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 “AAHSS” 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
Sssh! 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

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

Yeah, you should have.

Ed looks through some papers on his clipboard.

What’s going on?

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.

Thanks, Ed. We’ll be in touch.

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

Or just give him singing lessons.

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

Oh, you mean Fenton’s?

Both ED and BRYCE almost faint.

Fenton’s? They’re still around?

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 cliental 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, ooo- 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-cultural 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
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
-Wilwaukee. 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)
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 see 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