

7th Heaven

"Deacon Blues"

Written by
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SEVENTH HEAVEN

"Deacon Blues"

PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

DAY ONE

1	EXT. GLENOAK COMMUNITY CHURCH - ESTABLISHING - DAY	1
2	INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY	2

Fresh from the service, ERIC takes off his robe. He hums a tune, obviously quite pleased with himself. LOU enters.

ERIC
Lou, how you doing?

LOU
I wish I were better.

Eric looks at him.

LOU
Quite a few empty pews out there today.

ERIC
No more than usual.

LOU
That's my point.

Eric looks at him, waiting.

LOU
Don't take this as coming from me, because this is not necessarily my opinion, but the deacons are of the belief that the services lately...

Eric waits.

LOU
Frankly, Eric, they are not pleased with the direction the church seems to be heading.

Eric is taken aback.

ERIC
And what exactly do the deacons have problems with?

(CONTINUED)

LOU

The buzz the deacons are hearing is that your services have jumped the shark.

Eric reacts.

ERIC

Jumped the shark?

LOU

Their words, not mine. They think the sermons are sounding a little too... old. A lot of life and death stuff. People can't take that every week.

Eric does his best not to be offended.

ERIC

And this came up all of a sudden? These problems the deacons have with me all materialized in the... ten minutes since the service finished?

LOU

No, they've been discussing this for some time. They didn't want to say anything since you're going through what you're going through, but that kind of subject doesn't really appeal to the younger crowd.

ERIC

I didn't realize that was our target demographic.

LOU

Young churchgoers are the lifeblood of every congregation.

ERIC

I know that. I thought Lucy appealed to some of our younger members.

Lou shakes his head no.

ERIC

So Lucy's stale, too.

(CONTINUED)

LOU
The deacons believe we really need to reach out to these younger churchgoers. They are active in our charity drives, they volunteer for committees, they donate more to the church than some of our older parishioners on fixed incomes.

ERIC
Ah, so this is about money?

LOU
I'm sure none of this would be an issue if we weren't running about sixteen thousand dollars over budget for the fiscal year.

ERIC
Sixteen thousand dollars?

Lou nods.

ERIC
That's quite a discrepancy.

Lou nods.

LOU
I'm sorry, Eric, but the deacons would like me to pass along some suggestions about how to increase the buzz about your services and hopefully bring some young people back into our church and some needed funds back into the budget.

Eric sees the files Lou is holding.

ERIC
And those are?

LOU
Their notes.

Eric takes a seat at the desk, it's going to be a long morning.

FADE OUT.

END OF PROLOGUE

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

3 EXT. CAMDEN HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY 3

4 INT. GARAGE/INT. MINIVAN - DAY 4

UNDER SNIPES, CREDITS: The minivan is parked in the garage. T BONE enters, looks around. He listens up the stairs to the garage apartment. Nothing. Whatever or whoever he is looking for is not there. The passenger door to the van slides open. There's RUTHIE, waiting for him.

RUTHIE

Hi.

T BONE

Hi.

They look at each other.

T BONE

Room in there for me?

RUTHIE

Sure.

He climbs in. They look at each other, smile, then start to move toward each other, ready to make out. They hear something and drop down out of sight. JANE and MARGARET make their way down from the apartment.

JANE

You got the paper, right?

Margaret holds up a newspaper.

JANE

Good.

They exit. Ruthie and T Bone rise back into sight.

T BONE

That was a close one.

RUTHIE

Yeah. Too close.

(CONTINUED)

They look at each other again, and again start to move closer together. Light starts to move up the side of the minivan, as the garage door opens. Ruthie and T Bone drop down again. Eric pulls the other car in beside them and closes the garage door behind him. He climbs out and starts to exit, but stops, something doesn't seem right. He waits, nothing. He exits. When the door closes, Ruthie and T Bone poke their heads up again. END CREDITS.

RUTHIE

This isn't working.

T BONE

No, it's not. There's not a single place around this house where we can get even five minutes of privacy.

RUTHIE

We wouldn't have this problem if you could drive.

(considers)

Why can't you drive?

T BONE

I can drive.

RUTHIE

Do you have a license?

T BONE

Well, no.

RUTHIE

Then you can't drive. Why don't you have your license?

T BONE

I've had a few problems jumping through the bureaucratic hoops required for one to obtain a license. Why don't you have your license? You're old enough.

RUTHIE

I didn't take driver's ed last semester because I was in Scotland, and they were already full this semester when I tried to sign up.

T BONE

That might be for the best. You probably don't remember what side of the road to drive on anymore.

She looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

T BONE

A joke.

RUTHIE

I know, but not a good one.

He reacts.

RUTHIE

If you ever want us to have a few minutes to ourselves, you're going to have to get your license.

T BONE

Does that mean we can't make out until I do?

RUTHIE

Of course not.

They start at it again.

5 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

5

Eric is looking through the refrigerator when ANNIE comes down the stairs.

ANNIE

What took you so long? I thought you'd be home just a few minutes after us.

ERIC

So did I.

ANNIE

We already had lunch. Now the boys are upstairs studying. Can you believe it? They love the home school so much, they're studying on a Sunday afternoon.

ERIC

Yeah. That's great.

She notices Eric's not really paying attention.

ANNIE

What's wrong?

ERIC

Do you think my services are depressing?

She looks at him, not sure how to answer.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC

The deacons are worried that church attendance is slipping, and they think my depressing services are the reason.

ANNIE

Oh, Eric, I'm sorry.

ERIC

So am I. They've decided to implement a few changes to increase the profile of the church.

ANNIE

Eric, there are ebbs and flows in any religious community, and any congregation members who leave today will come back twofold tomorrow. You can't take their criticism personally.

ERIC

I know. I'm sure they wouldn't have said anything if we weren't sixteen thousand dollars over budget.

Annie is in shock.

ANNIE

How much over budget?

ERIC

Sixteen thousand dollars.

ANNIE

We are not even one dollar over budget.

ERIC

I haven't had a chance to go over the books yet, but according to Lou, we are.

ANNIE

Those are my books. Those are my numbers. We're not over budget.

ERIC

Annie, don't take it personally.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

ANNIE

No, I will take it personally. I helped with that budget. I help you stay on budget. I know where the money goes, so any implication that you're over budget is a direct shot at me.

She looks at a ledger Eric brought home.

ANNIE

Is that...?

He holds up the ledger. She swipes it.

ANNIE

I'll let you know when I find the money.

She exits.

6 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

6

MAC, Jane and Margaret are sitting at the table, circling apartment listings. Jane shows one to Margaret.

JANE

What about this one?

MARGARET

Too small.

Mac shows one to Margaret.

MAC

This one?

MARGARET

Too expensive.

Jane shows Margaret another.

MARGARET

Too small and too expensive.

MAC

So, every available apartment in town is either not big enough for the three of us or cost too much. Or both.

Jane looks at Mac.

(CONTINUED)

JANE

We wouldn't have this problem if we were looking for just the two of us. We could get a one bedroom. Or a studio even.

MAC

We can still get a one bedroom. I've already told you I'm more than willing to share.

Margaret shakes her head no.

JANE

Nice try.

MAC

Okay. Then we need more money.

Nobody likes the sound of that.

JANE

I work at a non-profit. They can barely afford to pay me what they're paying me now. I can't ask for a raise.

MARGARET

I love working with kids, but I'm not getting rich being a nanny.

JANE

I thought Evelyn said she was going to pay you a lot.

MARGARET

I do pretty good by the hour, but Evelyn can't stand to be away from the house for more than a couple hours at a time. She's a great mother.

JANE

That's great for her, not great for us.

Then they both look at Mac.

MAC

I don't even have a job, so I can't ask for a raise.

They keep looking at him.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

MAC
I guess I need to get a job.

JANE
If you want to move in with us you
do.

MAC
Right now it doesn't look like any
of us are moving anywhere.

They sit there, all thinking about what to do next.

7 INT. KINKIRK KITCHEN - DAY

7

KEVIN is there when there's a KNOCK on the door.

KEVIN
Come in.

T Bone enters and stands there, just looking at Kevin.

KEVIN
Can I help you with something?

T BONE
Yes, you can. Thank you.

Kevin looks at him, waits.

KEVIN
What can I help you with?

T BONE
I need you to help me get my driver's
license.

KEVIN
You want me to teach you how to
drive?

T BONE
No, I know how to drive, I'm actually
quite good at it. I just never really
had the parental permission needed
to take the driving test, but now
with the emancipation, I can go in
on my own.

KEVIN
So go on your own.

(CONTINUED)

T BONE

I've aced the written part of the driver's exam, but I have a tendency to choke under pressure, and since it's been a while since I was in driver's education and drove with an authority figure beside me, I'm not sure I'll be able to handle it.

KEVIN

What do you want me to do?

T BONE

I figure you used to be a cop. You know about all the secrets and tricks they use to get guys like me to fail the test.

KEVIN

There are no secrets or tricks.

T BONE

Really?

KEVIN

Either you can drive or you can't. It's pretty simple.

T BONE

I don't need super thorough driving lessons, I just want you to give me the quick, Cliff's Notes version of how to pass. I only want to know what I need to know.

KEVIN

You need to know it all.

T Bone reacts.

KEVIN

If you want your license, it's because you want to drive. And if you want to drive, you want to drive Ruthie.

T Bone blinks, is Kevin onto him?

(CONTINUED)

KEVIN

And if you're going to drive Ruthie, then I'm going to make sure you're a safe driver. I care about her too much to let her get in a car with someone who doesn't know proper motor vehicle safety and basic traffic regulations.

T BONE

Really? You'll help me?

KEVIN

Sure. Every day, after school, I'll help you become one of the safest drivers on the road.

T BONE

Thanks, Kevin.

KEVIN

You can thank me after you finish the Kinkirk Crash Course.

T BONE

I will. Just don't say "crash" again.

Kevin nods as Eric knocks and enters.

ERIC

Sorry to burst in like this, but I need Lucy.

KEVIN

She's upstairs giving Savannah a bath. I can get her if you need her.

ERIC

I do. It's kind of important.

Kevin looks at him, worried.

ERIC

It's about work.

KEVIN

Okay. I'll be right back.

He exits. Eric looks at T Bone.

ERIC

Where's Ruthie?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (3)

7

T BONE
What do you mean?

ERIC
The two of you are usually joined
at the hip.

T BONE
No, we're not.

Eric reacts.

T BONE
I have no intention to be joined at
the hip with Ruthie any time in the
near future. I never even think
about her hips, I swear.

ERIC
No, I didn't mean --

T BONE
I should go.

He exits in a flash. Eric reacts.

8 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

8

Mac is sitting at the table, half-heartedly looking through
the classifieds when T Bone enters from the back gate. Mac
looks at him.

MAC
There aren't any jobs available at
the movie theater, are there?

T BONE
Tony is always looking for qualified
candidates. Why, are you interested
in gainful employment?

MAC
I guess. The real world is expensive.

T BONE
Tell me about it. Why do you think
I ended up squatting at the church
when I needed a place to stay?

MAC
I'm starting to realize that if I'm
going to move in with Jane and
Margaret, I need to, you know, have
an income.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

T BONE

You're not going to get rich working at the movie theater, but you'll probably be able to put a little change in your pocket.

MAC

I don't need to get rich, I just need to be able to pay for one third of an apartment.

T BONE

I'll put in a good word for you.

MAC

Thanks. I owe you one.

T BONE

I'll remember that.

Mac reacts.

9 INT. KINKIRK KITCHEN - DAY

9

LUCY is beside herself.

LUCY

Lou doesn't think I'm young and hip?

ERIC

The deacons think there are changes we can make to the standard service to bring in more of a crowd.

LUCY

More of a hip, younger crowd.

Eric nods.

LUCY

I'm young. I'm hip. I've got my teen group. They're young. They're hip. They love me.

ERIC

I'm sure they do. But right now, the deacons aren't happy with the direction the church is headed. And until we can convince them otherwise, we've got work to do.

Lucy reacts.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

DAY TWO

10	EXT. CAMDEN HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY	10
11	INT. KITCHEN - DAY	11

SAM and DAVID are looking at their schoolwork. Annie is pouring over the church ledger. Sam and David share a look, then look over at Annie. Annie feels their gaze, looks at them.

ANNIE
Are you finished already?

They nod.

SAM
It was easy. I was finished five minutes ago.

DAVID
I was finished ten minutes ago.

SAM
No, you weren't.

DAVID
Yes, I was.

ANNIE
It's great that you are both so smart that you finished ahead of time. You both learned something, and that's more important than who finished first.

DAVID
I finished first.

Annie reacts.

ANNIE
What do you want to work on next? You've got spelling, reading, geography...

SAM
What are you doing?

ANNIE
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

Sam points to the ledger.

SAM

That. You've been working on it for days.

ANNIE

Oh, this is for the church. I'm trying to figure out why we don't have as much money as we should have.

DAVID

What subject is that?

ANNIE

It's called accounting.

They look at her.

ANNIE

It's math with money.

SAM

I'm good at math.

DAVID

I'm better at math than he is.

SAM

No, you're not.

DAVID

Yes, I am.

ANNIE

I think you are both very good at math. You're both better than I was at your age.

They both smile.

DAVID

Do you want us to do your work for you?

SAM

Yeah, we can help you, since we're better at it than you are.

She smiles.

ANNIE

Thank you, but I think this is something I should work on myself.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

SAM

Okay.

DAVID

If you need any help, you know where
to find us.

Annie smiles.

12 EXT. PROMENADE - MOVIE THEATER - DAY

12

Mac and T Bone are squeezed into the theater booth. Both are
in uniform.

MAC

Thanks for helping me get this job.

T BONE

No problem. Once I explained to
Tony how film is your life, he jumped
at the chance.

MAC

But I don't really like movies, I'm
a television guy. I told you, I
just need to make some money.

T BONE

I know, but Tony likes to talk
movies. So if he asks, your favorite
movie is...?

MAC

Rambo: First Blood, Part Two.

T Bone shakes his head.

T BONE

Just say *Citizen Kane*.

MAC

I've never seen *Citizen Kane*.

T BONE

Trust me.

They turn their attention to the task at hand.

T BONE

It's really pretty easy. People
give you money, and you give them a
ticket.

MAC

I can handle that.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

T BONE
Good. I'll be back.

MAC
Wait, you're leaving?

T BONE
Remember when you said you'd owe me
one if I got you a job?

MAC
Yeah.

T BONE
This is the one. I've got another
lesson with Kevin. Hopefully he'll
let me drive today.

MAC
I thought you were supposed to train
me.

T BONE
I just did. Tickets are there, money
goes there.

T Bone exits the booth. Mac, feeling a bit overwhelmed, calls
out of the booth.

MAC
When do people start to show up?

T BONE
Soon. Don't worry. You'll be fine.

He exits.

MAC
But I'm a television guy.

Mac starts to panic.

13 INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

13

Eric's at his desk, writing. Lucy enters, sees he's working.

LUCY
Sorry.

Eric looks up.

ERIC
It's okay, Luce.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
I don't want to disturb you.

ERIC
You're not disturbing me. I was
just putting the finishing touches
on my weekly sermon.

LUCY
Wow, you're finished by Wednesday.
You really must have something to
say.

ERIC
Not exactly.

Lucy looks at him.

ERIC
I didn't want to tell you this
because I knew it would upset you.

She waits.

ERIC
The deacons want to approve this
week's sermon to make sure it fits
their "new direction."

Lucy is beside herself.

LUCY
They what? When was the last time
you had to have your sermon approved
before giving it?

ERIC
Never.

LUCY
I can't believe they're treating
you this way.

ERIC
Us. They're treating us this way.

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

LUCY

Dad, I'd understand if it were me. I'm young and inexperienced, I'd expect a little guidance from those who know the church's business. But you, you're an institution. You've been doing this a long time and you've proven you know what you're doing. Don't you think you've earned the right to run your church the way you think is best?

ERIC

Times are changing, I guess. And don't knock yourself for being young and inexperienced, that's what the deacons seem to be looking for nowadays.

Lucy looks at him. He shrugs, returns to his writing.

14 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

14

Annie is still looking over the ledger. Ruthie enters with SAVANNAH. Annie looks up, smiles.

ANNIE

There's two of my favorite girls.

RUTHIE

I told Kevin I'd watch Savannah in exchange for his helping T Bone get his license.

ANNIE

That's so nice of Kevin to help T Bone like that.

RUTHIE

Yeah, nice.

Annie looks at her.

ANNIE

You don't seem very appreciative.

RUTHIE

When I believe Kevin is actually helping T Bone rather than instilling more fear in him to stay away from me, then I'll appreciate it.

ANNIE

If that's what Kevin is really doing, then I appreciate it.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

Ruthie looks at her.

RUTHIE

Are you telling me you don't trust me to be alone in a car with T Bone?

ANNIE

I trust you, and I trust T Bone, but I'd trust you both a whole lot more when you're in the general vicinity where your father or Lucy or Kevin or I could keep an eye on you.

RUTHIE

So that would be a no.

Annie looks at her.

ANNIE

If my not trusting you would make you happy, then you can believe whatever you want to believe.

RUTHIE

That's what I thought.

Annie reacts, teenagers.

15 EXT. SOMEWHERE - DAY

15

T Bone stands in front of Kevin's car. Kevin circles him.

KEVIN

You are about to make a left turn. You must signal continuously during the last how many feet before the turn?

Just as T Bone is about to answer, Kevin blows a deafening AIRHORN. T Bone flinches.

T BONE

Is that really necessary?

KEVIN

There are many surprises on the road. You have to be ready for anything.

T BONE

I told you, I already passed the written part. I know all this stuff.

(CONTINUED)

KEVIN

You said you choke under the pressure, so I am putting you in a high-pressure environment while I make sure you are prepared to get behind the wheel. Again, you are about to make a left turn. You must signal --

T BONE

One hundred feet.

KEVIN

Good. You are at a green light, but traffic is blocking the intersection. You should...?

Kevin BLOWS the HORN. T Bone flinches and answers.

T BONE

Stay out of the intersection until the traffic clears.

KEVIN

Correct. You are driving on a freeway where the posted speed limit is sixty-five miles-per-hour. Most of the other vehicles are driving seventy miles-per-hour or faster. You may legally drive how fast?

Again, Kevin BLOWS the HORN. T Bone flinches and answers.

T BONE

Sixty-five.

KEVIN

Correct again. The Term "Gross Combination Weight" refers to what?

Kevin BLOWS the HORN. T Bone flinches but doesn't answer.

T BONE

I've never heard that before.

KEVIN

It's on the test for Commercial Drivers.

T BONE

Why would I ever need to know that?

KEVIN

You can never know too much.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

T BONE
Am I ever going to drive?

Kevin BLOWS the HORN. T Bone flinches.

16 INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

16

Lucy reads Eric's sermon as he paces behind his desk. She finishes, looks up.

ERIC
Well?

LUCY
It's good.

Eric breathes a sigh of relief.

LUCY
It's really good.

ERIC
It felt good, but it's nice to have another pair of eyes take a look at it.

LUCY
It's like one of the sermons you used to give when I was younger.

ERIC
You mean when I was good?

LUCY
That's not what I meant. You captured something in here that reminds me of hearing your words for the first time. It's comforting and powerful at the same time.

ERIC
Thank you.

LUCY
I can't believe Lou is making you get approval before you give this.

ERIC
It's not really an approval. I don't look at it like that. They just want to be involved, the deacons, Lou, they want to feel like it's their church, too.

Lucy looks at him.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

ERIC
I'm just looking at this as a
challenge. Always good to have a
challenge.

Lou enters.

ERIC
Speak of the devil.

Lou laughs.

LOU
I'm not your enemy here, Eric.

ERIC
I know you're not. You're just acting
on my enemy's behalf.

LOU
Whether you want to admit it or
not, we're both on the same team.

Eric hands Lou his sermon.

ERIC
Here you go. Knock yourself out. I
hope it meets with your approval.

LOU
So do I.

LUCY
If there's anything else we need to
do to make our church service more
entertaining, please let us know.

LOU
Now that you mention it...

Eric and Lucy react.

LOU
It might be nice to bring a little
more music into the services.

Eric brightens at this suggestion.

ERIC
Great. We can do that.

Lou looks at him. Eric nods.

ERIC
Right. Young and hip music. Got it.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

There's a KNOCK on the door. BOB MEYERS enters, looks at Lou.

BOB
I'm not late, am I?

LOU
Of course not, come in.

Eric and Lucy exchange a glance, Lou just invited a stranger into their office.

LOU
Eric, Lucy, do you know Bob Meyers?
They don't. Bob extends his hand.

BOB
Meyers Automotive. New and used car sales and service.

ERIC
Ah, I've seen your ads on the sides of buses.

BOB
Yep, those are the ones.

ERIC
What can I do for you, Bob?

BOB
It's more what I can do for you.

Eric and Lucy don't understand.

LOU
One of the ways the deacons are looking to spread our message in the community is having Bob talk up our church at his dealership.

LUCY
We've never advertised.

LOU
It's not advertising, it's outreach.

BOB
We're getting ready for our big President's Day Bonanza. That means a lot of people coming into my shop looking to get behind the wheel of a new or used automobile.

(CONTINUED)

LOU
It could also mean many potential
new parishioners.

ERIC
And what does Bob get in return?

LOU
Half a page in the church bulletin.

BOB
And just a brief mention during the
service itself.

Both Eric and Lucy can't believe what they just heard.

ERIC
I don't know, Bob, it's going to be
kind of hard to tie car sales in
with the Sermon on the Mount.

Bob smiles.

BOB
If what I heard about you is true,
you're just the guy for the job.

Eric and Lucy silently steam.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

DAY THREE

17	EXT. GLENOAK COMMUNITY CHURCH - ESTABLISHING - DAY	17
18	INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY	18

Eric is there when Lou enters. Eric looks at him.

ERIC

So, Lou, what's the verdict? Have the deacons cleared me to do the same service I've been doing for over twenty years?

LOU

The deacons thought your sermon was wonderful.

Eric smiles, a bit of his pride returning.

LOU

They only have a few changes.

Eric reacts.

LOU

It's nothing major, really, just a few tweaks here and there. You should be able to whip it into shape by next Sunday.

Eric isn't quite sure he heard what he thought he heard.

ERIC

Next Sunday?

Lou just looks at him. He's as sick of giving Eric bad news as Eric is hearing it.

ERIC

Lou.

LOU

Eric.

ERIC

What do the deacons want now?

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

LOU
Because they're... you're... doing
so much to implement these desired
changes, they thought they'd kick
this Sunday off with a whole new
program.

Eric waits, expecting the worst.

LOU
They thought a fresh new voice would
be a welcome change once in a while.

Eric reacts.

ERIC
Fresh?

LOU
They thought if someone with a unique
perspective and a new point of view
were to give the sermon, it might
breathe some life into the service.
I think you'll agree with their
choice.

ERIC
I don't agree with their decision
to make a choice, why would I agree
with their choice?

This is when SANDY steps into the office. From the look on
her face, it's obvious she now realizes she is in the middle
of something she never meant to get in the middle of.

SANDY
(meekly)
Hi.

Lou nods. Eric reacts.

19 EXT. PROMENADE - MOVIE THEATER - DAY

19

Mac is in the booth, taking money and handing tickets to
moviegoers.

MAC
(not looking at the next
customers in line)
Welcome to Flicks, how can I help
you?

The customers don't say anything, they just start laughing.
Mac looks up to see Jane and Margaret at the front of the
line.

(CONTINUED)

JANE
Nice outfit.

MAC
Very funny.

JANE
We heard you were down here and had
to get a look at you ourselves.

MAC
Hey, I'm trying to make some money
so we can get a place. You shouldn't
be mocking me, you should be
supporting me.

They can't stifle the laughter.

MARGARET
Can't we do both?

Mac rolls his eyes.

MAC
If you're not going to see the movie,
you have to step out of line. I'm
kind of over my head here. T Bone
left me alone again.

JANE
Actually we're here for a reason.
We found a place. One bedroom, one
bath, in a safe part of town.

Mac smiles.

MAC
One bedroom. Yeah, why not? We're
friends, right? How much?

Jane and Margaret look at each other.

JANE
If your job pans out, it's in your
range.

MARGARET
The high end of your range.

MAC
And?

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

JANE

After rent, utilities and food,
you're not going to be left with
any spending money.

MAC

That's fine. I don't want to crash
at the Camdens' house forever, so I
can cut back on my spending. Wait,
I'm not going to be left with any
spending money?

Jane and Margaret look at each other, then at Mac.

JANE

We can't. Not with the jobs we have
now.

MAC

This was your idea and now you're
bailing out?

JANE

We're not bailing out, we just
decided that the Camdens' garage
apartment better fits our financial
needs at the moment.

MAC

You can't freeload off the Camdens
forever. You're adults. Act like
it.

They react. Mac looks at them.

MAC

And you're holding up the line.

They step away and look at each other.

JANE

That was harsh.

MARGARET

Really harsh.

They turn and see a "Help Wanted" sign on the Dairy Shack.
They look at each other.

20 EXT. SOMEWHERE/INT. KEVIN'S CAR - DAY

20

Kevin's car skids to a stop. T Bone gets out of the driver
seat and starts walking away. Kevin gets out of the passenger
seat and follows.

(CONTINUED)

T BONE
(calling back)
If that's your idea of help, I don't
want it anymore.

KEVIN
I'm sorry.

T BONE
I don't think you are.

KEVIN
Really I am. I didn't mean anything
by it.

T BONE
You didn't mean anything by it? You
kept blowing that stupid horn in my
ear the whole time I was driving.

KEVIN
It's called pressure.

T BONE
That's not pressure. That's creating
an unsafe driving environment.

KEVIN
I thought you wanted help passing
your test.

T BONE
I do. But this isn't helping, this
is hazing.

KEVIN
Maybe I went about this the wrong
way.

T BONE
I know why you're doing this. I
know you don't want me to get my
license because you don't want Ruthie
and me to be out alone together.

KEVIN
That's not it at all.

T Bone looks at him.

KEVIN
I don't think.

(CONTINUED)

T BONE

I understood your subtle threats about what you would do to me if I did anything with Ruthie.

KEVIN

Lucy told me to apologize about that.

T BONE

You don't have to. Ruthie and I are two mature people. We can decide what we do or don't do on our own. Your threats, while quite effective, had no bearing on our decision to take it slowly.

KEVIN

Really?

T BONE

Really. We're taking it slowly.

KEVIN

No, I meant really, my threats weren't effective?

T BONE

You painted quite a picture, I'll give you that, but we're teenagers. We're used to going against the wishes of elders. Oh, and another thing, this is none of your business, as much as you think it is. Reverend and Mrs. Camden, sure. But you, definitely not.

Kevin looks at T Bone.

T BONE

(gulps)

If you're thinking about driving off and leaving me here alone, I'll say I was just kidding.

KEVIN

Come on. Let's go take your test.

T BONE

Really? You're not going to kill me?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (3)

20

KEVIN

No. You just faced a high-pressure situation, and you passed with flying colors. You're ready.

They head back to the car.

KEVIN

But I'm serious, you hurt her, I'll hurt you. Even if it is none of my business.

T Bone nods.

T BONE

Noted.

They climb in. T Bone starts the car. Kevin BLOWS his HORN. T Bone looks at him.

KEVIN

Last time. I promise.

They drive away.

21 INT. KITCHEN/DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

21

Annie is still working on the church books. It appears she has made no headway. There is a baby monitor on the table next to her. Sam and David watch from the hallway.

DAVID

Mom is still doing her homework. I think we should help her.

SAM

She doesn't want our help.

Ruthie enters from the living room, carrying AARON.

RUTHIE

What are you guys looking at?

DAVID

Mom.

RUTHIE

Exciting.

SAM

Will you keep Mom busy for a while?

RUTHIE

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

Ruthie enters the kitchen. Annie smiles at her.

ANNIE

Look at you. Yesterday, Savannah.
Today, Aaron. You're a regular
babysitter, aren't you?

RUTHIE

Yeah, whatever. Sandy dropped him
off before she headed for the church.

ANNIE

I wonder what she's doing there?

Ruthie shrugs.

RUTHIE

Could you keep an eye on him? I've
got homework.

ANNIE

Of course. Savannah's napping
upstairs, but I'm used to watching
multiple children at a time.

Ruthie hands him off.

RUTHIE

Thanks, Mom.

She exits past the boys.

RUTHIE

Mission accomplished.

Annie looks at the church ledger, then at Aaron.

ANNIE

This can wait until later.

She leaves the ledger on the table and heads up the stairs.
Sam and David enter, open the ledger. They look at each other.

DAVID

This isn't like any math I've ever
seen.

SAM

Good thing there's two of us.

David nods.

22 INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

22

Sandy is seated at Lucy's desk. Eric is reading a magazine behind his. Lucy enters.

LUCY
I confirmed the band for...
(notices Sandy)
...next week. Hi. Sandy, what are
you doing here?

She looks to Eric for an answer, but Eric just nods toward Sandy.

SANDY
Lucy, I'm sorry. I didn't know.

LUCY
Didn't know what?

SANDY
I didn't know about all the stuff
going on at the church, what they're
doing to you and your dad. If I
knew anything about it, I wouldn't
have said yes. I should have figured
something was wrong when Lou called
me instead of you, but I was so
happy to get the call, I didn't
even think about it.

LUCY
I'm sorry, said yes to what?

ERIC
Sandy's going to be giving the sermon
this Sunday.

Lucy doesn't know how to react.

LUCY
That's... that's...

SANDY
It's terrible. I'm not doing it.

ERIC
No, I told you, we're not going to
let you turn this down. Even if you
think the deacons are being unfair
to us, this is such a great
opportunity for you, you have to do
it.

Eric looks to Lucy, nods for her to say something.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

I remember the first time I spoke in front of the church. Like you, I already knew this was what I wanted to do, but to be at the pulpit, and realize that my words were being heard by everyone, and maybe some of them might even listen to what I was saying, and maybe a few of those people might learn something, or understand something, or feel something they didn't feel fifteen minutes before... It's an amazing feeling. Don't take that feeling away from yourself. This is your Sunday. We'll have others.

Eric nods, impressed.

SANDY

Are you sure?

They both nod.

SANDY

If I have your blessing, then I'll do it.

ERIC

You have our blessing.

SANDY

Thank you, both of you. Wow, I've got a lot of work ahead of me.

LUCY

You better write fast so the deacons can approve your sermon.

SANDY

Oh, they told me I could say anything I wanted.

Eric looks at Lucy. They both react.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

DAY FOUR

23 EXT. GLENOAK COMMUNITY CHURCH - ESTABLISHING - DAY 23

24 INT. GLENOAK COMMUNITY CHURCH - DAY 24

As people file in for the service, Annie, with Sam and David in tow, finds Lou at the back of the church. He sees her coming, but can't find a way to escape.

LOU
Hello, Annie.
(notices her expression)
I can't imagine I'm the most popular
person in your house right now.

ANNIE
No, you're not.
(hands him the ledger)
Can you explain this?

LOU
We're over budget, and we need to
do something about it. The numbers
don't lie.

ANNIE
I've been over these and over these,
but I can't find the money anywhere.
It doesn't make sense.

LOU
There's nothing to find. I've been
over them myself, and everything
looks right to me.

SAM
We know where the money is.

DAVID
Yeah, we helped you with your
homework, we know where it is.

Annie looks at them.

ANNIE
What?

Sam pulls a envelope out of his pocket and hands it Annie.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID

It was in the back of the book,
stuck between some blank pages.

Annie looks inside the envelope.

ANNIE

Checks written out to the church.
Here's one for a thousand, another
for five hundred, and another...

DAVID

Sixteen-thousand four hundred seventy-
five.

SAM

We accounted it ourselves.

Annie hands the envelope to Lou.

ANNIE

Here's the money that wasn't missing.

LOU

It appears the deacons made a bit
of an oversight.

ANNIE

Yes, it does.

LOU

I'm sorry, Annie.

ANNIE

I'm just glad the church is still
in good shape.

LOU

Yes. Me, too.

He exits. Annie looks at the boys.

ANNIE

Thank you so much, boys. You have
no idea how much you just helped.

SAM

You're welcome, Mom. It was easy.

DAVID

We're working on times tables now.
Those are harder than accounting.

Annie smiles and gives them a hug. Kevin approaches with
Savannah.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

24

KEVIN
Have Ruthie and T Bone shown up
yet?

ANNIE
No, but they'll be here. I trust
them.

KEVIN
That's easy for you to say.

Annie looks at him.

25 EXT. STREET/INT. MINIVAN - DAY

25

The minivan is parked in some out-of-the-way location. T Bone is behind the wheel, Ruthie in the passenger seat.

T BONE
Actually, Kevin's hazing helped me.
As misguided as it was.

Ruthie looks at him.

RUTHIE
I'm happy you finally got your
license and everything, but if we
don't get to church before it starts,
I don't know when my parents will
ever let you borrow the car again.

T BONE
I know, but I'm just kind of savoring
this freedom. I can go wherever I
want, whenever I want. And no one,
not my mother, not your parents,
not the Glenoak Public Transit
system, can tell me I can't. I'm
free to be free.

Ruthie looks at him.

T BONE
I guess we could leave, or we
could... you know...

RUTHIE
Yeah, I know.

He leans in for a kiss. She pulls back. He reacts, what?

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

RUTHIE

Just because you've got this newfound freedom, that doesn't mean we have to make out all the time. You're free to be free, I'm free to not make out with you if I don't want.

T Bone reacts.

T BONE

Oh. We should get going.

RUTHIE

Yeah, we should.

He starts the car. She reaches over and turns it off.

RUTHIE

I'm also free to make out with you if I want.

He smiles.

T BONE

Freedom is a wonderful thing.

And they start going at it. They're still going at it as a PARKING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER slaps a ticket under the windshield wiper. Ruthie and T Bone break and look at the officer.

T BONE

Are you kidding me? I thought I couldn't get a ticket on a Sunday.

PARKING OFFICER

(shrugs)

Loading zone.

RUTHIE

This freedom thing is certainly getting off to a poor start.

T Bone looks at Ruthie, then back at the officer. The officer smiles.

26 INT. GLENOAK COMMUNITY CHURCH - DAY

26

Lucy is at the pulpit.

LUCY

My father and I hope you're all enjoying the new feel of the service today.

(CONTINUED)

Some in the congregation nod, but mostly there are looks of indifference.

LUCY

Continuing with that theme, we are fortunate to have Sandy Jameson giving today's sermon. Most of you probably know Sandy because our church sponsors her while she is completing her studies. Sandy.

Lucy steps down, and Sandy steps up. She nervously clears her throat, then begins.

SANDY

I want to thank Lou Dalton and the deacons for inviting me to speak. I wanted to talk about the challenges young people face in the world today, about the challenges young parents face raising their children in the world today, about the challenges young Christians face in the world today. I wanted to talk about all those things. But I'm not going to. I'm not going to talk about those things because I don't have all the answers. And I guess no one really does. But whenever I have questions, I turn to people who know more than I do to help guide me toward the answers. It is always important to listen to what people who you respect have to say. Right now, I want to listen to someone I truly respect. I want to hear what he has to say. I don't want to hear what someone who has not accomplished as much as he has allows him to say.

She looks at Eric.

SANDY

Reverend Camden, the pulpit is yours, like it always should be.

The congregation watches in silent amazement as Sandy steps down and approaches Eric. He looks at her.

ERIC

You didn't have to do that.

She smiles.

(CONTINUED)

SANDY

Yes, I did. It was the right thing to do.

Sandy takes a seat next to Lucy, who mouths, "Thank you."
Sandy mouths back, "No, thank you."

Eric steps to the pulpit. He's not reading anything, he's speaking from the heart.

ERIC

Sandy, I never asked for you to say anything on my behalf, but I am thankful for your kind words. I remember when I first came to this church. I was young, idealistic, and I had the whole world in my sights. Back then the only things I wanted to do were to take care of my family and help the people of this congregation. As time went on, I realized that those things were not enough. I also had to take care of people in need who weren't part of my family, and I had to do my best to help those in this community outside this congregation. That used to be enough. But now, it seems like some people care more about figures and attendance and statistics than doing the right thing. It shouldn't be about how much money we have or how many people are sitting in the pews, it should be about how much good we do in our communities, our neighborhoods, our homes. Some people seem to have forgotten about what's important. I hope I haven't. I hope I never do.

Eric looks out at the congregation, at Lou, then at the faces of his family sitting in the front row.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC

I've loved every Sunday I've stood before you. I hope you've loved them, too. Because no matter what some people may try to tell me to do, I'm am not going to change the way I've always done things. Sometimes you have to make a stand; for your beliefs, for your principles, for what you know to be right. This is my stand. I've always done my best for this community. I don't think it's time for me to start doing my second best for the community if it looks good on the bottom line. I think my community deserves better. I think you deserve better. I think we all deserve better.

Eric steps away from the pulpit, and looks out at the congregation. Annie smiles at him, Kevin nods to him, the twins give him a thumbs up, some deacons can't hide their frowns, and... Is Lou grinning? He starts back toward his seat, sees Lucy and Sandy, both smiling at him. He remembers something, returns to the pulpit.

ERIC

Sorry, one more thing.

He rustles through a stack of papers.

ERIC

Today's service is brought to you by Meyers Automotive. With both new and used cars, Meyers Automotive has a friendly and courteous staff ready to help you with all your car-buying needs. Get down there for their big President's Day Bonanza.

Bob Meyers in a middle pew has a huge smile on his face.

ERIC

Thank you.

The congregation doesn't know how to react. Eric smiles the smile of a man who just changed his life for the better.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

27 EXT. GLENOAK COMMUNITY CHURCH - ESTABLISHING - DAY 27

28 INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY 28

Fresh from the service, ERIC takes off his robe. He hums a tune, obviously quite pleased with himself. Lou enters.

ERIC

I don't want to hear it, Lou. I
said what I said, and I meant it.
If the deacons don't like it, they
can have my resignation.

Lou tries to say something, but Eric cuts him off.

ERIC

Life is too short. I know that now.
I'm not going to live the rest of
my life the way they want me to
live it. I'm going to live it the
way I want to live it. So go ahead.
Tell me how disappointed the deacons
are with me.

Lou looks at him. Eric waits, ready to debate anything. He's not ready, however, when Lou grabs Eric in a big hug.

ERIC

Lou?

Lou breaks the hug. Eric looks at him.

LOU

Thank you, Eric. You just said
everything I've been wanting to say
for months.

ERIC

Really? The deacons aren't mad at
me?

LOU

Who cares what the deacons think?

Eric reacts.

LOU

I resigned my position at the church
last week.

Eric reacts.

(CONTINUED)

LOU

I couldn't say anything, about my resignation, about their ideas, about what they were asking you to do, anything. I'm sorry.

ERIC

You don't have to apologize.

LOU

Yes, I do. I knew what they were asking you to do was wrong, but I didn't stand up to them. For that, I am sorry.

ERIC

And for that, you are forgiven. You'll still be around, even if you're not head of the deacons, you'll still be at church, right?

Lou smiles.

LOU

No. I'm retiring from the bank, and I'm going to do something I've wanted to do for a long time. I'm moving to the midwest and helping open a non-profit bank that deals strictly with microloans for farmers and small businesses. We've put the house up for sale and found a little rental house on a few acres. We're heading out next week.

ERIC

Not a lot of money in non-profits from what I heard.

LOU

No, there isn't, but there's more. A lot more.

Eric smiles.

ERIC

Congratulations.

LOU

I wish I could say today's sermon inspired me to do this.

ERIC

It didn't?

(CONTINUED)

LOU
Eric, you've been inspiring me for
over twenty years.

Eric can't help but get a little choked up by this.

ERIC
If you need anything, you know the
number.

LOU
The same goes for you.

They extend their hands to shake, then laugh and hug each
other again.

LOU
God bless you, Eric Camden.

ERIC
Same to you, Lou.

Lou smiles and exits, passing Annie as she enters. She looks
at Eric.

ANNIE
He looked happy.

Eric nods.

ERIC
He is.

Eric looks at Annie.

ERIC
And so am I.

ANNIE
Very impressive out there today.

ERIC
What can I say, I was moved.

ANNIE
What now, Reverend Camden?

ERIC
Let's go home.

And that's just what they do.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 EXT. CAMDEN HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY 29

30 EXT. BACKYARD - DAY 30

Lunch is being set up. The gang's all here. T Bone and Ruthie are talking to Kevin.

KEVIN

Didn't you give her my name?

T BONE

Of course I tried to drop your name
to get me out of the ticket.

KEVIN

And?

T Bone holds up the ticket.

T BONE

Does it look like it helped?

KEVIN

I guess I've been out of the game
too long.

He exits to help Lucy with lunch.

RUTHIE

I'm not even sure he ever was in
the game.

T Bone looks at her.

T BONE

So, do you think your parents will
ever let me borrow the car again?

She shakes her head no.

RUTHIE

And now you're going to have to
fight for shifts at the theater
with Mac if you want to buy a car
of your own.

He reacts.

T BONE

I think I trained him too well.

She rolls her eyes at him. Eric and Annie enter. Eric crosses to Mac, Jane and Margaret, who are both in Dairy Shack uniforms.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC
Missed you at church today.

JANE
We were packing.

ERIC
Packing? You're...?

MARGARET
We're moving out.

JANE
We found a place. With Mac.

Eric looks at Mac.

ERIC
You're moving out, too?

MAC
'Fraid so.

Eric can barely hide his pleasure.

ERIC
So the uniforms?

MARGARET
We're back at the Shack.

JANE
Sometimes you have to take a job
you don't like to be able to do
what you need to do. You know what
I mean?

ERIC
I do. Very much. So, the other jobs,
the ones you loved so much?

JANE
I'll be working at the Dairy Shack,
but volunteering at the environmental
office whenever I have any free
time.

MARGARET
And once I find out my new schedule,
I'll babysit for Evelyn whenever
I'm free.

ERIC
That's great.

(CONTINUED)

MAC

We just wanted to thank you for
your hospitality. We're on our way
to pick up the keys to our new place.

ERIC

Please, stay for lunch.

MARGARET

Really?

ERIC

Absolutely. You're always welcome
here.

They smile. Lucy and Sandy set the table.

LUCY

I think you should give the sermon
next week.

SANDY

No, I don't want to step on your or
your dad's toes.

LUCY

You won't be, because we're asking.
We want to hear what you have to
say.

Sandy smiles.

SANDY

I'll do it.

LUCY

Of course, you'll have to run
everything by my dad before you say
anything.

Sandy looks at her.

LUCY

Kidding.

Sandy smiles. Eric finds Annie and puts his arm around her.
They look across their yard at family members, friends,
children, dogs, and a few people who are practically
strangers.

ANNIE

Is this how you always pictured it
would be?

(CONTINUED)

ERIC
(thinks, then)
Actually, yes.

ANNIE
Really?

ERIC
As long as I'm here with you,
everything else looks fantastic.

And as they continue to look across at a small fraction of
the people whose lives they've touched, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW