

HOT in Cleveland

"Dead Is The New 90"

Pilot

Written by

Suzanne Martin

Directed by

Michael Lembeck

VIACOM INTERNATIONAL INC.
HAZY MILLS PRODUCTIONS

PRE-TABLE DRAFT
1/19/10

ACT ONE

SCENE A

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

Hi. (TAKEN ABACK) Kim. (OVERLY
FRIENDLY) Kim. (FEELING THE PAIN)
Kim. (STOIC) Kim. Kim, Kim, Kim...
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:

JOY

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

ACT TWO

SCENE B

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)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

(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.

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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:

ACT TWO

SCENE C

INT. CLEVELAND HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MORNING (DAY 2)
(Melanie, Joy, Victoria)

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

ACT THREE

SCENE D

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.

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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 CROSSES 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)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

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

ACT FOUR

SCENE H

FADE IN:

INT. HANK'S BOAT - LATER THAT NIGHT (NIGHT 2)
(Melanie, Joy, Victoria, Hank)

MELANIE AND HANK ARE IN A SMALL BUT CHARMING BOAT CABIN --
CANDLES LIT, WINE POURED.

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)

HANK (CONT'D)

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 concerned 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.

HOT IN CLEVELAND
PRE-TABLE DRAFT

"DEAD IS THE NEW 90"
1/19/10

45.
IV/H

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)

MELANIE (CONT'D)

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