JOHN C. REILLY IS A ROBOT

A SHORT SCREENPLAY

By

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FADE IN

TITLE CARD: A HOUSE ON A LAKE IN WISCONSIN

INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

TWO middle-aged MEN watch TV.

KETCHY
I remember this one. John Wayne searches for his niece.

Ketchy casually tosses the REMOTE to Joe.

JOE
Careful! These are not free. KABLECOM charges an arm and a leg.

GLADYS, Joe’s WIFE, brings in a large PIZZA.

KETCHY
That Duke.... always searchin’.

Joe changes the CHANNEL. He lands on “GOODFELLAS”.

JOE
Stop!

DIALOGUE from the film is RECITED, almost a DAILY ritual.

KETCHY
Ma, can I borrow this knife? I need it. I hit a deer, ma. I have to cut off its.... what do you call it? Paw?

JOE
(chewing)
Hoof.

KETCHY
Hoof. Ma, come on, it’s a sin.

JOE
Henry, you don’t say much. What’s wrong?

KETCHY
Oh, I just like to sit and listen.
JOE
Have I ever showed you my paintings?

KETCHY
Look at this guy. One dog goes this way, the other goes that way.

Gladys is CONFUSED.

JOE
This is delicious.

GLADYS
Are you saying that or is Joe Pesci?

JOE
Me and Joe.

KETCHY
Gladys, we need you to be Martin Scorsese’s mother. Joe and I suck at being Mrs. Scorsese.

JOE
Please?

Gladys puts down her SLICE just as she was about to EAT.

GLADYS
Where are we in the script?

KETCHY
Ma, I settle down every night, I’d rather be with you, I love you.

Gladys MERGES into the GAME, like she was merging onto I-94.

GLADYS
Henry, why don’t you talk? You don’t talk much.

Joe WINCES. He signifies “CUT” with a FINGER moving from left to right across his THROAT.

JOE
Where are you? We did that line already.

GLADYS
I’m going into the kitchen and visit with Edna. You guys need to get some air.
KETCHY
That’s not in the script.

She LEAVES the room.

JOE
Forgive her Ketch, she gets confused at times.

Ketchy is STILL in MOVIE-MODE.

KETCHY
Give me the wine.  Bee-yu-ti-ful!
Now, we can eat.

They GOBBLE up all the PIZZA.

The REMOTE flips back to the WAYNE film AUTOMATICALLY.

JOE
Spooky.  Where’s Maureen O’Hara?

KETCHY
There are no Maureens in this movie.  Just Natalie Wood, and Jesus Christ.

JOE
Who?

KETCHY
Jeffery Hunter.  King of Kings.

JOE
Oh, yeah, good call.

KETCHY
Where’s Scorsese’s mom?

JOE
She went into the kitchen.

KETCHY
No offense, but she’s not into our movie game.

JOE
You can lead a woman to pizza but you can’t make her Mrs. Scorsese.

KETCHY
Should we audition my wife?

Ketchy channel SURFS.
JOE
Leave it on one channel!

He flips back to the WAYNE movie.

KETCHY
You ever think about how many muscles you utilize when using the remote?

He RUBS his THUMBS.

JOE
Supper is when?

KETCHY
Depends on the stew.

JOE
Here comes the Duke’s best line.

KETCHY
I think it’s great the two of us like the same stuff.

Joe ADDS up their LIKES and DISLIKES.

JOE

Gladys comes back in and GAZES out the front WINDOW.

There’s ICE HOCKEY being played on the frozen LAKE.

KETCHY
Move, Glad, I can’t see the TV.

She BACKS away.

JOE
Now you’re in my way.

She KNEELS.

GLADYS
Looks like everyone’s gettin’ their shanties on the lake. The ice is solid. The kids are playing hockey. You guys going out?

The MEN make a HALF-ASS attempt to GAZE out the WINDOW.
KETCHY
Nobody has driven their Pontiac onto the ice and landed in twenty feet of slushy water?

GLADYS
I see a Subaru. One guy has an ice shanty with a deck!

KETCHY
We’ll put a deck on ours this year, whaddaya say, Joe?

JOE
Sure, sure. We’ll go out, just not today.

KETCHY
Aina hey?

JOE
Aina hey!

Joe slaps Ketchy’s hand and wiggles his fingers.

GLADYS
You said the same thing yesterday. You were watching the Swayze movie about the FBI surfer.

Gladys watches some kids enjoying their hockey game.

KETCHY
Along with Road House, the two of them would produce five hours plus of classic film viewing.

Joe differs with Ketchy.

JOE
More like eight hours if it’s chopped up for commercials on Bravo, TNT, AMC, TBS, A&E, CBS, NBC, ABC.....

The kids wave to Gladys.

GLADYS
What if it’s on TCM?

JOE
Point Break on TCM? Sir Robert Osborn would never allow it.
KETCHY
That tidley wink wouldn’t know a classic if it bit him!

GLADYS
You’re a couple of bums. I happen to like Robert Osborn.

Joe shakes his HEAD.

KETCHY
It’s not like we’re not going out ice-fishing at some point.

They think they’re creating DAVID MAMET-type dialogue....

MAMET-SPEAK!

JOE
At some point. Just not today.

KETCHY
Not just today. But-

JOE
-At some point.

KETCHY
Some point. I kept a copy!

JOE
(his best JAMES MASON)
You kept a copy. Why would you keep a copy?

KETCHY
I didn’t write a nine, I wrote a one!

JOE
You didn’t write a nine, you wrote a one....

KETCHY
Objection!

JOE
Overruled!

KETCHY
‘Ception!

JOE
Noted. It’s noted that I’m tired.
GLADYS
I don’t know what film you’re into, but you two seem to be having fun. I wish all of us could have as much fun as you two.

Gladys WALKS out of the ROOM.

KETCHY
Your wife sure has gotten ornery since her change of life.

JOE
And yours hasn’t?

INT. KITCHEN—DAY

Ketchy’s wife, EDNA, is braising a STEW. Her work STATION is a MESS. Vegetables SCATTERED, meat from some dead animal BLANKETED with buckets of SEASONING.

BRAISED with PEPSI. Gladys ENTERS.

GLADYS
Those two will never amount to anything.

She ATTEMPTS to tidy up, but it’s a LOST CAUSE.

EDNA
What do you mean will? They’re almost old enough to collect social security.

JOE (O.C.)
Can we get some more beer in here? We’re a might thirsty.

Gladys GRABS two Miller Lights from the old REFRIGERATOR.

GLADYS
I only have two legs.

JOE (O.C.)
And three arms, six heads and fifteen fingers.

EDNA
Christ, I know dogs that don’t yelp as much as them two.

GLADYS
Oh, Edna, you’re so right.
INT. LIVING ROOM- DAY

KETCHY
Here comes the ending. Duke carries her in his arms, the music swells, John Wayne’s face is stoic and.....

JOE
Stoic? Are you taking an extension course from Oshkosh Tech on the sly?

KETCHY
Always trying to improve the noggin, Joe. Always trying to improve the noggin.

Gladys APPEARS with the beer. She’s STRUGGLING with SIX.

JOE
Are those going to be enough?

Ketchy is CHANNEL surfing REALITY TV.

KETCHY
Housewives of San Quentin, no. Remodel my mother-in-law’s home, no. Hoarders who live in storage lockers and run a pawn shop on the side, then sell themselves? Nope.

Joe grabs the REMOTE. He finds a MOVIE.

JOE
Good, a Will Ferrell movie, the one with John C. Reilly.

KETCHY
This is the step-brothers one. They meet, fight, become friends, fight and then decide they’re best friends for life.

JOE
Reilly and Ferrell are step brothers... just like you and I.

KETCHY
Let’s go for it.

Joe EATS the last piece of PIZZA.
JOE
That had Gladys’ name all over it.

KETCHY
Unfortunately, she spelled it with an “i” instead of a “y”. Sorry.

JOE
The movie’s on TBS. There’ll be four minutes of movie for every seven minutes of commercials. I’ve timed it.

KETCHY
And they call you slow.

Edna YELLS from her KITCHEN.

EDNA (O.C.)
Men, when are you gonna catch me some bluegills or perch for dinner? I’m hankering for a fish fry.

JOE
We’ll go out for a fish fry. Why, bob that tiny pole with a moldy old fish egg on it leftover from last winter for an entire afternoon just for two or three fish? I don’t care if we’re in a shanty or not.

Ketchy LEANS over, LOWERING his voice.

KETCHY
We could bring a stripper into the shanty. She could strip and fish.

EDNA (O.C.)
I heard that!

JOE
The hearing capability of an elephant, that one.....

The REMOTE changes channels again on its OWN again.

KETCHY
That is weird! Here comes a Swayze movie.

JOE
That one sucks. Let’s watch Will and John C.
KETCHY
Alright. But I get first choice on new clicking rights.

JOE
No problem. We’ll surf during the scenes with the bald father. He creeps me out.

INT. KITCHEN—LATE AFTERNOON
Edna and Gladys are DREAMING about LIFE.

GLADYS
I’ve spent my whole life here in this house. It seems like winter 12 months a year.

EDNA
Not true. We get a three day break when it’s 100 degrees with 98% humidity.

Gladys ATTEMPTS to clean the kitchen, but Edna’s GIRTH hinders that CHORE. She FANS her RUDDY face.

She’s DRIPPING with SWEAT even though it’s 5 degrees outside.

GLADYS
There’s a window of ten minutes a day I don’t sweat.

EDNA
It’s the global warming. I read about it in the Globe.

GLADYS
Well, if you’re gonna read about global warming, it might as well be from the Globe.

Edna STIRS the STEW.

EDNA
I’m so bored.

GLADYS
We got to get these jerk-offs to take us on a vacation.

Gladys EDGES her way past EDNA to the TRASH bin.
EDNA
Vegas! Viva Las Vegas, baby. Roll the dice, hit the roulette wheel.

GLADYS
We have no money.

Joe BECKONS from the LIVING ROOM.

JOE (O.C.)
More beer, please.

Gladys slowly RAISES her middle FINGER, AIMS it toward the LIVING ROOM, and gets more BEER.

EDNA
We should go in February, middle of the month. Lots of deals then.

GLADYS
Then we need a plan to get us some money. God knows those two idiots won’t come up with any.

Ketchy walks in to the KITCHEN. He’s SCRATCHING his ass. His PACKER CHEESE HEAD is on the counter. He puts it on.

KETCHY
I need a new hat.

GLADYS
What we need is a vacation to Vegas. Next month!

Edna FARTS.

EDNA
Whoops a doodle.

EXT. LAKE- NIGHT

High school BOYS skate. They have shoveled the snow in the shape of a large PENIS and SCROTUM, complete with a tiny SLASH at the TIP.

The TEAMS play hard, and SOUND OFF when a TEAM scores a GOAL in the TESTICLE net.

GIRLS watch the BOYS.

One girl YELLS to her BOYFRIEND:
HIGH SCHOOL GIRL
Want a snow job?

INT. MALONE HOME- EVENING

The two STEP BROTHERS are still watching the Ferrell movie. Joe notices something STRANGE about JOHN C. REILLY.

JOE
Hey, Ketch, how many movies have you seen with John C. Reilly?

Ketchy THINKS. As he PONDERs the question, he NOTICES a water STAIN on the CEILING resembling JESUS CHRIST.

KETCHY
I’ve been watching Johnny for a long time. The porno film about porno films with Burt Reynolds, the Tom Cruise car one, even one as far back as the early eighties, with De Niro and Sean Penn. Why?

JOE
There’s something fishy about him.

KETCHY
Hey, look at this water stain.

INT. HOME- EVENING

Joe and Ketchy have done EXTENSIVE RESEARCH into John C. Reilly’s LIFE.

They have come up with an interesting FACT.

JOE
In each film, Reilly seems to get younger and younger. He’s younger in the Ferrell movie than he is in the Tom Cruise movie, a difference of over twenty some years.

KETCHY
I’ve noticed he likes to work with a certain director. You know the guy. What’s his name?

JOE
Danny Anderson Thomas?
KETCHY
Lee Harvey Oswald?

JOE
Jim Hensen?

KETCHY
Paul Thomas Anderson?

JOE
Michael Tilson Thomas?

KETCHY
Curtis James Lofgren?

JOE
Gunther-Gabel Williams?

KETCHY
Michael Phillip Thomas?

JOE
The Lehman Brothers?

KETCHY
The Coen Brothers?

JOE
The Farrelly Brothers?

KETCHY
The Brothers Karamazov?

JOE
The Malone Step-Brothers?

KETCHY
The Smith Cough-Drop Brothers?

JOE
Hilary Rodham Clinton?

INT. KITCHEN- EVENING
Tonight’s STEW is ready. Gladys and Edna dish it up.

GLADYS
Did you bake the bread?

A LIGHT BULB goes off in EDNA’S head.
EDNA
Damn! Screw 'em. It’s either Vegas or Pillsbury French bread for the rest of their lives. They can choose which.

GLADYS
Let’s get out there and watch some TV with our loving husbands.

EDNA
No thanks, I’ll stay here. I’m reading something interesting.

Gladys’ EARS perk up.

GLADYS
Really? What is it?

Edna HOLDS UP up the NATIONAL SUN EXAMINER cover, with a picture of JESUS. (Actually, JEFFERY HUNTER.)

EDNA
It’s a scoop on Tom Cruise. I love him. It says Tom hates Jesus and thinks we all came from the planet Zarcon 2,000 years ago.

Edna stands at the SINK eating a BOWL of stew.

INT. LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Gladys STANDS, waiting for someone to offer her a SEAT. The BROTHERS are OBLIVIOUS to her DILEMMA.

JOE
Hey, where’s our food, Glad?

TV tables are SET UP for each MAN. There are only TWO.

Gladys sits at ONE and begins EATING in silence.

KETCHY
Where’s ours?

GLADYS
Oh, are you hungry? I see only two tables and there are three of us.

Joe RUBS his right SOCK-COVERED-FOOT with his LEFT one.

Ketchy GRABS a TV table and SETS IT UP.
KETCHY
Gladys, would you please bring our stew into the dining room?

Gladys DISAPPEARS for 30 seconds, then RE-APPEARS with STEW.

JOE PULLS OUT THE CHAIR FOR HER!

GLADYS
Why, such a gentleman!

SLURPING AND GOBBLING SOUNDS COMMENCE......

KETCHY
This is good, Glad. Did you cook it?

GLADYS
No. Edna’s the Bobby Flay tonight.

KETCHY
It tastes like venison.

The afternoon SUN disappears. Joe CLAPS on a LIGHT.

EDNA (O.C.)
It should taste like deer. You shot it last year.

GLADYS
You guys went hunting? Why don’t I remember that?

JOE
You’re old?

Ketchy buries his HEAD in a PILLOW.

KETCHY
Uh-oh, spaghetti-o’s.

JOE
We’re all old. That’s what I meant.

GLADYS
Do you remember shooting this poor deer?

JOE
I can’t remember last Thursday.

Gladys GRABS the REMOTE. She SURFS.
GLADYS
What’s on guys?

JOE
Hey, come on! You don’t waltz into a room and take a man’s clicker.

Ketchy SNATCHES it back.

KETCHY
We’re investigating an actor who may or may not be a robot. He hasn’t aged since 1985.

JOE
1983!

The STEW is definitely venison.

KETCHY
We need beer.

JOE
Food. We crave substance!

KETCHY
Ah, the late, great Philip Seymour Hoffman! What a terrific actor.

GLADYS
Fellas, why don't we just put a fridge out here?

Joe and Ketchy GLANCE at each other, SMILING.

JOE
Gladys, you’re one smart cookie.

Joe POINTS where the FRIDGE could sit.

KETCHY
Gladys, you’re an idea person. You should write for the movies.

Gladys TODDLES off to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN- EVENING

EDNA
I’m caught up with Cruise and Katie’s new boyfriend, a space shuttle astronaut. Tom cannot make it on movie-making only.
She TOSSES the PAPER over to Gladys. She, in turn, throws it on a stack of other GROCERY literary RAGS.

GLADYS
I’m gettin’ some beers. You want one?

EDNA
No, I have my diet Coke. I’m good.

Gladys walks out with FOUR BOTTLES close to her bosom, one with the NECK halfway in her mouth.

INT. LIVING ROOM- LATE EVENING

Gladys gives the MEN their beers and waddles to the bathroom.

KETCHY
What do we do about proving he’s a robot?

John C. Reilly HELPS Tom Cruise CHANGE A TIRE in the MOVIE. His movements are stiff, robotic.

JOE
Doesn’t Edna read all those super market celebrity newspapers?

KETCHY
Yep. You’ve got it! We can call the one Edna reads all the time. They’ll find out if Reilly’s a robot. And we’ll get paid.

Joe looks up at the Jesus WATER STAIN.

INT. BATHROOM- EVENING

Gladys is STUCK on the TOILET with no PAPER.

She YELLS and YELLS, but NO ONE hears her.

She SEES an old NATIONAL SUN EXAMINER slipped in between the TOILET and the WALL. She RIPS off a few pages and utilizes the GIFT in the true manner for which it was intended.

(But first she’s COMPELLED to read about the GAL with three BREASTS and two HEADS living a NORMAL LIFE in Tulsa.)
INT. LIVING ROOM— EVENING

JOE
So what did John C act in before the De Niro-Penn flick?

KETCHY
Another Penn film, with Michael Fox. He looks the same as he does in the brothers movie!

JOE
God, he is a robot! Probably manufactured from a schematic found at Roswell.

KETCHY
Possibly. Possibly.

Gladys RE-APPEARS, exhausted.

GLADYS
Didn’t you hear me yelling?

She SITS and FANS herself.

KETCHY
Nope. We’ve been in a deep discussion, something that just may save our financial asses.

JOE
Where’s the phone number for your supermarket newspaper?

GLADYS
Ask Edna. She buys them. I just use them.

JOE
(yelling)
Ed? Where’s...

EDNA (O.C.)
I heard everything you have said about Reilly. You’re both crazy.

Edna ENTERS the living room.

She slaps Ketchy’s HEAD with the NATIONAL SUN EXAMINER.

KETCHY
Edna? What’s the problem?
EDNA
You guys sure he’s a robot?

KETCHY
Pretty much. Why?

EDNA
’Cause if he’s a true robot, we’re gonna get paid!

KETCHY
Excellent!

EDNA
They’ll ask me for proof when I call. But first, I want to digest our fabulous dinner.

KETCHY
We should-

EDNA
-Our fabulous dinner.

GLADYS
Our fabulous dinner, you morons!

KETCHY
Oh, fabulous dinner, honey.

JOE
Terrific dinner, Ed.

INT. LIVING ROOM- LATE EVENING

All FOUR have GATHERED for the TV news. Edna is sitting on a large BEAN BAG.

KETCHY
We’ll get started tomorrow on our project tomorrow.

Ketchy KISSES his wife Edna.

EDNA
We’re using this money to go to Vegas. Five grand could really give us a great vacation, aina hey?

KETCHY
We don’t have it yet. Tell me again, how the hell are we supposed to get that proof?
EDNA

The Examiner guy said he’s had similar claims about John C, but if we can get a photograph of him oiling his neck and replacing his batteries, we’re home free.

KETCHY

Aina hey.

EDNA

What do you guys want for supper tomorrow night?

GLADYS

Are we shopping for toilet paper?

EDNA

I was thinking rabbit stew. How’s that?

Edna pulls off Ketchy’s SOCKS and TICKLES his feet.

GLADYS

I’ll help.

EDNA

It’s good to be a Malone.

IN UNISON

Aina hey.

EDNA

Maybe John C. Reilly really is a robot.

GLADYS

Maybe we can keep a few extra rolls of toilet paper in the downstairs bathroom from now on?

EDNA

And maybe you’ll go out and find me some fresh fish to fry up this Friday?

JOE

And if he’s not a robot, we’ve got this water mark up here that looks just like.....

Both WOMEN stare at the STAIN.
EDNA
Oh, my God, it’s Elvis!

GLADYS
No, it’s Michael Jackson!

JOE
Do you need glasses? It’s Jesus!

KETCHY
Anyone can see it’s Aaron Rodgers!

All FOUR stare at the STAIN.

Edna DIALS the NATIONAL SUN EXAMINER.

EDNA
This is better than John C. Reilly being a robot. This is Elvis!

KETCHY
Rodgers!

GLADYS
Michael Jackson!

JOE
It’s our Lord Savior Jesus.

They ARGUE into the late NIGHT.

EXT. LAKE–DAWN

The PORNOGRAPHIC hockey RINK has FADED with the newly fallen SNOW.

Only the very TIP of the PENIS is still VISIBLE.

An OLD MAN begins DRILLING his FISHING hole right there.

His FRIEND places their SHANTY over it.

LIFE IS GOOD ON LAKE NIKIWIKIWAWAUGA.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END