

UNTITLED DANA GOULD PROJECT
written by
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COLD OPEN

EXT. DANA AND JULIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A MODEST MIDDLE CLASS HOME ON A TREE-LINED STREET.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

MONDAY MORNING CHAOS. DANA NOLAN, 42, A TIGHTLY-WOUND EVERYMAN TRYING TO DO RIGHT BY EVERYONE (WITH THE HEADACHE TO PROVE IT), IS MAKING SCHOOL LUNCH FOR HIS DAUGHTERS, ABBY, 7, AND ELAINE, 5. THE GIRLS EAT BREAKFAST AS AN AFFABLE MUTT, BARNEY, LIES UNDER THE TABLE.

DANA

Mommy will be down in a minute. Abby,
eat your cereal.

ABBY

I don't want cereal. I want a cheese
stick.

DANA

All you eat are cheese sticks, honey.
You need a healthy breakfast.

ELAINE

Daddy? What are sweetbreads?

DANA

Huh?

ELAINE

Grampy said when you get on our nerves
we should knock you in the
sweetbreads.

ENTER DANA'S WIFE JULIE, 36, A DEVOTED WIFE, MOTHER AND PROFESSIONAL, POWERED BY SELF-CONFIDENCE, YOGA AND LATTES.

DANA

Why am I the last generation of kids to get hit by their parents and the first generation of parents to get hit by their kids?

JULIE

Are you freaking the girls out again?

DANA

Not too much. Elaine, we don't take advice from Grampy.

JULIE

Am I driving so you can pick up, or are you driving so I can pick up? I think you shouldn't drive because I know I can't pick up.

DANA

You want to drive so I can pick up? I'm only driving so you can pick up.

JULIE

I don't want to drive, I want to pick up, but Dr. Lukert has a bypass at two, and if there's no anesthesia, there's all this thrashing and swearing.

DANA

I got it, no worries.

ABBY

Cheese stick!

DANA

Abby won't eat anything I give her,
she only wants a cheese stick.

JULIE

This is a classic power struggle.
Didn't you read that book I gave you,
"Parenting Outside The Box"?

DANA

Right, yeah! No.

JULIE

If you HAD read it, you'd know that
Abby needs a choice.

DANA

When we were kids, my dad would just
take us aside and explain that if we
didn't follow orders, he'd be forced
to murder Santa Claus.

JULIE

How'd that work?

DANA

Oh, it worked, but our Christmas
letters were like, "Dude, you can't
come here. Just ditch our stuff in the
dumpster behind the post office."

JULIE

Abby, cereal or an English muffin,
that's your choice. I'll be right back
down.

JULIE RUNS UPSTAIRS. ABBY TURNS TO DANA.

ABBY

If I eat it can I have a cheese stick?

DANA

How do I know? I didn't read the book.

ABBY

English muffin.

DANA

Okay, I have to get my bag. I think
I'm driving you. Or you're driving me.
Someone's driving someone someplace.

DANA HANDS ABBY AN ENGLISH MUFFIN AND EXITS. ABBY FEEDS IT TO
THE DOG, WHO SCARFS IT DOWN JUST BEFORE JULIE ENTERS.

ABBY

Mommy, I chose an English muffin.

JULIE

And it's gone already? I think you've
earned yourself a cheese stick.

JULIE GIVES ABBY A CHEESE STICK.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Forgot my phone.

JULIE RUNS OUT AS DANA RETURNS.

DANA

All done? Good enough. Here's your
cheese stick.

HE HANDS HER (ANOTHER) CHEESE STICK.

DANA (CONT'D)

Go get your coats.

ABBY, GRINNING, LEADS ELAINE OUT. JULIE ENTERS.

JULIE

See? Gave her a choice and it worked
like a charm.

DANA

You know what they call that?

DANA / JULIE

Gooooood parenting.

THEY HIGH-FIVE.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT, PORTER FALLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

TIGHT ON A MAJESTIC, LACQUERED, OAK PLAQUE. "THANKS TO COACH NOLAN - THIRTY-FIVE WINNING YEARS!" IS ETCHED INTO BRONZE OVER A PHOTO OF A HARD-EYED, NO-NONSENSE, BULL OF A MAN. INSCRIBED BELOW, THE NICKNAME, "BIG PHIL".

NEXT TO THE PLAQUE, AN OFFICE DOOR BEARING THE UNCEREMONIOUS STENCIL "DANA NOLAN - GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR." A KID RUNS PAST, SLAPPING STICK-ON LETTERS OVER THE SIGN, CHANGING IT TO: "GUIDANCE COUNSELDORK".

DANA APPROACHES AND STARES AT THE DOOR, AWARE HOW WOEFUL IT LOOKS NEXT TO THE GRANDIOSE WALL PLAQUE. HE RUNS HIS FINGER ALONG THE VANDALIZED "COUNSELDORK" AND LAUGHS.

DANA

Guidance Counsel Dork. That's actually
pretty clever.

A TEACHER, LEON SWALLINGFORD, ABOUT DANA'S AGE, STROLLS BY.

SWALLINGFORD

Hey, Nolan, your dad's here again. I
thought he retired.

DANA

So did I.

SWALLINGFORD
(re. the plaque)

Doesn't it bother you having that
there?

DANA

That? No. This gets annoying.

WE SEE THE SCHOOL TROPHY CASE, A GLASS-ENCASED SHRINE STUFFED WITH TROPHIES, AWARDS AND PHOTOS. IT OCCUPIES THE ENTIRE WALL OPPOSITE DANA'S OFFICE.

DANA (CONT'D)

You in any of those pictures?

SWALLINGFORD

No. I tried out every year, but your dad never played me.

DANA

Try growing up with the guy. I'm five-eight. You know why I'm not six-three? According to my dad, I didn't "want it enough".

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Swallingford!

ENTER "BIG PHIL" NOLAN, 66, A FORCE OF NATURE, A SIX-FOOT FIST IN A WINDBREAKER. HE POINTS TO THE TROPHY CASE.

PHIL

What are you looking at? You ain't in there.

SWALLINGFORD FUMES. PHIL THROWS AN ARM AROUND HIS SHOULDER.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I know it bugs you, but, well, that's it. I know it bugs you. Okay, hit the showers!

PHIL SLAPS HIM ON THE BACK. SWALLINGFORD WASTES NO TIME LEAVING. PHIL POINTS OUT A PHOTO.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Look at that, 1984. The whole team was white 'cept for two black guys. Now its all black 'cept for two white guys.

DANA

And?

BIG PHIL

Line 'em up and trade 'em off you'd
have a hell of a chess match.

DANA

Dad! You can't say that.

BIG PHIL

I ain't sayin' it's right or wrong,
I'm just sayin' it is. What's that
sitting in your parking space?

DANA

That's Julie's new Prius.

PHIL

Is that a car? Don't look like a car,
looks like a camera. Your brother
drives a car.

DANA

Stan drives a truck.

PHIL

A truck. Now that's a car. Got snow
tires for that thing?

DANA

Yes.

PHIL

Can you put them on yourself?

DANA

Yes.

PHIL

You lying to me?

DANA

No. Yes.

PHIL

Geez! Where's your older brother?

DANA

I dunno. What's he doing for a living
this week?

PHIL

Easy. He could have gone pro, your
brother. If it wasn't for his
shoulder, that kid would have touched
greatness.

DANA

Yeah, seventeen years ago.

OFF PHIL'S ANNOYED LOOK.

DANA (CONT'D)

I haven't seen him.

PHIL

Something's up. Tell him to call me.

DANA

I will.

PHIL

You promise?

DANA

Yes.

PHIL

You lying to me?

DANA

No.

PHIL

You really don't know how to put on
snow tires?

DANA

Are they like regular tires?

PHIL

Yes.

DANA

Then no.

INT. DANA'S OFFICE - LATER

DANA IS WRAPPING UP A CONFERENCE WITH A TEENAGED GIRL.

TEENAGED GIRL

Thanks, Mr. Nolan. This is a big help.

AS HE USHERS HER OUT, HE SPOTS A KID IN THE HALLWAY.

DANA

Charlie! Come in here a minute.

ENTER CHARLIE, 16, A PASTY, SKINNY, ZITTY KID WITH BAD HAIR,
BAD GLASSES AND A WORSE DEMEANOR. BUT OTHERWISE, GREAT.

DANA (CONT'D)

Where are those college applications?

CHARLIE

I'm not going to college. Don't need
it. I'm gonna be an emcee, gonna rap.

CHARLIE STARTS HUFFING, BUZZING, DOING A HUMAN BEAT-BOX.

DANA

Stop it. Charlie, you can't do this.
You're not a rapper, okay? What you
are, is the smartest kid in here.

CHARLIE

But this is my passion. I've gotta rap
about the street.

DANA

You live on Rainbow Terrace. What are
you going to rap about, fighting the
kids from Lollipop Junction?

CHARLIE LOOKS AWAY, MIFFED AND INSULTED.

DANA (CONT'D)

Hey, I understand being smarter than
half your teachers can be a little
scary. And boring. Which is why I
don't think it's a coincidence that
with all the things you can do, you
found the one thing at which you
stink, and that's what you want.

CHARLIE

I don't stink!

DANA

No, you don't. Not at everything. You do at this, though. I mean, let's be honest. Good Lord.

HURT AND OFFENDED, CHARLIE PUSHES PAST AND HEADS DOWN THE HALL, ADDING SARCASTICALLY.

CHARLIE

I'm glad we have these talks.

DANA

Come on, Charlie. Charlie? Oh crap.

DANA TURNS, FINDING HIMSELF FACE TO FACE WITH SWALLINGFORD.

SWALLINGFORD

Apple didn't fall far from the tree, did it?

SWALLINGFORD PASSES BY, LEAVING DANA, IRATE, IN HIS OFFICE DOORWAY.

DANA

Think this job is easy? I've got real responsibilities, Leon. I don't hide off in the music room like some people. I take my title seriously.

DANA ENTERS HIS OFFICE AND SHUTS THE DOOR. IT STILL READS, "DANA NOLAN - GUIDANCE COUNSELDORK"

EXT. DANA AND JULIE'S HOUSE - THAT EVENING - ESTABLISHING

INT. APARTMENT OVER THE GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A SMALL MAID'S APARTMENT OVER THE GARAGE NEARING THE END OF A MAJOR CLEANUP: LOTS OF BOXES, CLEANING SUPPLIES, ETC.

DANA IS MOVING A LARGE CRATE WITH HIS BROTHER STAN, 43. TALLER AND BETTER LOOKING THAN DANA, IT'S EASY TO SEE STAN AS THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL SUPERSTAR HE ONCE WAS.

DANA

There. Get some exercise stuff and Julie won't have to drive over to the gym, she can work out right here.

STAN

You ask Dad to come over and help?

DANA

Why, so he could stand around and criticize the way I move boxes?

STAN

He loves the way I move boxes. Hey, Julie's gonna love this. You're a good man.

DANA

No, I'm not. I lost it on some kid at school today. He's just mixed up and I was so rude. I turned right into dad.

STAN

Come on, a little tough love never hurt anybody. Well, there's Manson. I bet his parents stunk. And Hitler. And Oscar, The Grouch. He lives in a trash can, but no one will help him.

DANA

Stan?

STAN

You ever notice how bugged out Oscar's eyes are? What's haunting him?

DANA

Stan! Dad wants to know why you're not calling him back.

STAN

Oh. I need to talk to you about that.

DANA

Okay. How much?

STAN

Sixty thousand dollars.

DANA

Sixty how many what?!

STAN

You know what a home equity loan is?

DANA

You didn't.

STAN

So you'd know what three of them are?

It's hard, man. I have four kids.

DANA

You have five kids.

STAN

Right. It made sense at the time. I was getting in on the ground floor of something big.

DANA

Again?

STAN

They never gave me the details.
Somehow it involved jewelry and
cattle. I'm gonna lose my house.

DANA

Sixty thousand?

STAN

You don't have to say "yes" right
away. I already feel better now that
the ball's in your court.

DANA

Court? What court?

STAN

Look, I've got to get out of here.

STAN STROLLS OUT.

DANA

There's no ball in my court. I don't
even have a court.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

DANA ENTERS THE THROUGH THE BACK DOOR AND HEARS THE TV.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DANA ENTERS IS SURPRISED BY STAN, FEET UP, WATCHING TV.

DANA

Agh! You said you had to get home?

STAN

No, I had to get out of there. The conversation got weird so I came in to watch TV.

DANA

I've had this nightmare before, I just don't remember falling asleep. I hope I'm not driving.

STAN

Dad's on his way over.

DANA PINCHES HIS ARM.

DANA

Wake up!

STAN

I thought the three of us could go out for dinner.

DANA

Out where?

STAN

Technically, this is "out" for me.

DANA

Are you going to tell dad about this money thing?

STAN

Actually, dinner is the perfect opportunity for you to tell him. You're the one taking care of it.

DANA

I'm not taking care of it.

STAN

You're backing out already? What's dad gonna say?

PHIL (O.S.)

What am I gonna say about what?

PHIL ENTERS, ALSO THROUGH THE KITCHEN DOOR. RE. THE TV:

PHIL (CONT'D)

What are you watching, that singing show? What's this thing called, The Goddamn Jack-Ass Pageant?

DANA

Don't you watch this?

PHIL

I only like animal shows, unlike you two, I'm straight. What am I gonna say? Is there a problem?

STAN

Well.

PHIL

What?

STAN

You know.

PHIL

I do?

STAN

Sure.

PHIL

Right. Work.

STAN

You got it.

DANA

Wow.

PHIL

All work sucks. You should just make up a job, like Dana did.

DANA

What?

PHIL

Easy, don't pollute your bloomers. It's just, talking to kids about life ain't the kind of job you'd think was a job. Sounds like a job you made up. Like a horse dentist or that jerk at the store that sprays lettuce. I bet they didn't even hire that guy. I bet he just showed up one day, started sprayin' stuff.

DANA

Work isn't the problem, is it, Stan?

BEHIND PHIL'S BACK, STAN MOUTHS "NO!". PHIL TURNS, STAN IS CAUGHT LIKE A DEER IN THE HEADLIGHTS.

STAN

Alright, I'll tell you. The thing is,
Dana was saying he wishes you two
could spend more time together.

BEHIND PHIL'S BACK, DANA MOUTHS "NO!" PHIL TURNS.

PHIL

You said that?

DANA

Yeah, sure. We don't have to do
anything, really. We could just...

PHIL

What?

DANA

Talk.

PHIL

Oh.

A LONG, AWKWARD SILENCE.

DANA

Right.

PHIL

Okay.

DANA

Uh-huh.

PHIL

Sure, sure.

STAN

I gotta get home.

PHIL

Me too.

DANA

Yeah, I -
(realizing he's home)

Oh.

PHIL AND STAN MAKE FOR THE DOOR.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

THE FAMILY EATS DINNER AT THE KITCHEN TABLE.

DANA

It was a freak show.

JULIE

I'm sorry. Why is Stan always having
money problems?

DANA

He was supposed to make three million
a year for throwing a ball. When he
finds another seven figure gig he can
do in the yard, he'll settle down.

JULIE

What are you gonna do?

DANA

I have no idea. He just dumps it in my
lap, now it's my problem.

JULIE

You're the responsible one.

ABBY

Daddy, what's a hero?

DANA

Someone like me.

ABBY

No, really. I have to find my hero so
they can talk to my class this Friday.
It's Hero Of The Week.

JULIE

A hero is someone you look up to.
Someone who sets a good example.

ABBY

Okay. Hmmm.

ABBY, FINGER TO HER LIPS, UNDECIDED, STARES BACK AND FORTH
BETWEEN THEM. DANA AND JULIE STARE BACK AWKWARDLY. UNTIL...

JULIE

While you're pondering, could you get
washed up?

ELAINE

My hero is grapes.

ABBY AND ELAINE EXIT. DANA TURNS TO JULIE.

DANA

Better start your acceptance speech.

JULIE

For that? You're crazy. Abby's a daddy's girl, like I was with my dad, and all he ever did was come home from work and pass out on the couch. That's why I became an anesthesiologist. I'm always trying to please the unconscious.

DANA

How was it today?

JULIE

Work is fine, there's just too much of it. They cut half the staff and expanded our hours. Am I Abby's hero? She'll be lucky if she sees me.

DANA

It's not forever, hon.

JULIE

The important thing for now is no matter who she picks, we support it. The last thing we want is to turn this into a competition for our daughter's affection. That's just wrong.

JULIE PUTS TWO GLASSES OF MILK AND SOME COOKIES ON A TRAY.

DANA

What are you doing?

JULIE

Mother-Daughter-Milk-And-Cookie-Story-Time. It's a family tradition.

DANA

Since when?

JULIE
(checks watch)

Ten of seven.

DANA

Very "heroic".

JULIE WINKS AND HEADS UPSTAIRS.

DANA (CONT'D)

Two can play at that game. All I have to do is find a pony made of ice cream cake.

THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE BACK DOOR. IT'S PHIL. AGAIN.

DANA (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

PHIL

Yeah. I just left your brother. Where is everybody?

DANA

Upstairs.

PHIL

Good. Get your coat, come have a drink with me.

DANA

I can't sneak out to a bar while my
family's upstairs.

PHIL

Sure you can.

HE GRABS BUTTER FROM THE FRIDGE AND DROPS IT INTO THE TRASH.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Now call Julie from the car, say
you're out of butter and you're going
to the store.

DANA

Wait a minute. So when I was growing
up, all that milk I found in the
garbage was you?

PHIL

What'd you think? We had a ghost that
hated milk?

DANA

(shifty-eyed, lying)

No, that would be crazy.

ABBY ELAINE ARE HEARD SQUEALING AND RACING DOWNSTAIRS.

ABBY / ELAINE (O.C.)

I hear Grampy! I hear Grampy!

THE GIRLS POUR INTO THE ROOM AND THROW THEMSELVES ONTO PHIL.

PHIL

Oh, no! Mice! Look at all the mice!

ABBY / ELAINE

Squeak! Squeak!

ABBY

Grampy, come upstairs for story time.

PHIL

I'd love to sweetie-pie, but your dad
and I have to go meet Uncle Stanley.

DANA

Ah-ha!

PHIL

The minute he said you said what you
said I knew there was something he
wasn't sayin'.

DANA

He told you, huh?

PHIL

He told me everything.
(to Abby)

Your Uncle Stanley's in trouble.

ABBY

And you're gonna fix it?

PHIL

We're all gonna fix it.

ABBY

You gonna knock it in the sweetbreads?

PHIL

Like I always do!

DANA

When she gets to testicle slang in her spelling words she's gonna really knock 'em dead.

PHIL

I'll be in the car. Up to bed, girls.

PHIL EXITS, ABBY AND ELAINE HEAD UPSTAIRS.

ABBY

Daddy, come up for Mother-Daughter-Milk-And-Cookie-Story-Time.

DANA

I'd love to, but daddy has to go to a bar for Grampy-Daddy-Passive-Aggressive-Guilt-Trip-Time.

ABBY

What do I tell mommy?

DANA

Tell mommy the truth. We're out of butter.

INT. THE TRADESMAN - A SHORT TIME LATER

A BLUE COLLAR TAVERN. FLANNEL SHIRTS AND DOWN VESTS. DANA, OUT OF PLACE IN SCHOOLTEACHER CLOTHES, ENTERS WITH PHIL. STAN WAVES FROM A NEARBY BOOTH. AN OLD TOWNIE SHOUTS FROM THE BAR.

OLD MAN AT BAR

Hide the booze, here comes Nolan!

PHIL WAVES THE MAN OVER. THIS IS FRENCHY, PHIL'S BEST FRIEND. SCRUFFY BEARD, WOOL CAP, WOULDN'T LOOK OUT OF PLACE GUARDING A STILL WITH A SHOTGUN.

PHIL

Frenchy! I had to drive Dana myself so
he wouldn't get lost.

PHIL AND FRENCHY LAUGH. DANA SMILES THINLY. THE BARTENDER
BRINGS A PITCHER AND GLASSES. STAN POURS.

DANA

Just one.

FRENCHY

You sound like me the other night.
"Just one," I says. The next thing I
remember, I'm in a screaming match
with the cashier at Food King. Guess
I tried to pay for some Draino with a
bird's nest.

DANA

I can't figure out why I don't come
here more.

DANA AND STAN CRACK UP. PHIL AND FRENCHY DO NOT.

PHIL

Okay, we got a problem in the family.
Stan's in a pinch.

STAN

And that's all it is. A pinch.
Temporary pinch.

DANA PULLS A CRUMPLED SLIP OF PAPER FROM HIS POCKET.

DANA

I have looked at this a hundred
different ways -

PHIL GRABS THE SLIP OF PAPER.

PHIL

Uh-oh. Looks like Mr. Spock here can't
crack it.

DANA REACTS, STUNNED.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Relax, I'm just giving you a hard
time. I figured it out already, right
Stanley?

STAN NODS.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Stan's gonna sell his place, then him,
Claire and the kids are gonna move
into the house. Your mother's up in
Heaven; I got more rooms there than I
know what to do with anyway.

DANA

Wow, that's... Wow. That's very
generous of you, dad.

PHIL

Well, that's it. Problem solved. Have
a drink while I beat Frenchy at pool.

PHIL AND FRENCHY GET UP TO PLAY POOL.

DANA

Well Stanley, you've done it again.
How's this gonna work, exactly?

STAN

Claire, me and the baby take the big
room, the boys go in mine, Ellen and
Molly get yours.

DANA

Wait a minute. Where's dad sleeping?

STAN

He's not staying. Said he's moving
out.

DANA

What do you mean? Where to?

STAN

I don't know. I assumed he was moving
in with you guys.

OFF DANA'S HORRIFIED LOOK...

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

INT, DANA AND JULIE'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING - ESTABLISHING

INT, DANA AND JULIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DANA AND JULIE ARE GETTING DRESSED FOR WORK.

DANA

This is so perfect. Stan, because he's irresponsible, gets a free house. I, who have been playing by the rules, get a roommate who criticizes me.

JULIE IS SILENT.

DANA (CONT'D)

You're right.

JULIE

I didn't say anything.

DANA

But I know what you're thinking and you're right. I have to tell him. I have to look him dead in the eye and tell him you don't think it's a good idea.

JULIE

You have to find out what's really going on. Stan doesn't know, he just guessed.

DANA

What if he guessed right?

JULIE

Is it a good idea for any of our parents to move in with us? But who has a choice? "Never take sides against the family."

DANA

Are you quoting The Godfather? Shut that door.

JULIE

Don't you dare, I can't be late! It makes sense, doesn't it? You work hard for your kids, why not work hard for your parents?

DANA

I get it with the kids. The weird thing is, the harder we work for them, the more we have to hide it from them, because if they grow up unhappy, then we'll never get their money.

JULIE

Sweetheart, you have to ask your dad what his plans are.

DANA

I can't talk to him. We tried today, it doesn't work.

JULIE

There's a way to do it. Be simple and direct. You read "Talk, Look and Listen".

DANA

What, what and what?

JULIE

It's by the same guy who wrote, "Wake Up and Win".

DANA

Are these real?

JULIE

You never read any of the books I leave out for you.

DANA

You never read any of the books I leave out for you.

JULIE

They're all about serial killers!

JULIE GRABS "TALK, LOOK AND LISTEN" OFF OF A STACK ON THE BEDSIDE TABLE, HANDS IT TO DANA AND LEAVES.

DANA

They're out there! You can't just wish 'em away. It's in their book.

EXT. PORTER FALLS HIGH SCHOOL RUNNING TRACK - LATER

PHIL EATS HIS LUNCH ALONE ON THE BLEACHERS, WATCHING, WITH GROWING ANNOYANCE, THE TRACK TEAM GO THROUGH ITS PACES.

PHIL

Putnam! I chased women in high heels
ran faster than you!

DANA APPROACHES AND SITS DOWN BESIDE HIM.

DANA

I thought I heard you over here.

PHIL

Were you nearby?

DANA

No.

PHIL

Get those knees up, this ain't a dance
contest!

DANA

Now that you're retired, don't the
other coaches get mad when you yell at
their team?

PHIL

Who, Larsen? He don't know his butt
from a tub drain. Big, dumb Swede.

DANA

Dad, you really can't talk like that.
People are going to think you're
racist.

PHIL

I don't hate whole races, just
individuals and small groups.

DANA

What about Russians?

PHIL

I don't like Russians! When I was a kid, I had a dog, a Collie named Ginger. Beautiful. She was fourteen years old when this Russian family moved into the neighborhood, and within two years, she was dead.

DANA

She was sixteen years old.

PHIL

That's what the vet said. I knew they got to him. I guess they got to you too.

DANA

Aaaanyway, here's my question. Let's say.. No. Wait. Okay. The way that... No. Alright. Listen. In the Bible...

PHIL

Are you having a stroke?

DANA

Julie gave me this book on how to ask questions -

PHIL

Stop right there, I don't want to hear it. Self-help garbage.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

Parenting books! Bullfrogs raise babies, they're dumb as a bag of hammers. You need a book.

DANA

It's a different time, Dad. Now kids respect us because we respect them.

CHARLIE (O.C.)

Up yours, Nolan!

DANA PUSHES A FAKE LAUGH OUT A FORCED SMILE.

DANA

He's one of my students. Wants to be a rapper so I said something dumb and his parents called and I got yelled at so now I have to apologize on paper. It's all good.

PHIL CHECKS HIS WATCH.

PHIL

I gotta go.

DANA WATCHES HIS FATHER DESCEND THE ROWS OF BLEACHERS.

DANA

Dad! Stan says your moving out. What are you doing?

PHIL

I'm moving into Frenchy's old place.

DANA WATCHES HIS FATHER DISAPPEAR ACROSS THE FIELD.

DANA

I'm glad we have these talks.

EXT. DANA AND JULIE'S HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

JULIE DESCENDS THE STAIRS AS DANA ENTERS, HOME FROM WORK.

DANA

Did you get my message? You were right about my dad. He's got a place lined up.

JULIE

(subdued)

I did. I heard. That's great.

DANA

Also, I found this amazing place. Ernie's Exotics. They sell weird pets.

JULIE

M-hmm?

DANA

Yeah. You know how we were thinking about getting Abby a cat? What if we got her a cat - that was a monkey!

JULIE

Is this for Hero of the Week? You can have it, honey. I give up.

DANA

Julie, what's wrong?

JULIE

Okay, I know this shouldn't bother me. I know that I'm bigger than this.

DANA

Oh, this is gonna be great.

JULIE

I'm at the store today behind Holly Babcock, and she says, "Eliza just interviewed me for Hero Of The Week. What an honor for working mom's like us."

DANA

Awesome.

JULIE

Like us? I'm sorry, she works at the library two days a week. I'm in an operating room, all day, every day. People in life or death situations, life or death!

DANA

Go slow, try to remember everything.

JULIE

Standing there with her cart full of four-dollar cupcakes. You're home all week, make your own cupcakes!

DANA

Who else was at the store?

JULIE

How can we compete with that? And, unlike some people, who, despite their free time, feed their children store-bought cupcakes, we need child-care in the afternoons. We have to pay someone to be here, because we can't be here, because we're out making money to pay them to be here. You know who doesn't worry about this stuff?

DANA

I can guess!

JULIE

Holly Babcock!
(then, collecting herself)
But, I'm over it. And in a way, I'm relieved. We can't go around grovelling for a seven-year-old's approval. The best we can do is keep our dignity and lead by example.

ABBY AND ELAINE COME RUNNING DOWNSTAIRS.

ELAINE

Mommy-Daddy-Mommy-Daddy!

ELAINE PLOWS INTO THEM AND IS SCOOPED UP. ABBY JUMPS UP AND DOWN.

ABBY

I have a secret! I have a secret! I picked my Hero of the Weeeeeek!

DANA AND JULIE EYE EACH OTHER, SMILING.

DANA

I still say it's you.

ABBY

It's Grampy!

DANA IS STUNNED. JULIE SMILES, SURPRISED AND DELIGHTED.

JULIE

Really? That's wonderful, sweetheart!

DANA

Why Grampy?

ABBY

'Cause Grampy fixes everything! Uncle Stanley got in trouble and Grampy gave him his house and he's a hero!

FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES. ABBY'S SIMPLE REALIZATION STOPS DANA AND JULIE IN THEIR TRACKS. AFTER A LONG BEAT.

DANA

You're right. He is.

DANA STARES AT HIS SHOES AS HE AND JULIE TAKE TURNS SAYING NOTHING.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

AT THE SINK, JULIE WASHES, DANA DRIES.

JULIE

Your father cannot live in Frenchy's place. It sounds like an old cabin out in the woods. You've seen The Shining, you know what will happen.

DANA

Yup.

JULIE

You are his son.

DANA

I know. And that's what I'll always be. But I want to be the father now.

JULIE

Having Phil live above the garage is not the perfect situation, but it's better than having him need to live there and us saying no. Besides, we need someone here after school. Why not your father? There's no one I trust more. He's crazy about the girls. Abby's the only person he lets boss him around.

DANA

So that's why he's her hero.

JULIE

No, it's because we shouldn't be. You're right, we do hide how hard parenting is. The kids aren't supposed to applaud us. It's not about us. While we were out trying to look like heroes, your father gave away his house.

(MORE)

JULIE (CONT'D)

Don't be the son here, be the father.
This is a good thing for your
daughters.

DANA

If I say yes, will you do the rest of
these dishes?

JULIE

Your dad is speaking in Abby's class
tomorrow. Talk to him then.

DANA

Oh, that's right. My father's going to
make a speech to a bunch of seven-year-
olds.

JULIE

Yeah, he is.

JULIE'S FACE FALLS AS THE CONCEPT FINALLY HITS HER.

DANA

Don't worry. How could that possibly
go wrong?

INT. ABBY'S CLASSROOM - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

CHILDREN, PARENTS AND FRIENDS MILL ABOUT MISS SALCIDO'S
SECOND GRADE CLASS.

DANA, JULIE, AND ABBY ENTER.

DANA

Where's dad?

JULIE

He'll be here. There's that horrible

Holly Babcock.

THE BABCOCK FAMILY: ELIZA, ABBY'S CLASSMATE, HER MOTHER HOLLY, A PERMA-SMILING NUT JOB WITH WIDE EYES AND SHARP TEETH, AND HOLLY'S HUSBAND, DEREK, AN OLDER, WELL-TO-DO CORPORATE LAWYER WITH NO APPARENT FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.

PHIL ENTERS, LOOKING NERVOUS. MISS SALCIDO, A YOUNG LATINA, ADDRESSES THE ROOM.

MISS SALCIDO

Welcome everyone to our Hero Of The
Week presentation.

MISS SALCIDO (CONT'D)

First up, Eliza Babcock.

ELIZA APPROACHES.

ELIZA

My hero is -

HOLLY BABCOCK

Oh, I'll do it. It's her mom! I'm

Holly Babcock!

HOLLY SCUTTLES UP, WHEELING AN AV CART STACKED WITH PRESENTATION MATERIELS. ELIZA IS MORTIFIED.

ON DANA AND PHIL.

DANA

Hey, I need a favor.

PHIL

You? You ain't never needed no favors
from me.

DANA

I need one now. I know you're set on moving into Frenchy's, but we don't want you to. I don't. I want you to move in with us.

THIS CLEARLY CATCHES PHIL OFF GUARD.

PHIL

Gee, I don't know.

DANA

Think about it.

MISS SALCIDO (O.C.)

Thank you Eliza and Holly.

APPLAUSE AS ELIZA SKULKS OFF. HOLLY CARRIES AN ELABORATE TRIPTYCH OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DIORAMAS.

MISS SALCIDO (CONT'D)

Next up, Abby Nolan.

ABBY STRIDES UP.

ABBY

My hero is my Grampy 'cause he takes care of everybody. One time an old man yelled at me and my sister when we were running down the sidewalk. He was real mean and my Grampy said, "Just 'cause you're in a wheelchair don't mean I won't pound you, old man!" And a whole bunch of people gathered around -

PHIL

Okay, okay, okay.

PHIL LUMBERS TO THE FRONT OF THE ROOM, TOWERING OVER THE CHILDREN LIKE AN AWKWARD, NERVOUS BEAR.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Thank you, honey. Okay, uh, the only heroes I know are sports heroes. But that stuff's changed a lot over the years. Take, for example, take black guys.

SHOCKED SILENCE. DANA GROANS.

DANA

Here we go.

PHIL

All your basketball stars today are black guys. I ain't sayin' it's wrong, I'm just sayin' it is. White guys used to have everything, now what do we got? Talk radio and hockey, that's it. Everything changes. It's only us old guys get confused. Like me. I got no idea where I fit in anymore.

ON JULIE AND DANA

JULIE

I've never heard him like this.

DANA

It's early. He could still pound
someone.

PHIL

A family is a team. Like a team, it
has a clutch player, the go-to guy you
count on every time. As a coach, I'll
tell you, that's the guy you ride the
hardest, but it's because that's the
guys you need the most. Which brings
me to my hero.

DANA CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT HE'S HEARING. JULIE SQUEEZES HIS ARM.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'm talking about, of course, Red Sox
great Carl Yastremski. The man they
called Yaz.

DANA BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF. JULIE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

DANA

Baby steps, okay?

LATER:

THE PRESENTATION OVER, PHIL, HOLDS A GIGGLING ABBY.

PHIL

Dana, Julie? I found this mouse. I'm
taking it outside.

DANA

Have you thought about what I said?

PHIL

Look, I'm all set. But if this is something you really want, that's good enough for me. I'll talk to Frenchy.

PHIL PATS DANA ON THE SHOULDER AND CARRIES ABBY OFF.

JULIE

See? Look how you two handled that. You're both growing up.

DANA

Speaking of growing up, in two years Elaine's going to be in this class.

JULIE

I know.

DANA

Honey? We're still young. There's always room for one more.

JULIE

Is this about getting a monkey?

DANA

You can teach them to fetch keys.

INT. GARAGE APARTMENT - DAY

PHIL HAS MOVED IN. THE APARTMENT IS SMALL, BUT HOMEY. DANA, JULIE AND STAN ARE THERE. DANA FIDDLES WITH THE TV REMOTE.

JULIE

I'm glad you like it Phil. And thank you, for everything.

DANA

Check this out. Free cable. You
wouldn't have that at Frenchy's place.

PHIL SHIFTS UNCOMFORTABLY.

STAN

Frenchy's place?

DANA

The old place. That's where dad was
going to move.

STAN

Frenchy's? That place burned down
eight years ago. Dad knows that.

DANA AND JULIE TRADE SURPRISED LOOKS.

DANA

Dad?

PHIL

What?

DANA

Did you?

PHIL

And?

DANA

How come?

PHIL

Hey.

DANA

Yeah?

PHIL

Sure.

DANA

Really?

PHIL

Alright?

DANA

Yeah.

STAN DABS A TEAR.

STAN

That was beautiful.

JULIE SMILES.

JULIE

I'm glad you all have these talks.

END OF ACT TWO

TAG

INT, DANA AND JULIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

DANA AND JULIE ARE READY FOR BED.

DANA

Hang on. I've got to check the kids.

DANA DISAPPEARS DOWN THE HALL FOR A MINUTE. RETURNS.

JULIE

How old do you think they'll be before
we stop checking on them?

DANA

I don't know. Old habits die hard.

LIGHTS OUT. AFTER A BEAT, THEY HEAR THE BACK DOOR OPEN.

JULIE

Dana?

DANA

Shhh.

FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS. A BEAT. PHIL POKES HIS HEAD INTO
THEIR BEDROOM DOOR.

PHIL

You guys all set?

DANA

Yeah, dad.

PHIL

Okay. G'night.

PHIL LEAVES.

DANA

We need a lock for that door.

FADE OUT.