HOT in Cleveland

“Dead Is The New 90”

Pilot

Written by

Suzanne Martin

Directed by

Michael Lembeck
FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE/GALLEY — DAY (DAY 1)
(Melanie, Joy, Victoria, Flight Attendant, Anders, Kim, Captain (O.S.), Extras)

THREE VERY L.A. LADIES -- ALL OF A CERTAIN AGE, THOUGH FIGHTING IT TOOTH AND MANICURED NAIL -- SIT IN FIRST CLASS. AT THE WINDOW SEAT, WEARING OVERSIZED SUNGLASSES AND A LARGE ATTENTION-GETTING HAT, IS VICTORIA TROUSDALE, WHO IS NOISILY TYPING ON HER BLACKBERRY. NEXT TO HER AND READING A NOVEL IS MELANIE DELVECCHIO, THE MOST GIRLISHLY DRESSED OF THE THREE. ACROSS THE AISLE, DESIGNER-DECKED JOY SCROGGS IS REVIEWING A STACK OF SPREADSHEETS THROUGH CHANEL READING GLASSES. SHE LOOKS OVER THEM AT A SWEET-FACED CHILD SEATED NEARBY.

JOY
Don’t you just hate any kid who flies first class? (THEN) Tori, enough with the clacking.

VICTORIA
My agent said there might be an audition for me. It’s so hard to find good roles in your late thirties.

JOY
And that affects you how?

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT APPROACHES.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(TO VICTORIA) Excuse me, are you --

VICTORIA
Yes, I’m Victoria Trousdale, (REMOVING HAT AND GLASSES WITH A FLOURISH), one tries to be inconspicuous.
JOY
By wearing a sombrero?

VICTORIA
(IGNORING HER) Some fans are hesitant to approach me since “Time and Time Again” was cancelled, but playing Honor Saint Raven for the last twenty-seven years has been a privilege, and it’s always gratifying to meet those I have touched and moved.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Actually, what I was going to ask was, “Are you comfortable”? Can I get you a pillow?

VICTORIA
No, but you can get me a drink. Now.

MELANIE
Champagne. Three.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Right away. (TO VICTORIA) Y’know, I think my Nana watched that show.

VICTORIA
Bless her heart.

THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT QUICKLY CROSSES AWAY.

VICTORIA (CONT’D)
(TO HER BACK) Oh, and that pillow? Kindly smother yourself with it.
MELANIE

Honey, you can’t fall apart every time someone doesn’t recognize you.

VICTORIA

(WATCH ME) Can’t I?

VICTORIA RETURNS TO TEXTING, BUT MELANIE STOPS HER.

MELANIE

Okay, Victoria, put down your Blackberry. Joy, put away your spreadsheets. It’s time for a toast.

THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT HAS REAPPEARED WITH A TRAY OF CHAMPAGNE GLASSES. MELANIE TAKES ONE AND RAISES IT.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

Here’s to Number Thirty-eight: “Cash in all your miles and fly to Paris with your best friends.”

AS THEY CLINK GLASSES THE AIRPLANE HITS SOME TURBULENCE AND MELANIE SPILLS CHAMPAGNE ON HER BLOUSE.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

Oh shoot, I better get club soda.

AS MELANIE HEADS BACK TO THE GALLEY, SHE NOTICES A MAN, ANDERS, STANDING THERE, READING A NOVEL AND SIPPING FROM A PERRIER BOTTLE. SHE SWINGS AROUND AND RUSHES BACK TO THE GIRLS.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

My husband is on the plane!

VICTORIA

(CRANING NECK) Anders? Really?
MELANIE
Don’t let him see you!

JOY
You didn’t know he was going to Paris?

MELANIE
Our lawyers told us not to talk to each other.

MELANIE CAREFULLY SNEAKS A PEAK. ANDERS IS STILL READING.

MELANIE (CONT’D)
He looks thinner... and kind of lonely. (BEAT, THEN) Guys, what if this isn’t just a coincidence? What if... (FARAWAY LOOK) He’s like me and he’s going to Paris to fill a void in his life, too? What if... this is our meet on top of the Empire State Building moment?

JOY
(ANNOYED) Have you been watching Sleepless in Seattle again?

MELANIE
No. Yes. But it’s down to once a month.

VICTORIA
I was up for a part in that movie.

MELANIE
I’m gonna go talk to him.
MELANIE RISES. JOY GRABS HER ARM.

JOY

Melanie, listen to me: romantic comedies are like cellulite cures -- every one of them is a lie. Women watch them because they enjoy being lied to. In real life, Jack Nicholson and Keanu Reeves do not fight over Diane Keaton.

MELANIE

(SIGHING) Something’s Gotta Give.

VICTORIA

Loved that movie.

JOY

I give up.

SHE LETS GO OF MELANIE’S ARM. MELANIE GATHERS HERSELF AND CROSSES AWAY.

JOY (CONT’D)

(CALLING AFTER) Don’t be too nice.

Remember he’s a lying piece of crap.

RESET TO:

INT. GALLEY- CONTINUOUS

MELANIE REACHES THE GALLEY AND AFFECTS A DOUBLE-TAKE.

MELANIE

Anders, is that you?
ANDERS
Melanie? Wow. I didn’t see you get on the plane.

MELANIE
Me, either. Or is it neither. Or nye-ther or eye-ther? Whatever it is, I sound like an idiot right now.

ANDERS
No, you don’t. And you look great. Did you change your hair?

MELANIE
Me? No, no change. Same as always. But you. Travelling to Europe, reading fiction, and (RE: GLASS) drinking Perrier?

ANDERS
I know. Where’s your workaholic drunk of a husband, huh?

MELANIE
(NERVOUSLY FLIRTY) Tell me you can change a toilet paper roll, and I might tear up the divorce papers.

AS MELANIE ATTEMPTS A SILVERY LAUGH, A WOMAN IN HER TWENTIES, KIM, APPROACHES AND SLIPS HER ARM AROUND ANDERS’ WAIST.

KIM
Hi, I’m Kim.
MELANIE


Y’know what? I’ll be right back.

RESET TO:

INT. AIRPLANE – CONTINUOUS

MELANIE SCURRIES BACK TO JOY AND VICTORIA, BESIDE HERSELF.

MELANIE

He’s with a girl half my age.

VICTORIA

Oh, you poor baby.

MELANIE

I haven’t even gone on a date yet and he’s on vacation with another woman?

JOY

I say we kill him and make his underage whore watch.

VICTORIA

(AN IDEA) Maybe it’s his daughter! From an affair you didn’t know about.

MELANIE

I don’t think so, but thanks for the lovely thought. (THEN, DETERMINED) I’ve gotta go back there, be strong and show I don’t care.

MELANIE CROSSES AWAY. AFTER A BEAT:
A daughter from a secret affair? What is wrong with you?

VICTORIA
It happened to Honor Saint Raven on three separate occasions.

MELANIE RETURNS, SITS DOWN AND STARES STRAIGHT AHEAD.

MELANIE
They’re engaged.

WIPE TO:

INT. AIRPLANE – LATER

MELANIE IS STILL SITTING IN THE EXACT SAME POSITION BUT NOW THERE ARE MANY LITTLE EMPTY LIQUOR BOTTLES ON HER TRAY AND BOWLS OF NUTS.

MELANIE
(Bitterly) Even the moles on her arms looked young.

JOY
You were checking out her moles?

MELANIE
I was trying to avoid looking at her perfect breasts.

JOY
Melanie, all men are bastards. All relationships end badly. Hasn’t my life taught you anything?
VICTORIA
They’re in coach, you’re in first class. Isn’t living well the best revenge?

MELANIE
No. It isn’t. If I could make him suffer I’d give up the warm nuts.

SHE GLANCES BACK TO SEE HER HUSBAND MAKING OUT WITH THE GIRL.

MELANIE (CONT’D)
(TO JOY) Go ahead, make your warm nuts joke.

JOY
(DISAPPOINTED) It won’t be funny now.

MELANIE
I hope the plane crashes and kills them both.

THEN SUDDENLY THE PLANE JOLTS IN A THIS-ISN’T-GOOD WAY.

VICTORIA
(TO MELANIE) Make it stop!

JOY
She didn’t cause this, you idiot!

ANOTHER EVEN BIGGER JOLT.

JOY (CONT’D)
(TO MELANIE) Make it stop!
CAPTAIN (O.S.)
This is Captain Reid speaking. All passengers and flight attendants take your seats and fasten your seat belts.

THE PLANE STARTS TO DESCEND QUICKLY. VERY QUICKLY.

VICTORIA
I knew something like this would happen. All the great ones go down in planes.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)
We’ve been cleared for an emergency landing. Please remain calm.

AS THE PLANE CONTINUES TO DROP, AMID OTHER PASSENGERS’ AD-LIBBED SCREAMS AND PLEAS:

JOY
Oh my God, all I cared about was being successful and now I’m gonna die and I never got married or had children!

VICTORIA
And I never won a daytime Emmy. Even the season I courageously battled Lyme disease.

MELANIE
And I’ve never done anything impulsive in my whole life except get on this plane and look where that got me!
VICTORIA

I’m too young to die! (THEN) Although it is nice I’m still too young for something.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

All passengers brace for impact.

WITH THEIR HEADS IN CRASH POSITION:

VICTORIA

If I survive this I’m going stop being so vain.

JOY

And I’m not gonna be so cynical.

MELANIE

And scared. About everything.

JOY

And I’m never gonna complain about anything ever, ever again!

AND AS THE OTHER WOMEN NOD THEIR HEADS, AD-LIBBING: “ME, TOO”, “NO MORE COMPLAINTS” THE PLANE HITS THE GROUND. HARD.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

We have safely landed in Cleveland.

ALL THREE WOMEN’S HEADS POP UP AND THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER MAKING FACES:

JOY/MELANIE/VICTORIA

Cleveland!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

INT. CLEVELAND BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT (NIGHT 1)  
(Melanie, Joy, Victoria, Hank, Bill, James, Waitress, Extras)

OUR LADIES, SHAKEN AND STIRRED AND LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SHAKEN AND STIRRED, ENTER A LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD BAR. HAVING JUST SURVIVED A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE, THEY ARE DISCUSSING MATTERS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE.

VICTORIA

There’s a completely unsubstantiated rumor that Catherine Deneuve stays young by drinking cat urine.

JOY

So we’re all gonna get cats, right?

(OFF THEIR LOOKS) Oh c’mon, Botox is botulism. Once you agree to inject your face with one the world’s most deadly poisons, the jig is up.

VICTORIA

I’m in.

MELANIE

But that’s so vain. What about all the promises we made on the plane?

JOY

Near-death promises are like near-sex promises -- God knows to cover his ears.
THE THREE WOMEN SCOPE OUT THE BAR. THERE’S NOTHING PRETENTIOUS, HIP OR HAPPENING ABOUT IT – JUST A FRIENDLY PLACE WITH PEOPLE OF VARIOUS AGES HAVING A FEW BEERS.

MELANIE

Great. My husband’s engaged and I’m in a dive in Cleveland.

VICTORIA

Hey, I googled “Cleveland” and “get hammered” and this is what came up.

JOY

Listen, sweetie, you need a full dose of the B.S. women give each other in these situations and we all know that goes down better with alcohol. C’mon.

AS THE WOMEN CROSS TO AN EMPTY TABLE, THEY NOTICE SOMETHING. SOMETHING STRANGE. MEN ARE LOOKING AT THEM. NOT JUST A QUICK GLANCE BUT FULL-ON LINGERING STARES. AND SOME ARE SMILING, A FEW EVEN NODDING. THE WOMEN KEEP MOVING, BUT SPEAK TO EACH OTHER IN HUSHED TONES.

MELANIE

Why are the men looking at us like that?

VICTORIA

I get recognized a lot, but this is different.

JOY

Wait. I remember that look. It’s...

desire.

MELANIE

They’re looking at us, not past us.
THEY WALK BY A TABLE OF MEN WHO AD-LIB “HI, HOW YOU DOING”, “HOW’S IT GOIN’” IN THAT WE’RE-ACTING-REAL-CASUAL-BUT-WE’RE-CLEARLY-HITTING-ON-YOU WAY.

JOY

I feel young and hot. Like they’re undressing me with their eyes and not finding Spanx. (GETTING EMOTIONAL, TEARING UP) I haven’t felt like a piece of meat in so long.

THEY REACH THEIR TABLE AND SIT DOWN, STUNNED AND DELIGHTED.

VICTORIA

Wow. All the effort and money we put into looking ten years younger and ten pounds lighter, and all we had to do was crash-land in Cleveland?

JOY

And the men look like men and the women look like real women.

MELANIE

But what’s that strange expression on their faces?

WE SEE VARIOUS MEN AND WOMAN SMILING, ENJOYING THEMSELVES.

JOY

They look... happy. What’s up with that?

VICTORIA

They’re smiling. With laugh lines.
JOY

No one smiles in L.A. They laugh, but that’s to get people to notice them.

MELANIE

And everyone’s eating. And no one’s a size zero.

JOY

I’m gonna order French fries.

THE OTHER TWO WOMEN GASP.

VICTORIA

You said the “f” word.

MELANIE

When was the last time you ate French fries when you weren’t drunk, dumped or pregnant?

VICTORIA

Or all of the above?

MELANIE

It’s been... decades.

A WAITRESS APPROACHES THE TABLE.

WAITRESS

Hello, Ladies.

JOY

(ALMOST SHAKING) We want three French fries and three not-light beers.

THE OTHER TWO WOMEN GASP AGAIN.
JOY (CONT’D)

(TO THEM) Okay, cut that out.

WAITRESS

Comin’ right up. And I don’t know if you’re interested, but the guys at that table over there would like you to join them.

SHE POINTS TO THE TABLE THEY WALKED BY EARLIER WITH THREE NICE-LOOKING GUYS—GUY TYPES THEIR AGE -- BILL, JAMES AND HANK. THE WAITRESS CROSSES AWAY.

VICTORIA

Look how adorably heterosexual they are. In L.A. it’s always a question.

JOY

I blame manscaping. Once a guy waxes his chest he’s at least looking at the other team.

VICTORIA

I’m still not sure if my third husband was straight.

JOY AND MELANIE EXCHANGE A LOOK.

MELANIE

(SOTTO) Now’s not the time.

VICTORIA RISES.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

Victoria, what are you doing?

VICTORIA

C’mon, let’s have some fun.
JOY

(RISES) Oh, why the hell not?

MELANIE

Are you sure?

JOY

We appear to have landed in a
dimension where men in their forties
hit on women their own age. We owe it
to science to investigate.

THE WOMEN APPROACH THE GUYS’ TABLE.

BILL

Hey, ladies.

VICTORIA

Gentlemen. (INDICATING) This is Joy,
that’s Melanie and I’m --

JAMES

We know who you are. Victoria
Trousdale.

BILL

I got addicted to “Time and Time
Again” one summer I got laid up. It
was the year you were Honor Saint
Raven and her evil sister Silver Saint
Raven and --

VICTORIA

(SOUTHERN ACCENT) Her even eviler
sister Magnolia Saint Raven.

(MORE)
(THEN) Many daytime actors have done dual roles, but I was the first to tackle the triple. (BITTER) And the Emmy goes to Susan Lucci. Finally.

BILL

I’m Bill, that’s James, and that’s Hank. C’mon, have a seat.

THEY MAKE ROOM AND VICTORIA AND JOY TAKE A SEAT. AFTER A BEAT, MELANIE SITS HESITANTLY NEXT TO HANK.

HANK

Hey, how’s it goin’?

MELANIE SMILES NERVOUSLY. BILL TURNS TO VICTORIA.

BILL

So, you here making a movie?

VICTORIA

We’re actually on our way to Paris.

JOY

Melanie wrote this book called “Two Hundred Things Every Woman Should Do Before She Dies” and she figured she really should do at least a few of them.

MELANIE

Number thirty-eight was “Fly to Paris with your best friends.”
VICTORIA
Now we’re doing Number Sixteen: “Walk into a bar and meet three great guys.”
MELANIE
(SOTTO) That’s not in the --
VICTORIA
(SOTTO) Shut up.
JAMES
Wow, a writer and an actress. (TO JOY)
What do you do?
JOY
I’m a butt model.
JAMES
What’s that like?
JOY
God bless you. Even if that was a fake question, God bless you. I was kidding. You’re looking at the eyebrow queen of Beverly Hills.
HANK
There’s a pageant for eyebrows?
JOY
No, I have a salon that does eyebrows.
A lot of celebrities. Mostly women.
Oprah, Cher, Ryan Seacrest.
THEY ALL SHARE A LAUGH.
BILL

So how do you all know each other?

MELANIE

We met in a park in Santa Monica when we were watching our kids.

JOY

(POINTING TO SELF) Or dogs.

MELANIE

And now our kids are grown.

VICTORIA

But luckily we had them at an obscenely young age.

JAMES

You ladies all unattached?

JOY

At the moment. Melanie’s going through a divorce, Victoria’s been married like twenty times.

VICTORIA

Only five. Which in L.A. is like three and for an actress is barely one.

JOY

Yeah, that’s our Tori. Never been touched.

THE WAITRESS ARRIVES WITH THEIR FOOD AND DRINKS.
WAITRESS

Here you go, ladies.

SHE HOLDS A TRAY LADEN WITH FROSTY BEER AND BASKETS BRIMMING WITH FRIES, SALTY AND GREASY THE WAY GOD INTENDED. THE WOMEN ARE OVERCOME WITH LOOKS OF RAPTUROUS PLEASURE.

MELANIE

Am I the only one hearing angels?

THE OTHER WOMEN SHAKE THEIR HEADS, NO. THEY HEAR THEM, TOO.

CUT TO:
CLOSE UP ON JOY’S VERY PAINED HEAD.

JOY

Oh my God, did the plane crash?

VICTORIA

No, you’re just hungover.

VICTORIA IS IN THE MIDDLE OF DOWNING HANDFULS OF SUPPLEMENTS.

VICTORIA (CONT’D)

(DISTRAUGHT) What were we thinking?
Alcohol and salts and trans fats.

JOY

I know. (STARING AT HER SKIN) French fry grease is literally sweating out of my pores.

SHE LICKS HER ARM.

JOY (CONT’D)

It’s so delicious! (THEN NOTICING VICTORIA’S FACE) You have all your makeup on.

VICTORIA

I got up an hour early and then came back to bed.
JOY

(IN SHOCK) You do that for women, too?

(PICKING UP PHONE) Maybe Melanie got coffee. (INTO PHONE) Melanie DelVecchio’s room, please. (BEAT) Are you sure?

JOY HANGS UP THE PHONE.

JOY (CONT’D)

She never checked in.

SFX: KNOCK AT THE DOOR

VICTORIA OPENS THE DOOR AND MELANIE WALKS IN HOLDING A TRAY OF COFFEES AND A NEWSPAPER. SHE IS WEARING AN OVERSIZED CLEVELAND BROWNS TEE SHIRT.

MELANIE

I’m moving to Cleveland.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS (DAY 2)
(Melanie, Joy, Victoria)

JOY AND VICTORIA STARE AT THE WOMAN WHO USED TO BE MELANIE.

JOY

(AMUSED) You little whore.

MELANIE

I know, right? I’ve already done three more things from “Two Hundred Things Every Woman Should Do Before You Die”.

VICTORIA

Number Fifty-four?

MELANIE

Twice! Oh, guys, Hank is amazing and sweet and charming and solid and good to the bone. He told me I looked like a girl. He said I was luscious. And delicious.

JOY

I tell you, it’s the French fry grease.

MELANIE

He’s a plumber.
THE OTHER TWO WOMEN GASP.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

I know. How many times have we fantasized about a guy who could actually fix things?

SHE HANDS THEM THEIR COFFEES.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

Four lattes. Eight bucks.

JOY

Get out!

MELANIE

He showed me all around Cleveland. It’s nothing like we think. It has museums, symphonies, light opera -- Okay, nobody really likes those things, but they’re here. I feel like there’s a whole new world to discover. I feel like Dorothy after her house landed in Oz.

JOY

But Dorothy went back to Kansas.

MELANIE

But that was the most depressing part of the movie.

THE WOMEN AD-LIB AGREEMENT: "THAT DEPRESSING BLACK & WHITE", "OZ HAD THAT GREAT SALON", "AUNTIE EM SEEMED LIKE A DRAG".
JOY
Listen, we hear what you’re saying,
but you’ve lost your friggin’ mind.

VICTORIA
It’s the hangover-near-death-
experience-multiple-orgasms-running-
into-ex-husbands-with-surprise-fiances
doing the talking.

JOY
And friends don’t let friends move to
Cleveland.

MELANIE
Look, we’re here. And even though my
husband and his fiance blithely got on
the next flight to Paris, none of us
wants to get back on a plane, right?

JOY        VIOLET
No.        Never again.

MELANIE HANDS THEM A SECTION OF THE PAPER.

VICTORIA
The real estate section?

JOY
Oh my God!

MELANIE
I know, inexpensive, huh?
JOY

No. (RE: ANOTHER SECTION) It’s a picture of Oprah. Look at her brows! That’s not my work!

VICTORIA

Maybe it’s just the camera angle.

JOY

No, that’s definitely someone else’s arch. I built my business on being the salon that does Oprah’s eyebrows. And now those brows have me by the short hairs.

MELANIE

There’s an image.

VICTORIA

It’s probably just retouched. I have all my photos... I mean I hear that’s done.

MELANIE

Besides, you’re the best, she’d never leave you. Take your mind off it.

(POINTS TO LISTING) Look at this one.

JOY

“For sale or lease. Victorian, wrap-around porch, guest cottage, seven thousand square feet.” (THEN, RE: PRICE) That’s gotta be missing a zero.
SHE HANDS IT TO JOY.

JOY (CONT’D)

That’s how much it cost to build that media room I never use.

VICTORIA

Yeah, but you gotta have one.

AS THEY ALL AD-LIB AGREEMENT, WE:

CUT TO:
ACT THREE

SCENE E

INT. CLEVELAND HOUSE - DAY - LATER THAT DAY (DAY 2)  
(Melanie, Joy, Victoria, Elka, Larry)

IT’S BIG, CHARMING, HOMEY -- VERY UN-L.A.  THE REAL ESTATE AGENT, LARRY, LOOKS PLEASED AND JOY AND VICTORIA LOOK STUNNED.

MELANIE

I love this.  I’ll take it.

MELANIE STARTS WRITING A CHECK.

JOY

Whoa.  Slow down, crazy lady.

VICTORIA

What are you doing?

MELANIE

It’s a month-to-month lease.  I was going to spend the next two weeks in Paris anyway and a month here costs the same as a night there.  (THEN) Here you go.

SHE HANDS THE CHECK TO LARRY.

LARRY

And here you go.  (HANDING OVER KEYS) Now, there’s just one thing about this place I should mention....

ELKA (O.S.)

Why are you renting to prostitutes?
STARTLED, THEY ALL JUMP AND TURN TO SEE A WOMAN STANDING THERE, ELKA OSTROVSKY. SHE IS 70+, DRESSED IN A PASTEL TRACKSUIT.

LARRY
This is Elka Ostrovsky. She’s a caretaker who comes with the house, if you wish to retain her. She stays in the guest cottage.

MELANIE
But --

LARRY
(QUICKLY) I’ll leave you to get all that worked out. Pleasure doing business with you.

LARRY SHAKES MELANIE’S HAND AND CROSSES AWAY. MELANIE TURNS TO ELKA.

MELANIE
Hi, I’m Melanie. I’ll be leasing the house.

ELKA
I’ve been with this house for fifty years. First as a nanny, then housekeeper, then caretaker. But you can kick me out. I’ve had many losses.

MELANIE
Well, I, uh...
ELKA

No worries. If you can escape from the Nazis you can handle anything.

VICTORIA

You escaped from the Nazis?

ELKA

Escaping from the Nazis was the least of my troubles.

JOY

Boy, you don’t hear that very often. (THEN) So, what are you, like a hundred?

ELKA

I don’t like you. (THEN, RE: VICTORIA) Hey, aren’t you that girl from that show?

VICTORIA

Yes, I am. Are you a fan?

ELKA

No. When it got cancelled I said “good riddance.” Though I do like that one with Susan Lucci. Now there’s an actress.

VICTORIA

You call that acting? She’s never even done a dual role.

JOY SNIFFS.
JOY

Does anyone else smell pot?

ELKA

What are you, a cop?

JOY

No.

ELKA

Then what’s it to you? (TO MELANIE)

So, am I out on the curb?

MELANIE

Well... no... of course you can stay.

ELKA CONTINUES TO JUST STAND THERE.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

And go... as you please.

SHE DOESN’T MOVE. IT’S AwKWARD, BUT MELANIE DECIDES TO MOVE ON AND TURNS TO THE OTHER WOMEN.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

I can’t wait to tell Hank. He said he’d call.

JOY/ELKA

They all say they’ll call.

JOY

Okay, that’s creepy.

JOY AND ELKA EYE EACH OTHER WARILY.

MELANIE

He said he’d call at six.
VICTORIA

It’s five till six.

SFX: CELL PHONE RING.

MELANIE

(LOOKING AT CALLER ID) It’s him!

THE OTHER TWO WOMEN LOOK AMAZED AS MELANIE CROSS AWAY TO TAKE THE CALL.

ELKA

Shameful. I haven’t even looked at another man since my husband passed away.

VICTORIA

(SYMPATHETIC) Oh, I’m sorry. When did you lose him?

ELKA

Nineteen forty-nine.

JOY

(BEAT) You haven’t looked at a man in sixty years?

ELKA

When the husband dies, you die.

VICTORIA

But you’re not dead.

ELKA

Inside you die. (INDICATING BODY) You keep the shell alive.

MELANIE JOINS THEM, GIDDY AS A SCHOOLGIRL.
MELANIE

I have a date! My first date in twenty-five years! He wants me to meet him at the Whiskey Island Marina. (TO ELKA) Do you know where that is?

ELKA

You’re too old to be acting like this.

JOY

She’s not old. Forty is the new thirty.

MELANIE

And fifty’s the new forty.

ELKA

What’s dead? The new ninety?

SFX: WATCH BEEPING

ELKA (CONT’D)

(GLANCING AT WATCH) It’s time.

SHE EXITS. THE WOMEN ALL LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

MELANIE

Okay, I’ve got a caretaker. Whatever that is. I’m too excited about seeing Hank to think about anything else. He’s making dinner for me on his boat.

JOY

Plumbers in Cleveland can afford boats?
MELANIE
I know. Doesn’t it all just sound so --

JOY
(INTERRUPTING) Insane. It sounds insane. You’re uprooting your whole life for some guy you met at a bar?

VICTORIA
What do you even know about him?

MELANIE
I know that I’ve never felt so alive. And he said it was the same for him, too. Maybe at our age you pounce on things like this. And the kids are in college and (MAKING FACE) Anders is in Paris. Why rush back to a very empty house?

JOY
But this is so not you. You’re the sane, cautious one. We count on that.

VICTORIA
You’re our rock.

MELANIE
Well, maybe I’m tired of being everyone’s rock. Anders used to say I was his rock, too. Who wants to be married to a rock? That girl on the plane was very un-rock like.
VICTORIA

We’re just worried.

MELANIE

No you’re not, you’re... jealous.

There, I said it. Both of you. And

I’m not gonna feel guilty about it.

SHE GRABS HER PURSE, EXITS, THEN OPENS THE DOOR AND STICKS HER HEAD BACK IN.

MELANIE (CONT’D)

Okay, I do feel a little guilty. But

that doesn’t mean it’s not true.

SHE SHUTS THE DOOR AGAIN.

JOY

She gets kinda mean when she’s having great sex. Who knew? (THEN, RE: VICTORIA’S DISTRACTED FACE) You look lost in thought. That’s never good.

VICTORIA

Doesn’t this all remind you of when Honor Saint Raven had the affair with that college professor?

JOY

Uh... I might have missed that episode.

VICTORIA

It was a three-month arc.
JOY

How long are we gonna do this? Just tell me what happened.

VICTORIA

He lured me to his boat and then revealed himself as the Venezuelan hitman known as “El Gato.” It was submitted for a Humanitas.

JOY

By who?

VICTORIA

It was submitted.

JOY

Give me your Blackberry.

AS SHE DOES:

VICTORIA

What are we doing?

JOY

What Melanie should have done. Googling him. Let’s find out about this guy. (AS SHE PUSHES BUTTONS) This is why the Internet was invented: for men to find naked celebrities and women to cyber-stalk the men they trust.
VICTORIA
Put in Hank, plumber, Cleveland,
Whiskey Island Marina.

JOY TYPES.

JOY
Oh my God, no!

VICTORIA
What?

JOY
It says that Russian chick on Melrose
is the hot new eyebrow queen to the
stars. That must be where Oprah’s
going!

VICTORIA
You got that from Hank, plumber,
Cleveland --

JOY
No. I googled me first. It’s habit.

VICTORIA
Well, now I want to do me.

SHE TAKES THE PHONE AND STARTS TYPING.

VICTORIA (CONT’D)
Hey, did you know I’m in Wikipedia?

SHE CLICKS ON THE SITE AND THEN GASPS, HORRIFIED.

VICTORIA (CONT’D)
It has my real birth date! Even my
children don’t know my actual age.

(MORE)
This is career suicide. (THEN NOTICING) Oh, thank God, you can contact them with corrections.

SHE STARTS FURIOUSLY TYPING. JOY GRABS HER HAND.

JOY

We’re supposed to be helping Melanie.

VICTORIA

Right, right. Okay, we’ll do him.

SHE ENTERS THE WORDS AND PRESSES A BUTTON.

JOY

(LOOKING) Wait there’s an image. That’s him! (CLICKS ON IT) From a month ago. With...

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

VICTORIA

His wife.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
MELANIE

My book really came out of trying to stay sane when I was home with my kids. There were moments between Barney videos and cooking healthy food they wouldn’t eat when I’d jot down something I’d like to do someday. After eighteen years I had two hundred and I turned them into a book. (THEN) So what would be on your list?

HANK

Honestly? I’ve always wanted to learn to tap dance.

MELANIE

Me, too! It’s Number Forty-seven in the book. Hey, why don’t we learn together?

HANK

That sounds... (PAINED) so good. (LONG BEAT, THEN) Melanie, there’s something you need to know.

(MORE)
And I’ve been imagining telling you
and picturing these awful scenarios --

JOY AND VICTORIA BURST IN.

JOY

He’s married!

HANK

Not that bad, but like that.

MELANIE LOOKS COMPLETELY SHOCKED. SHE TURNS TO HANK.

MELANIE

Oh my God, that’s what you were about
to tell me, wasn’t it? Oh God...

SHE RISES AND TURNS HER BACK TO HIM, VERY UPSET.

HANK

Melanie, I --

MELANIE

No, don’t. Please please don’t.

JOY

(TO HANK) You can just leave.

HANK

But... this is my boat.

VICTORIA

(POINTING TO DOOR) Just go!

HANK EXITS THE CABIN. THE OTHER WOMEN GO TO MELANIE’S SIDE.

VICTORIA (CONT’D)

Oh, honey, what can we do?
JOY
Let’s kill him.

MELANIE
(NEAR TEARS) That’s your solution to everything.

JOY
Well, could we try it just once?

MELANIE TRIES TO HOLD BACK TEARS, BUT THEY JUST START COMING.

MELANIE
I wanted to feel young and stupid. Instead I just feel stupid.  (THROUGH TEARS) And old.

JOY
You’re not old. Forty is the new twenty-five.

MELANIE
I thought forty was the new thirty.

JOY
Well, if we’re just gonna make crap up, I’d rather be twenty-five.

HANK STICKS HIS HEAD IN.

HANK
Listen, I know I’m not --

JOY
Get out of here!
VICTORIA

You hurt Melanie. And no one should ever hurt Melanie.

HANK

I know. I really do. And there’s nothing I can say to make this right. I lied. But I also told the truth. Last night really was the best night of my life, or at least the best night I can remember in a long, long time. I didn’t go to that bar with this in mind... but then these three incredible women came to our table.

VICTORIA

Go on.

HANK

And, Melanie, you were so breathtakingly out of my league and I couldn’t stop myself. When you’re a kid you think, oh, that opportunity will come again. But then you get to be my age and you think maybe not. You women are beautiful and sophisticated. I’m just a plumber from Cleveland in a bad marriage who hurt someone who never should be hurt.

THE WOMEN CAN’T HELP IT. THEY’RE ALL CHARMED BY HIM.
JOY
Well, for sophisticated ladies, we
probably shouldn’t have burst in on
you like that.

HANK
No, it does you credit. You were
cconcerned about your friend.

VICTORIA
It’s true. When one of us needs help,
nothing else in the world matters.

SFX: HER CELL PHONE RINGS

VICTORIA (CONT’D)
Oh my God, it’s my agent! Everyone
shut up, he thinks I’m in Paris.
(INTO PHONE) Bonjour.... Uh-huh, uh-
huh, okay, let’s talk tomorrow.

SHE HANGS UP THE PHONE AND TURNS TO THEM.

VICTORIA (CONT’D)
I got an audition. To play Megan
Fox’s grandmother.

THE OTHER WOMEN AD-LIB SYMPATHY.

HANK
I don’t know Hollywood, but if there’s
a show that thinks you look like a
grandmother, it’s a stupid show.
VICTORIA

Thank you. (TO MELANIE) He’s a keeper. (REMEMBERING) Oh, sorry.

MELANIE

I think it’s time for us to go.

HANK

(SINCERELY) Good luck, Melanie.

MELANIE

You, too, Hank.

THE WOMEN EXIT AND WE:

CUT TO:
ACT FOUR

SCENE J

EXT. HOUSE - PORCH - LATER THAT NIGHT (NIGHT 2)
(Melanie, Joy, Victoria, Elka)

MELANIE, JOY AND VICTORIA SIT OUT ON THE PORCH SIPPING WINE.

MELANIE
He lied to me and cheated on his wife
and he’s still the nicest man I’ve met
in years.

JOY
Imagine what the men are like here who
don’t screw around on their wives?

MELANIE
I should have listened to you guys.
You were right.

VICTORIA
You were right, too. I was jealous.

JOY
So was I. But in our defense, there’s
nothing more obnoxious than when your
best friend falls in love. Especially
when you’re my age and you’ve never
been in love yourself. Do you think
I’ll ever get married?

VICTORIA
Oh, please, you’re a catch. If you had
the right equipment, I’d marry you.
MELANIE

Me, too.

JOY

You guys are sweet. In an unsettling way. I don’t know. At a certain age you can’t keep blaming the men. Or work. Maybe I need to look at myself. A little.

VICTORIA

I’d start with your thighs.

JOY

Thank you, Grandma.

VICTORIA

Oh, God, I don’t want to audition for grandmother parts. I loved being the queen of daytime.

JOY

I loved being the eyebrow queen. Well, if I’ve lost Oprah at least I don’t have to pretend to like Maya Angelou anymore.

MELANIE

Change is scary. People say getting older makes you wiser, but I think it just makes you more cautious, which looks like wisdom, but it’s really just fear. Doing something fearless.

(MORE)
That’s youth. Number Sixty-two: “Re-invent yourself.” I’d like to do that.

ELKA

You’re not gonna become one of those women who like themselves are you? Because everyone hates those women.

THE WOMEN ARE STARTLED TO SEE THAT ELKA HAS APPEARED, ONCE AGAIN OUT OF NOWHERE, NOW DRESSED IN A DIFFERENT TRACKSUIT.

VICTORIA

How long have you been standing there?

ELKA

Long enough.

MELANIE

What did you hear?

ELKA

Plenty.

JOY

Well, while we’re asking questions, what’s the deal with old ladies and tracksuits?

ELKA

It’s simple. In your twenties you dress for men. In your forties you dress for success. In your eighties you dress for the bathroom. (THEN) So the guy was married, huh?
MELANIE
Yes.

ELKA
When I was your age we didn’t get into that kind of trouble. We went gray and went away. My husband was the only man I ever dated.

VICTORIA
Didn’t you ever want to try another one out? I mean, just to compare.

ELKA CONSIDERS THIS.

ELKA
Well, that’s a sinful thought...

JOY
So what should we do now?

MELANIE
How about we go back to that bar where guys think we’re hot?

ELKA
I’ll drive.

AND AS THE WOMEN HEAD OUT, WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW