while for my Jersey girl to get adjusted, but I think she digs it.

JESSICA

(playful)

I'm a full-on Southern belle.

Rob TOASTS her with his beer.

ROB

Prettiest girl in all of Memphis.

Joyce and Jessica COO. Rob's hand moves a tad higher up Jessica's thigh. Andy takes a big GULP of his own beer.

ROB (CONT'D)

So, Andy, you're Jess's high school sweetheart, right? She talks about you all the time.

JOYCE

I sn't that funny? Andy was just talking about Jessi ca the other day. Tell them what Bethany said about her.

ANDY

Ma.

JESSI CA

(confused)

Who' s Bethany?

JOYCE

Hi s latest. He broke up with her. She claims you're one of the reasons he has commi tment i ssues.

Si lence. Andy coul d di e. But then... everyone starts  
LAUGHI NG. Well, everyone except Andy.

JESSI CA

How ri di culous! We broke up, when, Andy?  
When we were like seventeen?

ANDY

(can' t hel p hi msel f)

Si xteen actual l y.

JESSI CA

Si xteen!

She LAUGHS.

JESSI CA (CONT' D)

God, remember how crazy you were? Mrs. B, did you know Andy asked me to marry me when we were si xteen? Like a serious get on your knee ki nd of proposal ?

ROB

(j oki ng)

You son-of-a-bi tch.

Rob PUNCHES Andy' s arm. Andy forces out a mi serable chuckl e. Joyce suddenly looks at him di fferentl y: she hadn't known thi s.

JESSI CA

Seri ousl y, Andy. Can you i magi ne if I 'd  
sai d yes?

Andy' s face tell s the story: he clearly can.

JESSICA (CONT' D)

You were such a romantic.

Nothing we've seen from Andy thus far has painted him as "romantic." Joyce's attention is now solely on her son, a concerned look on her face. Jessica may not realize how gut-wrenching this is for Andy, but Joyce finally does.

Joyce STANDS. She clears her coffee, changing topics...

JOYCE

So Jessica, do you know if it's a boy or a girl yet?

ON ANDY

They start CHATTING but he's not listening anymore. His head is clearly in a different place.

EXT. STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT - NEXT MORNING

Rob and Jessica say their goodbyes to Joyce, now back at the site of the Ford Focus. Andy stands off to the side.

JESSICA

You tell my Mom I say hey, Mrs. B. And don't you give her any ideas about a cross country road trip with me.

Joyce LAUGHS. Rob goes to say goodbye to Joyce. Jessica approaches Andy. One single private moment between old high school sweethearts...

ANDY

The kid is adorable.

JESSICA

He's okay. Hoping to do better on the next one.

She PATS her stomach. Andy smiles, confesses.

ANDY

I'm having sort of a... mid-life crisis right now. It's pretty weird.

JESSICA

You're twenty-nine, Andy.

ANDY

That's probably what makes it so weird.  
 (then)  
 It's not you. That's not why I'm--

JESSICA

I know.

Jessica kisses him on the cheek, WHISPERS:

JESSICA (CONT'D)

For the record: if you'd waited five years I probably would have said yes.  
 (then)

And then I probably wouldn't be living in  
 fri ggi n' Memphis. Thanks a lot.

And suddenly, as it goes sometimes, that's just... it.  
 Just like that. A chapter of a life finally closed.  
 Andy looks almost relieved. He smiles, gets in the car.

The Focus pulls out of the strip club parking lot, saying  
 goodbye to Memphis forever.

INT. FORD FOCUS - LATER

Andy drives. Joyce sits up front, in silence.

JOYCE

(apologetic)

I didn't know. I thought it would be  
 good to see her. Get some closure.

ANDY

It's okay, Ma. You didn't know.

Silence. Andy looks at her. She really does feel bad.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I was so crazy about her. I don't know,  
 maybe it did screw me up. I was just...  
 I was so crazy about her, Ma.

JOYCE

It'd be nice to feel that again, no?

ANDY

Honestly, right now it'd be nice to make  
 a sale at Walmart. That's what I want to  
 feel. I want to feel a sale at Walmart.

(off her look)

One step at a time, Ma.  
 (MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)  
 I'm glad we saw her. You were right...  
 about the closure. This was good.

Joyce looks at him, SHRUGS.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
 Alright, what tape are we up to?

JOYCE  
 Tape five, side B.

ANDY  
 Well we better do some serious listening.  
 We're gonna be in Arkansas soon and they  
 haven't even found her penis yet.

Joyce smiles, happy to oblige.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - LATER THAT DAY

The Focus ENTERS Bentonville, Arkansas: the home of Walmart. Bentonville is a small town, completely consumed by Walmart. The Walmart mark is everywhere you look. Stores, warehouses, signage. That said: there's not a lot of aesthetic here; you wouldn't know that it's the home of one of the biggest companies in the world.

The Focus pulls up in front of a nondescript building.

INT. WALMART LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Andy and Joyce ENTER a hallway, approach reception.

ANDY  
 Hi, Andrew Brewster. I have a two  
 o'clock with... Ryan McFee?

The receptionist doesn't even look up.

RECEPTIONIST  
 Go to the Lobby, pick up a house phone,  
 dial extension 151, tell him you're here.

Andy NODS, confused.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Cafeteria style tables fill the room. Scattered around, people sit talking. Andy and Joyce go to an EMPTY TABLE.

Andy spots a bunch of hotel styled house phones on a back wall. He leaves Joyce at the table, goes over. DIALS.

ANDY

Hi, Andrew Brewster for Ryan McFee?  
(a beat, then)  
Yes, in the lobby.  
(a beat, then)  
Oh. Okay.

Andy HANGS UP, walks back to Joyce (at the table).

ANDY (CONT'D)

I guess they come down to get me.

Joyce is looking around.

JOYCE

I don't think they're coming to get you.

#### ON OTHER TABLES

People aren't just sitting and chatting... they're pitchin. There are corkboards, diagrams, products.

#### BACK TO ANDY

Who realizes: this is where Walmart buyers hear pitches.

ANDY

Ma, go wait out in the hallway.

Joyce NODS, gathers her purse. But then...

VOICE (O. S.)

Andrew?

In front of them stands RYAN MCFEE, a Walmart buyer. He's wearing jeans and a t-shirt, casual.

ANDY

Ryan?

RYAN

Nice to finally meet you, Andrew.

They SHAKE. Ryan turns toward Joyce, extends his hand.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Ryan McFee. Walmart.

Joyce looks to Andy, unsure what to do. He jumps in.

ANDY

This is Joyce. Joyston. Joyce Joyston.  
My business partner.

Joyce shakes. Ryan sits. Andy follows suit, motions for Joyce to follow. She smiles, excited to play the part.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Ryan, I've got a product that's perfect for Walmart. I spent five years developing it and--

JOYCE

Tell him about the FAA approval.

Andy shoots Joyce a glare. Ryan looks confused.

RYAN

It's for airplanes?

ANDY

No, FDA. It's a cleaning product, Ryan.

He reaches BENEATH him, goes for the dramatic...

|                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| ANDY (CONT'D)        | JOYCE         |
| (slightly, dramatic) | (too quickly) |
| I call it...         | Organic!      |

As a result, it comes out GARBLED. Ryan is confused.

RYAN

What's the name?

ANDY

(sadly)  
Organic.

The dramatic moment is gone.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Let me demonstrate.

Andy pulls out his BOX. We hear his standard spiel.

ANDY (CONT'D)

While at the EPA I heard complaints from consumers whose children had ingested...

Andy stops, noticing that Ryan's attention has gone to Joyce. She's fanning herself with her hand, mid-flush.

RYAN

Is she alright?

JOYCE

Oh, I'm fine.

She gulps down some water. Andy tries pressing on.

ANDY

The complaints came from consumers whose children were having reactions to everyday cleaning supplies--

JOYCE

Like Wi ndex.

Andy pauses, his rhythm again broken.

ANDY

Exactly, Joyce. Like Wi ndex.

He's thrown. Ryan waits.

ANDY (CONT'D)

And I, uh, decided to, you know, develop something better than Wi ndex.

JOYCE

Organic!

Andy drops his head momentarily, continues valiantly:

ANDY

Organic is completely non-toxic. If you so desire you can flavor your baby's bottle with it--

JOYCE

You can even drink it!

ANDY

(giving up)

You can even drink it.

Andy pours a SHOT, downs it. They look to Ryan. He's obviously trying to put it all together.

RYAN

So it's a non-toxic, organic cleaning supply?

ANDY

In a nutshell.

RYAN  
 Interesting concept.  
 (to Joyce)  
 Do you drink it?

Joyce hesitates, looks toward Andy.

ANDY  
 Of course! Anyone can drink it!

He pours her a shot, puts it in front of her.

ON JOYCE

She looks to Andy. She can't let him down. She puts it to her lips, takes a very small sip. Immediately, she cringes. It obviously doesn't taste good. She takes a huge chug from her water bottle, washing it down.

Ryan watches, confused. Andy shakes his head.

JOYCE  
 (unconvincing)  
 Mmm. Good.

INT. FORD FOCUS - TEN MINUTES LATER

Andy pulls out of Walmart. Joyce looks at him.

JOYCE  
 I was just trying to help.

ANDY  
 (tense)  
 I know.

JOYCE  
 I shouldn't have--

ANDY  
 Ma, I need a few minutes, okay? I just want to find a hotel and get a drink.

Joyce knows to shut up.

GPS  
 (still in English accent)  
 Bear right in one mile.

Andy SMASHES the GPS with his hand, starts beating the shit out of it. Joyce watches, says nothing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Another miniature hotel room. Andy lies in bed, staring up, drinking a mini-bar bottle of whiskey. Joyce stands at the other bed, packing conditioner into her suitcase.

JOYCE

Well, the good news is I've got enough hair product to last me four years.

Andy says nothing.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Andy, you're so smart, so talented. Someone is going to give you your break.

Andy takes a gulp of whiskey. Joyce watches, concerned.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

If you're going to drink all that alcohol, you should really hydrate.

Nothing. Joyce treads carefully...

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I don't want to say it again, so I'll just leave an empty bottle here. You can refill it whenever you want.

She puts it on the nightstand next to him. Andy drinks more whiskey. She sits on the bed, watching. She waits.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I only say it because I read that for every glass of alcohol you should drink an extra glass of water to--

And that's it. That's the one that pushes Andy past the point of no return...

ANDY

JESUS CHRIST, MA! WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU? JUST STOP! STOP WITH THE WATER, STOP WITH THE NAGGING, JUST STOP TALKING! CAUSE I SWEAR TO GOD, IF YOU SAY IT ONE MORE TIME, I'M GOING TO EMPTY OUT THE ENTIRE GOD-DAMN MINI BAR AND DRINK MYSELF TO DEATH! JUST SHUT UP!

Andy lies back down. Joyce looks at him, then...

JOYCE

Who the fuck do you think you are to talk to me like that?

ANDY

Who do I think I am! ? I think I 'm a guy who 's spent three days with a woman who--

Andy stops, realizing. He shifts tone.

ANDY (CONT' D)

Did you just say fuck?

This time, it 's Joyce who explodes:

JOYCE

YES, I SAID FUCK! I 'M NOT JUST SOME MOTHER, SOME THING WHO EXISTS ONLY TO NAG YOU TO DRINK MORE WATER AND PICK YOUR WET TOWELS UP OFF THE FLOOR! I 'M A HUMAN BEING, ANDY! I HAVE FEELINGS! AND I CAN SAY FUCK! FUCK, FUCK, FUCK, FUCK, FUCK, FUCK!

Andy doesn 't even know what to do. But Joyce isn 't done.

JOYCE (CONT' D)

I 've devoted my entire life to you: a bad marriage, no career, and this is how you talk to me! ? Like I 'm some "thing" you can barely tolerate? And I try, Andy! I try to bite my tongue when you don 't eat enough, or drink enough, or squirt fluid on the frozen window! You think I don 't know that you can 't stand me! ? You think I don 't realize that you went away to college at the furthest possible place, that you still live in California so you only have to see me twice a year! But I 'm still so desperate for your affection that I drop my own life - and yes, Andy, pathetic as it might seem to you I do have my own life - to drive cross country with you on a whim! And this is how you talk to me? I deserve more than that, you selfish little boy. Now fill up your fucking water bottle and drink it before you drop dead from dehydration!

Joyce STORMS out of the room, slamming the door behind.

ON ANDY

Wi de-eyed. What the hell was that? Not knowing what else to do, he puts down the whiskey, picks up the empty water bottle, and heads to the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Andy lies in bed, waiting on Joyce. He looks to a CLOCK. It's been a few hours and she's still not back.

INT. HOTEL BAR - CONTINUOUS

Joyce sits at the bar with a group of MEN: some young, some old, all southern. They're drinking heavily. Andy approaches, wary. Joyce sees him.

JOYCE

Hey everyone, look! It's my son, Andy!

She's wasted.

ANDY

Okay, Ma. Let's get you going.

JOYCE

Why? Look how much fun I'm being! I'm meeting men like you wanted!

Andy looks around: it's a tough, southern-looking crowd. Scary. A few are missing important teeth.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

This is my little boy! He lives in California, far, far away from his Mother.

ANDY

Ma, you're drunk.

JOYCE

Far, far, far away. Far as he can go. But that's okay. He calls me on my birthday and comes home for most Thanksgivings... so that's exciting.

(then)

Bobby, get me another martini please.

A YOUNG HILLBILLY motions for the BARTENDER.

ANDY

Thank you, Bobby. But really, she's had enough.

JOYCE

Don't you listen to him! You get me that drink! And I want more cheesy fries.

Bobby smiles, CALLS the bartender over. Andy puts his hand on Bobby's shoulder, says it more strongly.

ANDY

Seriously, she's had enough, Man.

BOBBY

Sorry, Boss. Lady wants a drink, she's getting a drink.

Andy grabs Bobby's wrist, the one reaching for her drink.

ANDY

But Lady doesn't need a drink, Bobby.

And like that, the atmosphere in the room changes instantly. Bobby turns slowly, facing Andy.

BOBBY

I paid for it, she's drinking it.

Andy may not be the world's toughest guy, but everyone has their limit. And he's found his.

ANDY

I appreciate you taking care of my Mom. Really. And I'm happy to pay for the drink if you want. But so help me God, that martini is not going in her mouth.

One of the MEN around Andy STANDS. Joyce, drunk as she may be, suddenly sobers up. She is, after all, still Andy's mother.

JOYCE

Actually, I am tired. We should get going. Thanks again for all the drinks.

Bobby touches Joyce's shoulder, a bit too strong.

BOBBY

You sit down and drink--

BAM! Andy NAILED Bobby with a right cross. Joyce SCREAMS. The men jump up, but slowly realize... there's no need. Bobby is completely un-phased.

He wipes his lip, smiles at Andy.

ANDY

Oh shi t.

BAM! Andy gets rocked.

INT. FORD FOCUS - NEXT MORNING

Andy drives, sporting a black eye and cut lip. Joyce sits shotgun, looking exhausted from worry as well as a little hungover. Silence. It's awkward, and tense, and there are things to be said. In the background, the book-on-tape comes to a halt...

BOOK ON TAPE

And that concludes tape 11, side A of  
Middensex. Please flip over--

Andy hits EJECT. A long beat of dead silence. Finally, Andy breaks the tension...

ANDY

You remember that bunsen burner you got  
me for Christmas when I was a kid?

JOYCE

You didn't stop playing with it for a  
year.

ANDY

All the other kids played basketball and  
Nintendo. But I put on those dorky  
goggles and conducted experiments in the  
basement all day.

He smiles, nostalgic.

ANDY (CONT'D)

You remember what I'd say when people  
asked me what I wanted to be when I grew  
up?

JOYCE

An organic chemist. All the other little  
boys wanted to be astronauts or baseball  
players. And here was this kid, telling  
anyone who would listen that he was gonna  
be an organic chemist.

Joyce smiles at the memory. A beat.

ANDY

Ma?

She turns to him. Andy suddenly looks more serious.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I went to UCLA because they had the best organic chemistry program in the country. That was the only reason.

Joyce NODS and waves him off, as if feeling nonchalance. Only when she turns toward her window, away from him, can we see that it means a great deal more to her.

Andy gives her a moment, changes topics...

ANDY (CONT'D)

You hungry?

DISOLVE TO:

INT. BIG TEXAN - LATER

The Big Texan is a restaurant/tourist trap located just off the interstate (in Amarillo, Texas). It bears an arcade, a large gift shop, and a rocking chair the size of a small building that you can sit in and take photos on.

Joyce and Andy sit at a table, waiting.

JOYCE

You were entitled to snap at me last night, Andy. I know I've been driving you crazy.

Before he can object...

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You were entitled. Rationally I know you're almost thirty years old. But I look at you, Andy, and I only see a newborn baby.

(then)

You don't need me to fix your hair and tell you what to eat anymore. You're not a child.

ANDY

It goes both ways, Ma. You... I don't know, existed before me. You exist without me. You're not just my mother. You're this whole... person. Thing.

She NODS.

JOYCE

Well, I'm just sorry you've been having  
an awful time--

ANDY

It hasn't been awful.

JOYCE

Yes it has. But just the idea that you  
wanted to at least try and spend time  
with me, that means more than anything.

Andy smiles, weakly. He has to tell her.

ANDY

Ma? In San Francisco--

A WAITRESS (in cowboy hat) comes over, interrupting:

WAITRESS

Welcome to the Big Texan! You all know  
what you want?

Joyce clicks on her glasses, looks at the menu.

JOYCE

I am starving. Andy, you order, I'll  
find something.

ANDY

I'll have a cheeseburger, medium well.

WAITRESS

And to drink?

Andy looks at Joyce, her eyes still on menu. He knows  
the routine...

ANDY

Just water please.

JOYCE

(still reading)

Oh, have a coke. You want a coke, have a  
coke. What could it be, a dollar?

WAITRESS

Two, actually.

Joyce looks up, hesitating. Andy smiles.

JOYCE

Screw it. You only live once.

ANDY  
(to waitress)  
Okay. I'll have a coke.

JOYCE  
What's this?

She points at her menu. The waitress looks on.

WAITRESS  
The 72 Ouncer? Oh, that's our specialty.  
Seventy-two ounces of Grade-A steak.  
Comes with a dinner salad, roll, shrimp  
cocktail, and baked potato. If you eat  
it all, in under an hour, you get it for  
free. And you get a t-shirt.

(then)  
You want to try?

JOYCE  
How much is it if you don't finish?

WAITRESS  
Seventy-two dollars.

Andy can't even believe she's having this conversation.

ANDY  
Ma, are you kidding?

JOYCE  
I'm very hungry. You know how I can eat.

ANDY  
You actually think you can eat seventy-  
two ounces of steak?

JOYCE  
It's not "if" I can do it, I know I can  
do it. It's if I want to do it.

Andy looks concerned, not sure what's coming over her.

WAITRESS  
Well, you want to do it?

Joyce SHRUGS.

JOYCE  
I like eating for free. And how many  
times am I gonna be in Amarillo, Texas  
with my boy?

She unclucks her glasses.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I want to do it. And I'd like a glass of wine.

Andy LAUGHS, confused, unsure of what's happening.

INT. BIG TEXAN (STAGE) - LATER

Joyce sits on an ELEVATED STAGE, a large electronic TIMER behind her. It reads one hour. Andy stands behind her.

A MAN rings a BELL.

MAN

(loudly)

Ladies and Gentlemen! If you will direct your attention to the stage, you will find Ms. Joyce Brewster. She's from New Jersey but she's got a Texas-sized appetite tonight!

ON THE TABLE

We watch MATCHING FOOD get set down as he narrates...

MAN (O. S.) (CONT'D)

In the next hour, Joyce will have to consume a salad, a dinner roll, a shrimp cocktail, and a baked potato as well as seventy-two ounces of Grade-A steak.

The STEAK: it's enormous to the point that seeing it makes you sick. The equivalent of five large steaks.

JOYCE

(interrupting)

Is it possible to get the salad dressing on the side?

He nods, continues.

MAN (O. S.)

It all has to get down in under an hour. If it comes up, figuratively speaking, we've got buckets. But it will eliminate her. Everyone let's give Joyce a hand!

ON ANDY AND JOYCE

As the crowd CLAPS. Joyce smiles. Andy looks nauseous.

ANDY

Ma, you don't have to do this.

JOYCE

Honey, if you think I'm paying seventy-two dollars for a piece of meat you're crazy. Now get out of my way.

The timer starts, Joyce digs in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BIG TEXAN (STAGE) - SIXTEEN MINUTES LATER

A CROWD has gathered around Joyce. She's plowing through the steak, juice dripping down her mouth and coating her manicured fingers.

A SPECTATOR snaps a picture, Joyce holds up a forkful of meat to her mouth, posing.

Andy watches it all from the side, smiling and shaking his head. An OLDER MAN steps up beside him, also watching. He's wearing a cowboy hat and jeans. He's got a grey mustache, handsome, a Sam Elliot type.

COWBOY

I've seen some things in this place, but never a gal like yours trying the seventy-two ouncer.

ANDY

She's my Mom.

COWBOY

You're puttin' me on?

Andy shakes his head, "no."

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Looks too young to be your Mom. Pretty gal.

Andy smiles. The man puts out his hand.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

James Graw.

They SHAKE.

ANDY

Andrew Brewster.

COWBOY

What brings you to Amarillo, Andrew?

ANDY

Traveling for work.

COWBOY

Same here. I'm in oil. Always try and stop at the Texan. Watching folks up on the stage there is the best form of free entertainment around.

Up on stage, Joyce takes a breath. She's getting full. She reaches for the shrimp cocktail, takes a bite.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

No, no. Save the shrimp for last, Darlin'.

(then, to Andy)

You know, I could probably help your Ma, give her some tips. You know, if that's alright with you?

Andy waves him on.

ANDY

Good luck.

The cowboy tips his hat at Andy, approaches the stage. Andy watches as he stops Joyce from eating the shrimp, pulls a chair up next to her. She doesn't shoo him away.

Andy raises a brow, surprised.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BIG TEXAN (STAGE) - LATER

The clock shows FOUR MINUTES remaining.

The crowd has gotten even fuller. People are chanting:

CROWD

Joyce! Joyce! Joyce! Joyce!

The Cowboy sits with her, she's down to about seven ounces of meat. But she doesn't look well. She's down to a t-shirt and fanning herself, a bit green. On top of the steak, the shrimp cocktail still remains.

JOYCE

I think I need more water.

The Cowboy STANDS.

COWBOY

Robin, dear! ? When you get a moment, the young lady would love another glass of water.

WAI TRESS

Comin' right up.

Joyce smiles, but then... turns even more green. Suddenly, she's getting nauseous. She looks down next to her: there's a BUCKET, ostensibly to throw up in.

JOYCE

(panicked)

Andy! ? Where's Andy! ?

Andy runs up onto stage, kneels down next to Joyce.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

(desperate)

Andy?

ANDY

Ma, are you going to be sick?

She NODS, sad. She has tears in her eyes. It is the saddest, sweetest, most pathetic thing you've ever seen.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I'm throwing in the towel. You did great. Let's get you to a bathroom.

JOYCE

(desperate)

I thought I could do it. I don't want you to have to pay seventy-two dollars.

ANDY

I would pay a thousand dollars not to see my mother throw up in a bucket in front of a roomful of strangers.

JOYCE

Oh, that's so sweet--

She GAGS. Andy takes her napkin, puts it on her plate. It's over. The crowd GROANS. But just then...

The wai tress returns with a big glass of water. The Cowboy puts his hand on Joyce's shoulder.

COWBOY

Now just sit here for one minute, ride it out. Drink some water. I've seen people get sick, I think you're okay.

She DRIES.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

There you go, there you go. Deep breaths young lady. Now... how you feeling?

Joyce NODS, calming herself. Slowly, she removes the napkin from the plate, picks her fork back up. The crowd CHEERS. The cowboy turns to Andy, comforting.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

I've got my eye on her.

ANDY

Yeah, I can see that.

Joyce continues. Bite after bite. The clock ticks away. Two minutes. One and a half. One. She takes one final bite. It's done! The crowd SCREAMS! Andy smiles.

All that remains: THAT SHRIMP COCKTAIL. The clock ticks. Forty-five. Forty. Thirty-five. Joyce takes a bite of shrimp, the Cowboy stops her.

COWBOY

No, no, no. That's why we save it for last. You just shoot and swallow. You know how to do a shot?

Joyce looks at Andy, smiles. She picks up the shrimp cocktail and stands... twenty-five, twenty, fifteen...

JOYCE

To my son.

Andy smiles, raises his COKE to her shrimp.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I'd still pick you every time.

She DOWNS the shrimp with five seconds to spare. She shows the waitress her empty mouth and...

THE CROWD ERUPTS! Joyce holds her hands up in the air like a victorious heavy-weight champion.

EXT. BIG TEXAN PARKING LOT - LATER

Andy and Joyce walk with the Cowboy toward the Ford Focus. Joyce is wearing a t-shirt that says: "I ate the 72 Ouncer at the Big Texan and I lived to tell about it."

COWBOY

You planning any sightseeing the rest of the way?

ANDY

Not really. We're on a schedule: Santa Fe, then Vegas, then San Francisco.

COWBOY

Well, I hope you at least get to stop at the Grand Canyon.

JOYCE

Ooh! The Grand Canyon! I've always wanted to go to the Grand Canyon.

ANDY

We just don't have time.

COWBOY

Maybe next trip, then.

They're at the car. The Cowboy bids farewell to Andy:

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Andrew. A pleasure.

They SHAKE. Andy walks around the car. Cowboy opens the door for Joyce, she gets in. She lowers the window.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

Hope this isn't too forward, but heck, you see a woman who eats like that, you've got to stick your neck out...

He reaches into his pocket, hands her a BUSINESS CARD.

COWBOY (CONT'D)

I do business in New York. Maybe I'd have the pleasure of your company one night for dinner?

Joyce takes the card, unsure of what to say.

COWBOY (CONT' D)

I do know a few places where you don't have to eat on stage.

Joyce LAUGHS.

JOYCE

I'll think about it, James.

He TIPS his hat. Andy waves, pulls out. After a beat...

ANDY

Why, Mother! How scandalous.

JOYCE

Oh, stop it.

ANDY

(imitating her)

I'll think about it, James.

JOYCE

Stop it!

Andy LAUGHS. They drive in silence for a moment.

JOYCE (CONT' D)

What the hell is wrong with me?

Andy looks at her: where'd that come from?

JOYCE (CONT' D)

I mean, I haven't had fun like that in...  
(then)

I'm a fifty year old woman and I'm still  
clipping on earrings. What kind of woman  
is scared of getting her ears pierced?  
Of getting a man's business card?

It's a statement more than a question. Andy NODS.  
Smiles. Suddenly, he stops the car.

ANDY

You want to see the Grand Canyon?

JOYCE

I thought we didn't have time.

ANDY

I can skip my meeting in New Mexico.

JOYCE

Don't even think about it.

ANDY

I t's a small company anyway. Even if I make a sale, it won't be big enough to keep me afloat. QVC in Vegas, that's our haikmary.

(then)

You want the Grand Canyon, you're getting the Grand Canyon.

Andy pulls forward to the road. The GPS talks at him.

GPS

(English accent)

Turn right, in two miles.

ANDY

To the Grand Canyon, Jeeves.

We CUE CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL'S "Down on the Corner" which COVERS...

MONTAGE:

- Andy drives as the car passes into New Mexico.
- Joyce points, takes pictures of the New Mexico landscape.
- Another tape goes into the cassette player
- Joyce is telling a story, expressing herself with her hands. Andy LAUGHS.
- Tumencari, New Mexico.
- Andy and Joyce lie in adjacent beds in a small hotel, both eating M&M's.
- Andy is in the hallway of a HOTEL. He looks around. The coast is clear. He steals toiletries from an abandoned maid cart.
- He runs into a room, gives them to Joyce. She SQUEALS and piles them into her suitcase.
- Albuquerque, New Mexico. Flagstaff, Arizona.
- Another Book on Tape Cassette goes in...
- A sign (at night) reads: "Welcome to the Grand Canyon."

- The Ford Focus pulls a small hotel .

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRAND CANYON HOTEL - MORNING

We stay on the hotel as night turns into morning.

INT. GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK - MORNING

The entrance to the Grand Canyon looks much like the entrance to an amusement park. Cars wait in line, waiting to pay RANGERS who provide admission.

Andy pulls the car up to a RANGER.

RANGER

Welcome to the Grand Canyon. You have a pass already?

ANDY

No, first time.

RANGER

It's twenty-five dollars per vehicle. That entitles you to unlimited entrance to the park for the next seven days.

Andy looks to Joyce. She holds her tongue. Andy SIGHs, bites the bullet.

ANDY

Let me ask you: do you take Triple A?

RANGER

Sorry, no.

Joyce smiles off to the side, she's never been prouder.

RANGER (CONT'D)

Only discount we offer is if anyone's over sixty-two.

Andy looks over at Joyce. She looks up at him.

JOYCE

Don't even think about it. Pay the man his twenty-five dollars.

Andy smiles, forks over the CASH.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAND CANYON - LATER

Andy and Joyce stand in front of the Grand Canyon, looking out. For the four of you who haven't been there, it's as breath-taking and awe-inspiring as everyone says.

JOYCE

Wow.

ANDY

Yeah.

They take it in, silent.

JOYCE

You see that over there?

ANDY

Yeah, beautiful.

Silence. Then...

JOYCE

How long are we supposed to look at it?

ANDY

I don't know.

JOYCE

I mean it's beautiful...

ANDY

So beautiful...

A beat, then:

JOYCE

Who are these people who spend twenty-five dollars to look at rocks for seven days?

ANDY

I don't know, Ma.

JOYCE

Don't get me wrong, it's beautiful...

ANDY

So beautiful.

Silence. Andy looks around. People clearly have more patience for it than they do.

JOYCE

We're not far from Vegas, right? We can stay here for a few hours.

ANDY

Good.

Silence. They sit and look out at the Canyon for about ten seconds. Then...

ANDY (CONT'D)

Vegas?

JOYCE

Let's go.

They quickly turn away, back toward the car.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

Billboards and lights everywhere. We pull down off a WAYNE NEWTON BILLBOARD to...

The Ford Focus. Dirty and disgusting, entering the VEGAS STRIP.

INT. FORD FOCUS - CONTINUOUS

Joyce looks out, awed by everything.

JOYCE

I have a good feeling about this, Andy. You're going to do well tomorrow.

ANDY

I better. This is my last hope.

JOYCE

Besides your meeting in San Francisco.

Andy smiles, weakly. It's time. He has to tell her.

ANDY

You know, Ma. I've been thinking about your Andy. Margolis. I keep thinking it would be nice to track him down.

JOYCE

I told you the story, so if you need to, go ahead. But for me, it's... it's wrapped up in too many things. It makes me sad. It makes me think about a time in my life when I...

(then)

You know what, we're in Vegas. I don't want to talk about Andy Margolis.

ANDY

But--

JOYCE

Andy, I really don't want to talk about it.

Andy stops, the wound is clearly too deep for her. He turns forward, continues down the strip.

INT. CEASERS PALACE - LATER

Andy drags Joyce's bags through the CASINO, towards an elevator. Joyce looks around in wonder.

ANDY

Let's go drop our bags off, shower up, then we'll get a nice meal, oh, I want you to see the fountain at the Bellagio--

But Joyce is not with him. He looks back. She's in front of a five cent slot machine. He heads back.

JOYCE

It has frogs!

Sure enough, the machine spins FROGS. Triple-frogs. Double-frogs. Bonus frogs.

ANDY

Ma--

JOYCE

And it's on the aisle. Right in front. I bet they put it here so people can see a winner.

ANDY

There's lots of machines on aisles--

JOYCE

This one is a winner.

Joyce SITS, digs through her purse.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Honey, I showered this morning. Go drop off the bags and shower, I'll be here.

Andy SHRUGS.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

The drinks are free, right?

ANDY

Yeah.

JOYCE

Flag me down a waitress if you see one.

Andy raises a brow.

ANDY

Okay.

And that's when Andy loses his mother to Las Vegas...

JUMP CUTS:

As Andy repeatedly approaches Joyce, tries to remove her from the machine.

AS SHE DRAINKS A BLOODY MARY:

ANDY (CONT'D)

Ma, if we want to get dinner--

JOYCE

The big one's coming, I feel it.

WHEN HE RETURNS AGAIN:

ANDY

Ma, don't you want to see the fountain?

JOYCE

You go ahead, Honey.

ANDY

Yeah, well, the thing is, I've seen the fountain.

She waves him off. A WAITRESS approaches, takes Joyce's empty bloody Mary, replaces it with...

WAI TRESS  
Double scotch, rocks?

Joyce, without looking, hands her a buck.

ANDY  
Jesus.

AND ONE FINAL TIME:

ANDY (CONT'D)  
Well, Ma? I think I'm gonna turn in.

JOYCE  
You get some sleep. Big day tomorrow.

ANDY  
You're not coming up?

JOYCE  
In a bit, in a bit.

Andy shakes his head. Oh well. He EXITS. Joyce spins again. Starts BANGING the machine.

INT. CEASER'S PALACE ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Andy lies in bed, asleep. Next to him, a completely made bed, not slept in.

The door opens, waking him. He looks up. It's Joyce, bddy Mary in hand. She smiles.

Andy looks at his clock: 7:45 AM.

JOYCE  
So... do you notice anything different?

Andy squints.

ANDY  
You're drinking at seven in the morning?

Joyce shakes her head, announces...

JOYCE  
I got my ears pierced!

Andy sits up.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I was up si xty dol lars and deci ded to  
cal l i t qui ts and I passed a jewel ry  
store and got my ears pierced!

ANDY

Okay.

JOYCE

It di dn' t even hurt!

ANDY

Well... way to go, I guess. I'm happy if  
you're happy.

Joyce si ts on the bed.

JOYCE

Oh, Andy. I'm so happy. I never want to  
leave.

ANDY

Yeah, but at some poi nt the frog machi ne  
coul d short-ci rcuit.

JOYCE

I know, I lost control. But I do want to  
see more of Vegas. I was thi nki ng: maybe  
you shoul d go to San Franci sco al one and  
I'll stay through the weekend, fly home  
from here.

ANDY

Absolut ely not.

JOYCE

I'm letting you off the hook, Kiddo. You  
drove wi th your mother to Las Vegas. I  
have enough braggi ng material to last me  
the rest of my life.

Andy si ts up.

ANDY

Ma, you have to come.

JOYCE

(j oki ng)

Because I've been so hel pful so far?

It's time. He has to tell her.

ANDY

I don't have a meeting in San Francisco,  
Ma. I tracked down Andy, Andy Margolis.  
He's the meeting in San Francisco.

Joyce opens her mouth, but nothing comes out.

ANDY (CONT'D)

He still works at J&R Records! They  
transferred him to the West Coast office.  
I've got his numbers address, everything.  
Ma, he's not married!

Joyce sits on the bed, taking it in.

JOYCE

When?

ANDY

When, what?

JOYCE

When did you track him down?

ANDY

The morning after you told me the story.

Joyce NODS, suddenly things are clear.

JOYCE

That's why you invited me to come? So I  
could see Andy Margolis?

ANDY

No. I mean, I wanted to see him, too. I  
wanted both of us to see him. He's my  
curse, right?

He smiles, trying to lighten things. Joyce doesn't take.

JOYCE

How stupid I was. To think you'd  
actually want to spend time with me.

ANDY

I did!

JOYCE

No. This was you worrying about your  
pathetic shut-in mother. Reunite her  
with the love of her life, you don't have  
to feel responsible for her anymore.

ANDY

It's not like that.

JOYCE

I'm not mad. Most children wouldn't even care enough. I just... I thought this was something else, you know?

Joyce gets up, and walks out of the room.

INT. CASINO - LATER

Joyce sits at the FROG SLOT MACHINE, monotonously pulling the lever. Depressed. She looks up. Andy stands there.

ANDY

I'm sorry. I should have told you.

JOYCE

Yeah, you should have.

There's nothing Andy can say. She spins the WHEEL again.

ANDY

I want to talk but I have to go to my presentation. Are you okay here?

JOYCE

Oh, don't worry about me, Andy. You've done that enough already.

Ouch. Andy looks at his WATCH. He has to go.

INT. BANQUET HALL - LATER

A BANNER READS: "QVC OPEN CALL." We PAN DOWN to...

Andy. He's sitting in a waiting room. A QVC MAN emerges from a room off to the side.

QVC MAN

(reading)

Andrew Brewster for Organiclean?

Andy STANDS, approaches him. The Man leads him into a...

INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's a no frills mini STAGE. There's a long table set up front, above it a QVC BANNER.

Behind the table stands a PRETTY WOMAN. A CAMERA faces her. Two QVC EXECS sit in folding chairs next to the camera. It's not unlike a casting session.

The QVC Man leads Andy behind the table.

QVC MAN

Okay, Mr. Brewster. You get five minutes to explain the product and demonstrate. Our hostess Amy will introduce you. You can interact with her however you want. We're looking for both a good product, and good salesmanship. Any questions?

ANDY

No.

He takes a seat next to the other. Amy smiles at Andy.

AMY

Break a leg.

MAN (O. S.)

Roll tape!

Amy introduces, reading off cue cards.

AMY

Welcome back to QVC. I'm here with Andrew Brewster, creator of a new organic cleaning product called Organiclean. Tell us a little about Organiclean, Andrew.

Andy is clearly distracted, not himself.

ANDY

Yes, uh, thank you. Organiclean is a product I invented five years ago. Actually, no, I came up with the idea five years ago, but I've been working on the formula for the last five years. Technically I invented it only a few months ago I guess.

The execs exchange looks. Amy looks confused.

AMY

Well, why don't you tell us a little about the product Andrew?

ANDY

Sure, sure.

Andy pulls out his box.

ANDY (CONT' D)

Well, Organiclean cleans like any regular  
cleaning product.

Andy does his dirt demonstration. Amy CLAPS, impressed.  
But she's really not. We can tell. Essentially, he  
wiped a table clear of dirt.

AMY

Well, I look at that. The table is clean.

An exec STIFLES a yawn. Andy notices.

ANDY

Well, hold on Amy. That's not what makes  
Organiclean special. Many products clean  
dirt, but they're also toxic. You don't  
want your children ingesting them. But  
Organiclean...

He PULLS OUT his SHOT GLASS, does it. The execs sit up,  
taking notice. They share an intrigued glance.

ANDY (CONT' D)

Organiclean is completely non-toxic. You  
can get it in your eyes, drink it... here  
Amy, try it. It's perfectly safe.

He hands Amy a SHOT GLASS. She hesitates.

ANDY (CONT' D)

Don't worry, it's completely non-toxic.

Amy looks off camera, no longer in "character."

AMY

I don't think I'm comfortable with this.

JOYCE (O. S.)

Then get out of the way.

They turn. Joyce ENTERS FRAME, marches up to the table.  
One of the execs STANDS.

EXEC

I'm sorry, who are you?

JOYCE

I'm the mother.

Joyce grabs Amy's shot glass and DOWNS it in one gulp.  
Andy looks at her, smiles. She POURS another, hands it  
to Andy.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I am this boy's mother and I am allowing him to sit here and drink this. And any mother out there knows that if it wasn't one hundred percent safe I wouldn't even let it near his mouth, no matter how much money it could make him.

Andy TOASTS her, does the shot.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

That's a mother job: you protect your child. I would jump in front of a train for this boy, even at his worst moments. Any mother would. So why do we sit at home cleaning our counters and floors - the very counters and floors they play on - with something we wouldn't dare let them put in their mouths?

(then, to Andy)

Now, tell them about the FAA approval.

The execs watch them go back and forth, as if watching a ping-pong match.

ANDY

It's FDA, Ma.

JOYCE

Well, whatever it's called, tell them about it. And show them how you drip it in your eyes.

ANDY

I think they get the point, I want to talk about the ingredients.

JOYCE

No one cares about the ingredients, we told them it was safe, now drip it in your eyes.

ANDY

I didn't bring the dripper.

JOYCE

Why didn't you bring it?  
It's the neatest part.

ANDY

Ma, I can handle this.

JOYCE

I know you can handle it  
but--

QVC MAN STANDS up.

EXEC

Okay, stop tape.

Andy and Joyce stop. Have they blown it? Andy starts gathering his belongings.

ANDY

Well, you have my business plan and contact info. Thank you for the time.

Andy leads Joyce toward the door.

EXEC #1

How soon will you be ready to go to market with this?

Andy turns, surprised.

ANDY

As soon as we have somewhere to sell it.

EXEC #2

You have financial backing, FDA approval?

ANDY

Uh huh.

The EXECS conference. Andy looks at Joyce, SHRUGS.

EXEC

We'll want you on the air as soon as possible. How's April?

Andy looks at Joyce in complete disbelief.

ANDY

Yeah, sure. April's cool.

EXEC #3

Obviously, we'll want your mother presenting with you.

QVC MAN

She's going to be a huge star on QVC.

Andy looks at Joyce. She primped her hair.

ANDY

Ma? You good with that?

JOYCE

I always thought I'd do well on QVC.

Andy shakes his head, in complete disbelief.

QVC MAN

Come to dinner with us, tonight. We'd love to tell you more about the QVC--

Andy is about to agree when...

JOYCE

I'm sorry, we can't. We have an important meeting to get to in San Francisco.

Andy turns to Joyce, surprised. She NODS.

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - LATER

From ABOVE, the Focus crosses toward the San Francisco skyline.

INT. FORD FOCUS - CONTINUOUS

Andy drives, Joyce looks at him.

JOYCE

So what was your plan?

ANDY

He was getting back this morning. I thought you'd call his office, say "hey, remember me?" Then we'd meet for coffee or something and you'd marry him.

Joyce holds out her hand. Andy hands her the cell phone and a piece of paper.

ANDY (CONT'D)

His work number is on top.

This is it. She takes a deep breath, DIALS.

JOYCE

Hi, I'm trying to reach Andrew?

(a beat)

Oh. Okay. No, no message.

She HANGS UP. Andy waits expectantly.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

She said he's working from home today.

Andy points at the paper.

ANDY  
Home number is at the bottom.

Joyce breathes deeply again, DI ALS.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
Put it on speaker, I want to hear.

She puts it on speaker. RING. RING. Then...

VOICE  
Hello?

JOYCE  
Andy?

VOICE  
Speaking.

Joyce FREEZES.

VOICE (CONT'D)  
Hello? Are you there?

A beat, then... Joyce SHUTS THE PHONE. She's completely freaked out.

JOYCE  
It was him.

ANDY  
I heard.

JOYCE  
I got scared.

ANDY  
I saw.

JOYCE  
What am I supposed to say?

ANDY  
I don't know... "Hi, Andy. It's Joyce.  
The girl from Florida"

She shakes her head, no. She's suddenly really unnerved.  
She looks at the paper.

JOYCE  
This is his address, right?

Andy NODS.

JOYCE (CONT' D)

Let's just go there. If we're going to do this, we're going to do it in person.

Andy agrees, takes the paper and starts programming the GPS. Joyce pulls down the car visor, starts preening herself. Andy looks at her, smiles.

JOYCE (CONT' D)

The man hasn't seen me since I was twenty-three. Some make-up might not help, but it can't hurt.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

The Focus pulls up in front of a LARGE HOUSE. Andy EXITS the car, comes around and opens Joyce's door.

ON ANDY

Waiting.

ANDY

This is it. This is his house.

Nothing.

ANDY (CONT' D)

Ma? You ready?

After a beat...

JOYCE EXITS the car. She stands in front of Andy. She's clearly gotten much more dressed up, and more made-up. She looks great... and extremely nervous. She shows Andy her hand. It's shaking.

JOYCE

Do I look okay?

Andy looks at his mother. Mid-fifties, dressed up, and nervous like a little girl going to her first dance.

ANDY

You look great, Ma. Now, take a deep breath.

Joyce BREATHES IN. Settles herself.

JOYCE

Okay.

ANDY

Okay?

She NODS. On instinct, she LICKS her finger and makes a move toward Andy's hair. Before she gets there, she stops herself, pulls her hand back. Andy smiles, takes a step toward her, and lowers her head just a bit. She smiles, presses down his cowl neck. And with that...

Andy turns, a man on a mission, and heads toward the house. She follows, talking as they walk.

JOYCE

You know, whatever happens in there, it really doesn't matter. It was always you.

Andy turns toward her, confused.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

The love of my life. It will always be you, Andy.

Andy smiles, touched. Joyce immediately changes tone.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

I hope he doesn't look like hell.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Andy approaches the door, RINGS the bell. Joyce stands to his side, slightly behind him. They share a look. Nothing. Andy RINGS again.

VOICE

Coming!

Joyce tenses. Andy puts his hand on her shoulder, settling her.

ON THE DOOR

Which opens slowly, revealing...

A HANDSOME MAN

Actually, let me re-phrase. A handsome young man (29).

ANDY

Sorry to bother, I'm looking for Andrew Margolis?

MAN

We're not interested. Thanks.

He starts closing the door, Andy stops it with his hand.

ANDY

No, I'm sorry. We're not selling anything. We're old friends of Andrew Margolis.

MAN

Yeah, well, unless I'm suffering from amnesia, we're not old friends.

Confusion. Andy looks to Joyce. Back to the guy.

ANDY

You're Andrew Margolis? From J&R Records?

MAN

(uncomfortable)

What is this about?

It occurs to Joyce before it occurs to Andy. She speaks for the first time.

JOYCE

He's his son.

Andy looks at her. Suddenly he gets it.

ANDY

Is your father named Andrew as well?

ANDREW MARGOLIS JR.

Yes. What can I help you with--

ANDY

And he worked at J&R as well?

ANDREW MARGOLIS JR.

He owned it. I'm sorry, I'm confused.

Andy is suddenly relieved.

ANDY

No, no. You must think we're crazy. My mother is an old friend of your father's.  
(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)

We thought you... it doesn't matter. Is it possible to find out how to get in touch with your him?

ANDREW MARGOLIS JR.

I'm sorry, Dad died five years ago.

And I like that, all the air goes completely out of them. Joyce quickly braces herself against the wall.

INT. ANDREW MARGOLIS' KITCHEN - LATER

They sit at a table, drinking coffee. Joyce is looking at a PHOTO, lost in thought.

ON THE PHOTO

It's an OLDER MAN (the original Andy). He's kissing an OLDER WOMAN. They are standing with their son. They all look incredibly happy.

BACK TO SCENE

Andrew (Margolis) and Andy (Brewster) drink coffee, they're looking at Joyce.

ANDREW MARGOLIS

Is she okay?

ANDY

Yeah, she's just... your father was very important to her.

ANDREW MARGOLIS

He was a good man.

ANDY

So I hear. How long were your parents married?

ANDREW MARGOLIS

Twenty-four years. Mom lives in Florida now.

Andy STANDS, looks at Joyce. This was all a mistake.

ANDY

We should get going. I know you're just getting back from a trip.

ANDREW MARGOLIS

No, it's okay.

Joyce finally speaks, still looking at the picture.

JOYCE

Did he ever mention me? We dated for two years, probably not long before your mother.

Andrew thinks about it.

ANDREW MARGOLIS

I'm sorry, no. He never talked about anyone besides my mother. At least to us.

Gut-shot. Joyce STANDS to go, hands him back the photo.

JOYCE

Your father was a very nice... he was very nice to me. I'm sorry he's gone.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O. S.)

Hey, Big Brother! I'm here!

A PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN ENTERS the room.

YOUNG WOMAN

You got enough mail to choke a--

She sees Andy and Joyce, stops.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't know you had company.

ANDREW MARGOLIS

No, they're uh, old friends... of Dad's.

Andy STANDS, faces her. She's adorable. Instant chemistry. He holds out his hand.

ANDY

Hi, I'm Andy.

She smiles, SHAKES his hand.

GI RL

Joyce.

ON ANDY

Who freezes instantly. He looks behind him to...

HIS MOTHER

She looks up, stunned. A single name says everything.  
An unrequited love... finally requited.

EXT. HERTZ RENTAL CAR DROP OFF - LATER

The FORD FOCUS, dirty and disgusting, pulls into the DROP OFF LANE of Hertz.

INT. HERTZ RENTAL CAR DROP OFF - CONTINUOUS

Inside the car, Joyce and Andy sit in their customary positions, listening to the book on tape...

BOOK ON TAPE

The wind swept over the crusted snow into my Byzantine face, which was the face of my grandfather and of the American girl I had once been--

A BANG ON THE WINDOW. A RENTAL AGENT stands there. Andy stops the tape, lowers the window.

ANDY

Just give us a minute.

Andy raises the window back up as the agent just stands there, confused. He pushes PLAY AGAIN.

BOOK ON TAPE

I stood in the door for an hour, maybe two. I lost track after a while, happy to be home, weeping for my father, and thinking about what was next.

(a beat, then)

And that concludes the audio presentation of Middlesex.

The tape stops. Andy looks at Joyce. She NODS. They did it. Dramatically, she takes the tape out and places it back in the final spot of the casing.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT - LATER

Andy and Joyce hold separate BOARDING PASSES. This is goodbye.

ANDY

Well, I'm this way.

JOYCE

I'm that way.

ANDY

You're okay with flying alone?

JOYCE

I pierced my ears and ate 72 ounces of  
steak. I can handle American Airlines.

(then)

So what's next for you?

ANDY

I don't know. I'll go back to LA and  
start prepping for QVC--

JOYCE

That's not what I meant.

Andy smiles.

ANDY

I don't know, Ma. I mean, it's not like  
he gave us any answers did he?

JOYCE

Andy, I've spent almost forty years  
thinking I didn't matter to the man who  
mattered the most to me. He gave me all  
the answers I needed.

(then, with a smile)

Now, as for you and your "curse?"

Joyce removes a BOTTLE OF WATER from her purse.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

No such thing. I wasn't meant to be with  
my Andy. I was meant to meet him. To  
learn about myself from meeting him. And  
then... I was meant to marry your father.  
If I hadn't, I wouldn't have had you.  
And if I had it to do all over again, I'd  
do it all the same. I'm sure Andy would  
too.

She smiles.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

When it's not meant to be, you know it.  
And when it is, no matter how hard you  
try, you won't be able to stop it. No  
fear of commitment can stop it. When  
it's time for you to go the dance...

(MORE)

JOYCE (CONT' D)  
 you'll dance. You won't be able to help  
 yourself.  
 (then)  
 You're going to be just fine, Andy.

ANDY  
 You promise?

JOYCE  
 I do.

Joyce hands him the WATER BOTTLE.

JOYCE (CONT' D)  
 Now you make sure to drink your water.

ANDY  
 I will.

JOYCE  
 Six bottles a day.

ANDY  
 What's good for Oprah is good for me.

JOYCE  
 I'm going now before I start crying.  
 Remember: if all the boys in the world  
 were lined up and I could only pick--

ANDY  
 Ma?

She stops, interrupted.

ANDY (CONT' D)  
 I wouldn't have let you pick anyone else.

Joyce touches her heart, feigns a swoon. Then...

JOYCE  
 Please. You'd have let Mrs. Ernst pick  
 you in a heartbeat.

ANDY  
 No I wouldn't.

JOYCE  
 You loved her cookies.

ANDY  
 You know what, Ma? I try and say  
 something nice and--

The camera PULLS AWAY, as they continue arguing in the middle of San Francisco airport.

JOYCE (O. S.)  
What about Mrs. Shapiro?  
Remember how she'd let you  
kids watch TV--

ANDY (O. S.)  
Well, yeah, well maybe if  
you let me watch more than  
two hours a week--

JOYCE (O. S.)  
Sue me because I wanted you  
to read! It didn't exactly  
hurt you when you needed  
that scholarship halfway  
around the world--

ANDY (O. S.)  
For the last time: UCLA was  
not halfway around the  
world!

As the argument continues, we leave the airport and . . .

DISOLVE TO:

**TITLE CARD: EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER**

INT. UNDRESSED LOCATION - MORNING

We open TIGHT ON ANDY. He's wearing a TUXEDO, looking nervous. A WEDDING PLANNER approaches.

WEDDING PLANNER  
It's time. You nervous?

ANDY  
A little.

WEDDING PLANNER  
No second guessing, I hope?

ANDY  
No. None at all.

Andy TURNS, revealing:

ON JOYCE

In a WEDDING GOWN. Andy approaches her.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
You ready, Ma?

JOYCE  
I'm not sure I should be wearing white at  
this point in my life but what the hell.

DOORS OPEN as Andy walks his mother down the AISLE OF . . .

## THE BIG TEXAN

The site of her steak eating champion ship.

At the end of the "aisle" (the "stage") stands JAMES, the Cowboy she first met during her eating display. He smiles at the sight of her.

## INT. BIG TEXAN - LATER

Up on STAGE, Joyce and James feed each other huge steaks like a bride and groom share wedding cake at a normal wedding. They LAUGH. We pull back to...

ANDY

He sits at a table, watching. A country band starts playing music and people begin DANCING.

GI RL (O. S.)

Hey there.

Andy turns, revealing...

JOYCE MARGOLIS, the "original" Andy's daughter. Andy is clearly surprised. He stands. As before, there's instant chemistry.

ANDY

Hi.

JOYCE

(helping him)  
Joyce. Margolis.

ANDY

No, yeah, of course. Hi. How are you?

JOYCE

I'm good, I'm good.

Awkward silence. She breaks it.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

Is it weird that I'm here? Your Mom invited me, we've kept in touch a bit.

ANDY

Really? I didn't know that.

Andy looks toward the dance floor. His mother is dancing with James, but watching them. She smiles at him. He shakes his head at her.

JOYCE  
She's hysterical.

ANDY  
Yes, well, that's her thing.

Andy looks at the girl in front of him. She's standing there, vulnerable, beautiful, a little awkward.

ANDY (CONT'D)  
So?

JOYCE  
So?

He smiles. She smiles back. It's that awkward moment when two people both realize there's a legitimate connection and they don't know how to address it.

ANDY  
You like to dance?

JOYCE  
Not really.

ANDY  
Me neither.  
(then)  
You want to dance?

JOYCE  
Definitely.

Andy smiles, holds out his hand.

ANDY  
Let's see what you got, Margolis.

JOYCE  
You can call me Joyce.

He takes her hand, leads her toward the dance floor.

ANDY  
I'm sorry, I can't. I just can't.

She LAUGHS. We pull back OVERHEAD as Andy and Joyce join James and Joyce on the dance floor...

## INT. QVC STAGE - LATER

**ROLL END CREDITS** as we watch Joyce and Andy, on a major QVC set, selling Organiclean to the masses. As they bicker, phones LIGHT up in the control room.

## INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Andy sits at a table with Joyce Margolis, drinking coffee as they talk and laugh... clearly the last patrons there.

## INT. ANDY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Andy plops contentedly into his empty bed, a big smile on his face. Clearly, he's just had the best date ever.

We PAN to his nightstand toward... A NEW PHOTO. Andy and his mother, smiling at the lip of the Grand Canyon.

## INT. JOYCE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A different nightstand, the same photo. We PAN to the bed where Joyce sits, glasses on, reading her book and eating her M&M's.

Next to her, her new cowboy husband sits reading the paper. Fittingly, he's also eating M&M's.

A DEDICATION types across screen:

TO ALL THE MOTHERS, FROM ALL THE SONS... WE'D PICK YOU EVERY TIME.

AND NO, WE DON'T WANT MORE CHICKEN.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.