

SCRIPT TITLE

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ACT ONE

INT. JERROD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jerrod walks into his apartment from his bedroom to applause. Like a standing ovation. He hasn't even spoken yet. Off of a look a woman faints. He lives in Charlotte, North Carolina. His apartment could definitely use a woman's touch. Black leather couch, white walls with a picture of Michael Jordan. A large television. A PlayStation 4. Business school books. He turns on Taylor Swift's "You Belong With Me." Jerrod starts to dance and clean while listening to this song. He starts humming along to it. As the chorus starts...

JERROD
(singing)

*She wears short skirts! I wear T-
shirts/She's cheer captain/And I'm
on the bleachers/*

Maxine, Jerrod's girlfriend, walks in with a broom. She looks at Jerrod like she's over it. Jerrod turns to her and sings to her.

JERROD (CONT'D)
(singing)

*Dreaming about the day when you
wake up and find/That what you're
looking for has been here the whole
time.*

Maxine then jumps in with full passion.

JERROD/MAXINE
(singing)

*If you could see/That I'm the
one/who understands you./Been here
all along./So, why can't you see --*

They hold their hands out towards each other.

JERROD/MAXINE (CONT'D)
(singing)

*You belong with me, / you belong with
me?*

They get closer and closer to a kiss.

MAXINE

Hey Jerrod, are you feeling nervous
about tonight?

JERROD

I'm never nervous, baby. About
what?

MAXINE

About telling your parents we're
moving in together?

Jerrod lets go of Maxine. Maxine starts sorting mail.

JERROD
(singing)

*I told you next month we were going
to tell them next month that's when
it's going to happen next month you
something bleachers bleachers
bleachers bleachers --*

Maxine turns off the radio.

MAXINE

No, Jerrod. We talked about this.
We have to tell them.

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Otherwise your mom will secretly
hate me and will use terms like
"shacking up" and "that woman" and
it's not what "Jesus wants."

JERROD
(singing)

*Next month. I swear. We're gonna
tell them. But in the mean time
let's not tell them.*

MAXINE

Stop singing. You always sing
Taylor Swift when you're trying to
avoid something.

Something catches Maxine's eye in the mail.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Why are you getting mail from the
North Carolina Republican Party?

JERROD
(singing)

Cause I'm a registered Republican --

MAXINE

Jerrod, stop singing!

JERROD

I'm sorry, it's a great song.
Taylor knows melody.

MAXINE

You're a registered Republican?
How? Why?

JERROD

Look I went down to vote for Obama like we're supposed to do and I was standing in line and it was really really hot and I was really really miserable and don't get me wrong it was historic both Obama and the temperature that day and I can see from your face that you think that I registered Republican because it was hot. But it wasn't that at all. It was that the Republican registration area had free sandwiches.

MAXINE

So you voted for Romney? I guess that makes sense. You're in business school, maybe you met some Republicans and it's the cool thing to do. Anyway about tonight --

JERROD

Of course I didn't vote for Romney. I didn't vote for anyone. I just registered and then left cause the line for voting was too long. I guess in a way when you think about it I voted for a club sandwich.

MAXINE

How could you just throw your rights away over a sandwich? It's like you don't even care?

JERROD

It is like I don't even care.

MAXINE

I always do this. Politics always gets me riled up and distracted.

Jerrod notes this.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

But who cares? So you don't vote. Whatever. Now which one of us is going to tell your parents we're moving in together?

JERROD

You're right. We shouldn't talk about politics. And why bother? Your vote is not worth anything anyway and it doesn't matter cause democracy is dead.

MAXINE

How can you say something like that!?

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Now you have to go down to the DMV and re-register Democrat and get back in time so we can go tell your parents we're moving in together.

JERROD

There are two problems with that:
1. The going down to the DMV and 2. the whole re-registering to vote. Besides these days there are no important issues. We are living in the best of times.

MAXINE

How could you say a thing like that? What about the community? And giving back?

JERROD

I don't really like the term "giving back to the community" cause it implies the community gave me something in the first place. The community didn't give me anything. The community stole my bike, that's what the community did.

MAXINE

Oh I see what's happening. You're trying to distract from the real topic.

JERROD

Women's rights?

MAXINE

No. Not women's rights. You and me telling your parents we're moving in together. Like we planned four weeks ago. And instead you're baiting me with this... dumb... junk.

JERROD

Did you just run out of words? We are going to get back to the topic at hand. Right now can you name five things that politics has done to make your life better?

MAXINE

I am not doing this.

JERROD

You can't do it. That's why you're not doing it. Cause you can't. Cause you can't. Cause you can't.

MAXINE

Freedom.

JERROD

That's not a thing. I got a sandwich. That is a thing. I want things.

Beat.

MAXINE

Li --

JERROD

Don't say liberty.

MAXINE

I wasn't going to say liberty. Why are we still talking about this? Why are you avoiding this?

JERROD

You were going to say liberty.

MAXINE

Of course I was! What's the deal with your parents? Do you not want to move in with me? Is that what this is about?

JERROD

No. Of course I do. But moving in with you doesn't concern my parents. I don't see the point of bringing it up to them.

MAXINE

Your parents are old school. It's better to talk about this stuff in the open then surprise them and keep things secret and let things fester. It's like when you didn't tell your mom we were dating and she referred to me as Miss Thing for three months.

JERROD

This is where I disagree with you. My parents don't need to know this. In fact they don't want to know this. It's like when people think they want to know the government's secrets but you don't want to know the government's secrets. Obama didn't have a single gray hair until he found out those secrets. He knows we didn't go to the moon.

MAXINE

Stop filibustering our relationship!

JERROD

Hey, remember earlier when we were singing? Those were some good times we had.

Jerrod turns on the music and starts singing. Maxine picks up his headphones.

MAXINE

I don't want to listen to you. Use
your headphones.

Maxine tosses his headphones at him. They land on the floor and break.

JERROD

Not my Tonz by Ice-T!

MAXINE

Grow up! Get name brand headphones!

Jerrod's phone buzzes.

JERROD

Rel's here. Pretend we're happy.

MAXINE

Don't let him in.

JERROD

It doesn't matter he's gonna come
in anyway. He has a key.

MAXINE

Tell him you're not here.

JERROD

You know I don't lie. I can't lie
to my brother.

MAXINE

You lie to your parents.

JERROD

It's different. Generational thing.

The door starts to unlock.

MAXINE

I don't want him here. This is like
a horror movie and only your lie
can save us!

JERROD

Like George Washington I cannot
tell a lie!

MAXINE

You wouldn't have voted for him
either --

JERROD

Well I couldn't have cause uhh you
know. You know.
(motioning to his skin)
Slavery.

Rel walks in.

REL

Yo my business is taking off!

Maxine immediately leaves the room. Rel celebrates by doing a
little shimmy.

JERROD

Stop calling it your business. It's
a pyramid scheme.

REL

You think you know everything cause
you're in business school? Well I
attend the school of hard knocks.

JERROD

Not a real school, bro. It's a song from *Annie*. And a Jay-Z song that I like very much. But it is not a school.

As Rel describes he makes a diagram with his hands that is in the shape of a pyramid.

REL

Whatever. My business is not a pyramid scheme. Cutco hires entrepreneurs to distribute their knives. Those entrepreneurs hire more entrepreneurs to help distribute more knives. Those entrepreneurs find lower entrepreneurs to distribute even more knives. Everyone gets knives. Everyone gets rich. Hashtag alwaysbehustlin'

Rel does his shimmy again.

JERROD

You realize you just made a pyramid with your hands. And who are you doing this shimmy for? No one else is here. You're like a black neighbor in a white sitcom.

REL

Where's Maxine? I gotta tell her
the great news.

JERROD

We're in a fight right now.

REL

I never really liked her.

Maxine walks in.

MAXINE

Shut up, Rel. I don't like you
either.

REL

What're you fighting about?

JERROD

It's nothing.

REL

You pregnant?

JERROD

She's mad because I'm a registered
Republican.

MAXINE

That's not why I'm mad.

REL

I know, man. Cause Obama's tryin'
to take our money and give it to
people on welfare.

JERROD

Rel, you are on welfare.

REL

Yeah until I move these knives.

Hashtag alwaysbehustlin'.

MAXINE

It's good to see you and your
brother share the same views.

REL

Yeah we two peas in a pod. We like
share a brain. You should start
entrepreneuring these knives with
me. The Carmichael Boys!

Beat.

JERROD

Ok, I'm going to register
immediately. And we'll tell my
parents tonight.

MAXINE

Thank you.

They kiss. As they walk out, Rel touches Maxine's belly
gently.

REL

It's gonna be alright.

MAXINE

I'm not pregnant, Rel.

Rel stares at her, looking her up and down.

REL

It's gonna be a girl.

CUT TO:

EXT. DMV - LATER

Jerrod and Rel fill out forms to register Democrat. People behind the desk are wearing Democratic Party T-shirts.

REL

See you don't just get steak
knives. You also get a paring
knife, a turning fork, a carving
fork, a trimmer, a petite carver
which gives you total control over
the littler meats --

JERROD

What littler meats?

REL

Your Cornish game hen. Your petite
filet. Your petite rib eye.

JERROD

You're making a pyramid with your
hands again.

REL

Dammit, I gotta stop doing that.

JERROD

Maxine wants to talk to mom and dad
about us moving in together.

REL

That's a terrible idea. They'll come back to you with all their opinions. Like when they told me I shouldn't lease a Mercedes G-Wagon just cause I live with them.

JERROD

That's what I think! Get a home first, but I agree! It's like I'll be inviting mom and dad into our relationship. But then I'll hurt Maxine's feelings and then she won't have sex with me --

REL

(condescending)

You can say that you love her.

JERROD

Stop talking to me like a child!

REL

It's ok, little Jerrod.

JERROD

Do you think we should tell mom and dad?

REL

Hell no. Keep it a secret. Let them find out on their own. They never leave that house anyway.

JERROD

That's what I think. Maxine is great. "Love of my life." Brilliant lady. But sometimes she is just a real dumb idiot.

REL

You did air quotes when you said love. Just pointing it out.

JERROD

Of course I love her! I'm just uncomfortable saying it in front of people that aren't her! Also her sometimes! I have some real issues.

Rel puts his arm around Jerrod.

REL

Course you do. You're a Carmichael Boy.

Jerrod shakes him off. Rel and Jerrod finish and hand the forms in. They turn to leave. They pass a tent that says GOP Registration on it. There's a Beats by Dre box on the table.

REL (CONT'D)

Yo, Jerrod, check this out.
(reading the sign)

Get a chance to win Beats by Dre if you register Republican today.

JERROD

What?

EXT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jerrod and Maxine up the front steps.

MAXINE

This is so exciting. We're going
public with this. Finally.

JERROD

Oh about that: we're not going to
talk about moving in at all.

MAXINE

What?

JERROD

Ok pretend you're happy.

Jerrod rings the doorbell before she can respond. Cynthia
opens the door.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Heyyyy!

MAXINE

Ahhhh!

CYNTHIA

Whoooo!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Jerrod and Maxine sit in front two TV trays. There are two other TV trays next to them.

CYNTHIA (O.S.)

We'll be right out with dinner.

JERROD

How long a mad is this going to be?

MAXINE

Mad isn't a length of time.

Jerrod stares into her eyes.

JERROD

What is that, two days? Dr. Phil said rather than fighting about problems you should just sweep them under the rug.

MAXINE

He didn't say that.

JERROD

It's like with dead bugs. You kill a bug and you sweep it under the rug and a couple days later it's just gone.

MAXINE

Is that where those come from? Stop doing that. It's disgusting.

JERROD

Oh you've been cleaning that? I thought there was like a bug tooth fairy.

MAXINE

You know what? You don't control me. I'm not your girl puppet. If you don't bring it up, I am bringing it up. I don't care what you say.

JERROD

Don't you dare. Cause I will strike down upon thee with great vengeance and furious anger those who attempt --

Joe and Cynthia walk in, carrying food.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Mommy, that smells yummy.

Joe wears an Obama T-shirt that features Obama as Neo from the Matrix. It reads "I am the One."

JERROD (CONT'D)

What is that on your plate, dad?

JOE

Ribs with a nacho cheese dipping sauce.

JERROD

You just had bypass surgery. It's like you're trying to commit suicide.

JOE

No. Now wait wait wait. What happened was I was eating some rib.
(holds out a hand)

And I had this nacho cheese dipping sauce, you see.
(holds out another hand)

And then I thought, well hell.

Joe combines his hands.

CYNTHIA

He did. He did that.

JERROD

Why are you proud of this? What happened to sticking around for your family? You're literally out of breath. And all you did was walk from the kitchen.

JOE

Wooh. Now that's a lot of cheese. Alright going back in.

MAXINE

We love you but we can't watch you do this to yourself.

Joe sticks his fingers into the nacho cheese dipping sauce and licks them off.

JERROD

That was just aggressive.

CYNTHIA

So you all said you had some big news?

MAXINE

We did have some news, didn't we Jerrod?

JERROD

Fine, Maxine. I'll tell them. I'm a registered Republican.

Cynthia drops the plate she's holding.

CYNTHIA

Jesus no.

MAXINE

Now wait a minute, I thought you re-registered Democrat?

JERROD

Funny story: I registered Democrat, Maxine. And then re-registered as a Republican. Because now wait for the logic they were offering me the chance to win Beats by Dre. Also I registered you as a Republican. So it doubles our chances.
(chanting)

We're gonna get some headphones!

(MORE)

JERROD (CONT'D)

We're gonna get some headphones!
Maybe! There's a chance!

JOE

Boy, we didn't raise you that way.

JERROD

Yeah I don't vote but at least I
don't vote blindly like most
people. I mean if we're being
honest do any of you even know why
you voted for Obama? And you cannot
use the words hope or change or
Michelle.

MAXINE

That's not what we are here to
discuss --

CYNTHIA

Obama is a good president! He is a
good man!

JERROD

Ok. That's nothing. Care to
elaborate.

JOE

Obama represents progress, he
represents hope -- dammit. Never
mind.

Joe starts eating his ribs and cheese again.

CYNTHIA

Joe, talk to your son.

JOE

Just do what your mother wants so I
can finish my ribs and cheese in
peace.

MAXINE

So you'd rather ignore things too.
(to Jerrod)

This is where you get it.

JERROD

You mean to tell me none of you has
ever voted selfishly before?

JOE

Thinking about it, maybe the boy
does have a point.

MAXINE

He doesn't have a point. He's just
trying to distract us.

JOE

I mean I did vote for Bush in 2004.

MAXINE/CYNTHIA

What?!

JERROD

Lead with that! Why am I all alone
out here?!

JOE

You know I didn't think it really had much to do with this conversation.

CYNTHIA

Joe! You're wearing an Obama t-shirt, right now!

Joe looks down.

JOE

Well I'll be damned. That's not fair. You know I don't dress myself.

MAXINE

That's the craziest thing I've ever heard. Why would you vote for Bush?

JOE

You know why? He sent me that stimulator check. No president ever sent me sixteen hundred dollars. Nobody has ever sent me sixteen hundred dollars. You can bomb whoever you want as long as you send me sixteen hundred dollars.

JERROD

See? Dad's right. Coulda done
without the whole bombing part but
he was trying to prove a point and
that's what's important here.

JOE

Thank you, son. Come get you some
ribs.

Jerrod eats the ribs.

JERROD

Wow. That is just fantastic.

CYNTHIA

Are you telling me your vote can be
bought?

JOE/JERROD

Yeah.

MAXINE

You two are unbelievable!

CYNTHIA

I am taking the ribs away. You've
had enough. You have lost your rib
privileges.

JERROD

Ribrileges.

Cynthia takes the ribs and cheese away.

JOE

Now wait. The stimulator check
probably paid for part of that rib -
-

MAXINE

It's stimulus! Not stimulator! And
you know what? I don't care! Jerrod
and I have something actually
important to tell you guys --

JERROD

Exactly! You're ignoring the real
issue here! Prayer in school! Let's
talk about it!

CYNTHIA

There is prayer in school.

JERROD

No there isn't. Because of the
Democrats.

CYNTHIA

You mean the little babies can't
pray?

Maxine turns to Cynthia.

MAXINE

I think that's good because what
kind of prayer would we have in
school if we had it?

JERROD

That is an excellent question,
Maxine.

Maxine realizes she's done been had. She throws her arms up.

CYNTHIA

Just normal. Regular normal prayer
where you thank Jesus for all he's
done.

JERROD

What about Jews and Muslims and
atheists?

CYNTHIA

They would have a lounge where they
could go. Or like a cafeteria.

JOE

Would this lounge have snacks?

JERROD

So you would segregate them?

CYNTHIA

No, baby. I lived through Jim Crow.
I hate segregation. For their own
comfort I would just remove them
from the prayer lounge and put them
in a separate room oh I see what
you're doing right now and I do not
approve.

Joe turns off the TV.

JOE

I am enjoying where this is going.

JERROD

Another question!

MAXINE

No more questions!

JERROD

Sustained!

CYNTHIA

I don't like this anymore!

JERROD

No no no --

JOE

Let the boy speak. He's on a roll.

JERROD

Are you pro-choice or pro-life?

JOE

This is good.

CYNTHIA

Well I would never harm a child.

JOE

You ain't say that in '78.

Long beat. Everyone stares. This is not what Jerrod wanted to happen.

CYNTHIA

That wasn't me, Joe.

JOE

Awe damn, I'm sorry.

Beat.

JERROD

Maxine, you have something you want
to tell them?

MAXINE
(quietly to Jerrod)

You son of a bitch.

Rel walks in.

REL

Now this looks like a happy group
of potential customers?

JERROD

Rel, not now.

Cynthia leaves the room and slams the door to her bedroom.

REL

Are you eating ribs I see? Let me
cut that bone in half.

Rel then removes a knife and cuts the rib.

REL (CONT'D)

Right on through. It's as if that
bone was butter. This knife could
be yours for thirty-five ninety
nine. Or if you agree to sell
knives to ten other people.

Joe gets up and goes into the other room.

REL (CONT'D)

I need to make a sale. My sponsor
Karen is freaking out.

(MORE)

REL (CONT'D)

She says if I don't get ten other people by next week the whole thing could fall apart. She's in danger of losing her Rav 4. I'm starting to think this is some sort of triangular scam.

Jerrod and Maxine leave.

REL (CONT'D)

I just thought that things would be great after high school. But every day brings a new struggle.

Rel looks at his knife and then at the ribs.

REL (CONT'D)

Ribs... and cheese?

He eats it.

REL (CONT'D)

That's damn good.

INT. JERROD'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jerrod gets into bed wearing a Snuggie. Maxine is in bed.

MAXINE

You tore your family apart to avoid talking about real stuff.

JERROD

I did what I had to do.

Jerrod makes a move. Maxine moves away from him.

MAXINE

You're trying to have sex with me,
right now?

JERROD

Yeah. Make up sex.

MAXINE

We're still fighting.

Jerrod turns on the TV. Beat.

JERROD

How about now? Is the fight over
now?

She pushes Jerrod off the bed. He hits the ground.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Don't push me in my Snuggie! I
can't break the fall!

Jerrod stands. She pushes him again. He falls again.

JERROD (CONT'D)

Stop bullying me! I don't want to
tell my parents. Because they're
not going to like it and then it's
going to turn into a real stuff
conversation.

MAXINE

You say crazy stuff all the time to
try to get a rise out of people and
get to the truth. This isn't any
different.

JERROD

It's easier to argue about politics. It doesn't affect our personal life.

MAXINE

But they're going to find out that we moved in together and then they're going to be mad.

JERROD

At which point I will bring up affirmative action and how I'm against it --
(miming puppet strings)
-- and watch them argue and argue and argue. And so the cycle of life will continue.

MAXINE

I want to have a real relationship with you and your family and if we can't talk honestly about real stuff then forget about moving in together. Maybe we shouldn't even be dating.

JERROD

Ok, fine. If it's that important to you I will do it. I will tell them.

Jerrod makes another move.

MAXINE

No!

JERROD

I just fixed it.

Maxine turns over. Beat. Jerrod opens his computer. (**This is Willie's joke.**)

MAXINE

Do not do that in here.

Jerrod gets up with his computer and goes into the other room.

JERROD (O.S.)

It's chilly on the balcony. And the Kims can see me. Can I come back in? It doesn't matter what room I'm in. You still know it's happening. But it's more comfortable in there. You can just turn your head.

MAXINE

That's it. I'm going to my place. Maybe permanently.

Maxine gets up to go.

JERROD

We get it. You're mad. How long is this going to last? Is this a three day mad? This isn't a week mad, right?

Maxine leaves.

JERROD (CONT'D)
(yelling after)

I just need to know so I can put it
in my calendar! I will tell them!

Then Jerrod opens his phone.

JERROD (CONT'D)

This isn't going to be that long of
a mad.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Jerrod stands outside. He goes to ring the doorbell and then can't. He stands there a little while longer. He then raises his hand again. Then brings it down. Then raises it again. Joe opens the door. He's eating from a bag of salami.

JOE

Ah! You almost gave me a heart
attack!

JERROD

Me? I almost gave you a heart
attack? You're eating a bag of
salami.

JOE

This salami is healthy as hell. Got
a ton of nitrates in it. And a
bunch of MSG. Even got some
carcinogens thrown in here.

JERROD

That's the health warning you're
reading. Anyway, where's mom?

JOE

In the kitchen. Where a woman
belongs. Calm down. I'm just
joking. A lot's changed since the
sixties. You want some salami?

INT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jerrod walks into the kitchen. Cynthia is reading a Joyce Meyer bible based self-help book.

JERROD

Hey mom.

CYNTHIA

Hello.

There are six knife blocks on the kitchen counter.

JERROD

Oh, mom, you guys didn't buy knives from Rel, did you?

CYNTHIA

We just want to support him.

JERROD

You know that support is what makes him dumb?

CYNTHIA

You're the smart one. You're in business school. He's the dumb, likable one. Everyone has a role to play.

JERROD

I'm not likable?

CYNTHIA

You got everything, ok? Let the boy have his knives.

Beat.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Is there something else?

JERROD

Nope. Peace.

Jerrod starts to leave.

INT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S HOUSE

Jerrod walks through the living room.

JOE
(talking to the TV)

Why would you go back into the
house if you knew there was a ghost
in there? People on TV are stupid.

Jerrod leaves.

EXT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S HOUSE

Jerrod is leaving. He waits. He turns back around and rings
the doorbell. Joe answers.

JOE

You can't stay away from us, can
you?

JERROD

Did you finish all that salami
already?

Joe looks at the empty bag.

JOE

Well lookie there. I guess I have.

JERROD

Are you aware of anything about
your person? First it's a surprise
to you that you're in an Obama T-
shirt --

Joe looks down at his Obama T-shirt.

JOE

Well lookie here.

Jerrod stares at Joe. Jerrod and Joe walk in.

INT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S HOUSE

Jerrod and Joe walk into the house.

JERROD

We gotta talk about something.

JOE

Are you about to come out of the
closet? Is that what's happening
here?

JERROD

No, dad.

JOE

You know Marvin?

JERROD

Yeah.

JOE

He gay.

JERROD

Alright. Good dad joke.

JOE

I know. I know. I'm gonna write
that down.

Cynthia walks in.

JERROD

Mom, dad, I have something big I
need to tell you both.

Cynthia grabs her bible.

CYNTHIA

Oh boy here goes. Dear Heavenly
Father...

JERROD

No mama --

JOE

Shut up we're praying right now.

JERROD

Before you pray let me just get it
out --

CYNTHIA

The prayer has already started and
it's bad luck to interrupt mid-
prayer --

JERROD

Is that in the bible? Or you
winging it? I'm so scared to tell
you this. But here we go: Maxine
and I are moving in together.

Beat.

CYNTHIA

Oh.

JOE

That it?

JERROD

Yeah. I guess it is.

CYNTHIA

Well why were you scared to tell
us?

JERROD

Because telling you makes it real.
You know why people don't walk away
from each other at the altar?
Because their parents are there.

CYNTHIA

What's the problem between you and
Miss Thing?

JERROD

There is no problem. Stop calling
her that. Maxine is amazing. It's
just I'm terrified to move in with
her. It's a big step.

JOE

It's good you told us that. And now that you've gotten that off your chest never ever mention that to Maxine ever.

JERROD

What? Really?

CYNTHIA

Your father's right. You tell her you're scared, maybe she thinks --
(while staring at Joe)
-- 'I want a real man, one who isn't afraid to make a firm commitment, not one who just sits around, gaining weight and causing your health insurance premium to go up' and she breaks up with you and you never find someone as amazing she is. Or maybe she's fine.

JERROD

Mom, what was that?

JOE

Or you tell her you're scared, and maybe she thinks 'Jerrod's not scared, it's just that he's got something on the side, and maybe you do got something on the side, maybe that was just a brief moment of weakness caused by a lifetime of a woman chipping away at your self-esteem but you all gotta stay together for the kids.' Or maybe she's fine. I don't know.

JERROD

So you're telling me I should just move in with Maxine and never express to her my honest reservations?

CYNTHIA

Yes. Change the subject.

JOE

Maybe give her a gift.

CYNTHIA

Mmm hmmm. Your father likes to rap when he doesn't want to talk about something.

JOE

*When you want to go to Atlantic
City with the Boys/I just start
rapping to drown out her noise hu
huh huhhh huh huh huhh.*

CYNTHIA/JOE

Deflect, deflect, deflect.

JERROD

So is that how you all handle
problems or fears between you two?
You just ignore them?

JOE

Son, we've been married for over
thirty-five years. Yes.

CYNTHIA

Honey, marriage is a castle built
on avoidance surrounded by a moat
of blissful ignorance. Cause the
truth is a cold bastard. You and
Maxine will see.

JOE

That was beautiful, dear.
Especially coming from the most
beautiful woman I've ever seen.

CYNTHIA

And you're the most handsome man
I've ever met.

JERROD

You're just lying right now!

CYNTHIA

Fine. Besides Denzel.

EXT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S HOUSE

As Jerrod closes the door...

JOE (O.S.)

You got anymore of those Funyons?

Cause I got a chocolate bar here

and a crazy idea.

CUT TO:

INT. JERROD'S APARTMENT

Jerrod talks to Maxine. Jerrod is freaking out.

JERROD

They just basically lie to each other and they accept it and it's fine. They said to me their entire marriage is built on a castle of avoidance and a moat of something and my dad seemed to casually admit to an affair which my mom didn't seem to care about which was weird and I don't know I'm so confused.

MAXINE

That's just horrible.

(then)

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)

But they were ok with us moving in together?

JERROD

Maxine I just got back from Vietnam and you're asking me how the flight was.

MAXINE

I just want to know. I'm sorry.

JERROD

I don't want to repeat my parent's relationship. Is that what we're going to one day become? Two liars just sitting around lying to each other?

MAXINE

Of course not. Because we're honest. No matter what.

Jerrod looks away.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Why are you looking away? Is there real stuff you want to talk about?

JERROD

I'm so scared. I'm so scared of the truth, Maxine.

MAXINE

Let's put all our cards on the table.

JERROD

I'm cold, Maxine. The world is
turning dark.

MAXINE

We'll start small. With something
cliched. I don't like it when you
leave the seat up after you pee.

JERROD

Ok, ok.

Beat.

JERROD (CONT'D)

I'm terrified to move in with you.
Jerrod flinches as if she's going to punch him.

MAXINE

I'm terrified to move in with you
too.

JERROD

You are?

MAXINE

Of course I am.

JERROD

If we live together that will make
me a twenty-four seven boyfriend.
And I am worried what will happen
if I no longer have time off.

MAXINE

I love you and all but sometimes it feels like I'm choking to death in a sea of dumb arguments you keep making me have. I'm just trying to save money on rent.

JERROD

Oh. When you put it that way.

MAXINE

Yeah. Why don't we think about it as if we're roommates who have sex?

JERROD

Mmm. You make a good point. It's definitely something to think about.

(then)

And since we're being honest I will never care about politics and you need to accept that.

MAXINE

And I will never stop bugging you to care about politics and you need to accept that.

Maxine and Jerrod hug and kiss.

JERROD

Alright, so when do you want to move in?

MAXINE

I'm not moving in here. This place is a dump. You're moving in with me. And you're not bringing any of your stuff.

JERROD

I have dope stuff. All you have at your place is lotions. So many lotions.

The lock starts to open.

MAXINE

Rel has a key. He doesn't have a key to my place.

JERROD

Lay off, Rel. He's not that bad.

Jerrod and Maxine turn towards the door. Rel walks in.

REL

Guess who just got into the vitamin business? They told me all I gotta do is get ten people to invest and those ten people will get ten other people --

JERROD

Hey, Rel, guess what? I'm moving.

Maxine hugs Jerrod. Rel stares at them weirdly.

JERROD (CONT'D)

What is it?

REL

I was wrong. It's a boy. I had a
dream.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. JOE AND CYNTHIA'S HOUSE

Joe and Cynthia are in front of the TV. There's space between them as they watch TV. Cynthia knits.

CYNTHIA

You're like a fine wine. You get
better and better every day.

JOE

You are like oxygen. I could not
live without you.

Joe dips Funyons in chocolate. PULL BACK to reveal Jerrod and Maxine are there as well. They look at each other.

JERROD

This is such a bummer.

MAXINE

I'm not gonna lie. It's really
depressing.

Maxine and Jerrod grab hands.

JOE

I love it when the younger
generations think they know more
than us.

CYNTHIA

It's adorable.

FADE OUT.