

BERKELEY BLUES

"Blow My Baby Back To Me"

The Pilot Episode

CURTIS LOFGREN

WGAW # 1760241

TEASER

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - DAY

BRYCE MOON CANYON has taken the day off. He's getting sloshed at the bar overlooking the gorgeous Berkeley bay.

The 54-year-old former restaurant manager, now a private eye, is broke, lonely and almost homeless. BRYCE sips his third brandy MANHATTAN, extra cherry juice.

BRYCE

You know, barkeep, my parents named me. I had no control in the decision. This was 1961. They were hippies, not *beatniks*. Mom *hated* the word beatnik. We lived right by the freeway, past the Gilman Exit, off 80, in a house that had seven bedrooms and one bathroom. By the time I was six, it was the so-called summer of love. For us, it was our best year in sales. A summer of love in San Francisco meant a summer of sales here in Berkeley.

He glances out the large window. WINDSURFERS fly through the air, land on the water, get right back on their boards and fly some more. It's a BEAUTIFUL day in the Berkeley Marina at His Lordships Restaurant & Banquet Facility.

BRYCE

We sold bongos. Can you *believe* it? Bongos. I sold them right along with my parents, on Telegraph avenue, right next to the main gate of the college. The protestors tried to steal our bongos, but we managed to keep a steady supply of them coming from Mexico. Talk about *smuggling!* Who smuggles in bongos from Tijuana? Anyway, they named me Full Moon. How does *that* happen? I changed it to Bryce Canyon Moon, after that small hole in the ground in Utah. I went there in '75, when I was all of 14 years old. I hitched from San Diego, where my mom lived after she divorced my dad, who called himself Space Cadet.

(MORE)

BRYCE (CONT'D)

He left to join a commune in northern California in '69. He claimed he saw Bigfoot the first day he was there!

More WINDSURFERS fly through the air, crash near the big, floor-to-ceiling bar windows, producing many an "OOH" and a few "AAHHSS" from DINERS.

DINER ONE

Oooh, look, Agnes, he almost bought the farm on that one!

DINER TWO

Aahh, that wave took her down to Neptune's cellar!

BRYCE

Neptune's cellar? That's a new one.

BARTENDER

You gonna pay now or run a tab? Need a card if you're gonna run a tab.

BRYCE

I know the manager. She's a friend. Boy, this town has really changed. I mean, have you ever thought about the last part of the 20th century? I mean, really *studied* it? The 60's were really the early 70's. The protest movement was over and done with by '65. You know who were the heroes back then? The Oakland Black Panthers. Before they felt they needed guns, they took care of *all* people. It didn't matter what color you were. Free breakfasts for kids, free housing for the poor. And all with legitimate businesses.

BARTENDER

Any selling bongos?

BRYCE

Ha! Good one. No, our family had the local patent on *that*.

(MORE)

BRYCE (CONT'D)

Man, the tourists would come to Berkeley and buy three or four sets of bongos, then tell their friends, and eventually, we had a house that was really huge. That is, until the late 60's when rents went through the roof! Everyone thinks the 60's were from '61 to '69, but that's not true. The 60's started around '62, with the advent of surfing music and ended in '72, when Dick Nixon sent some common thugs into the Watergate Hotel to see what he could learn about the Democrats. Boy, good old Dick Nixon. Where's a guy like that today?

BARTENDER

Dead. Are you going to pay?

BRYCE

See, the 70's began in '73 and didn't end until '81, when Ronnie Reagan became President. So, using our common math skills, we can ascertain that the 80's were *actually?*

BARTENDER

From '82 to '93? When Bill Clinton got elected?

BRYCE

Buy that man a drink! Flared jeans for men were outlawed by the fashion police! An *awful time* in our culture.

Bryce enjoys his DRINK. He looks out at the beautiful afternoon SUNLIGHT streaming into his face.

BARTENDER

Cheri told me to get a card by the third drink or I'll never see you after the fourth. A card that *works.*

BRYCE

You'd think I was a slouch. You don't care for the history lesson?

BARTENDER

Wrong on both accounts. But Cheri is my boss and I work for her.

BRYCE
You *used* to work for me.

BARTENDER
And you were a good boss. But things *change*.

BRYCE
Ah, yes... things change.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. HIS LORDSHIPS - DAY

The GENERAL MANAGER, a beautiful WOMAN in her late thirties, is getting ready to open the restaurant for a busy lunch shift. She's carrying a BIG load. Her child's birth is imminent.

Her name is CHERI NIGHTINGALE and she is in love with Bryce Moon Canyon but won't admit it. Bryce is not sure she loves him since she is presently seeing HENRY JOI, a low-life scumbag douche bag. (And that's when you've caught him on a *good day!*)

Bryce is still looking for his own *inner child* after he walked off the job as GENERAL MANAGER of the restaurant.

BARTENDER
Cheri, the beer guy said it would be a week until the new lines get installed and Brian called in sick for tonight, so can I work a double? Also, our ex-general manager slept here again. He's sloshed and asleep.

Bryce has his arms folded, and a stack of cocktail napkins are his pillow.

CHERI
Sshh! I don't want him to hear you.

BARTENDER
He can't hear his own thoughts, much less our conversation. He told me he was leaving last night, and hid in the bathroom again.

CHERI

Haven't I told you the bathrooms
are the *last* thing you check?

BARTENDER

Hassan was closing. I was helping.

CHERI

Never the less, a job worth doing
is a job worth doing...

BARTENDER

Well? Okay, I get you. I'm sorry.
Bryce stinks. He needs a bath.

CHERI

Good thing he's not driving. He'd
probably hit his own car.

BRYCE

(mumbling)

I heard that!

CHERI

I *asked* you to be quiet. Now
you've awakened a sleeping giant.

BARTENDER

He'd be better off in a cab for the
hundred yard walk to his trailer.

Bryce NOTICES Cheri. He SMILES.

BRYCE

Hello, there, good looking, what's
cooking? Why did you *take* this
job? I should have given it to
Hassan. *He* liked me. *He'd* have
given me a home upstairs in the
ballroom.

CHERI

The *company* gave me this job when
you had that unfortunate incident
on the roof and then walked off the
job. You had no say in the matter.
The owner was so shaken after your
tirade that he almost fell off the
roof, too. That's a long drop.

BRYCE

Well, five times he has to fix the
leaky roof because he doesn't hire
the right guys the first time?

(MORE)

BRYCE (CONT'D)

He gets his nephew to do the work?
His nephew is a girl. I mean, you
know, a trans.... trans....

CHERI

Gender. A transgender. It's a new
world out there, Bryce and we're
part of it. This is Berkeley. The
nephew was a nice guy... uh, gal.
Shit. Plus, when you walked out-

BRYCE

-I *ran* out.

CHERI

I stand corrected. When you *ran*
out, I wasn't ready for the job
yet. So I had to hit the floor
running, as they say.

BRYCE

(out of nowhere)
What's LGBT then?

CHERI

It's an organization. Lesbian,
gay, bisexual and transgender. The
nephew was transgender.

BRYCE

A transgender? Or just
transgender?

CHERI

I believe just transgender. But
I'm not an expert. Let's Google
it.

BRYCE

Oh, here we go.... let's Google it.
Do we have to Google *everything*?

CHERI

And you without a computer now that
you're no longer employed here.

BRYCE

I don't like calling him or her an
"it". What was this person's name?

CHERI

Sandy.

BRYCE

Of course. Sandy. Why would *that* name confuse me?

Bryce pats Cheri's TUMMY.

SERVER

Should we be talking about this?
We open in five?

CHERI

Oh, God, Bryce, now you've gotten me off track.

BRYCE

How's Bryce junior?

CHERI

You mean Henry Joi junior?

BRYCE

Henry Joi is a liar and a thief, plus he cheats at cards. Anyone who cheats at cards cannot be your boyfriend or the father of our son.

It's a CONFUSING statement, but LOGICAL to Bryce and Cheri.

CHERI

I said we were through discussing Henry the last time we saw each other.

BRYCE

Yesterday? Or the day before?
They all kind of just run together.

Another MANAGER approaches Cheri for some advice on a problem. The TWO speak in hushed tones.

BARTENDER

Sounds important.

BRYCE

I'll bet another plumber's banquet ran off on their tab. You cannot book plumbing awards banquets. They never pay and all they do is talk about clogged sewers and clogged wives.

The bartender LAUGHS again. Cheri comes back to finish her discussion with Bryce.

CHERI

How's the detective business?
Detect anything lately?

BRYCE

I *detect* an awful yearning in your heart for my body, but we both know that's not possible. Not at this trimester.

CHERI

What am I going to do with you?

BRYCE

Pay my tab?

BARTENDER

It's up to \$41 now, but I know he's gonna wanna leave a huge tip for me, so I'd call it an even \$50.

BRYCE

\$41.75 You didn't laugh enough at my bongo jokes.

Cheri rips up the check, and hands Bryce the key to his trailer.

CHERI

It's about time I gave this back, huh?

BRYCE

Keep it. You never know in this city. I might need you to water my begonias. You might need a booty call at noon, when the buses arrive with the old ladies on a tour group, grabbing at the buffet and hoping for some affection from the young waiters. *Or* you just might want to see me again. You know, I'm *only* a few hundred yards away.

The bartender laughs. Cheri gives him the CROOK-EYE.

CHERI

Bryce, please don't make this harder than it has to be. Henry is a great guy.

BRYCE

Sure, if you like living in the Oaks Room, playing Texas Hold 'Em all hours of the day and night, loaning out money to losers who can't pay. Dealing drugs. Breaking people's legs who can't pay the loans back. You haven't signed over your house to him yet, have you?

CHERI

He's going to gamblers anonymous. *What drugs? My house?* Are you crazy?

BRYCE

"You owe me money. If you don't pay by Tuesday, I'll break your arm." That's his mantra.

CHERI

That's weird! You sound just like him when you try. It's uncanny!

BRYCE

Henry Joi is a guy that will make you cry one day. And I don't like to see you cry. I don't like him. Is that understood?

A SERVER hands Cheri Bryce's lunch bill.

CHERI

You *ate* on my dime, too?

BRYCE

Wouldn't want to disappoint. Thanks, dolly.

Bryce STUMBLES out of his bar chair and FALLS onto the floor.

CHERI

Bryce!

BRYCE

Don't get up. Including me.

The BARTENDER helps Bryce to his CHAIR.

CHERI

You need to be more careful. You're over fifty.

BRYCE

Thanks for the tip. I'll go next door to the track and bet on "Be More Careful" in the fifth.

BARTENDER

"A Sore Back from Lifting Bryce" is running in the third...

BRYCE

Terrific! We'll get a few bucks together and go in on the exacta!

BARTENDER

Just go. Take an *exacta* shower, you stink.

BRYCE

"Take a Shower" is running in the seventh. She's a 3-year-old. Never won a thing.

BARTENDER

Is everything a joke to you?

BRYCE

Some. Most, actually. I'll go with the knowledge that you are one of the few good people on this planet who helps someone when they're down.

BARTENDER

And out!

Cheri begins her work day by inspecting the BAR.

CHERI

Bryce, leave us to our *own* problems. There's a guy outside I passed coming into work. He was asking about you. Looks like a shady character.

BRYCE

He's probably from AARP magazine. You know, they've been wanting to interview me for a while now. Something about being the world's best looking man over fifty in the Bay Area....

CHERI
 Don't trip and fall into oblivion
 on your way out.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Bryce Moon wobbles out to the sunshine. He throws up on the sidewalk. The SHADY CHARACTER approaches.

SHADY CHARACTER
 Hello. I'm Ozzie Neilson. I need
 your help.

BRYCE
 You mean Ozzie Nelson.

SHADY CHARACTER
 Neilson.

BRYCE
 And I thought *I* got a bad deal on a
 name.

OZZIE
 I've got a proposition for you.

BRYCE
 Let's go to my office.

Bryce walks right into a TREE.

EXT. 1952 AIRSTREAM TRAILER - DAY

In the restaurant's huge parking lot, near the end, stands a shining example of what European craftsmanship can do when the effort is there.

AND next to that beautiful FIAT is Bryce's aged and crumbling 1952 AIRSTREAM trailer.

The silver paint has peeled and the front end is off the cement blocks, giving it a "Leaning Tower of Berkeley" look.

The TRAILER has one window. DUCT TAPE has replaced the window glass.

EXT. TRAILER - DAY

BRYCE
 So, what's the problem?

They admire a view found no where else in the East Bay.

The GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE seems within REACH, as does the BAY BRIDGE.

On the BAY side, KIDS in Kayaks make their way through the LAGOON's murky waters. The BERKELEY PIER is right down the road, with FISHERMEN-A-PLENTY.

OZZIE

I think I killed my wife.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Blues is a big part of Bryce's life. He's loved it since the first time he heard MUDDY WATERS in 1969.

He is an aspiring HARP player, but doesn't play enough to warrant much skill. Still, listening to him will not cause an inner ear explosion.

As a Muddy Waters' album plays on Bryce's old TURNTABLE, he picks up his Marine band harmonica and blows.

BRYCE

What do you mean you may have killed your wife? Coffee?

OZZIE

No, thanks.

BRYCE

Uh, no, I was hoping you might have some. I'm still a little drunk. Nice gun by the way.

OZZIE

Maybe I shouldn't have come here.

Bryce slips up on the PAUL BUTTERFIELD solo, angering him greatly. He tosses the small instrument to the floor.

BRYCE

Okay, then but don't let this Airstream's classic door hit you in your ass on the way out. Go home, wonder if you killed your wife or didn't kill your wife, and when you realize you need help, bring me back a cup of coffee. Large and black, like my first wife's lover.

OZZIE

May I?

BRYCE

Sure, I'll even pay.

OZZIE

No, may I sit on this orange crate. I'm not going out to get you coffee. Why didn't you just get some to go at the restaurant?

BRYCE

Should have thought about that one. You're smarter than you look.

OZZIE

How many miles are on this American beauty?

Bryce picks up the harmonica and hits the notes EXACTLY as BUTTERFIELD plays.

BRYCE

278,399 and that's just in this parking lot.

OZZIE

My wife. She's gone. I think I killed her. Should I go to the cops?

BRYCE

Well, I wouldn't. Why should the cops jeopardize my freedom? Just joking. Most detectives would tell ya about now that they got this special cop friend down at the precinct, and they're always solving cases together. I ain't got no cop friends except one and he's a jerk. In fact, I don't have many friends at all.

OZZIE

Then why should I hire you?

BRYCE

(belching)

'Cause I'm cheap, honest and I won't tell your wife later, when we find her alive, that you *hoped* she was dead.

OZZIE

I *never* hoped she was dead! How can you say such a thing?

BRYCE

By the shine on your shoes. You were going somewhere special today. Somewhere other than down here at the Marina.

OZZIE

I had a date.

BRYCE

With?

OZZIE

My girlfriend.

BRYCE

But you're married... and she might be dead.

OZZIE

No, she's not dead. I mean, maybe she was murdered, but she's not dead. I mean, I didn't do it. If she *is* dead.

BRYCE

How about we find out?

OZZIE

How much do you charge?

BRYCE

Two hundred fifty a day, plus expenses.

OZZIE

You said that way too fast, like you memorized it.

BRYCE

I did. It's from a Rockford Files episode. Actually, you'll be my first case. So I have no idea what I'd charge. I'll Google it.

Bryce looks around his TRAILER.

OZZIE

What are you looking for?

BRYCE

A computer. Or a laptop. Got one of those tablet things? Or a smart phone?

OZZIE

Yes, but I'm not lending it out.

BRYCE

'Yes, but I'm not lending it out'..... what kind of client are you?

OZZIE

The kind that will pay you one hundred dollars a day, plus reimbursement after an itemized expense report is submitted when you're finished. That sound good?

BRYCE

Aren't I the lucky one? Let's go.

OZZIE

Where?

BRYCE

The police. They'll know if there's been a murder. Least if there's any new bodies resting on the slab at the morgue.

OZZIE

I suppose you *know* the police captain or at least, a lieutenant?

BRYCE

Nope. Just a guy named Ed. I already said that. You see, Jim, I'm just a simple country doctor....

OZZIE

Are you some kind of Star Trek fan?

BRYCE

Of the original show.

OZZIE

And that was supposed to be Bones?

BRYCE

You're quick. You should see my Halloween costume. I'm Uhura.

OZZIE

I'll bet that's a hit at the gay bars.

BRYCE

I wouldn't know. I only go to unhappy bars. Bars where a man can cry his eyes out.

EXT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

They leave the TRAILER. Bryce's CAR is up on its rims.

They hop into Ozzie's 1999 red Cadillac. It's a *real* beauty.

INT. OZZIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

BRYCE

You'll wanna go slow through the Marina. Cops all over this place. They sleep behind the bushes most of the time, but then, there's a few....

A long line of YOUNG GIRL SCOUTS, along with their DEN MOTHER, march into the street. Ozzie nearly HITS them.

OZZIE

Stupid girls! This is a Caddy! You can't stop these on a dime.

BRYCE

And *I'm* the one who's been drinking!

OZZIE

Sorry, but my temper's been running on overtime lately.

EXT. BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT/PARK- DAY

The Berkeley Police building sits at the end of a STREET which has a nearby PARK always full of HOMELESS people and plain-old BUMS.

BRYCE knows BOTH and walks across the street to talk with a few. He stops an old WOMAN with no teeth.

BRYCE

Grandma! How are you?

OZZIE

That's your *grandma*?

BRYCE

She's *everyone's* grandma. How are you?

GRANDMA

I'm okay, Bryce, How's the food business? Oh, that's right, you're a culinary detective now.

BRYCE

What's the word in the park today?

GRANDMA

'Bout what?

BRYCE

Anything unusual. Any homicide dicks been out here harassing folks?

GRANDMA

You mean more than usual? Nope. But that don't mean they won't be tomorrow. But there was one guy out here last night....

She grabs Bryce alone.

BRYCE

What's up?

GRANDMA

That's the guy, the guy next to you. He was here in tent city last night. Old grandma knows this stuff, sure as she's traipsing through this jungle of humanity called BeSerkeley. That guy was here asking all about a woman. He didn't see me. Grandma has her hiding places.

Bryce hands her a twenty. He and Ozzie walk on. She notices Ozzie's shined shoes.

OZZIE

Nice to meet you, Grandma. Stay warm.

GRANDMA

This guy got a name?

BRYCE

Ozzie. Ozzie Neilson.

GRANDMA

You mean Ozzie Nelson.

BRYCE

Nope...

GRANDMA

And I thought *I* got screwed on my name....

OZZIE

Let's go, Bryce....

Bryce and Ozzie walk toward the Police Station.

GRANDMA

That old silly fart, always thinking Grandma needs money.... Well, he be right today, that for sure.

They wander through TENT-CITY.

OZZIE

I'm not going any further. It stinks!

BRYCE

It ain't me. Could be you.

OZZIE

Could be these freaks living in this tent.

BRYCE

Know *why* they're living in these tents?

OZZIE

I assume they lost their homes in the real estate crash.

BRYCE

Remember when you were a kid? And you had a nice roof over your head? And food on the table? And other kids that played with you and *none* of you lived like this?

OZZIE

Your point?

BRYCE

My point, and I *always* have one, is that these kids didn't exactly plan for this. Neither did their folks. It just happened. One check away.

OZZIE

Huh?

BRYCE

That's all *any* of us seem to be nowadays. One check away from a tent. Maybe two. Show some compassion or I'll walk right into that station with you and confess *for you!*

A young TEEN boy comes out of a TENT.

YOUNG TEEN

Sshh! My dad's trying to sleep. He got in late last night. Third night in a row he got work over at the Richmond railroad yard.

BRYCE

Good for him. We were just leaving.

Ozzie opens his wallet and hands over some money.

YOUNG TEEN

What's that for?

OZZIE

Dinner... or lunch.... breakfast?

YOUNG TEEN

Thanks. But you can have it back. We're not beggars. The beggars work next to the Post Office. They have a big house on Shattuck. They live pretty darn good.

Ozzie SNATCHES the bill back.

BRYCE

You'll get the hang of it, Oz. Some of these folks beg, and then go home at five, pop open a Bud and watch their flat screen all night. Some are just without a home, and they work everyday. Beggars give the true homeless a bad name.

YOUNG TEEN

You got that right!

BRYCE

Are you over 17?

YOUNG TEEN

When I use my phony birth certificate. Why?

BRYCE

There's a restaurant looking for a bus boy down in the Marina. His Lordships.

YOUNG TEEN

My cousin got married there.

BRYCE

Ask for Cheri. Tell her Bryce sent you and *promised* you a try out. Okay?

OZZIE

You're a good guy.

BRYCE

Nope, I'm just a guy two unemployment checks away from a tent in the parking lot.

OZZIE

Are we done here?

BRYCE

Enough fun for the time being. Let's go see the cops.

OZZIE

I thought you'd never ask.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The inside to the police building is rather dull.

No MENACING OFFICERS sitting on high chairs, behind high desks, waiting to take STATEMENTS from CRIMINALS.

No GORGEOUS traffic COPS, male or female, waiting to POSE for the Berkeley Police Calendar.

No tremendous ACTIVITY on the floor.....

Just ED BROWN, a fat, grumpy older COP, sitting in a chair by the front door. He wants nothing to do with *anything* more important than an ILLEGAL U-TURN.

BRYCE

Ed! Ed Brown, you old goat!

ED
Bryce Canyon, as I live and almost
breathe.

OZZIE
I thought it was Bryce Moon.

ED
It's Canyon.

BRYCE
It's Bryce Moon Canyon.

ED
Not according to your license. You
know? The thing which allows you
to play detective?

BRYCE
Oh, *that!*

OZZIE
You don't even have a private
investigator's license?

ED
Who's the fish?

OZZIE
I'm Ozzie Neilson.

ED
Don't you mean Ozzie Nel-

BRYCE
-Forget it, Ed. I'm here on a job.

ED
Then I'll need to see it.

BRYCE
But I don't have it.

OZZIE
You don't *have it*?

BRYCE
Hey, I have it, I just don't *have*
it.

ED
Hey, Oz, how'd you get stuck with a
name like...

BRYCE

I have it... somewhere. Just not on me. Ed, you *know* me.

ED

That's my problem.

Ed throws up his hands.

BRYCE

You want me to go all the way back down University and get my license so I can just show it to you? Come on, Ed?

ED

Let's just all wait here while mister Bryce Moon Canyon goes home, gets his license and brings it back. Okay?

BRYCE

Now, Ed, you know me. I'm not a liar.

ED

(singing)

"Let's all go to the lobby, let's all go to the lobby..."

BRYCE

Man, your voice is worse than mine!

ED

What about that time in Vegas? With our *then* wives? You coulda really helped me outta a jam, but nooo-oo-oo, you *had* to tell the former Mrs. Brown where I was at the time. You just can't fib, can you Bryce-A-Rice-a-Roni, the Berkeley-iscous treat!

Bryce narrowly avoids two HOOKERS walking past.

BRYCE

They your late night duties, Ed?

ED

They walk the captain's dog every hour on the hour. What do you want with me today?

OZZIE

I think I may have killed my wife.

ED

I *knew* this day would suck.

INT. UNMARKED ROOM - DAY

ED sits with OZZIE in a room. There are no other COPS. Just Bryce.

ED

So what's all this then?

OZZIE

I think I may have killed my wife.

ED

Killed? Or murdered?

OZZIE

What's the *diff*?

ED

The *diff* is *one* could be construed as an accident. And *one* could be construed as involuntary manslaughter. The *other* is life on death row. The needle, or whatever they're using nowadays. Pretty soon, it'll be my ex-wife's cooking. Her meat loaf could rid a state of an entire *band* of a *serial killers!*

OZZIE

I *know* I didn't *murder* her.

ED

How?

Ed pretends to be interested.

OZZIE

I'm not that kind of guy. Even when I get hammered, which I was last night, I'm as tame as a pussycat.

Both Ozzie's hands are scratched with fresh wounds.

ED

My cat did those. Cats can be tough.

Ozzie CRIES.

OZZIE

I'm not sure. It's all a blank.

ED

Talk about your bad day, huh?

OZZIE

Aren't you gonna read me my rights?

ED

Why? You did something you need to have your rights protected? Spit it out. Let's start from the beginning.

OZZIE

Are you recording this?

ED

Oz, why so paranoid? You either murdered your wife or you didn't.

OZZIE

Okay, Let's start at the beginning.....

Bryce walks into the room.

BRYCE

(singing)

"A very good place to start. When you read, you begin with a, b, c, when you sing you begin with doe, re, mi....."

Ozzie and Ed just stand there with mouths OPEN.

ED

Bryce, no show tunes today. I beg you!

BRYCE

You don't like musicals? I love 'em. Sing 'em every chance I get.

ED

Bryce?

BRYCE

"The hills are alive with the sound of music....."

OZZIE
Okay, I'll talk! Just stop!

Ed is ready for Ozzie to write a statement. He throws a YELLOW PAD and a PENCIL on the table.

BRYCE
Betcha woulda talked anyhow. My voice just *encouraged* you.

OZZIE
You two set me up.

ED
Hey, I didn't set *anyone* up. I'm on my lunch break. If you want to talk to a homicide detective, well, then, that can be arranged...

OZZIE
What? No, why would I want to do that? Bryce? You're supposed to be helping me here.

BRYCE
Jim, I'm just a simple country doctor.

OZZIE
(to ED)
Why does he say that line all the time?

ED
He's got a thing for the original Star Trek. The one in the 60's. Once day, he's Jim. Next, he's Bones. Soon, I expect him to be the two-faced painted guy...

BRYCE
Frank Gorshin!

ED
Whatever. Okay, Neilson, start from the beginning.

Ozzie collects his thoughts.

OZZIE
It all started when she told me about her new job. She's a nurse over at Children's Hospital in Oakland. She got a new job in Los Angeles at their hospital for kids. I forget the name.

(MORE)

OZZIE (CONT'D)

But it's a good job for her. But that would mean moving.

ED

What do *you* do?

OZZIE

I'm a professional gambler. Golden Gate Fields, mostly. Card rooms here and there. But I win. Mostly I win. Occasionally, I lose. But mostly, I win.

BRYCE

Ever meet up with a crook named Henry Joi?

OZZIE

That scumbag? Yeah, I've had dealings with him. Down at the Oaks. He's been kicked out of Pacheco, and he'll be kicked out of the Oaks, too, but you have to be a pretty big cheat to be kicked out of there. Those guys...

BRYCE

Broken noses? East coast accents?

OZZIE

Yeah, *snub noses*. Anyway, we were going to go out to dinner at Rivoli to celebrate.

BRYCE

Rivoli? Wow! Fancy pants.

ED

Where's that?

BRYCE

Solano, mid way up. It's been around since the 90's. I took Cheri there a few times, back when we....

ED

Yeah, when you had a life.

OZZIE

Well, they told us it was either five or nine for a reservation, so we took the nine p.m. spot. I hate eating late.

ED

Me, too.

BRYCE

I'm the same.

OZZIE

We said we'd have a drink first over at the Solano Bar & Grille before dinner. She was all for that. Then, she got the *call*.

BRYCE

What call?

ED

I'm doing the detective work, please. What *call*?

BRYCE

You handled that brilliantly.

OZZIE

A call from this doctor at work. I had my suspicions about him having an affair with her, but I had no evidence. Just the Christmas party when he was drunk and all over her.

BRYCE

I love Christmas parties. Drink after drink and suddenly, you're someone's best friend or new lover. Happens all the time. Only time I hated them was when I had to supervise them in the restaurant. *Then*, they were a pain in the ass.

ED

You thought *everything* in the restaurant was a pain in the ass.

BRYCE

True, true.

ED

Bryce, I think Ozzie here would like to just tell his story. We can wait for the DVD-Blue Ray to come out with all your added quips.

BRYCE

I'll shut up. But remember, Ozzie,
you came to me.

ED

By the way, you didn't just drown
her somewhere in the Marina and
you're just waiting for the
Chronicle guys to get here?

OZZIE

No!

BRYCE

(laughing)

Who's interrupting now?

ED

Go on.

OZZIE

Well, when the guy called, I was
just about ready to jump all over
Harriet, her name, my wife's name,
when-

ED

-Wait, your wife's name is-

BRYCE

-I got this, Ed. Your wife's name
is Harriet? Ozzie and Harriet
Neilson?

Ozzie looks BAFFLED.

ED

Boy, I'm not asking about your
kids. You got any kids?

OZZIE

Just two boys.

BRYCE

Names, please.

OZZIE

Not that it matters, but their
names are David and Richard. We
call the younger Ricky.

BRYCE

I need a drink.

ED

I need a double of whatever you're having. I *assume* it'll be a double.

Ozzie continues his story.

OZZIE

So, when Harriet and I got into my caddy, I suspected something was wrong, because she had her best outfit on, and even though Rivoli is a nice place...

ED

I wouldn't know. My idea of eating out is a fish sandwich at Al's Big Burgers on San Pablo.

BRYCE

I love to talk restaurants. Not work in them, just talk about them. But not another peep. Go on.

OZZIE

Harriet never gave me any reason to doubt her love for me.

BRYCE

Wait a minute, Don Juan, weren't you seeing someone on the side?

OZZIE

Still am. What's that got to do with the story?

ED

Oh, shit, you better go out and grab a nice big cup of free police coffee. I got a feeling we're gonna be here for a while.

OZZIE

But I haven't finished.

ED

Bryce, you better take this guy outta here *right now* before I get the homicide guys in here to *really* go at him.

BRYCE

The only reason we came down here was to find out if there were any new stiffes at the morgue. I shoulda stopped at 'Hi, Ed'.

ED

Yeah, you should have.

Ed looks through some papers on his clipboard.

OZZIE

What's going on?

ED

We got a floater from the ritzy side of the Marina. Down by that expensive hotel near the Track, the one that used to leave chocolates on your pillow, but now can only afford Good & Plentys. She's been out of the water for six hours. Middle-aged, white female.

Bryce grabs Ozzie.

BRYCE

Thanks, Ed. We'll be in touch.

ED

Gosh, that was gonna be *my* line. Ozzie, good luck to you. Word of advice? Buy your Ricky a guitar.

BRYCE

Or just give him singing lessons.

ED

Better yet, have David tell Wally to get the kids together at the malt shop.

OZZIE

Oh, you mean Fenton's?

Both ED and BRYCE almost faint.

ED

Fenton's? They're still around?

OZZIE

Gosh, yes, and their malts are to *die* for!

ED

See ya, Oz. Hope you find out about your wife. You come back here again and I'll have to put you into a room.

OZZIE

Wasn't I already in the room? Or the box? Yeah, don't they call it the box?

ED

That they do.

BRYCE

We were in the lunch room.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Ozzie and Bryce walk OUT of the building, right smack dab into the same HOOKERS as before.

BRYCE

Time to walk the doggies again?

One HOOKER recognizes Bryce.

FIRST HOOKER

Hey, ain't you the dude who ran that place down by the water a few years ago? I got married there.

BRYCE

Didn't take?

SECOND HOOKER

She just didn't like the actual marriage part.

BRYCE

Huh?

FIRST HOOKER

I *loved* the ceremony, and the reception. We were upstairs in that big ballroom. Man, that was a cranking night!

BRYCE

But?

FIRST HOOKER

Well, then my husband wanted me home at nights, cooking him dinner and taking out the trash.

SECOND HOOKER

Taking out the trash? Can you *believe* that?

FIRST HOOKER

We're working girls. We believe in equal pay for equal work. And taking out trash is *not* equal work for what he wanted!

SECOND HOOKER

Yeah, so my girl here, we went back into the family business.

BRYCE

Dog walking?

SECOND HOOKER

Uh, yeah, dog walking.

BRYCE

See ya, girls. Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

FIRST HOOKER

God forbid!

BRYCE

If I got a dog, do you think you could you come over?

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BRYCE'S TRAILER - EARLY EVENING

PHILLIP MINION, a good friend of Bryce, is sipping on a beer. BRYCE walks in with OZZIE.

BRYCE

How'd you get in? With the cat?

PHILLIP

You have no cat.

BRYCE

How'd you get in?

PHILLIP

Cheri.

BRYCE

That's great, my ex hands out my key to dozens of losers who just drop by to bust my chops.

PHILLIP

I'm not here to bust your chops. I'm here to...

BRYCE

He's okay. He's in trouble. He may or may not have killed his wife.

PHILLIP

I may or may not have filed my taxes from the years 1999-2005. I may have or I may have forgotten.

BRYCE

Why you here?

PHILLIP

I thought, as the *good friend that I am*, I would give you a heads up on Joi. He's coming after you. Something about a debt he says you owe him? From the track?

OZZIE

I never see you at Golden Gate and I'm there five days a week.

PHILLIP

Clubhouse?

OZZIE

Yeah, so?

PHILLIP

That's why. Bryce here is a general admit guy only. The one time he was up in the Turf Club was the day after your divorce, remember?

BRYCE

I remember. I remember the nags, *both* of them!

PHILLIP

Man, we *hit it* that day. Three exactas and a super-trifecta, all on the last four races. We did okay.

BRYCE

Turf Club isn't much. It *used* to be. When *I* had it.

PHILLIP

God, who remembers the stone age?

OZZIE

You worked at Golden Gate Fields?

BRYCE

Sure did. Food and Beverage Director from 1992-1994. Did well, too. I had it all, a good job, inside tips, and a friend who placed my bets for me.

OZZIE

What happened?

BRYCE

An English racing company came in, bought out the owner, a really nice guy, and the place went to shit. Unions ate up any profit we made in F&B, so he fired all of us, from me down to the last dishwasher.

OZZIE

That sucks.

BRYCE

Tell me about it. They went with a catering company out of the city for a few years, then the race track clientele complained so much, they rehired everyone...

OZZIE

Except you.

BRYCE

Except me. By then, I was working at His Lordships and making twice the money. I gave up gambling.

PHILLIP
You gave it up for?

BRYCE
Three months. But I digress. How *did* you get into my abode?

PHILLIP
I told you, Cheri gave me a key.

BRYCE
Ozzie, I think I've done enough for one day. Can we take this up tomorrow? I need a drink, and I need to talk with Cheri about who she allows into my home.

Ozzie WALKS to the door.

PHILLIP
What about me?

BRYCE
What *about* you?

PHILLIP
I came to hang out.

BRYCE
Well, there's a big, beautiful bay out there. Grab a windsurfing board and hang with the kids for a while.

Ozzie opens the door to the trailer.

PHILLIP
Can I get a ride up to San Pablo? I can catch the bus to Emeryville and hit the Oaks.

BRYCE
You can tell Joi I'm right here.

PHILLIP
Will do, tough guy.

OZZIE
Let's go, Phillip. Bryce, tomorrow morning? Nine-ish?

BRYCE
The ish will be ten-thirty, okay?

INT. HIS LORDSHIPS BAR - NIGHT

Bryce has come in for a nightcap. Cheri is closing up.

Bryce sits alone at the bar with the same BARTENDER that was there earlier. He's nursing another double brandy MANHATTAN, straight up, extra cherry juice.

BRYCE

You know, you ought to really tell me your name. I thought it was Mike.

BARTENDER

It's Mickey.

BRYCE

Mickey? For sure? Where's Cheri?

MICKEY

Counting out the servers in the back. We gave last call ten minutes ago. You want anything else?

BRYCE

The love of a good woman? You got that there behind the bar?

CHERI

What happened with the shady character?

BRYCE

I introduced him to Henry Joi and they became lovers.

CHERI

You will never change. You are a *lout!*

She hits him on the right arm.

BRYCE

Maybe. But I *know* that Joi won't ever change.

CHERI

Did Phillip find you?

BRYCE

Yes, he did. What's the idea of giving out my key to anyone?

CHERI

I needed someone to help me bring home some baby items I bought today. Thought I might use your *home* as a holding area for all the stuff.

BRYCE

IKEA?

CHERI

Yep. You game?

BRYCE

No need to use the classic Airstream, I'll let you take me to your home and I'll help assemble A into B into C into.... me?

CHERI

Clever with words, or just happy to see me?

BRYCE

Mickey, set me up with one more. Cheri, your IKEA post-grad student is right here, waiting for your instructions!

MICKEY

Is that a double?

BRYCE

Of course, Cheri's the host tonight.

INT. CHERI'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cheri's house is in the Berkeley Hills, a beautiful part of town. It is tastefully decorated in *money*, with a kitchen any chef would die for.

CHERI

Now that the hard labor has been taken care of, I want to talk to you, Bryce. Shot?

BRYCE

You can't drink. I won't drink. Besides, the hard labor is about to begin in a few weeks. When are you taking your pregnancy leave?

CHERI

Three days from now. I could quit this instant, but I'm still training Hassan.

BRYCE

I could come back for a guest starring role as general manager. Win a culinary Emmy.

CHERI

Sure, sure. And I could name my son Space Cadet Two.

BRYCE

It has a certain ring-a-ding-ding to it.

CHERI

I want to talk about Henry. Why are you so against him?

BRYCE

Where is he?

CHERI

He called. Said he'd be home late 'cause he was... working.

BRYCE

Working? He's after *me*! The guy is a low-life gambler who drinks too much and tells lies after lies.

CHERI

That sounds like you.

BRYCE

I'm high-life. I down drink after drink and lie *before* lie. There's a unique difference.

CHERI

I'm just saying Bryce, I want the two of you to get along. Little Henry junior will be here soon.

BRYCE

I know you still love me. And I know you'd name the kid after me if you would just let your inner child out for a while.

CHERI

You selling bongos again? My inner child is inside me right now, kicking to get out. And when he does, I want him to know his father.

BRYCE

I'll be here. Henry will probably be in San Quentin. Or maybe Pelican Bay. It's pretty up there. You can see him *and* Bigfoot on the same day!

CHERI

(crying)

How do you know it's yours? It's just as easily Henry's.

Bryce gets off his BAR STOOL and begins singing an old BEACH BOYS song.

BRYCE

(singing)

"I get around, round, round, round, I get around, yeah, get around, oo-oo I get around."

CHERI

Stop it! How do you know?

BRYCE

Because nine months ago, you and I sat right here in your expensive, grandma-inherited house in the Berkeley hills, next to Tilden Park, talking, drinking and then, exit, stage right, *right into the boudoir.*

CHERI

We did *not*. We *started* on the couch *over there.*

She points to an exquisite SOFA in the living room.

BRYCE

Aha! I got you!

CHERI

But we didn't make love.

BRYCE

Then how come I remember *exactly* how far it is from your bed to the toilet? It's exactly sixteen steps. I know that. That takes some math skills, honey. Besides, why on earth would you want Henry to be the daddy?

CHERI

Bryce, I've always loved.....

The front DOOR opens, and HENRY JOI, degenerate GAMBLER, APPEARS in the KITCHEN.

BRYCE

Henry Joi. We were just speaking ill of you.

Henry Joi is a HANDSOME Asian MAN in his early forties.

(To WOMEN, he is the BAD BOY. To Bryce, he's a SCUMBAG.)

HENRY

Been looking for you Moonglow, or whatever your name is this week. Hi honey, how's our baby?

Henry hits Bryce in the arm, *harder* than a friendly tap.

CHERI

Boys, not in here.

Cheri gives Henry a kiss on the cheek. Bryce FLIPS-OFF Henry.

HENRY

Of course not. This is a fine home, one of quality, one of architectural delight.

BRYCE

It ain't no '52 Airstream, I'll say that.

HENRY

What are you doing here, Bryce?

BRYCE

Helping the little lady home. That's what I do, I help people.

HENRY

Just like you *helped* yourself to the money we were supposed to split after that day at the track? Ten grand? Any memory of that?

BRYCE

I seem to remember seeing you collect it and place it in your back pocket and neither Philip nor I never saw any of it. *That's* how good my memory is.

Henry grabs an APPLE and bites into it.

BRYCE

HENRY! They're wax!

Henry STOPS in mid-bite.

CHERI

He's just kidding, Henry.

BRYCE

Once a moron, always a moron, that's what pops used to say.

HENRY

Space Cadet?

BRYCE

I'll say my good-nights now and allow you two love birds to get some shut eye. What time does the Oaks open up? Oh, that's right, they never close. A degenerate gambler's delight.

The two men push and shove each other.

CHERI

I *said* not here. Good night, Bryce and thank you for your help. Henry, Bryce was *here* when I needed him tonight, helping a tired, pregnant lady.

BRYCE

Na-na-na-na-na-na! What's *your* excuse, Henry?

HENRY

I had business.

Henry is eye-to-eye with Bryce.

BRYCE
Business like that gets a guy
fifteen to life. Sometimes, the
needle.

HENRY
Allow me to walk Moonie-Poonie to
the door.

BRYCE
That's *Mister Moonie-Poonie* to you!

INT. CHERI'S FOYER - CONTINUOUS

HENRY
Listen, asshole, when I get my
hands on you away from here, you'll
be singing another song.

BRYCE
You mean like this? "Doe, a deer, a
female deer, fa, a long long way to
run...."

Henry shoves Bryce HARD, almost sending him through the
STAINED-GLASS door.

CHERI (O.C.)
Hey! What's going on out there?

HENRY
Sing away, scumbag, but your day is
coming.

BRYCE
"Mi, a name I call myself...."

Bryce KNEES Henry pretty good in the GROIN.

HENRY
Ugghhh! That's gonna cost ya!

BRYCE
(walking out the door)
"That will bring us back to doe, a
deer, a female deer...."
(SHOUTING) Good night, my Cheri! I
love you!

INT. CHERI'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Cheri's face turns BEET RED. She smiles and sings to her TUMMY.

CHERI
(singing)
"Nothing you can say can take me
away from my guy..."

INT. BRYCE'S AIRSTREAM - NIGHT

The place is a mess; that's normal. But it *seems* as if it's been ransacked. He picks up the pink land-line PHONE with a ROTARY dialing system.

BRYCE
Phillip, get over here now. We
need to take an inventory.

INT. AIRSTREAM - NIGHT

Phillip and Bryce go through the junk on the floor with little enthusiasm. Every time Phillip throws something on the AWAY pile, Bryce puts it back on the KEEP pile.

PHILLIP
I don't know how much of this is
missing and how much of this is
from the last episode of
"Hoarders". You guest-starred,
didn't you?

BRYCE
Knock it off. Oh, by the way, I
saw my buddy tonight at Cheri's.
Henry is such a fine looking young
man.

PHILLIP
Did he hurt you?

BRYCE
I kicked him in the groin and lived
to talk about it.

PHILLIP
Oh, man, he's gonna be gunning for
you. I mean it. You got a gun?

Bryce reaches into the third SHOE BOX on the left side of the closet. He pulls out a BB gun, made to LOOK and FEEL like a .45

BRYCE

Here she is. I've had it since high school. Feel it.

He throws it to Phillip.

PHILLIP

Heavy. But what good is it?

BRYCE

It scares people. You think I really wanna *shoot* someone?

PHILLIP

I'd be careful with using this against Joi. He takes great *joy* using his Glock.

BRYCE

How many times are you going to use that stupid joke?

PHILLIP

As long as you laugh.

There is a KNOCK on the Airstream door.

BRYCE

Yes? Merry Maids? Here to clean up?

A VOICE that means BUSINESS answers.

VOICE (O.C.)

Are you the guy who's helping Ozzie Nelson? You might just want to not help him. You might just want to keep your affairs private. Understood?

BRYCE

Why don't you come on in. We've got tea and crumpets.

VOICE (O.C.)

I'm fine right out here. Don't open the door.

PHILLIP

Think we ought to arm ourselves?

VOICE (O.C.)

I heard that. That wouldn't be wise.

BRYCE
Big mouth!

VOICE (O.C.)
So are we agreed?

BRYCE
What happens if I don't?

VOICE (O.C.)
You got a friend who's having a
kid, right? That might become a
problem.

BRYCE
You got nerve. How about balls?

PHILLIP
Bryce! Don't!

Bryce swings open the door to the Airstream quickly, knocking
out the MAN.

EXT. AIRSTREAM - LATE NIGHT

BRYCE
It's Nat Golden, a decent harp
player. I like his chromatic work.
But I don't like seeing him spread-
eagle here on my front lawn.

PHILLIP
Wasn't he working for Henry a while
back? To pay off some outstanding
loan?

BRYCE
And he was giving out some fine
points on harp plying to morons
like me. He's a good guy. I
wonder why he's here.

NAT wakes up. He immediately tries to leave, but Bryce has
his FOOT on his NECK.

PHILLIP
What's he doing here?

BRYCE
Not so fast, Little Walter. What's
the deal?

NAT

Bryce? That you? I didn't know I was threatening you. Had I known...

PHILLIP

What do you mean?

NAT

Henry said I was to hassle this real loser who owed him money, and that I should just scare him off a little.

PHILLIP

You need help in that area. You weren't very menacing.

NAT

No?

Nat gets up.

BRYCE

You almost needed some Depends.

PHILLIP

I knew all along we weren't in any danger.

They stand together under the flickering parking lot light.

BRYCE

You playing anywhere? Teaching?

NAT

(brushing himself off)

Here and there. I did a *week one night* at the Ivy Room.

They all LAUGH.

BRYCE

I could use a few more lessons. I want to be able to show Cheri I can do something more than drink and lie. I've been playing with my Pignose amp and I got a new green bullet. Picked it up at a store closing.

NAT

No kidding?

PHILLIP

What's a green bullet?

NAT

The old grocery stores and Mom and Pop places all used this green, short, fat microphone. Usually on a stick? "Clean up on aisle four".

BRYCE

That microphone is a green bullet. They're great for harp playing, but no good for yelling at your employees.

NAT

I got you. I *am* playing at Mark Hummel's Blues Blowout at Yoshi's in Oakland next month. Me, Musselwhite, Kim Wilson, Hummel. I have to open, but still...

BRYCE

Yeah, but still! Holy Muddy Waters! You're going to be in some heavy company, why do you want to get involved with Henry?

PHILLIP

Who's Musselwhite?

Bryce does a DOUBLE-TAKE.

NAT

He's a regular blues historian, this guy. Phil, know who B.B. King is?

BRYCE

Keep to your coloring books if you can't keep up with the adults in the room, Phillip. Charlie Musselwhite is one of the premier harp players of our times. And Kim Wilson? Wowie!

NAT

Rod Piazza will be there, too.

BRYCE

Sir Rod Piazza, king of the chromatic harp?

NAT
He's closing the show.

BRYCE
He's great and he *knows* he's great.
And his wife, Honey? Best piano
player since Pinetop Perkins.

PHILLIP
Who's Kim Wilson?

NAT
The Thunderbirds? Geez, Bryce,
where do your friends come from?

BRYCE
Nat, you need to stay out of
trouble. Did you trash my place?

NAT
No, really. You gotta believe me,
I didn't. I just got here. Took
me a while to find the trailer, the
lighting down in this area of the
parking lot is *horrible*.

BRYCE
This is what I want you to do. Go
back to Henry and tell him you
found me and beat the crap out of
me.

NAT
Bryce, I don't wanna cause any....

BRYCE
No, it's okay. I have a plan. In
the meantime, you can help us get
this place back in order and show
me that riff on 'Blow Wind Blow',
the one Jerry Portnoy used to just
blow off like it was last Tuesday.

NAT
Okay. Hey, my guys and I are
playing down at the Ivy tomorrow
night. Care to sit in?

PHILLIP
That place?

NAT
It ain't no dump. Now the Hotsy-
Totsy, there's a classy dump.

BRYCE

A *great* dump. A great dump has to have its own class and symmetry and boy, the Hotsy has all that and more.

PHILLIP

You guys. You'd think the places on San Pablo were shrines to blues music.

BRYCE

How 'bout the Albatross? Now that's a *multi-cultured* dive.

NAT

I wish my old stomping grounds were still around. Eli's Mile High.

BRYCE

Oh, she's still there, but I know what you mean. The good old days were *really* the good old days.

NAT

I played there with West Coast Minnie. *She* was a big gal! So, what's it gonna be? Sitting in with us?

BRYCE

I'd be honored. One song, just a shuffle in C, okay? I don't wanna have to fret over that *and* solve a murder, too.

PHILLIP

What murder?

BRYCE

Ozzie and Harriet? Here come the *Neilsons*?

PHILLIP

You think he killed her?

BRYCE

Don't know yet. But I'll find out, or my band's name isn't Little Bryce and the Moon Glows.

PHILLIP

You have a band?

BRYCE

With Nat's help, tomorrow night
will be their debut.

PHILLIP

Let's clean this place up.

JOHNNY SHINES is SINGING on the turntable. Bryce sings
along.

BRYCE & JOHNNY

"Well, I feel so lonesome, baby
help me when I'm gone....."

INT. BERKELEY MORGUE - DAY

Bryce has arrived at the MORGUE bright and early. He wants
to conclude his business before he meets with Ozzie.

The CORONER is a plump fellow in his late 50's, balding, with
a gray GOATEE. His name is BUDDY.

BUDDY

You know, I start my day at six
a.m. You got here late. I usually
don't let people I don't know in
here, but since you're best friends
with Ed and everything...

BRYCE

Best man at two out of three of his
weddings!

BUDDY

What can I do for you?

BRYCE

Ed told me there was a floater you
had in here yesterday, a middle-
aged white woman, dished out of the
Marina? Where is she?

BUDDY

Right over here.

He opens the drawer to the COOLER. The BODY of a WHITE
FEMALE is all Bryce can make out.

BRYCE

What did she die of?

BUDDY

A broken heart? Lyme disease?
Kidney failure? How 'bout Ebola?
That's big now, right?

BRYCE

What the hell are you talking about?

BUDDY

She's number eight on the top ten today. I'm really behind.

BRYCE

So is there *anything* you know?

BUDDY

She died suddenly. See how the blood clumps up here... and here? The blood settled in those spots right away. It means to me that she may have had a heart attack and fallen over and hit her head. *Or* she could have been brutally murdered.

BRYCE

Thanks. For what, I don't know.

He's about to leave the cold ROOM.

BUDDY

I doubt very much that she was murdered. We had one murder here last year of a woman like her, white, middle aged. People don't murder older, white women unless...

BRYCE

Yes?

BUDDY

Unless there's a *good* reason. By the way, have you checked the surrounding cities? Albany, Richmond? Richmond would seem to be a veritable plethora of female dead bodies.

BRYCE

You might be right.

BUDDY

Let me do some detective work on my own. This might be fun.

BRYCE

Call me?

Bryce hands him a card, but changes it when he realizes it's his old Blockbuster Video card.

INT. AIRSTREAM - DAY

Ozzie is right on time. Bryce is listening to ROD PIAZZA.

OZZIE

Can you turn that stuff down?

BRYCE

This is Rod Piazza. Fantastic!

OZZIE

What's the plan of action today?

BRYCE

I went to the coroner's place of worship this morning. It's not looking good. Tell me, Oz, what exactly do you remember about that night?

OZZIE

Well, that's why I dropped by. It seems my wife is just fine. She decided to visit her sister in Waukesha.

BRYCE

Is that so?

OZZIE

Waukesha's right outside-

BRYCE

-Milwaukee. There's a new show, "Housewives of Waukesha" which I hear is really catching on.... If you live in Waukesha.

OZZIE

Well, it's all okay and I've got things to do this morning, so if you'll just tell me how much I owe you....

BRYCE

You know, the coroner said they fished out a middle-aged white woman from the rocks out by Pt. Isabel. I just got off the phone with him.

(MORE)

BRYCE (CONT'D)

That's the Richmond Annex. It's tough out there at night. That big box store closes and then it's pitch black out there.

OZZIE

I guess so.

BRYCE

You *sure* Harriet's in Waukesha?

OZZIE

Yep. Sure as I'm sittin' here.

BRYCE

Didja buy that son of yours a guitar?

OZZIE

What? Oh, no, not yet.

BRYCE

Tell you what, next time we're at the track, you can buy me a beer and a dog. Okay? *Or*, better yet, get me up into the Turf Club on a Sunday. That'll do me fine. Just fine.

Ozzie sits down on the orange crate.

OZZIE

Shit, Bryce, she's not in Waukesha. She's the woman they fished out of the rocks. She's dead and I killed her.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BRYCE'S TRAILER - DAY

Ozzie is spilling his guts out to Bryce.

OZZIE

It's that damn Henry Joi. He's a real douche bag, a cheat, a liar-

BRYCE

-Cheat? Liar? Music to my ears. Tell me something I do not know.

OZZIE
I swear I didn't kill her myself.
But I'm responsible for her death.

BRYCE
Exactly how. Tell me what
happened.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

OZZIE
Please, if it's the cops....

BRYCE
Why would the cops be here?

PHILLIP
It's me, Bryce. Open up.

Phillip enters.

PHILLIP
Brycie, I came down to tell you
about that Ozzie Nelson guy.

OZZIE
Neilson.

Phillip sees Ozzie and stops.

PHILLIP
What are you doing here? Henry's
looking for both of you guys. He's
gonna murder you, Neilson, and beat
up you, Bryce.

OZZIE
Great. What do we do?

PHILLIP
You got your gun, Bryce?

Bryce loads his BB gun with BB's.

OZZIE
What the hell is *that*?

PHILLIP
It's our only line of defense.

BRYCE
It'll scare off that ass. Henry
Joi is a cheat, a liar, a rotten-

PHILLIP

-Yes, Bryce he's all those things.
But right now, he's *outside*.

A LOUD BANGING on Bryce's door convinces Bryce that Phillip is correct.

BRYCE

(yelling)
Joi? You out there?

HENRY

Send him out to me, Moonglow. You won't get hurt.

BRYCE

Send *who* out *where*?

HENRY

Send Ozzie what's his face out here so I can finish what I started with his wife.

BRYCE

I can't hear you. What did you say?

Bryce turns up his old fashioned REEL-TO-REEL Tape Recorder.

HENRY

You know what I said.

BRYCE

You kill Harriet Nelson? I mean, Neilson?

The GREEN BULLET microphone is pushed against the DOOR, plugged into the AMP, *recording* every word Henry says.

HENRY

She got in the way. That slime ball owes me money. He got so drunk the other night, even *he* didn't remember where we were. You know that dog park up the road from the track? Next to the big box store?

BRYCE

Yeah?

HENRY

Well, she accidentally slipped on some rocks when I pushed her into Ozzie.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

Ozzie didn't have the balls to help his old lady, just let her hit her head on the rocks and float down toward the Marina. What an ass!

PHILLIP

(whispering)

Shouldn't we call the police?

Ozzie has lowered his head in shame.

BRYCE

All in due time, my pretty, all in due time.

Bryce HEARS Cheri's beautiful VOICE approaching Henry outside.

CHERI

Why didn't you come home last night and stay home? Why are you here now? And why do you have (LOUDLY) a gun pointed at this wonderful example of Americana living?

BRYCE

That's my girl. That's *my girl*.

EXT. AIRSTREAM - DAY

Bryce has come outside alone.

BRYCE

You want some of this?

He points the BB gun at Henry.

CHERI

Put it down, Bryce. Both of you, put down your guns.

BRYCE

It's just a BB gun. Look.

He shows Cheri the BB's that unceremoniously *roll, one by one*, out of the barrel of the gun, onto the ground.

CHERI

Bryce, you're an idiot. You could have been killed.

HENRY

Cheri, why don't you just leave this to us guys?

CHERI

Sorry, but you've got a gun on *my* guy. And up until this very moment, I never thought I'd say that. But we're through, Henry Joi. You're no joy to be around.

They all MOAN at the poor pun.

Phillip and Ozzie come out of the trailer. Henry grabs Ozzie.

HENRY

This is what I came for. We'll just be leaving now.

PHILLIP

Bryce?

HENRY

Cheri?

CHERI

Phillip?

BRYCE

"Getting to know you, getting to know all about you...."

HENRY

Just get out of the way, Cheri and Oz and I will be on our way.

BRYCE

I'm afraid I can't do that, kid.

HENRY

Why not?

The SIRENS of a few police CARS are HEARD coming closer and closer.

CHERI

I called them from the restaurant. You think I want some kind of riffraff on my property?

PHILLIP

You tell 'em, Cheri!

CHERI

I was *talking about Bryce*. I am sick of this trailer smelling up my parking lot!

Henry lets Ozzie go. Bryce smiles.

In his hand is a TAPE.

PHILLIP

He got you Henry. Everything you said about the Nelsons-

OZZIE

-Neilsons.

PHILLIP

Neilsons is on reel to reel tape. The confession of the year.

The POLICE arrive.

OZZIE

Thanks, Cheri. Bryce. Phillip.

PHILLIP

I don't think we're quite done yet.

Bryce is speaking with the POLICE, handing them the TAPE. The police handcuff Henry.

CHERI

I've got to get back over to the restaurant. This will be my last day of work. I'm going out on pregnancy leave tomorrow.

PHILLIP

Have you picked your hospital?

CHERI

Alta Bates, on Ashby. Why?

PHILLIP

I'd kind of like to be there with Bryce when his son is born.

She walks back toward the restaurant. Bryce is finished with the police and stands next to his trailer with Ozzie and Phillip.

BRYCE

Well, that went well. The police actually believed me. They *know* Henry pretty well. I have to thank Buddy down at the morgue.

PHILLIP

Buddy?

BRYCE

That's his name.

PHILLIP

Funny, but I know all of those guys down there. There's no Buddy.

BRYCE

Of course there is. I *spoke* to him in person *and* on the phone a few minutes before all this garbage happened.

PHILLIP

If you say so.

BRYCE

I say so. Where's Cheri?

PHILLIP

Work. It's her last day before your son is born.

BRYCE

You know, Phil, some times you can be like the red-headed step child *my* dad thought *I* was!

Ozzie heads for his Caddy.

PHILLIP

Where you going? I think Bryce has a few more questions for you.

BRYCE

I think I have a few more questions for you.

PHILLIP

See?

OZZIE

I got a nag running in the first race today. I gotta see if she comes around that curve and flops or goes wire to wire.

PHILLIP

I'll go with you.

BRYCE

Ozzie, I may need to speak with you some more. And I *know* Berkeley police will, too. Don't move to Waukesha any time soon.

PHILLIP

Who wants to live in Waukesha?

BRYCE

It's a long story..... I'll be at the restaurant if anyone needs me.

He throws his BB GUN into the OCEAN.

PHILLIP

Oh great! Now some innocent shark will come along, find it and hold up an octopus. You have *no idea* the crime rate in our oceans.

BRYCE

Good bye, Phillip.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

MICKEY

You know, Mr. Detective, Cheri has feelings for you. Deep feelings. We *all* know that here. She used to keep tabs on you when you were the general manager and she was your dining room supervisor. Man, she used to get *so* jealous when you looked at another woman.

BRYCE

I know. I have that effect on some women, no, make that all women. What can I say?

Cheri comes into the BAR, looking like she's ready to DROP, both figuratively and literally.

MICKEY

You can say she doesn't deserve you.

BRYCE

I just wanted to say how much it meant to me back there this morning that you had my back.

CHERI

I said I called the cops because of that trailer. And I meant it.

BRYCE

I'll get it moved, don't worry.

Bryce spots his teen-aged friend, Sloan, who is now a BUSBOY.

CHERI

Thanks for sending him down. He's great. Works hard, courteous with the guests, all the things you used to look for.

BRYCE

Good for him. Hey, Sloan!

Sloan just lifts his head a little and nods.

CHERI

He's a keeper. Wish I could say the same for you.

BRYCE

Come see me tonight. I'm playing at the Ivy Room on San Pablo and Solano. It's gonna be great. Nat's going to lend me his band.

CHERI

Lend you the band? I've got to see that.

BRYCE

Will you come?

CHERI

Count on it!

INT. IVY ROOM - NIGHT

Nat's band is set up in a tiny corner of the BAR. Bryce and his friend Philip are at the bar, getting DRUNK.

BRYCE

I hope I don't blow this tonight.

PHILLIP

That's a good one. Blow? Harmonica?

BRYCE

By the way, what you said earlier about that guy Buddy? You're right, there *is* no Buddy working at the Berkeley morgue.

PHILLIP

Told you.

Nat comes over. He's in bad shape.

NAT

Hey, buddy, can you spare the whole set for me? I'm weaseled out tonight.

PHILLIP

Weaseled out? I'm hip.

BRYCE

Sure you are, Phil. Yeah, okay, when?

NAT

Now!

Nat's BAND begins a slow SHUFFLE 12 bar blues song, nothing Bryce can't handle.

BRYCE

I'm on!

Bryce takes to the small STAGE, grabs his GREEN BULLET and his C Marine Band harmonica and it's *off to the races!*

NAT

Hope that man has friends here.

Bryce begins PLAYING. The longer he plays, the more the small crowd *loves it! All 14 of them!*

INT. IVY ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Cheri has finally shown up. She finds Phillip and they both watch Bryce have the time of his life.

PHILLIP

You should hear him, he's great! The crowd loves him.

CHERI

Good. I'm proud of him. Tell him so.

PHILLIP
Tell him yourself. They're about
to take a break.

CHERI
I can't stay. All night I've been
feeling, well... a little strange.

PHILLIP
Just stay for one more. It's his
favorite... "Got My Mojo Workin'"

BRYCE
Ladies and gentlemen, I want to
thank all... 18 of you for this
chance to wail tonight. We're
going off with a classic....

He cups his harp and it falls to the ground. *Not the best
start, but.....*

PHILLIP
Here it comes...

He picks it up and they begin the song.

BRYCE
"I got my Mojo working... but it
just don't work on you...."

Bryce nails every NOTE, every NUANCE of the CLASSIC which he
has played for years.

In the middle of the song, Cheri's water BURSTS all over the
bar floor. Bryce stops playing.

EXT. IVY ROOM - NIGHT

The two get into Cheri's BENTLEY.

INT. BENTLEY - CONTINUOUS

BRYCE
Leave it to you to have a Bentley
when what we really need right now
is a '68 Dodge. A muscle car.

Cheri is laid out in the back seat.

CHERI
Call my doctor.

BRYCE
With what?

CHERI

Bryce Moon Canyon Cadet junior, you
still haven't bought a cell phone?

Bryce is driving as fast as he can. He's already RUN three red lights.

BRYCE

Nope. Never have and never will.
But we'll be there before you can
recite all the times I told you I
loved you in the past year. Come
on, start with the night we made
this baby.

CHERI

Okay, one. Now what?

BRYCE

The other day? I yelled it out to
you when I was kicking Henry in the
balls? Remember? You were in your
kitchen?

CHERI

Two... okay, now what?

BRYCE

There's lots more. How about
tonight, when I saw you. I was
right in the middle of "She Moves
Me" and I looked straight at you.

CHERI

I wasn't there yet.

BRYCE

(sheepishly)
That wasn't you?

Cheri SCREAMS in pain.

CHERI

This kid is coming out fast!

BRYCE

No worries. We're here.

Bryce parks the car at the Emergency entrance and hops out.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bryce practically throws Cheri into a WHEELCHAIR and starts moving down the AISLE.

BRYCE

Help us! Help us! My wife is having a baby!

CHERI

Your *wife*? Now I *know* I must have already gotten the drugs.

A NURSE comes by to help.

NURSE

We've got it from here, sir. Go relax in the waiting room right down the hall.

INT. CHERI'S ROOM - DAY

A NURSE brings in a baby BOY.

Bryce and Phillip are in the room, BEAMING. Cheri is still a bit drugged out.

CHERI

Who does my little man look like?

BRYCE

Let's put it this way: *my eyes, my nose, my mouth*, but your amazing overall beauty!

CHERI

Awe, Bryce, you say the sweetest things.

BRYCE

Hey, we gotta go, finish up this case we're working on. I just wanted to say...

CHERI

I know. Number three.

BRYCE

I'll be back to see you. The flowers over there are from the restaurant and the company sent a big basket of fruit.

CHERI

They need to fix the roof.

BRYCE

You mean it rained *inside* again?

CHERI

Yep. Last week, when it rained a bit, it leaked right onto the bride's head in a really expensive reception up in the ballroom.

BRYCE

You'll have to get Sandy on top of that, won't you? But not for a good six to eight weeks. You need to bond with little Bryce junior.

CHERI

I'm not *completely* sold on that name. But for now? Why not?

PHILLIP

Phillip is a great middle name.

CHERI

Bryce Phillip Nightingale. It has a ring to it. Like a senator, or governor.

BRYCE

Or a restaurant manager who sells bongos on the side. See ya, sweetie.

He KISSES her gently on the lips.

PHILLIP

Aawww, look at that.

BRYCE

Let's go.

EXT. CHERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

PHILLIP

Where are we going?

BRYCE

To find out if Ozzie Neilson is a grieving widower or a gangster.

INT. GOLDEN GATES FIELDS TURF CLUB - AFTERNOON

The TURF CLUB is busy, lots of GAMBLERS all PLACING BETS and CHOWING down on a decent BUFFET.

Bryce SPOTS Ozzie. He walks up behind him and pretends he's HENRY JOI. Phillip finds a SECURITY OFFICER.

Because Bryce can imitate Henry's voice well, Ozzie believes it *is* Joi.

BRYCE

I *said* you'd pay for your wife's death and now you will. Don't turn around. Just stay in this line. You and I are going to bet on a sure thing. I don't see a day in prison.

OZZIE

Alright, but don't hurt me. You got what you wanted. I forged her signature. Buddy conned that idiot Bryce and now my story is even stronger than before. She had even *more* than we thought. How much more do you *want*? The bitch was a noose around my neck. I went looking for you down at that tent city, across from the cop shop.

Ozzie turns to see Bryce speaking. He's petrified.

BRYCE

Well, a little of my famous Rich Little and I had you singing like the big, ugly blackbird you are. So who's Buddy? Not that it matters. I'll have Ed pick him up today. But you? You're going into the box, the *real* box, with as many homicide investigators as I can find. I might even send out to Oakland, Richmond, and San Jose for a team of experts. I hope David and little Ricky have some kind of family they can live with because you are going away for a long, long time. She sure *was* a noose around your neck.

The RACE goes off. Ozzie's horse comes in FIRST.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Bryce sees Sloan.

BRYCE

Sloan! Good to se you! How's the job?

SLOAN

Great! We're moving out of this tent place next week. My money and dad's have gotten us a nice house on Gilman for a while. We'll see.

Grandma walks over.

GRANDMA

Man, who be messing up my morning over here with this singing going on? Bryce, is that you? What you doing down here again? Get kicked out of that trailer of yours?

BRYCE

No, grandma, I just thought you'd like to know that the guy I was with last week is going away for a long time. He was the worst kind of scum. Berkeley didn't deserve his kind.

GRANDMA

Now, Oakland, *that's* a different story altogether!

BRYCE

Don't get me started about Oakland. Why are the rents so high over there now? It's just Berkeley's red-headed step child, isn't it?

GRANDMA

Let me tell ya somethin' 'bout real estate 'round here.... south Berkeley is north Oakland when you're buying, but when you're selling, north Oakland is south Berkeley.

END ACT THREE

EPILOGUE

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bryce and Cheri are on her COUCH, talking and smooching.

CHERI
 How long do you think Henry and
 Ozzie will get?

BRYCE
 Not long enough. But I'm not a
 vindictive person. A couple of
 life terms, then add 20. Sounds
 about right.

A BABY'S cry is HEARD.

CHERI
 Oh, uh, it must be little Bryce's
 feeding time, or *maybe* he just
 wants to see his daddy.

BRYCE
 I *knew* you'd go with Bryce. What
 was the deciding factor?

CHERI
 You *really* want to know?

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

The DOOR opens to a beautifully-fashioned IKEA nursery room.

CHERI
 You see the item in the corner?

The lights are dimmed, but an outline confirms Bryce's guess.

BRYCE
Noooo, I don't believe it!

A CLOSE-UP of the ROOM, cluttered with STUFFED ANIMALS and
 TOYS, reveals a set of BONGOS in the corner. The baby BOY is
 CLAPPING his hands, keeping TIME to a BLUES lullaby.

FADE OUT

THE END