

HEART TROUBLES

**Screenplay
by**

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1 **EXT. MERIT INSURANCE AGENCY, ALDERSHOT ONTARIO**

NICK, an insurance man, lives in a middle class neighbourhood with his family, his Mom. Every home is painted beige wall to wall, carpet to match, and a manicured lawn. CLOSE UP of houses and winding streets stretch down the road to the front doors of the Merit Insurance Agency office. Nick rushes through the door late for work.

2 **INT. MERIT INSURANCE AGENCY - MORNING**

NICK OSMOND(48) scurries to sit behind his desk and ANDY (46)takes in his every move. Nick drops his briefcase almost knocking his paper coffee cup over and looks up to see, LYNDA (70) who sits clutching her purse with a sullen LITTLE GIRL, SARAH (8), grasping onto a tattered doll.

 NICK
 (clumsily)
 Sorry, traffic was bad.
 (chuckles)
 I guess I'm not really a morning
 person.

Nick looks deeper into Lynda and Sarah's eyes, trying to get a read.

 ANDY
 I put their file on your desk.
 (stares with intent
 to warn Nick)

 NICK
 So what brings you both here
 this morning?

 LYNDA
 My granddaughter here and my
 daughter were in an accident.
 (stops quiet)

NICK
She's in hospital?

SARAH
She's in the water.

NICK
In the water ...

ANDY
(serious)
I made notes ...

Nick looks to Lynda and Sarah and then down to the file and reads 'Mother drives over bridge. Suicide suspected as cause of death.' Sweat beads come over Nick's forehead, he breaths deep and wipes his brow with a handkerchief. Andy rises out of his chair.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Need help with my notes?

NICK
No, I'm good. I'm good.

LYNDA
She's no longer with us.
(pause)
My daughter.

NICK
I see.

Sarah holds her doll tight with her gangly arms.

SARAH
I got out.
(quiet)

NICK
You were brave.

SARAH
I swam. To the fireman.

NICK
That was so smart.

LYNDA
(breaking up)
I didn't know. I didn't know
she was feeling that way. *

Lynda's eyes fill up with tears. Nick passes her a tissue.

NICK
There's no way to know.

SARAH
Mommy said to undo my safety
belt.

NICK
(crooks his eyebrow)
She did. When?

SARAH
When we drove towards the bridge.

NICK
Can you show me?

Nick places a stapler and a snow globe of Niagara Falls and an eraser on the front of his desk for Sarah to show him. Sarah is taken by what she now considers a game and carefully places her doll sitting upright behind her.

SARAH
The eraser is the car
(moves the stapler)
and this is the bridge. Then
we're right here.

Nick starts to touch the snow globe.

SARAH (CONT'D)
That's in the right spot.

NICK
That's a big help. I'm so sorry
about your mom. Maybe your Nan
and you should get some rest.

LYNDA
(nods with tears
on her face)
Ok.

NICK
We'll call you. I have everything
I need here.

Andy gently walks them to the door. Nick hears the
outside door click.

ANDY
Wow, that would break your heart.

NICK
Nobody wants to go that way.

ANDY
She knew how to save her
daughter.

NICK
Sometimes you just give in.

ANDY
Hey, I know.

NICK
What's her daughter going to
live on?

ANDY
Not sure. There was no mention
of 'Dad'.

NICK
I hear you.

ANDY

Insurance policies don't have a
line item for that kind of grief.

NICK

Neither do I, my friend.

Nick starts to shuffle the paperwork and at first it seems like a casual gesture. He then has a heightened sense of moving papers back and forth in an obsessive gesture. He opens and closes his briefcase latches with the click echoing about 15 times before he fully opens the briefcase. Nick repeats OCD gestures, until he feels a sense of anxiety and stress subside. He then takes out his pen and starts to fill out the paperwork. Andy looks over his shoulder hearing the ritual of clicks and shuffles, accustomed to Nick's mannerisms. He looks perplexed but familiar with his routine and says nothing.

3 **INT. FAMILY HOME - EVENING**

DARLENE (72) is in her favourite chair in the corner, watching *The Bachelorette*, she has her rosary beads in one hand and the TV remote in the other. FLORENCE (75), nextdoor neighbour, watches with Darlene.

DARLENE

She's not much of it. Kate from
home could beat her out in a
pinch.

FLORENCE

That's for sure.

DARLENE

Neither one suits me.

FLORENCE

I'm not sure if those men care
what we think of 'em.

DARLENE

Handsome.

FLORENCE

And ripped.

4 **INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

Nick is in the bedroom dressed and putting the 'final touches' on his outfit. Using the same mannerisms as at the office, Nick fixes his collar and buttons on his shirt about 15-20 times. He moves his belt buckle up and down, repeating the exact same motion. He then unfolds his wallet open and closed a dozen times quickly and finally secures it in his back jeans pocket. Once secure with his ritual, he bolts from the bedroom with exuberance and confidence, not even realizing he has these body tics.

5 **INT. FAMILY HOME - EVENING**

NICK

Did you call me ripped, Flo?

FLORENCE

(blushes)

Well, aren't you all dolled up. Set your eye on someone at Rangers Bar have ya?

DARLENE

There's been more Ranger's pick ups through here than Bachelorette contestants my dear.

FLORENCE

Don't mind your mother, she's just worried you'll run off and leave her on her own. You'll find the right one someday.

NICK

Florence, you know I only have eyes for you.

Nick leans behind her, grabs his jacket and places a kiss on top of her perfectly curled hair.

NICK (CONT'D)
Don't wait up, Ma.

The ladies giggle continuing to watch *The Bachelorette*.

6 **INT. RANGERS BAR - NIGHT**

Nick sees SHIRLEY (38) at the end of the bar and asks her to dance. There is line dancing in the background. But they keep to themselves. Nick sees Andy at the bar, but just gives him a nod and a wink.

NICK
Remember the first night I took you to this bar? We danced our arses off.

Nick toys with Shirley and smirks a mischievous grin.

SHIRLEY
I do.
(sighs)

NICK
Tough day?

SHIRLEY
I'm not sure if *my* husband is in this for the long haul.

Nick holds Shirley tight, trying to hold her up while dancing, a loosing battle, after all the shooters.

NICK
You don't think he knows about *us*?

SHIRLEY
Sad part is he doesn't have a clue.

NICK
(abruptly changes
topic)

Do you know how many people have
been killed on the 403? Driving
cold hard pieces of metal.

Shirley's sharp tongue peaks.

SHIRLEY
Gee, some people have to drink
to sound as twisted as you.

NICK
Ya, well I don't need *booze* to
mess me up.

SHIRLEY
Hey. You were just being
romantic. Lighten up.

She cuddles into his shoulder.

NICK
I know this is hard for you-
your husband and all. But I
think we could make a go of it.
If he leaves, ya know.
(takes her hand)
I'm here for you.

SHIRLEY
Really?

NICK
Of course. What kind of guy do
you think I am?

SHIRLEY
I have no clue. Motel?

They walk towards the door. Nick gives Andy another
nod and wink on the way out.

7 **EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING**

Nick drives from RANGERS BAR to a motel near by with Shirley.

NICK

Do you think we're wearing out
the motel?

SHIRLEY

I think we're the best customers
they've ever had.

8 **INT. FAMILY HOME - MORNING**

Nick wakes up and grabs his clothes hurrying to put them on. He rushes through the kitchen where Darlene is at the table having breakfast, sharing a look of panic as he's running late. Nick hears the car horn outside. It's Andy.

CLOSE UP front door closed shut.

9 **INT./EXT. JEEP - MORNING**

Andy and Nick drive up a suburban street and they see Shirley on the lawn, surrounded by luggage, and her daughter TASHA (8) grabs onto her leg.

10 **EXT. SIDE STREET - MORNING**

AIRPORT TAXI car door slams shut. A business man gets aboard the taxi without flinching or looking back. Shirley is up ahead on the front lawn of her home, hysterical after seeing her husband bolt.

11 **EXT. FRONT LAWN HOUSE - MORNING**

SHIRLEY

(talking into thin
air)

It's hard to take your daughter
to school if you move to Norway.
Fucking asshole!

Shirley collapses to the ground. Tasha joins in as if
it's a game and plays on her mother's back. Shirley
recovers and puts her on her back to play piggy back
to distract her.

TASHA

Dad's gone.

SHIRLEY

Yup. He's gone.
(kisses Tasha over
her shoulder)

12 **INT./EXT. JEEP - MORNING**

Andy and Nick sit still, staring ahead in disbelief.

NICK

What's going on with Shirley?
Did he just leave?

ANDY

Looks that way.

NICK

Looks like Shirley could be the
next D-i-v-o-r-c-e in the
neighbourhood.

(gloating)

ANDY

You don't need to be so happy
about it.

NICK
I don't know, Andy. Something
was off with that guy.

ANDY
Hey, your with another man's
wife. Now you'll be taking care
of *his* youngster? You ready for
that?

NICK
I think it was all for show.

ANDY
Doesn't look like any love loss -
that's true.

Nick starts to get out of the jeep.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Hey. Not now.
(voice gets loud)

NICK
I guess you're right.

ANDY
I *am* right.

Nick and Andy laugh as they drive away. Nick sees
moose running past out of the corner of his eye.
Andy sees nothing. Nick rubs his eyes and ignores
it.

13 **INT. LUCY'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY**

LUCY (28) climbs up over the stairs. CLOSE-UP of
FAMILY PORTRAITS. Lucy walks to the kitchen. Her
Mom, JEAN (64), and Dad, PAT, (68) are having
breakfast.

JEAN
Good morning, love.

LUCY
Morning.

JEAN
Keen to go swimming with us?

LUCY
I'm a truck driver. Do you know
a truck driver who does shallow
water fitness?

JEAN
Ahh ... no!

PAT
Truck driving is too dangerous.

JEAN
Young woman driving a truck.
Imagine.
(in disgust)

Lucy takes some toast and dips it into the egg.

LUCY
I'll be fine. *Imagine.*

Lucy smiles mischievously at them both, grabs a piece
of bacon and heads out the front door, wearing a ball
cap and ponytail. She shuts the door hard.

14 **INT./EXT. JEEP - HIGHWAY 403 - MORNING**

Nick and Andy continue to drive to work and listen to
the RADIO, just after witnessing Shirley's break up.

ANDY
Looks like cargo trucks up ahead,
blocking two lanes. I should
detour.

NICK
Sure, whatever is easiest.
Safest.

RADIO comes on louder. Nick fixates on the line up of traffic on the highway outside his window.

RADIO HOST

Remember Carnage Alley anniversary is this weekend. Next Caller.

CALLER

Anniversary?! Eight people dead. Eighty-seven car pile up. Forty-five injured. They said they would deal with this highway. Tragedy happens down East, the next day there is a monument and a parade.

CUTAWAY: We hear the sound of a violent rear-end collision, brakes locking, metal crunching, tires skidding as a car spins, horns blaring, gravel spitting. Then silence, and we glimpse to faint unfocused images of flashing lights. The police arrive on the scene.

15 **INT./EXT. JEEP - HIGHWAY 403 - MORNING**

RADIO SHOW continues even louder with more chaotic banter.

RADIO HOST

Not a competition my friend. Tragedy is everywhere and singers write their own music down East-that's *my* home.

CALLER

Last week's crash was so tragic. Every time I see an accident, I think that could've been *me*.

NICK

What a strange show. Talking about car accidents.

ANDY

(chokes)

You're saying that dude's job is strange. We not only talk about crashes we have to investigate them for fuck sake.

NICK

True. Radio host doesn't have to meet people face to face at least. That little girl at our office, man. It's hard to loose that image. Same age as Shirley's daughter. So young.

ANDY

You need to stay on the right side of this, you know that?

NICK

I do. I do. I'm working on it. You ever been in a bad accident, Andy?

ANDY

My brother was busted up pretty bad once. No one ever died, if that's what you mean. You?

NICK

Nah.

(pause, stares out
the window)

Just some close calls when I was young ...

FLASHBACK:

16 **INT. FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON -- ROSE BLANCHE, NL,
1980**

DARLENE (35) putters through the kitchen with matching wallpaper and canisters, wearing an apron.

She fixates on the crucifix above the stove as she takes out the bread and puts dinner on the table. NICK (11) and LAUREL (10) each fight to grab the ketchup. Darlene looks at the time on the stove.

DARLENE

Nick, go grab your father at the lounge. He should've been home by now.

NICK

Why me? Laurel can go.

LAUREL

(mimicking her
mother's voice)

The Border Lounge is *no* place
for a girl.

NICK

(pause)

LAUREL

I'm going to play hopscotch with
the girls.

NICK

I'll walk you.

17 **EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON**

NICK and LAUREL walk through the rural town on a spiraling dirt road. The newly paved highway connects both sides of the town, with the local pub and family homes below. You can walk from one end to the other in 15 minutes.

18 **EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON**

Laurel joins her girlfriends, taking turns jumping on one foot on a newly painted chalk game in the middle of the road. They toss a rock for each girl's turn. Nick tags along.

NICK
That game's for sissies.

LAUREL
You're a wuss.

NICK
I'm your brother.

LAUREL
Still a wuss.

Nick is the first to hear a large transport truck coming.

NICK
Clear the road. Now!

LAUREL
Watch out!

All the kids run to the side of the road, giddy.

NICK
That was a close one.

LAUREL
(catching her breath)
You're too scared to play.

NICK
(covers for himself)
I have to get Dad.

LAUREL
I'm staying.

19 **INT. BORDER LOUNGE BAR - AFTERNOON**

Nick peeks in through the door, his father catches his eye. NICK'S FATHER, DARRELL (38), still pounding back the drinks, chats with the regulars.

NICK
(hollers across
the bar)
Mother wants you home for supper.

DARRELL
Get the jeezus out of here Nick.
I'll be home when I'm good and
ready.

20 **EXT. BORDER LOUNGE BAR - AFTERNOON**

Nick is outside, old folks give him money, he naps,
has chips and a Coke. Plays with a rock on a pretend
hopscotch board on the gravel. Time passes.

21 **INT. BORDER LOUNGE BAR - LATE AFTERNOON**

Regulars are still drinking in the bar, otherwise it
looks lifeless.

DARRELL
I had the first taxi on the
highway in Rose Blanche...

The regulars nod having heard the same story many
times.

DARRELL (CONT'D)
If our youngsters are lucky
they'll get the hell out of
here. That's what I should've
done.

22 **INT. BORDER LOUNGE BAR - AFTERNOON**

DARRELL
I'm off.
(nods to the
bartender)

23 **EXT. BORDER LOUNGE BAR - AFTERNOON**

His father finally stumbles out of the bar, drunk. Nick and his father walk toward the car. Nick is visibly afraid.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

24 **INT. LAUREL'S CAR - HIGHWAY 403 - EVENING**

LAUREL(47), Nick's sister, shuts the car door. DONNY (50), Laurel's husband, a real estate agent, starts to drive out of the city with Laurel.

DONNY

I have to drive down to Aldershot to see a house.

LAUREL

Another million dollar bidding war?

DONNY

May the best fool win.

LAUREL

Hey. It's paying *our* bills.

NICK

You know you have family there.

LAUREL

Yeah, *I do*.

DONNY

You up for a drive?

LAUREL

I'll stay aboard, sure.

DONNY

Come on Laurel. We've talked about this.

LAUREL

Fuck Donny!

DONNY
It's time Laurel.

LAUREL
Drop me at his 'local', Rangers.
But I'm not going to the house.

Donny and Laurel head to the highway for ALDERSHOT.

25 **INT. MOTEL - NIGHT**

Nick and Shirley are on another 'date' at the Motel.

Nick walks through the Motel door after Shirley has gone in. Shirley has run to the bed and jumps up and down like a school girl. She bounces off the bed and goes to the desk playing with the notebook and pen and glasses with paper lids. She takes the notebook up to pretend to use it like an office clerk. Nick gently removes the notebook from her hands, laughing. Nick slides his hands down Shirley's side, then pulls up her skirt to remove her underwear. He leans in to Shirley on the desk top. They begin to have sex leaning against the table.

26 **EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Nick and Shirley walk to their car.

NICK
Not sure if we want to be seen
coming out of that dive all the
time. You're a *mom* and all.

SHIRLEY
I'm moving into co-op living and
they're strict you can't stay
over.

NICK
You have to leave your house
right away?

SHIRLEY
Company house. Company rules.
I have to move out.

NICK
Maybe it's time you come around
the house more. I want you to
meet Mom.

SHIRLEY
You live with your mom?! I just
want to date you, not *your*
mother.

NICK
Come on. She'll love you.

SHIRLEY
Really. I have a child you know?

NICK
Darlene will love Tasha.

SHIRLEY
You remember her name. That
means a lot.

NICK
You're easily impressed.
(laughs)

Nick reaches over and pulls Shirley close as they
drive.

SHIRLEY
(rummaging through
her purse)
Hey, I don't have my keys.

NICK
They're at the motel?

SHIRLEY
I don't think so. I had a coat
at Rangers.

NICK
I'll swing back.
(laughs)

Nick makes a u-turn in the road back to Rangers.

27 **INT. RANGERS BAR - EVENING - LATER**

Laurel walks into the bar on her own cautiously scanning the crowd. There are line dancers in the background.

Andy is leaning against the wall like a lost soul. He smiles and approaches Laurel.

ANDY
You're new here, aren't you?

LAUREL
Of course, I am!

ANDY
(laughs)
Yeah, thought so?

LAUREL
I mean I'm just waiting for
someone. You?

ANDY
A friend said I should try to
get out more.

LAUREL
Friends always say that.
(laughs)

ANDY
(laughs)
It's true.

LAUREL
I'm just waiting for my husband.
He's an agent for a house here.

ANDY

Real estate. I thought about doing that.

LAUREL

It's a crazy business. Not high on morals. What do you do?

ANDY

Insurance. Lacks certain 'morals' too.

LAUREL

My brother works in insurance, Nick.

ANDY

Nick Wilson?

LAUREL

Yeah!

ANDY

He works with me. Not a big town, as you can tell.

Donny comes up behind Laurel. With two drinks.

DONNY

(cheerful)

Hey. You got a drink.

LAUREL

How'd it go?

DONNY

Great. Mine for the taking.

LAUREL

(introduces Donny)

Donny, this man works with Nick. What's your name?

ANDY

Andy.

(MORE)

*

ANDY (CONT'D)

(they shake)

Nice to meet you. You picked the
'hot' career.

DONNY

(laughs, looks to
Laurel)

Can you see us hanging out
here...?

LAUREL

(cuts him off)

Living here. Line dancing? No.

(to Andy)

No offense.

ANDY

None taken.

DONNY

It's kind of got Nick's name all
over it though.

LAUREL

Oh yeah.

ANDY

Nick was here earlier.

LAUREL

He was?

ANDY

He left with a gal he hangs out
with.

LAUREL

A gal?

DONNY

We're in no rush.

Nick and Shirley walk in and Shirley is rifling
through coats on the back of chairs. Nick spots
Shirley's coat on a bar stool.

NICK
Shirl, I think I've got it.

ANDY
There he is.

Nick looks out of the corner of his eye, catches
Laurel. Nods to Andy.

NICK
Laurel.
(in shock)

LAUREL
I'm here.
(jokes as if it's
nothing)

NICK
Here. Oh, you're fucking here
now, are you?

Donny comes back with another drink standing beside
Laurel.

NICK (CONT'D)
Oh, we're all here. It's just
like one big fucking reunion.
Rose Blanche just moved to town.

DONNY
Nick.

NICK
You're in on this too. My sister
doesn't come see me ever.
(clocks their
wedding rings)

LAUREL
(giddy)
Yeah, we got hitched. *Back home*.
It was a small wedding.

DONNY
(trying to cover)
Really small.

Nick tries to rescue the moment.

NICK
This is Shirley. We were dancing -
earlier.

LAUREL
I'm Nick's sister. Laurel.

SHIRLEY
Oh. I didn't know.

LAUREL
You from here?

SHIRLEY
Close to here.

LAUREL
I see.

Laurel and Shirley scrutinize each other.

DONNY
(makes eye contact
with Shirley)
Donny. Friend of Nicks.

NICK
Oh yeah, we go way back. *Best*
friends.

LAUREL
How's Mother? Guess I should
get over to see her.

NICK
There's a thought.

DONNY
I tried...

NICK
 (cuts Donny off)
 Yeah?

LAUREL
 (cynical)
 How's the insurance business?

Nick smirks, not giving Laurel the satisfaction.

NICK
 Drop by. *Our* home.

LAUREL
 Tomorrow. I'll be there, for
 sure.
 (to Donny)
 Guess we'll stay the night.

Nick holds Shirley as they head to the door.

28 **EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

They drive home in silence.

SHIRLEY
 Should I know about *back home*?

NICK
 Yes, yes you should.

NEXT DAY:

29 **EXT. FAMILY HOME - STREET**

Nick backs out of the driveway and Laurel and Donny are driving slow past their house. Nick follows them to the restaurant.

30 **INT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Nick slides into a booth with Laurel.

NICK
You couldn't do it. She's your
mother.

LAUREL
Darlene didn't mother *us* Nick.
She protected that bastard.

NICK
Stop.

LAUREL
Shirley knows doesn't she?

Nick looks away.

NICK
No. Not exactly. She's been
asking - since you arrived.

LAUREL
And?

NICK
Family tragedy. If you don't
talk about it. It didn't happen,
right?

LAUREL
Does Darlene talk about it?

NICK
What do you think?

LAUREL
Oh right, Darlene. How's she
...

NICK
Addicted to *Bachelorette*. Rosary
beads in one hand and the TV
remote in the other.

WAITER fills up the coffees without speaking.

LAUREL
Religion and reality TV, what
could go wrong?

NICK
It's not like she has *you*.

LAUREL
She shouldn't have you either.
What she did to you.

NICK
(eyeing Donny)
Here's your husband, now.

DONNY
I hope ... I looked like I left
you alone long enough.

Donny messes up Nick's hair playfully, making a
valiant effort to deflect this chat. WAITER comes
over to do up the receipt with a debit machine.

WAITER
Is this together? There's a
family discount.

LAUREL
That's us. We'll take the *family*
discount. Thanks.

DONNY
I've got it.

NICK
You're both coming to dinner
tonight? Right?

LAUREL
(pause)

DONNY
We'll be there.

31 **EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Nick says goodbye to Laurel and surprises himself by giving her a long hug. Laurel softens to Nick and holds him close.

32 **INT. FAMILY HOME - EVENING**

Nick is cooking up a storm, clanging pots, flipping recipe books, and putting flowers on the table. Darlene and Florence whip their heads to Nick and then back to their TV room banter.

NICK
Ladies, a drink before dinner?

Nick has dinner in the oven. Florence blushes as Nick puts a cup towel on his arm as if he's a waiter and brings her a drink.

DARLENE
Nick, what are you up to now?

NICK
I'm making a gourmet dinner for the woman I dance with at Rangers.

DARLENE
Supper?

NICK
Dinner.

DARLENE
Sure, it's still light out.

NICK
We're all going to have a sit down *dinner*. Her daughter is coming.

DARLENE
Does this woman have a name?

NICK
Shirley. And her daughter is
Tasha.

FLORENCE
So you're dating a family. Mind
now.

Darlene and Florence choke over their drinks at the
same time.

NICK
She's just little.

DARLENE
They're all little to start
with, my dear.

Door bell rings. Shirley comes in with Tasha,
standing in front of Darlene.

SHIRLEY
(looks to Nick for
an introduction)
I'm Shirley.

NICK
Sorry. Sorry. Ma, this is
Shirley.

Shirley reaches out to shake hands and then plunks
herself on the couch. Florence and Darlene look beside
themselves.

DARLENE
You would think I never taught
that man any manners. I did,
you know.

SHIRLEY
(laughs)
He's always a gentleman with me.
If that helps.

DARLENE

Now what do you do my dear?
Besides dance at Rangers.

SHIRLEY

I just started a gig today.
Restaurant work for now.

DARLENE

I see. It must be a tough town.
On your own and all.
(nods to Tasha)

SHIRLEY

That's new. Being on my own.

DARLENE

I see.
(busting to ask)

SHIRLEY

I mean besides for Nick.

Darlene glances to Shirley and Florence.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Nick said he's only lived with
you. Who knows maybe I can take
him out from under your feet.

DARLENE

(serious laugh)
He's not going anywhere...

FLORENCE

Too soon for that I'm sure.

SHIRLEY

We've been hanging out for a
while.

DARLENE

I see...

Nick overhears every word but scurries through the
kitchen while playing with Tasha.

NICK
Dinner's served.

33 **EXT. FAMILY HOME - EVENING**

Laurel and Donny pull up to the house. Laurel gets out of the car and walks alone to the door and raises her hand to knock. She stops, and waits and waits. She suddenly turns, gets back in the car, and we see her mumble to Donny as they drive off.

34 **INT. FAMILY HOME - EVENING**

Ladies walk to the table. There are two extra places set and the chairs remain empty. Nick quickly removes the placemats hoping for Darlene not to notice.

SHIRLEY
This looks amazing.

FLORENCE
Such a surprise.

DARLENE
Who's the other places set for?

NICK
(makes excuses)
Ah, Andy and a new girlfriend said they may drop by. He had to work late.

DARLENE
You're all looking to 'date' now, then? This is as good as our show, Flo.
(laughs)

SHIRLEY
What show is that?

DARLENE
Bachelorette. Do you watch?

SHIRLEY

Nah.
 (smiles to Nick)
 I'm *good*.

FLORENCE

(laughs)
 Cheers.

NICK

(looks up and clinks
 glasses)
 Cheers!

35 **INT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Nick is sitting at a table eyeing Shirley while she works her shift. He finishes up his coffee winking at her but she'll have no part of it as she scurries to the next table. He leaves a twenty on the table and gives a nod and smile on his way out.

NICK

See you later ...

Shirley tries to ignore him so the other waiters don't see her wasting time. Nick keeps looking back, blowing kisses. She brushes him off.

36 **EXT. FRONT LAWN- YARD SALE - NEXT DAY**

Nick walks up to Shirley's front lawn and she has a folding table with kitchen items laid out. Tasha has a tin can with money. There are big items behind her like couches and end tables and lamps.

SHIRLEY

Need a lamp?

Nick laughs and fondles salt and pepper shakers on the table, moving them like chess pieces.

NICK

So, I guess Mr. Shirley didn't have a change of heart at the airport.

SHIRLEY

You could say that. I think he screamed *freedom* when he crossed the ocean.

NICK

He's loss.

SHIRLEY

Ahhh, that's the kind of guy you are. You say all the right things.

NICK

You're on a front lawn, with your life in boxes. It's easy to be kind.

SHIRLEY

I've bounced back before. If it's pity your handing out.

NICK

I never saw much use for pity, myself.

Nick starts to back up walking while still talking and looking towards Shirley. He keeps walking backwards.

NICK (CONT'D)

But if you need a roof over your head for you and Tasha ...

SHIRLEY

With you and your Mom?!!

NICK

(laughs)
She'll hardly know your there.

SHIRLEY
 Your Mom got eyes in the back of
 her head, when it comes to you.
 (laughs)

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
 Watch where your walking.

Nick stumbles over a twig on the ground, while still walking backwards, but maintains his balance.

NICK
 Think about it.
 (blows them a kiss)

TASHA
 (low voice)
 Mom, why is he walking like
 that.

SHIRLEY
 (blushes)
 Cause he's a little goofy.
 Beautiful. But goofy.

TASHA
 Okay.

Nick is in the distance, walking down the road. He's walking the right way since leaving Shirley's front lawn. Shirley and Tasha look on.

37 **EXT. NEIGHBOURHOOD STREET - DAY**

Nick continues to walk along a neighbourhood street, past corner stores. As he walks through the town he sees people walking as if in slow motion. They walk toward Nick and steer clear of spruce buds worms hanging from the trees. From a distance you can't see the worms, just the people making awkward moves to avoid the worms.

Nick walks further and sees a homeless woman, MARG, dressed in a fur leopard pattern coat, with costume jewelry on as if going to a ball. She is pulling a carry on suitcase, that is rickety over the sidewalk.

MARG

God damn mother fucking prick.
Son of a cock sucker prostitute
on steroids.

Nick gets closer to MARG and they pass each other.

MARG (CONT'D)

Another Beautiful day.

NICK

Indeed.

Nick continues down the road before he sees a kid, LEO, sitting outside a Take Out on the curb, tossing an empty tin can and rocks on the gravel.

LEO

Hey mister, got some spare
change.

NICK

I do. What's it for...

LEO

Fries and the machines.

NICK

(hands him some
money)

They let you play the machines?

LEO

Dad plays too. It's all good.
(runs off)

38 **EXT. FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON**

Shirley gets dropped off outside Nick's house and lands on the doorstep with boxes.

Shirley, wearing jean shorts, gets Tasha to move boxes by her side. Nick looks on, impressed.

39 **INT. FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON**

Nick's looks into the window sheepishly as if he's up to something taking quick glances back to Darlene in the living room. He rushes to the lawn to get Shirley. Darlene opens the door and Shirley and Tasha file in, Nick comes up from behind. Shirley's boxes and toys are wall to wall, a bike in the living room. Darlene is dumbfounded.

DARLENE

(to Shirley)

This is not *your* house my dear.
You have the wrong address.

Nick steps in between Darlene and Shirley.

NICK

Shirley ran into some bad luck-
with her new place.

DARLENE

Nick, is this really happening?

Nick takes Darlene aside.

NICK

Oh it's happening. I want Shirl
and I to give this a try.

DARLENE

This is quite a 'try' Nick. I
think we're in it now. Knee
deep.

Nick sees Darlene is easing up and turns to Shirley.

NICK

It'll be fine.

MONTHS LATER:

40 **INT. FAMILY HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Nick and Shirley fool around in bed and afterward Shirley is lying awake looking at the ceiling like a married couple, rather than a 'Rangers Pick Up' romance. Nick snores.

NICK
(nightmare, screaming)
No, stop. STOP. STOP.

SHIRLEY
Nick. Nick.

Shirley is shaking as she tries to wake Nick up. He rolls into the blankets, holding her tight.

NICK
It's just a bad dream. It comes
and goes.

Shirley stares at the ceiling bewildered.

41 **INT. FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - MORNING**

Tasha straggles out of the bedroom hallway. Darlene is pouring cereal and milk, popping toast, getting lunch ready. Her kitchen handiwork is seamless.

DARLENE
You think those two were newly
weds, hove off in bed.

TASHA
Grandma Darlene, are Mom and
Uncle Nick getting married?

DARLENE
Well, not if you call him Uncle
Nick. Rascal, I hope you don't
say that at school.

TASHA

Mom said Nick is the one, and he treats her like gold.

DARLENE

My son has a warm heart, and after what he's been through...

TASHA

Did you have a husband?

Darlene moves faster in the kitchen, pushing around jars, sandwich bags, juice boxes. Addled.

DARLENE

Yes, I had a husband and Nick had a father, but he was sick and didn't pull through. Now you need to get going. Did you say grace this morning?

Shirley stumbles out of the hallway with bedhead after a restless night. Nick follows behind and throws on a t-shirt.

SHIRLEY

Grace at breakfast Darlene. Enough already!

DARLENE

Nick! Do you drive anymore? Can you get her to school to learn something?

Nick grabs Tasha's knapsack and lunch, kisses Shirley, and heads out the door laughing with Tasha on the way.

DARLENE (CONT'D)

Your youngster told me you want to marry Nick.

SHIRLEY

You know Darlene your family needs to start telling the truth. What 'sickness' did Nick's father die from exactly?

Darlene stands to attention like a sergeant.

DARLENE

Now, you listen here. Nick and I are in the same house and that says it all. Not many others would've got through.

SHIRLEY

Got through what? Just tell me!

DARLENE

(ignores her)

That tight arse of yours may get you work at the Steakhouse but your youngster needs to be raised and Nick can't be pushed.

SHIRLEY

My tight ass might be the only thing keeping him from killing you. Is that Christian enough for you?

42 **EXT. SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - MORNING**

Nick pulls up to the school and lets Tasha out. He laughs, breathing in the moment. Nick's cell phone rings breaking his trance. He answers to a young woman's voice.

LUCY

Is Nick there?

NICK

This is he.

LUCY
I... I'm in Rose Blanche.

NICK
(silence)

LUCY
(pause, shaky voice)
I'm your daughter. Lucy.

Nick stops dead in his tracks.

43 **INT. BAR ON THE BOAT - DAY**

Nick enters the bar upstairs. He's familiar with the BARTENDER, DORIS (46), they know each other's story.

DORIS
Well now, look what the wind
blew in. It's been a while.

NICK
Long time.

DORIS
Strange time of year to come
back.

NICK
Lucy called me. LUCY HILL.

DORIS
So, she finally caught up with
you?

NICK
How the hell... did my daughter
grow up in a town with one corner
store and I not know.

DORIS
Jesus Nick. She just got back.
If she was here I would have let
you know. *Honest.*

*

NICK

But you knew. You *all* knew.

DORIS

That's on Rose. She hardly thought you two would stick it out. Let alone with a baby.

NICK

But she didn't ask.

DORIS

No ...

NICK

And then it was *too late*.

Nick paces the bar. There's a tourist ad on TV. In front of Nick is a standee (cardboard posterboard) replica of the family from the ad by a lighthouse.

NICK (CONT'D)

There's the Rose Blanche we all knew and loved. Guess they don't give a tour of the Border Lounge anymore.

DORIS

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for it all, my love.

Nick looks down and sees the standees in front of him and with one full swing of his arm he knocks the Mom and Dad over. The child standee and lighthouse tip with the hit but are still intact.

NICK

(very embarrassed)

Sorry. Sorry Doris. I'm a wreck.

DORIS

She's here. She's here, *now*.

Doris smiles, used to a rowdy crowd. Nick motions to pick up the standees.

DORIS (CONT'D)
 (picking up the
 cardboard standees)
 Leave it. You go find that
 daughter of yours.

Nick smiles back and leaves the boat.

44 **INT. BORDER LOUNGE BAR - AFTERNOON**

Nick takes a seat across from Lucy. He draws close and LUCY leans forward, keen to see everything about Nick, but she's cold and shut down and sips on a beer.

NICK
 Lucy?

LUCY
 I didn't think you would show.
 I suppose there's some courage
 left in you.

NICK
 Lucy, I would've been here.

LUCY
 I'm sure.

NICK
 I tried ...

LUCY
 Like father like son, I suppose.

NICK
 Like father *like* son.

BARTENDER comes over.

NICK (CONT'D)
 (pause on what
 Lucy said)
 Coke, please.

LUCY
 You carry your own flask? So
 they don't cut you off.

NICK
 (upset)
 You think I'm a drunk? Like my
 father.

Nick backtracks.

NICK (CONT'D)
 I don't know what they told you.
 My Father was a drunk.

Lucy is thrown for a loop.

NICK (CONT'D)
 I've only known *sober*. Stone
 sober.

Lucy loosens up.

LUCY
 (Pause)
 My folks are good. But I don't
 think Cape Breton is *me*.

NICK
 Why did you come here? How did
 you know?

LUCY
 (angry voice)
 I called the agency and they
 gave me your file. Or Rose's.
 My *Mom*.

NICK
 I wish you had called me. *Sooner*.

LUCY
(ignores him)
I'm a truck driver.

NICK
A truck driver. I didn't see
that coming.

LUCY
My parents don't want me to
drive a truck.

NICK
I can see why they're worried.
I'm worried.

LUCY
(snarky)
You're worried - now.

NICK
We had to get away.

LUCY
Why Ontario?

NICK
Darlene, my mother, your Gran...
she had been through a lot.

LUCY
What would Rose say? You and I
at *the Border*?

NICK
(gasps for air)
Not sure. I think she would
like *it*.

LUCY
(reluctantly)
People say you *loved* her.

NICK
(stammers)
I do... More than anything.

LUCY
 (snide)
 So what's your job?

NICK
 I'm an insurance adjuster.
 There was nothing back home.
 (skips a beat)
 I didn't know about you ...

LUCY
 And I bet that just changes
 everything.

NICK
 It changes a lot. I want you to
 come to our home. I want you to
 be with us. I want to know you.

LUCY
 You say I WANT a lot.
 (pause)
 I drive that way sometimes.
 Maybe if there's a shipment,
 I'll give you a call.

NICK
 I'd like that.

LUCY
 We'll see.

Nick absorbs the dreaded bar, it makes him shudder.

45 **EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY**

Nick drives down a familiar dirt road with an overgrown field, ROSE'S GRAVESITE. He turns off the truck and looks out the window, as if to consider getting out. And then he just sits there staring into the distance towards the field. And sits. We hear the wind blow through the the trees by the gravesite and the rustle of grass in the field.

Nick goes to start the truck again and has to turn ever nob and switch at least 6 to 8 times. Nick's nervous ritual takes him through turning on and off heat until its perfect, adjusting the seat, moving the rearview mirror, until he has settled his anxiety and obsessive disorder.

After Nick settles, he makes a quick jolt and backs the truck out of the dirt road.

46 **EXT. FAMILY HOME - MORNING, ALDERSHOT**

Darlene carefully lays the laundry basket on the stoop in the back garden and starts to reel in the clothesline. Mirror image to her is her neighbour, Florence, hanging out her own clothes.

FLORENCE

Another beautiful day.

(pause)

That Shirley ain't much of it.

DARLENE

It's something to raise a young one now. What they aren't expected to have. Fresh fruit and supplies galore.

FLORENCE

It's like your denying the world another genius if you send them to school with a slice of turnip and a hand carved pencil.

DARLENE

Any news from home?

FLORENCE

Moose accidents, government has more debt. How's Nick?

DARLENE

He's good.

(MORE)

DARLENE (CONT'D)
 (tries to cover)
 Him and Andy are working
 evenings.

FLORENCE
 He seems good with Tasha.

DARLENE
 Young Tasha can't see for nothing
 but Nick.

Florence picks up her basket.

FLORENCE
 I'll see you Sunday and maybe
 before. Getting down to the
 last of it with Bachelorette.

DARLENE
 Sophie Monk's not much of it.
 He can do better.

FLORENCE
 Shocking.

DARLENE
 Bring something sweet.

They laugh. Darlene smells the clothes on the line.

47 **INT. FAMILY HOME -LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Darlene rushes to the phone, expecting Nick's call.
 Shirley tries to get there first but is bowled over
 by Darlene, and accepting defeat, goes back to get
 ready.

DARLENE
 I can't believe you left me like
 this Nick.

NICK
 Where's Shirley?

DARLENE

Getting ready. The restaurant called her to come in.

NICK

Let me talk to her?

DARLENE

First things first. Have you seen her? Lucy.

NICK

She's beautiful, Mom. Just beautiful.

Darlene wells up with tears and Shirley comes in looking to have the phone. Darlene reluctantly hands it over, and Shirley talks 'about' Darlene while looking directly at her.

SHIRLEY

So, did she tell you? That I am not good enough for you? And how are we going to get by on a waitress salary, anyway?

NICK

Noooo. She said you were called in to work.

SHIRLEY

Well that's a first. You know, she'll never say we're okay.

NICK

We are okay. That's all that matters.

SHIRLEY

What's happening there? Is Lucy with you?

Darlene grabs the phone back.

DARLENE
She's *my* granddaughter.

NICK
I know Mom. I know. I promise
you'll get to see her.

DARLENE
You okay? In that *town*.

NICK
It's about Lucy now. That's
all. I'll say more when I get
back.

Darlene is overcome. Shirley gently takes the phone from Darlene and hangs it up, looking in each others eyes.

48 **INT. FAMILY HOME- KITCHEN - DAY**

Shirley is putting away the dishes, looking preoccupied.

SHIRLEY
They want me to work in
accounting. I can work my way
up.

DARLENE
He didn't ask for a diploma?

SHIRLEY
The manager is a SHE, Darlene.
Some managers are women now.
Don't you know.

DARLENE
I do know. I had my own
secretarial done at 18 and worked
until I got married.

SHIRLEY
 (ignores her)
 They'll train me. Can you
 believe it? They want me in an
 office! This is my chance.

DARLENE
 Your chance?

SHIRLEY
 I start right away.

DARLENE
 What Shirley wants, Shirley
 gets.

SHIRLEY
 I have a sitter coming by.

DARLENE
 What?! Someone else in the
 house.

SHIRLEY
 I met her at the restaurant.
 She's great. Lan is her name.

Doorbell rings. LAN (16) is at the door and Shirley
 lets her in and goes over the babysitting rules.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
 Lan this is Darlene, Mrs.
 Osmond.

LAN
 Hi.

SHIRLEY
 Well, I'm off.

Darlene looks confused with the arrival of the
 babysitter and glares toward Shirley as she shuts the
 door. She tries to be polite to Lan, who has now
 slumped onto the couch with her phone and not noticed
 TASHA.

DARLENE

You go to school close by?

LAN

Private school, up past the
ridge.

DARLENE

Oh.

(nods as if to say
you're a wealthy
family)

You like kids, then?

LAN

(TASHA moves in
beside her)

Sure. Who doesn't?

DARLENE

Not yet though?

(laughs)

What's your interest at school?

LAN

Poetry. Beat poetry - really.
Free verse. I'm saving up to
print my book.

DARLENE

Oh, that's smart. Poetry. Beat
poetry, you say. Kids love that.
(trying to be
serious)

Tasha pulls on Lan to go to the garden and she gets
up and looks back to grab her poetry notes.

LAN

Kids are natural poets. They
should exploit their talents.

DARLENE

(pause)

You help her now. Treehouse is high up.

49 **INT. FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

Nick comes in through the door greeted by Darlene.

DARLENE

What did Lucy say?

Nick pulls out his phone and shows Darlene the photos inside the Border Lounge with Lucy.

DARLENE (CONT'D)

You took her there?

NICK

(gasps)

Lucy said to meet there.

Nick holds Darlene tight. Shirley comes in the front door and sits along side of them on the couch without saying a word.

NICK (CONT'D)

She thought I was a drunk.

Nick clears his eyes.

DARLENE

Did she stay?

NICK

She did. I asked her to come here.

DARLENE

She has to.

Nick's voice trails off as they sit close to each other and he pulls Shirley in tight.

50 INT. MERIT INSURANCE AGENCY - DAY

Nick and Andy are hovering over their paperwork.
Andy swivels around in his chair.

ANDY

(holding up a file)

I see what your trying to do
here, you know.

Nick stares directly into Andy's eyes.

NICK

Sarah's grandmother didn't even
know her daughter was going to
take her life. How do we really
know?

ANDY

She drove over the bridge, Nick.

NICK

It could've been her heart.
Heart trouble. It happens.

ANDY

Nick... *I'm warning you.*

NICK

Weather conditions were poor.
Roads were slick from *all* weather
reports.

ANDY

And what Sarah said?

NICK

She's a child. We're one of the
last companies not claiming this
kind of death in insurance
policies.

ANDY

You want to change head office
policy. Go ahead.

(MORE)

ANDY (CONT'D)
 (shakes the file)
 But this is *not* going to fly.

NICK
 I'm not asking you to stick your neck out. This is me. I've been in a car when a parent decides for *me*. It's not pretty. You're never a kid again after *that* happens.

ANDY
 I can't unknow what I know. If you are taking this on. You have to do it straight up.

NICK
 Or what?

ANDY
 Don't go there, Nick.

NICK
 (louder)
 We have to fucking do something.

Nick storms off and heads out of the office.

51 **INT./EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY**

Nick picks up the laundry basket from the foot of Darlene's chair, where she plays crib with Tasha.

NICK
 This clean?

DARLENE
 If it's wet, it's clean. Isn't Shirley going to help with that?
 (smiles with Tasha)

Nick takes the clothes out to the clothesline on the stoop, and ignores Darlene.

Shirley storms out of the bedroom after hearing Darlene.

Florence is hanging out her own clothes on the line, mirror image across from Nick.

INTERCUT; Scenes 52 and 53.

52 **EXT. FAMILY HOME CLOTHESLINE - DAY**

 FLORENCE
 You're in an awful way Nick.

 NICK
 Really. How so?

 FLORENCE
 I don't think Darlene can take
 it.

Nick looks in through the patio doors and Darlene is still laughing with Tasha.

 NICK
 Is that so? What do you think
 we should do?

 FLORENCE
 I've this niece, now she's old
 enough to be with you. She
 doesn't have any youngsters and
 she's doing that Zumba. She's
 something.

 NICK
 You must think I've mojo to
 spare. I'm fine where I'm to,
 thanks.

53 **INT. FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Shirley storms into the living room carrying towels and sheets in a basket, after folding most of them. She slams the basket onto the floor.

SHIRLEY

Did I hear you asking about chores, Darlene?

DARLENE

I was just checking in.

SHIRLEY

Checking in. I'm an adult you know. It's not like you can withhold my allowance, or your son, if I don't tidy up.

DARLENE

We're just used to having things a certain way.

SHIRLEY

I noticed!! Like do you mind telling me what's with Nick moving things 100 times to make sure it's in its *place*.

DARLENE

(startled)

He just likes to have things just so, that's all.

(then strong headed)

You could learn from him and be so careful.

SHIRLEY

It's not good, Darlene. He's been through something.

Darlene stands up in a flurry.

DARLENE

You listen here. If Nick wants you here. Then that's that. But we come as we are, you understand.

SHIRLEY

We.

DARLENE

Yes, We.

Tasha has taken to Darlene. And takes her hand to go to the kitchen for a snack. Shirley looks on in disbelief to the two bonding.

DARLENE (CONT'D)

There now Tasha, were going to have ice cream.

Darlene reaches for the cones on the second shelf and takes a pain in her side and cripples over a little holding her side while standing.

Shirley sidetracked and still folding towels, hears Darlene, and drops the clothes running to her in the kitchen.

SHIRLEY

Darlene. Darlene. You alright.

DARLENE

Stop your foolishness. It's nothing. We just need the cones, right Tasha.

(smiles to her)

Mommy will pass them to us.

Shirley steps back in her stride and passes the cones. She looks down and sees Tasha's big smile towards Darlene, and says nothing and smiles too.

54 **EXT. FAMILY HOME CLOTHESLINE - DAY**

FLORENCE

Darlene's not getting any younger. Then it's all on you.

Nick gets unnerved.

NICK

Why, did she say something?

FLORENCE
She's too proud for that. But
I'd keep an eye on her.

Florence rushes in her house, she has said too much.

Nick looks in to see Darlene, Shirley and Tasha sitting and having ice cream cones at the kitchen table. Nick smiles.

55 **INT. CLINIC WAITING ROOM - MORNING**

Darlene walks up to the receptionist, LEAH (42), looks down at her chart. CLOSE UP on the medical chart report, possible signs of 'congestive heart failure'.

LEAH
(reading to herself
the diagnosis)
Shouldn't be too much longer.

DARLENE
Okay. Thank you.

LEAH
(with zero emotion)
Another beautiful day.

DARLENE
(cheerful)
Just put the clothes on the
line...

LEAH
(cuts her off)
Doctor will take you now.

56 **INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING**

Darlene stands with the doctor, anxious.

DOCTOR
There are signs you're at risk
of congestive heart failure.

DARLENE
I thought it was indigestion,
comes right after dinner.

DOCTOR
No, I'm afraid it's more than
indigestion. Tightness in your
chest.

DARLENE
(startled)
What is it Doctor?

DOCTOR
You have high levels of
cholesterol and that can lead to
heart failure.

DARLENE
No more cooked dinner?

DOCTOR
You have to take this seriously.
Less 'jiggs dinner' is best.

DARLENE
Shame.

DOCTOR
If the pain continues, get to a
hospital. Understood?

DARLENE
I will. I promise.

57 **INT. FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

Nick goes and taps on Darlene's door, gently. Nick walks in. Darlene is in her room and she's oddly quiet. He walks over and sits on her bed. Holds her hand.

NICK
You were gone a while.
Everything alright?

DARLENE
Just a check up. Foolishness.

NICK
Maybe, we're too much. We can
get our own place now that
Shirley is doing better.

DARLENE
And leave me in this big old
house with Flo bothering me.

NICK
Ma, we've never been apart. But
it's time for me to take care of
you now. What did he say?

DARLENE
I need to watch my cholesterol,
or there could be a scare with
heart.

NICK
You promise to take his advice
this time?

DARLENE
God as my witness. Where's
Tasha? I started teaching her
how to play crib.

NICK
In her room. Reading.
(smiles)
Rest.

Nick passes Darlene 2 pairs of rosary beads puts them in her hand, he puts a blanket over her and starts to leave. Darlene calls to him before he leaves the room.

DARLENE
Nick?

NICK
Yeah, Mom?

DARLENE
Laurel was here. She couldn't
do it? She couldn't come see
me?

NICK
(looks down)
How did you know?

DARLENE
I just know.

NICK
Florence.

DARLENE
Nick.

NICK
Yeah, Mom?

DARLENE
If something happens. Tell her
I tried.

NICK
Nothing's going to happen to
you. We need you.

DARLENE
Hope so. God willing.

58 **INT. BISTRO - EVENING, ALDERSHOT**

Laurel and Donny are at the bar having a glass of
wine.

LAUREL
All my family from home drink.
(MORE)

LAUREL (CONT'D)

It's so odd Nick doesn't. And yet here we are - again. Cheers to closing the deal.

DONNY

Are you drinking too much?
(looks at watch)

LAUREL

I drink when I want to ... not be here.

DONNY

Not here?

LAUREL

Not like that. I hide.
(voice starts to crack)
Dad was always loaded. Beating on Nick. Darlene knew.

DONNY

So, your punishing Nick too?

LAUREL

Nick forgave her, not me. He lives with her for fucks sake.

Laurel gives Donny a stern look.

DONNY

They're family.

LAUREL

He was just a kid.

DONNY

Hard to explain Rose Blanche now, let alone 40 years ago.

LAUREL

I should've stopped him.

DONNY

You were just a kid.

LAUREL

Dead is too good for that old man. I wanted him to suffer.

Donny pulls Laurel close to him and gives her a kiss on top of her head.

DONNY

I love you. You know that.

LAUREL

We've driven here *again*. I have to go see her this time.

Donny gets distracted by a beautiful woman who walks up, and catches his eye. They wink at each other and Laurel takes it in from the corner of her eye.

Donny gazes at the woman who appears tipsy as she walks by. Laurel waits for a few seconds.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Are you admiring that drunken woman while I'm falling apart? Fuck... I've got to get out of here.

Laurel rushes to the door abruptly pushes past the DRUNKEN WOMAN on the way with Donny running after her.

59 **EXT. BISTRO - EVENING**

Laurel bolts outside grabbing the first taxi she sees. Donny is chasing after her, but she is gone.

60 **INT. FAMILY HOME - EVENING**

Nick hears the front door bolt open and thinks Shirley has returned.

NICK
Shirl, you're back...

Laurel storms in leaving a taxi running outside.

LAUREL
Where is she?

NICK
What the fuck are you doing,
Laurel?

Laurel barrels down the hallway swinging open bedroom doors until she finds Darlene in her bedroom.

LAUREL
Where the fuck is she?

NICK
She's sick Laurel. Get out.
She's had heart trouble.

LAUREL
Really? How's that possible?

61 **INT. DARLENE'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

Laurel swings open the door and Nick follows. Darlene sits bolt upright in bed.

DARLENE
So you're here. 30 years and now
you're here.

LAUREL
I've tried to come over this
door step more times than you'll
ever know.
(crying)
We were just kids.

NICK
STOP. Just fucking STOP.

DARLENE

Hush. Let her speak.

LAUREL

You don't think I saw it coming?
Every fucking night he came
home. I was scared. Scared for
you ...

(looks to Nick)

NICK

He's gone. Let it go.

LAUREL

It could've been *me*.

NICK

I know. I fucking know. You
don't think I see *him* every god
damn fucking night.

LAUREL

(turns to Darlene)

You should've stopped him. This
is on you.

Darlene is going mad with her rosary beads.

DARLENE

I tried to stop that man every
night.

Nick turns on Darlene for the first time.

NICK

And *I* could stop him? I was 11.

Laurel sits on the edge of the bed to calm her
drunkenness, her head in her hands. Darlene rubs her
back without Laurel noticing or acknowledging it.

LAUREL

(hysterical)

Why? Fucking why?

DARLENE
I had no choice.

NICK
I had no choice.

LAUREL
And what about Shirley? What
have you told her?

NICK
I can't. She'll run just like
all the rest.

LAUREL
She has to know, Nick.

DARLENE
She's right.

Door opens loudly SHIRLEY comes in and she can feel the tension. She walks toward the bedroom, as Laurel hurls her way back through the hallway, almost knocking Shirley over, and runs out the front door.

SHIRLEY
I deserve to know what...

62 **INT. MERIT INSURANCE AGENCY - NIGHT**

Nick sits on his own in the office in the dark except for a lamp on over his desk. He has new paperwork drawn up for Lynda and Sarah's case. On the top of the page it reads: Insurance Adjuster Nick Osmond, Case File #11000 Final Report. Andy's name is not on the file.

CLOSE UP on the FILE: Cause of Death, poor visibility determined by weather, icy and life threatening road conditions. Driver deceased.

Nick pauses and then with a sudden gesture signs the report. He closes the file, and brings it into his boss's office.

Abruptly he leaves the office for the night.

63 **INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT**

LAN (Babysitter,16) cautiously walks to the front of the coffee shop to read her beat poetry (by Kinnie Starr), as if on a stage. Lan's high school mates are in the audience, but also some local customers.

LAN

(nervous)

It's a series on loneliness.

There is sporadic clapping throughout the coffee shop.

LAN (CONT'D)

Come, come let's sleep

Come, come let's sleep

And in the mornings, I wake
satisfied

Because the first thing I see is
your eyes

And it makes me wanna stumble
into my day

I like to try things your way
Thinking about them your way

Andy happens to be there getting a coffee and sees Lan starting to read. He looks towards Lan and at the same time through a big window pane out onto the street. On the street Andy can see a woman MEI (Lan's Mom) who is standing next to her car on the road with indicators flashing. Mei stands outside to see Lan read, making sure she is out of sight of Lan, and takes a photo of her.

ANDY

(smiles to Mei)

MEI

(smiles back to
Andy)

Andy sits for a little longer hearing Lan's poetry and then heads outside to be closer to Mei.

64 **EXT. COFFEE SHOP - EVENING**

Andy walks over to Mei's car where she is watching Lan read. Lan reading (V.O.) is very low in the background.

MEI

(smiling to Andy)

I can't let Lan see me while she's reading.

ANDY

(puts his finger to his lips)

Your secrets safe with me.

MEI

Daughters are tough to raise.

PAN of inside the coffee shop Lan's reading is being met with praise and applause from her peers.

ANDY

I believe you. I've always wanted kids.

MEI

Thanks for not making me feel like a complete fool.

ANDY

Nonsense. Someday she'll know how much you love her.

MEI

Hope so ...

Mei starts to get in her car. Andy pushes the door closed gently. Mei hesitates, rolls down the window, and pulls out her business card and passes it to Andy.

MEI (CONT'D)

(sheepish)

That's my number in case you'd
ever like to go for a coffee.

ANDY

I would love that.

MEI

Just not my daughter's coffee
shop.

ANDY

(laughs, looks at
the card)

I'll give you a call ... Mei.
I'm Andy.

MEI

Happy to meet you.

Andy walks on up ahead and Mei takes one more look at
her daughter inside and then drives off.

65 **EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - PARKING LOT - MORNING**

Andy is in the parking lot waiting for Nick. Nick
comes back beaming with pride with photos of Lucy.
He compares his photo to the tattered one of Rose he
has in his wallet. They drive out of the parking
lot.

NICK

She looks just like Rose.

ANDY

For such a messed up guy you're
starting to look like quite the
family man.

NICK

I need to make this work with
Lucy. Darlene needs this.

ANDY

You will.

NICK

How did your date go the other night?

ANDY

The date at Rangers- nah. She left early.

NICK

Before you had a run in with my sister?

ANDY

Your sister was great. Well to me she was great.

Nick glares at him.

NICK

It's a pretty loaded past.

ANDY

I know. I may have met someone last night at the coffee shop.

NICK

Really. That's great. I hope it works out. This thing with Shirley has a lot of rough edges but I think it's all I want.

ANDY

And it's back to you ...

Nick laughs.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Aren't those *your* rough edges?

NICK

(laughs)

You know me too well.

66 **EXT. STREET DRIVING - MORNING**

NICK

Tasha is so funny. Darlene is
teaching her crib...

(stops dead in his
tracks)

67 **EXT. STREET CROSSWALK - MORNING**

Nick and Andy drive and there is a school group of kids up ahead on a crosswalk with their teachers. Nick hears brakes screech to an abrupt halt. Andy and Nick slam on their brakes. A teacher and two students have been knocked down.

Nick runs from the jeep. SIRENS blaring. The ambulance has pulled up with the medics. Nick looks up and sees TASHA with the medics near her, and does a quick look back to the driver who has hit the little girls and is still in the car.

Nick bolts over to the car and leans in through the window of the driver who has hit the kids and is visibly shaken. Nick filled with RAGE grabs the MAN by the collar.

NICK

What the fuck are you doing.
They're just kids. They're just
kids. You could've killed them!

FLASHBACK:

68 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - ROSE BLANCHE, 1980**

SLOW MOTION of keys going through the air over the bonnet of the car. A SHOT of Laurel and her friends happily playing hopscotch on the highway.

DARRELL (V.O.)

You take the wheel tonight, son.

NICK (V.O.)

I'm 11.

DARRELL (V.O.)

Don't be a wuss.

NICK

(pause)

DARRELL (V.O.)

Help the old man out. When I
was your age ...

FLASHBACK ENDS.

69 **EXT. STREET CROSSWALK - MORNING**

Andy and a Police Officer rush over to Nick's side to pull him off the MAN who has caused the accident. Nick is trembling.

70 **INT. HOSPITAL - MORNING**

Shirley is in the hospital room with Tasha on a stretcher. Tasha is fully alert with scrapes on her head. Doctor MEI Li, (Lan's Mom) looks over Tasha. Tasha is bright, like nothing happened.

MEI

Everything is fine. She mainly has some bruising.

SHIRLEY

Are you sure she's okay? Please make sure.

MEI

Her vitals are normal. Just keep an eye on her and call if you have any concerns. She should rest.

Dr. Mei heads out to take care of other patients.

SHIRLEY

It's not your fault, honey.
It's not.

TASHA

Nick had a car accident when he
was small.

SHIRLEY

How do you know that?

TASHA

I heard that woman the other
night. Screaming with Grandma
Darlene.

SHIRLEY

Laurel. Laurel is Nick's sister.

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

(looks to Tasha)

Don't you worry about that.
You're okay now.

Shirley looks over Tasha.

71 **INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - MORNING**

Nick walks to the waiting area and joins Andy, waiting
patiently.

ANDY

How's Tasha?

NICK

She's fine. Just bruises.
Listen Andy about me leaning in
on that driver.

ANDY

It looked pretty scary there.
Like lawsuit scary.

NICK
Thanks for saving me. I could've
been arrested.

ANDY
You lost control. You scared me.

NICK
I scared myself. I can't be that
guy.

ANDY
What guy?

NICK
My father.

ANDY
You're *not* your father.

NICK
It takes more than not drinking
to make you *sober*. I have to get
honest with Shirley.

ANDY
She'll *feel* you not being honest.
Don't loose her.

NICK
I won't. If you're this smart
about love- it's time *you* had
someone.

ANDY
I'm working on it.

NICK
Love you man.

ANDY
You too.

72 INT. FAMILY HOME - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Shirley and Nick are digging through Shirley's clothes, picking out outfits for her workday. There are piles on the floor.

SHIRLEY
(holds up a short
skirt)
What about this one?

NICK
(laughs)

SHIRLEY
Will Darlene go see Lucy?

NICK
Darlene hasn't been back home
since we left.

SHIRLEY
That's 30 years ago.

NICK
Lucy'll come here.

SHIRLEY
What's she like?

Nick sits on the bed and breaths deep.

NICK
She's beautiful.

SHIRLEY
Like her mom?

NICK
(smiles)
I need to tell you something ...

Nick gets ready to talk and with that they hear a crash outside.

73 **EXT. BACKYARD - AFTERNOON**

Nick and Shirley both run outside, Tasha has fallen. Darlene darts out quickly from the living room.

NICK

Tasha, what the hell are you doing? You were almost killed!!

Darlene is quick to scream on top of Nick.

DARLENE

Nick, what are you doing? Don't you know how to watch a child?!

Nick looks over his shoulder in disbelief to Darlene. He catches Shirley's look, who is shocked by them both screaming.

NICK

(to Darlene, softer)

Don't *I* know how to watch a child. Are you lecturing *me*?

Nick walks past Darlene fuming with anger, and goes in the house, leaving Shirley with Tasha in her arms. Shirley looks furious but holds Tasha tight.

SHIRLEY

(to Tasha)

It's okay. It's okay, my love.

74 **INT. FAMILY HOME - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON**

Shirley returns to the bedroom in silence, walking past Nick and Darlene with Tasha in her arms, not wanting anything to do with them. She sits on the floor folding clothes and notices NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS under the bureau. She starts to pull them out, glances over her shoulder to make sure she is alone. Tasha is distracted reading on the bed.

75 INT. FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nick goes to the front door to leave and Darlene retreats to her armchair, rosary beads clenched.

DARLENE

Don't go.

NICK

(pauses)

DARLENE

Please Nick. Please. I know it's me.

NICK

(pauses, holds up
and doesn't move)

DARLENE

I know I caused this. I told you day in day out it wasn't your fault. You were just a child. I didn't tell you it was *my* fault.

Nick returns to the couch hands clasped around his eyes.

NICK

It was *his*...

DARLENE

Laurel is right. I should've packed the two of you up and left that miserable bastard.

NICK

You tried. I remember.

DARLENE

Laurel doesn't know that.

NICK

You have to tell her.

DARLENE

Laurel will never hear me. But
you Nick. You have to open up.
You have to tell Shirley.

NICK

I can't even talk to Shirley.
And now this screaming at Tasha.
She may never forgive me.

Tasha comes out to the hallway and sits with Grandma Darlene. Nick goes to the bedroom, too emotional to talk.

DARLENE

I didn't mean that hollering,
Tasha. You just gave me a
fright. But we'll do better. I
promise.

TASHA

Pinky swear?
(Tasha raises her
pinky to Darlene)

DARLENE

Pinky swear, my love.

76 **INT. FAMILY HOME- BEDROOM - AFTERNOON**

Shirley still sits on the floor with the newspaper. She slides the clipping out of the envelope, as Nick comes in the room. There is a photo of a car gone off the road and a caption. Nick looks to the floor and sees the clippings. Slowly he kneels down. Shirley is quiet.

NICK

So there he is. *My old man.*

77 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - ROSE BLANCHE, 1980 - FLASHBACK**

SLOW MOTION, car keys are tossed in the air over the bonnet. CLOSE UP Nick tries to catch the keys and is nervous and can barely hang on to them. Nick stumbles to the driver's side shaking and DARRELL, his father, goes towards the passenger side.

Nick gets in the car, he can just reach the gas peddle. Darrell is no sooner in the car and he nods off. Nick makes a turn onto the upper road and the car sways a little as it gets closer and closer to where Laurel is playing hopscotch and Nick screeches into the guardrail just missing Laurel and her friends. CLOSE UP Nick's eyes straight ahead lock with Laurels in fear.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

You were 11.

NICK (V.O.)

Tall enough to reach the gas peddle. He said I was a wuss if I didn't drive him home that night. I guess I showed him.

SHIRLEY (V.O.)

You were just a kid.

NICK (V.O.)

You weren't a child for long.
Father saw to that.

78 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - ROSE BLANCHE, 1980 - FLASHBACK**

Nick's head falls onto the steering wheel. CLOSE UP of the hopscotch game still on the road faded.

NICK (V.O.)

Police came to the driver's window and saw me- a kid.

(MORE)

NICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I was less than a foot from
 killing Laurel. And the old man
 was dead.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

79 **INT. FAMILY HOME - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON**

Shirley is holding Nick now and crying.

SHIRLEY
 That's why Laurel is so angry.

NICK
 It could've been her.

SHIRLEY
 She hates *him*.

NICK
 (shaking)
 I *can't* be him. Screaming at
 Tasha. It won't happen again.
 I mean it.

SHIRLEY
 You *can't* be him. No more.

NICK
 No more.
 (they kiss)

80 **INT. TRUCK STOP COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

Nick sits in a booth across from Lucy.

LUCY
 The answer is no.

NICK
 Don't be mean. It's my birthday.
 You have to come. Just for cake.

LUCY
Is cake really going to change
things?

NICK
Darlene said I couldn't make you
come.

LUCY
She said that?

NICK
(beat)
She's dying to see you.

LUCY
You're good. Guilt tripping me.

NICK
(smiles)
You've changed your mind?

LUCY
I have to drive back this way.

NICK
Darlene will be thrilled.

LUCY
(shakes her head)
Thrilled.

81 **EXT./INT. TRUCK - DAY**

Lucy gets aboard the truck and gets the gears ready.
Her cell phone rings, she doesn't recognize the number
but answers.

LAUREL
I'm a friend of your dad's.

LAUREL (CONT'D)
He gave me this number. Is this
Lucy?

LUCY (hesitates)

Yes.

LAUREL

It's really you. I'm your aunt.
He just told me... (sobbing like
a baby)

Lucy maintains her cool girl attitude.

LUCY

This is hard on you, I can tell.

Lucy hangs up. Looks straight ahead, eyes wide. She checks the levels and pulls out onto the highway.

82 **EXT. STREET DRIVING - DAY**

Nick drives and relives his chat with Lucy in his mind, seeing 4 or 5 moose running together and more and more start to populate in his mind.

83 **EXT. RANGERS BAR - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Nick rubs his eyes and shakes his head trying to see clearly. He parks alongside an Oldsmobile in the lot. Nick glances over a few times and the last time he looks he sees a young boy, BEN (11), sitting on his own. Nick gets out and taps on the window. The kid cautiously rolls down the window a little.

NICK

You okay?

BEN

Yeah.

NICK

What're you doing?

BEN

Waitin' for my Dad.

NICK
You've been waiting for a while?

BEN
All morning.

NICK
(looks at his watch)
It's almost 2.

BEN
(is a bit more
relaxed)
It's been a while.

NICK
You hungry?

BEN
(just a look)

84 **INT. RANGERS BAR - DAY**

Nick goes into the bar, familiar with the bartender. He clocks the bar. Andy and Mei (Lan's Mom) are having a drink. Nick smiles, finding solace in their romance. Nick looks around knowing the regulars, then he glares at one MAN with a cutting look who is visibly DRUNK, BEN'S FATHER.

NICK
(to the bartender)
Chips. Three bags. And a couple
of Coke. Keep the change.

Nick tosses the money on the bar and walks back out.

85 **EXT. RANGERS BAR - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Nick goes to the window but BEN has the door open on the passenger side as he sits in the driver's seat.

NICK
(gets in the car)
Shouldn't you be in school.

BEN
Dad said I could play hooky.

NICK
You spend much time waiting.

BEN
Oh, yeah.

NICK
Seems like forever, I bet.

BEN
(laughs, eating
chips)
Oh yeah!

NICK
(eating chips too)
You sit behind the wheel much?

BEN
I even *drove*.

NICK
Guess you had to, hey.

BEN
(quiet, serious)

NICK
I won't say. Want to play a
game.

Nick sees BEN'S FATHER come from the bar staggering drunk, just starting to close the barroom door.

BEN
(looks puzzled)

NICK
Let's lock the doors before your
Dad gets here.

BEN starts to lock the doors frantically.

BEN
(looks scared)

BEN'S FATHER comes up to the driver's door and pulls on the handle, swaying as he tries to open the door. BEN pushes harder on the already locked doors to make sure they are secure. He trembles with fear as his father's face is pressed against the glass. Nick locks his own door and the door behind him. Ben's FATHER pulls harder and harder on the car door and is swearing his head off. He doesn't have the strength, sways and retreats to the concrete bar steps and slumps over. Ben looks over to Nick, in awe, as if to say it worked.

Nick can't bare it. He goes into a fit of laughter. BEN sees his father weak from the booze and loves the game and starts to keel over with laughter too, joining Nick.

BEN (CONT'D)
Guess he's just going have to
wait.

NICK
(smiles, tears
roll down his
cheeks)
Guess so.

86 **EXT. FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON**

Florence knocks on the door and sings out to Darlene to go for a walk. Darlene comes out wearing sneakers, jogging pants and her signature house dress over it. Florence and Darlene walk down the sidewalk to the park.

FLORENCE
Congestive heart failure? What's
he mean by that?

DARLENE
(rosary beads in
hand)

Fancy term for heart trouble.
Doctor said to walk.

FLORENCE
That's a funny old cure. Didn't
he give you some pills?

DARLENE
How could we not know about
Lucy? Rose kept this from us?

FLORENCE
And Nick?

DARLENE
I just can't imagine no one
knew. You must've.

FLORENCE
Now Darlene, do you think if I
had wind of something this big,
I'd be able to keep it to myself?

DARLENE
True.

FLORENCE
And your doctor says this is it.
We walk to the park and that
should cure you?

DARLENE
It's the heart. It's a hard
thing to rip out if something
goes wrong.

FLORENCE
Yours has been ripped out that
many times my dear, I'm surprised
it still has a beat left.

DARLENE
Do you think he can handle it?

FLORENCE
 She's Nick's only child and your
 grandchild.

Darlene grasps her rosary beads tighter and takes out
 an extra pair for Florence.

DARLENE
 He's meeting her for coffee.
 It'll happen, God willing.

FLORENCE
 That's 2,200 steps. Better than
 a trip to the stove to boil the
 kettle, I suppose.

DARLENE
 (anxious)
 Let's get back.

87 **INT. FAMILY HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING**

Nick is looking in the bottom drawer and pulls out an
 engagement ring from a new box. Tasha follows him
 and sneaks up from behind. Nick opens the engagement
 box to a sparkling ring.

TASHA
 Wow. That's sooo pretty.

NICK
 Shhhh...
 (puts his finger
 to his lip and
 smiles)

TASHA
 Can I carry flowers if you and
 Mom get married?

NICK
 You certainly can.

Shirley opens the door and walks in on Tasha and Nick.

SHIRLEY
Are you bothering Nick so you
can stay up late?

NICK
She is cheering me up.

TASHA
I get to carry flowers.

SHIRLEY
(confused)
You do?
(looks to Nick)

Nick stands up and looks Shirley in the eyes.

NICK
Let's get married?

TASHA
(jumping up and
down)
YES.

SHIRLEY
YES. Yes, I do.
(laughs)

Darlene comes in the bedroom with the laundry basket.

TASHA
We're getting married.

DARLENE
Oh, we are, are we? Well that
means more hands to fold the
clothes.
(laughs)

88 INT. FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nick, Shirley, Tasha and Darlene run to the window.
'She's here'. Lucy walks into the house.

LUCY
So, this is my family.

NICK
This is us. Meet, Lucy, Shirley?

LUCY
(interrupts)
We've *all* really just met. Isn't
that right, Nick?

SHIRLEY
Give Lucy space, Tasha.

Shirley reaches out warmly to Lucy, and takes Lucy's
hands. Lucy notices Shirley's engagement ring.

LUCY
(looking at
Shirley's ring)
Thought it was just a birthday.

Lucy pulls her hands away, causing tension.

SHIRLEY
Lucy...

Lucy turns to Nick, ready to scowl. Cell phone rings.

LUCY
(on the phone)
Yes I get it. You're my *aunt*.
Maybe you could have told me my
old man was getting married.
(looks direct into
Nick's eyes)
We have so much to catch up on.

Nick grabs the phone from Lucy.

NICK
 (to Laurel)
 Yes, come over. You need to be
 here.

Nick looks to Lucy.

NICK (CONT'D)
 I have to pick up Laurel. Come
 with me for the drive.

LUCY
 I'll stay here. Keep an eye on
 my truck.

Lucy looks to Shirley with contempt, and then is
 distracted by watching Tasha play.

Darlene looks in Lucy's eyes and gives her a hug.

DARLENE
 It'll take time. But give us a
 chance.

LUCY
 At least my 'grandma' gets it.

DARLENE
 (to Nick)
 I'll go with you.

89 **EXT. FRONT LAWN - DAY**

SLOW MOTION. Darlene walks to the jeep with Nick in
 silence waving to Florence out on her front lawn.

90 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Darlene and Nick get aboard and drive to the highway.

DARLENE
 Lady of the Highway protect us.
 Sweet immaculate divine be with
 those who suffer today.

NICK

We're just going to the train station.

Darlene continues with her prayers.

DARLENE

Sweet blessed divine sanctuary
of the blessed virgin mother
shine down on God's children and
grant them the serenity to walk
safely in his path today.

Nick and Darlene continue onto the 403. Nick sees families on the road, in saturated colour, like a surrealist painting. One moose walks into the center of the lane, then there are two more and three and four up ahead, until he sees a mirage of five, six and then eight at a time likened to a person dehydrating and losing their vision in a desert.

Moose populate on the highway in a herd. (This scene emulates frogs falling from the sky like in the feature film, *Magnolia*, as a special effect treatment).

Nick checks Darlene. She seems unaltered and non-reactive to the growing population of moose.

91 **EXT. HIGHWAY - GAS STATION - DAY**

Nick pulls over to a gas station and starts to pump gas. Florence comes out of the store with cake and helium filled balloons.

FLORENCE

Is Lucy here?

NICK

She just arrived. She's not too pleased. We're getting Laurel at the train station.

FLORENCE
 Nonsense. You get back where
 you belong with Lucy. I'll go
 with Darlene. Grab my car.

Florence tosses Nick the keys, in SLOW MOTION. Nick catches them.

NICK
 You sure?

FLORENCE
 Here, take this for the party.
 (hands him the
 cake and balloons)

Nick gets aboard Florence's car with cake and balloons. Florence gets in the van and smiles at Darlene.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
 I sent Nick home. We can get
 Laurel.

The cars pull out and go in opposite directions. Nick's vision changes, images are clear, he sees families having fun driving on their way to ballet classes, picnics, and ball games.

92 **INT. FAMILY HOME - DAY**

LUCY joins Tasha looking through a shoe box of photos and picks up a photo of Rose and Nick and (Lucy) as a baby. There is a Close Up of the photo. Lucy looks away from Tasha and has a stricken and saddened expression come over her face.

LUCY
 He knew.
 (in a dazed and
 shocked state)

93 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

NICK drives home, the sky is clear. His vision is clear and there are no hallucinations of moose on the highway.

94 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (CONT'D)**

FLORENCE looks down the highway and to the shoulder of the road, as moose run at a steadfast and swift pace. Florence is dazed and tries to regain her vision.

95 **INT. FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

SHIRLEY and Tasha sing a gleeful Happy Birthday song to Nick. He's not there, but Tasha can't wait. There is a photo on the mantle of Shirley graduating with her diploma.

96 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

FLORENCE looks down the highway and sees the moose running at a steadfast and swift pace.

97 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (CONT'D)**

NICK smiles and thinks about his family at home with visions of his birthday and the whole family gathering around to meet his daughter Lucy.

98 **EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY**

Laurel is on her own, and receives a text from Donny meant for another woman: **'Yes, she's gone, she left this morning. Come over the wine is on ice.'** Laurel looks at her phone and wells up in tears. She is still.

99 **EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY (CONT'D)**

Florence continues to drive in between the moose. She notices Darlene's prayers fade off and she can no longer hear her speak. Florence turns to DARLENE to see the rosary beads have dropped from her hands.

FLORENCE
Darlene. Darlene...

Darlene has died. Her heart has stopped.

100 **INT. FAMILY HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Tasha is after Lucy to play, and Lucy picks her up and swings Tasha around in a circle, as if she is in a dream and is laughing with Tasha. She has the photo of Nick and Rose and her as a baby in her back pocket.

Shirley walks out with plates for the table.

TASHA
(points to the
photo still in
Lucy's back pocket)
Who's that?

LUCY
That's my mom.

TASHA
She's pretty. Is she nice?

LUCY
I don't know. I never met her.

Shirley pipes up, not seeing the photo, as if to give parental guidance and help Tasha understand.

SHIRLEY
Tasha, Lucy was put up for
adoption.
(MORE)

SHIRLEY (CONT'D)

Rose was a young mommy and she had another family help raise her.

LUCY

That and she's dead.

Shirley looks in shock. Lucy catches her look. Tasha runs to the table, programmed to avoid adult chats.

LUCY (CONT'D)

You don't know?

Shirley and Lucy share a look. Lucy is surprised.

LUCY (CONT'D)

He was a widow the same night they were married. Tractor-trailer jackknifed them.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Back home they'd say he'd do anything to get attention. To be in the limelight.

(teenage-like anger softens)

I thought you knew.

Shirley and Lucy look into each others eyes, they don't hug or touch, but keep looking in each other's eyes.

101 **EXT. FAMILY HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Nick pulls up in the driveway and floats into his home with a euphoric smile on his face carrying the balloons and cake. He hears a car screech to a halt behind him, and turns to see Laurel getting out of a taxi.

NICK

Hey, Darlene was picking you up.

LAUREL

I waited. I didn't see her.

NICK

They probably stopped to get
more cake and balloons.

(laughs)

Nick and Laurel walk to the door with their arms wrapped around each other.

102 **INT. FAMILY HOME - DAY (CONT'D)**

Shirley and Lucy are standing still. Shirley goes to the table and lights the candles. Tasha reaches out for Lucy's hand. Andy and Mei are smiling, arms around each other in love. Lan starts to sing Happy Birthday and Nick walks to the table with Laurel behind him. Shirley gives Nick a kiss. Lucy puts the photo of the 3 of them in front of the cake without others taking note, and continues to hold Tasha's hand. Nick's smile radiates with love for his family.

SHIRLEY

You're home... Just in time.

THE END.