

The Brainy Bunch
"Pilot"

by
Lizzie Molyneux & Wendy Molyneux

Imagine Television
20th Century Fox Television

2nd Revised Network Draft
January 23, 2015

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. COPYRIGHT © 2015 TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX
FILM CORPORATION. NO PORTION OF THIS SCRIPT MAY BE
PERFORMED, PUBLISHED, REPRODUCED, SOLD OR DISTRIBUTED BY ANY MEANS
OR QUOTED OR PUBLISHED IN ANY MEDIUM INCLUDING ON ANY WEBSITE,
WITHOUT THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM
CORPORATION. DISPOSAL OF THE SCRIPT COPY OR REMOVAL OF THIS NOTICE
DOES NOT ALTER ANY OF THE RESTRICTIONS SET FORTH ABOVE.

FADE IN:

COLD OPEN

INT. BLACKHAWK HELICOPTER - DAY

Sound of chopper blades. We're C/U on a guy in his 40s.

KIP (V.O.)
Greetings, America. That sweet
piece of tail right there is yours
truly, Special Forces Operations
Sergeant Kip Mitchell.

Kip rappels out of the Blackhawk.

KIP (V.O.)
Until recently, this was my life.

INT. MAKE-SHIFT ARMY BASE

A training exercise. JENKINS sneaks around a barricade and surprises Kip. He raises his hands and sets his weapon down, then suddenly springs up, takes Jenkins down and disarms him.

JENKINS
But you surrendered!

KIP
Incorrect. I pretended to
surrender!

KIP (V.O.)
As part of our nation's defenses,
I've been here and here and here.

On a MAP, arrows point to Iraq, Darfur, and the Yukon.

KIP (V.O.)
That one was to rescue some Caribou
that got stranded on an ice floe. A
fearsome beast in the wild, the
Caribou can be a real idiot if
removed from his home turf.

Kip floats in a rescue boat alongside several Caribou tied to a post. Kip removes his cap and hangs it on an antler.

KIP
But no matter where I've been on
God's green marble, I've always
taken my right hand man with me.

EXT. AFGHANI QALLA

An American lady in her 40s feeds a goat in a courtyard.

KIP (V.O.)

There she is. MonaLisa Mitchell, my wife. She's got a mysterious smile, a Ph.D. in literature, and a world-class vajayjay, which may explain the fact that we have seven kids. And through some combo of genetics and MonaLisa's teaching style, they all turned out super-smart.

INT. HUT IN SUDAN - SOMETIME IN THE PAST

Christmas. Kip and MonaLisa unwrap a huge contraption.

MATTHEW

It's a Turing Machine. We only made one so you'll have to share.

KIP (V.O.)

We've got the twins.

INT. QALLA

MARISSA and MATTHEW. She's beautiful, he's a chubby nerd. They jury-rig a computer from a TV, old typewriter, and a hot dog phone.

KIP (V.O.)

Phoebe. Our budding psychiatrist.

PHOEBE, 11, in an armchair, addresses an unseen patient.

PHOEBE

I'd say that *your* mother was a classic narcissist, and so you overcompensate by focusing on your children to the exclusion of your own needs. Does that ring true?

We reverse and discover the "patient" is her mom, Monalisa. A BEAT, then MonaLisa bursts into tears.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

It's okay, Mom. I'll give you a hug once our session is over.

INT. QALLA - GREGORY'S ROOM

Flipping through a Forbes, GREGORY, 9, spins in an Aeron chair among stacks of sneaker boxes, talking on a cell.

GREGORY

Here's what you should do, Hassan.
Take that deal, turn it sideways,
and shove it up your-

KIP (V.O.)

That's Gregory. He terrifies me.
Thunder's into building stuff.

EXT. AFGHANI VILLAGE

THUNDER, 4, completes an actual well as villagers look on.

INT. QALLA

ANGLE ON: Two pictures in frames. A girl, 20 and a boy, 19.

KIP (V.O.)

We've also got Sue. She's already a
surgeon. And my boy, Marcus. I
can't really talk about what he
does. (WHISPER) *He's in the CIA.*

INT. QALLA GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone's doing projects. Kip looks on admiringly.

KIP (V.O.)

And even though I rarely understand
what the hell my kids are saying...

MARISSA

Dad, I'm making a list of
tautologies in Beatles lyrics. Do
you think "There's nothing you can
do that can't be done" qualifies?

KIP

Oh hey, look, it's snack time!

KIP (V.O.)

...We're a pretty great team. But
life is a funny animal...

EXT. DESERT NEAR FIELD TENT

Kip digs a trench. Jenkins exits the supply tent.

JENKINS

Sarge, I think my rifle's jamme-

BANG. Kip gets shot in the butt.

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE**INT. MITCHELL VAN - PRESENT DAY**

Kip sits on a big hemorrhoid donut as MonaLisa drives the family-sized van. They pass by a sign that welcomes us to Dune Point, Orange County. All of the houses are almost exactly the same - mini-mansions with perfect lawns.

KIP (V.O.)

And lo, my butt was forced into retirement even though it had so much work yet to do. Happily, someone back home offered us a free place to live. Unhappily, it was MonaLisa's mother, Celeste.

EXT. MITCHELL HOUSE

Waiting as the Mitchells pull up is CELESTE, 60s, a former pageant queen with a permanent fake cheerfulness.

KIP

She used to be in pageants, but you can hardly tell.

Celeste walks down the driveway, waving exactly like a pageant queen, holding freshly picked flowers like a bouquet.

CELESTE

Welcome, children! (SPEAKING TOO LOUDLY) My. Name. Is. Grandma.

KIP

They all speak English, Celeste.

CELESTE

Oh good, because my foreign is not great! Well, everybody around back to get hosed off! And if anyone has lice, I have razors and wigs!

KIP

(SOTTO) Keep driving, M.L. It's not too late.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING - A FEW DAYS LATER

Kip, dressed casually but neat as a pin, whistles as he puts a final clean plate in the drying rack. MonaLisa enters.

MONALISA

How you feeling about today?

KIP

Great!

MONALISA

Really? You were stress-eating a lot of sausage at breakfast...

KIP

Well, we always talked about me taking over at home when I retired, but now that it's here... I'm used to tough guys, not geniuses.

MONALISA

They are really smart, but they're still just kids who need their dad.

KIP

I've got some pretty big shoes to fill though. You've always done an amazing job.

MONALISA

Well, I believe everyone on Earth is born with a special gift. Some people are dancers, some chemists, some just have really big ding dongs. I didn't find the kids' gifts for them. I just sort of got out of their way. I'm sure you did that same thing with your men.

KIP

Nope. I'd just scare them into submission with a combination of screaming and physical punishment.

MONALISA

And here I thought that was just your bedroom style.

He swats her butt as she leaves, then opens the trash can, finds a half of a sausage patty and stress-eats it.

INT. MITCHELL LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The whole family is gathered in the living room. Gregory's in a suit, and Marissa and Matthew are wearing matching capes. MonaLisa sits on the floor holding a huge yellow feather.

MONALISA

Welcome to Morning Meeting.
Gregory, please end your call.

GREGORY

(IN JAPANESE) Well, I can't make that deal, Hoshi. Call me back when you grow up. (HANGS UP)

KIP

Okay, everybody. Lots of changes today. Mom's gonna have her first day at work in twenty years, teaching women to read --

MONALISA

Teaching a feminist poetry course.

KIP

Right. You kids are going to a real school for the first time instead of having mom as a teacher. And my first day as a stay-at-home-dad. All right, now, who has questions for me about their first day of school?

A BEAT, no one says anything.

KIP (CONT'D)

No one wants to ask me anything?

Phoebe raises her hand.

MONALISA

Oh, here we go.

MonaLisa hands her the feather.

PHOEBE

I just want to say I know that we all have busy schedules now, so I will be extending my counseling hours. Just remember that if you don't cancel twenty-four hours in advance I do have to charge you.

Marissa takes the feather.

MARISSA

And we just want to say that, anthropologically, we're very excited to go to school and meet teens and learn their ways.

MATTHEW

Marissa and I have been working on some general small talk to engage them. We've categorized our conversation starters as Provocative Puzzlers --

MARISSA

"So, what do you all think about Net Neutrality?"

MATTHEW

And Gags and Giggles.

MARISSA

(FROM BORAT) "My wiiiiife!"

MONALISA

Enticing! And tell us the story of your capes.

MATTHEW

We designed and sewed them based on our favorite PlanesWalkers. In Magic: The Gathering.

MARISSA

If there's a Magic: The Gathering community at the school we want them to know we're interested.

KIP

I have a feeling they will.

THUNDER

Can I please go to school?

KIP

No can do, bud. Starting age is a hard five. So you get to stay home with me and play.

THUNDER

That sounds terrible. No offense. I like you, Dad, but we haven't read any of the same books.

CELESTE (O.S.)

If you want to read a good book, my bestie Sonja self-published a tell-all about her manicure injury!

We find Celeste in the doorway, with a big gift basket.

MONALISA

Mother! I thought we decided that you'd knock before you came in from the guest house, and we'd do the sa-

CELESTE

I wish I could have, MonaLisa, but I was carrying this big basket of goodies for all of you. For the girls, self-tanner. And self tanner for the boys. And for you, MonaLisa, self-tanner. Kip...

KIP

Self-tanner?

CELESTE

A picture of me when I won Mrs. Married California 1989. That's Patrick Duffy's elbow there. Later that night, he tried to put it in my-

MONALISA

Mother!

CELESTE

I was going to say "drink."

MONALISA

Mom, you can stay for our meeting but you can't share your feelings unless you have the feather.

CELESTE

Can I tell the kids how I felt when Peepaw left me for a stewardess?

MARISSA

We say Flight Attendant now.

CELESTE

Oh, those are all just fancy words for whore. Doesn't matter, though. I got the house and that sky slut still has to live on a stupid jet.

KIP

Pretty sure that's not where they live.

MONALISA

Greg, what's in the briefcase?

GREGORY

Money.

Gregory opens a silver briefcase filled with candy bars.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

Boom, the cocaine of the kid world!

KIP

No way, cowboy. I respect your entrepreneurial American spirit, but schools have rules.

Kip takes the case and puts it on a high shelf.

KIP (CONT'D)

Okay, everybody, fifteen minutes til wheels up!

CELESTE

Just enough time to get that self-tanner on.

MONALISA

Mom, no.

CELESTE

Fine, but they look like smart little ghosts.

INT. VAN/EXT. DUNE POINT ACADEMY - MOMENTS LATER

Kip peers through binoculars at the students gathering around the flagpole.

KIP

Conditions look a-okay for insertion, Mitchells. Let's ro-

The kids are already out of the car.

KIP (CONT'D)

Right, okay. You saw an opening and you took it. Good thinking.

The kids set off. Through the binoculars, Kip watches as the kids blend into the rush of students. After a moment, Kip clocks Gregory pulling *another* stainless steel briefcase out of his backpack.

KIP (CONT'D)

Uh oh. Thunder, sit tight. I'm going in.

EXT. DUNE POINT SCHOOL

Kip hustles towards Gregory. Gregory sees Kip and runs into school. Kip tries to go in but SHARON, an officious school security guard, blocks him.

SHARON
Sir, what's your business?

KIP
Oh, uh, I need to get in there.
Don't worry. You can trust me. I'm
with Special Forces. I mean, I was-

SHARON
And I'm Mrs. Jonathan Stamos.

Kip tries to get past her.

KIP
Gregory, my-

SHARON
Uh oh. Looks like I gotta call in
my partner, Alexis.

She extracts a taser from her belt.

KIP
You call your taser Alexis?

SHARON
That's her name.

KIP
Okay, look, this is just a
misunderstanding. I just need to
get in there and grab a kid--

SHARON
Grab a kid, huh?

Sharon fires up the taser.

KIP
Whoa, hold your fire. Hold it.
Please don't tase-- Agh! Alexis!

Sharon tases Kip, who goes down hard.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER**

Kip, joined by MonaLisa, sits across from PRINCIPAL RICHARD FAUVER, 30s, who looks way too young for his job. In the corner, Thunder does and undoes a Rubik's cube over and over again. The confiscated briefcase sits on the desk.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

So, I'm sorry we have to meet in such a tense situation, huh? Most of the parents - and the students, honestly - think of me as more of a cool friend than a Principal, Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell.

MONALISA

Please, Kip and MonaLisa.

MR. FAUVER

MonaLisa! What a fascinating name! Is it based on something?

MONALISA

Uh, the painting.

MR. FAUVER

I'll have to Google it. Anyhoward, thank you for confirming that this is your husband.

KIP

I'm sorry for causing a kerfuffle. My Gregory was going to attempt to sell contraband on your property.

MONALISA

Kip's last job before Dad was Special Forces Sergeant, so he might need some time to adjust!

MR. FAUVER

Well, I will admit that Sharon also has a bit of an itchy taser finger. During the school play, she tased Peter Pan when he started to fly.

KIP

Well, from here on in, I'll follow the rules in this terrific handbook you've provided.

He slaps the Dune Point Student and Parent Rule Book.

MR. FAUVER

Cool. Well My Instagram is Rico-Fauv-ay so find me and then I'll follow you back, okay?

KIP

I don't know what those words mean.

MR. FAUVER

I feel like that's what's gonna make us great friends. You make me tough, I make you cool. We're like an American Eagle and Rihanna.

KIP

Still not following.

EXT. DUNE POINT SCHOOL - MINUTES LATER

MonaLisa and Kip stand by the van.

KIP

Well, so far, not so great!

MONALISA

If it's any consolation, I couldn't get past the first line of the first poem with my first class.

KIP

What was the line? I'm sure I'll love it.

MONALISA

Hope is the thing with feathers-

KIP

No sorry you lost me.

MONALISA

It's all right, hon.

KIP

Okay, Thunder, my boy, what would you like to do? Go play catch?

INT. DUNE POINT DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER - A LITTLE LATER.

Thunder excitedly unfurls blueprints of the town's water system.

THUNDER

I bet you didn't know that *anyone* can come in and look at blueprints, huh? It's really exciting! Sorry, I'm completely hogging these. Don't be shy, dad, grab one and dive in.

INT. DUNE POINT ACADEMY - CAFETERIA - NOON

Marissa and Matthew walk towards an empty lunch table, confidently nodding and smiling at everyone as they go.

MARISSA

Hello, hello. Good afternoon.

MATTHEW

Hello. Greetings. Enjoy your lunch!

MARISSA

It's weird how no one says hi here.

MATTHEW

It's like their moms didn't have a Mandatory Manners Minute every day.

MARISSA

Her new students are so lucky.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE CLASSROOM - LATER

MonaLisa stands in front of a small group of young women, none of whom look up from their phones..

MONALISA

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers/
That perches in the soul/ And sings
the tune without the words-" Does
anyone want to guess what Dickinson
means by "sings the tune without
the words"?*

One of the girls laughs.

MONALISA (CONT'D)

Is something funny?

GIRL ONE

South Beach Gigolos. It's so good. Jose got pushed into the fountain at his niece's quinceanera.

MONALISA

Why don't we put our phones down and read the rest of the poem?

The girls hesitantly set their phones down. MonaLisa closes her eyes, lost in the poem, reciting from memory.

MONALISA (CONT'D)

*I've heard it in the chillest land/
And on the strangest Sea/ Yet -
never in Extremity,/It asked a
crumb - of me."* (SIGHS) Isn't that-

A series of beeps, and all the girls pick up their phones.

GIRL TWO

Sorry, Lindsay Lohan just tweeted.
She sprained her pelvis on Billy
Bush's boat in Ibiza.

MonaLisa looks defeated.

INT. CAFETERIA - A LITTLE LATER

A girl wraps up an announcement on a hand-held mic.

MIC GIRL

...to get your homecoming dance
tickets. And Principal Fauver
wanted me to remind you that even
though the theme is "Bottle
Service," there are no alcoholic
beverages permitted! Even though
he's cool. Go Dune Point Dentists!

Phoebe sets her tray down on the twins' table.

PHOEBE

We're the Dune Point Dentists?

MATTHEW

Yes, our new town was founded by a
rogue Mormon dentist in 1875.

MARISSA

Huh. So, who are you guys going to
Homecoming with? I have eleven
invitations so far.

PHOEBE

This boy Louis asked me, but I told
him I'm still in my latency period.

MATTHEW

I asked four girls from that group.

Matthew waves confidently at a table full of cheerleaders.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

They all had other plans that evening, unfortunately. One was taking a shower with her dog.

MARISSA

I wonder if Gregory got a date yet.

PHOEBE

I doubt it. He told me he's working through lunch.

WE SEE A QUICK POP: of Gregory at the vending machines. He's buying everything inside. A boy waits behind him.

BOY

Can I just get some Cheetos?

GREGORY

In about five minutes, and I tell you what, I'll give you a really good deal.

BACK TO SCENE

PHOEBE

So, how will you choose who you're going with, Marissa?

MARISSA

I already said no to the boy who asked me by throwing a gummy worm at my face. But that leaves ten.

MATTHEW

I wish I had more to go on. It would be nice to find someone who shared my interests in multiverses.

MARISSA

Right, like, a guy could be physically attractive but not understand algorithms or know all the lines from Monty Python and The Holy Grail and then what are we supposed to talk about?

MATTHEW

We are the Knights who say Ni!

MARISSA

Ni!

They crack up, then...

MARISSA (CONT'D)

It's too bad there isn't a simple algorithm for choosing a dance date.

Matthew looks up sharply.

MATTHEW

I think this is the moment in a movie where I say "wait, say that again" and then we both realize that the idea is staring us right in the face.

MARISSA

Wait, say that again.

MATTHEW

Oh, uh, I think this is the moment...

MARISSA

No, I'm doing that thing you just said. I know what you mean. We can write our own algorithm!

INT. COMPUTER LAB - A LITTLE LATER

Matthew and Marissa type furiously on adjacent computers.

MATTHEW

It's crazy how open the school network is. Every password is "Rico Fauv-ay."

MARISSA

I've created links to everyone's social networking profiles. How's the algorithm look?

MATTHEW

I was able to shift code from our Magic the Gathering Ally App to the categories that Phoebe said would make the best romantic pairings.

PHOEBE

Recreational interests, optimism versus pessimism, and attachment styles. You can really tell if someone wasn't breast-fed enough by how many selfies they've taken!

MATTHEW

Okay, this app should tell me exactly who to ask to the dance, solve Marissa's dilemma, and likely make us heroes amongst our peers. So... all that's left is to email a link to download the app to everyone, then sit back and watch the sparks fly!

INT. CAFETERIA

A little bit at first, and then in droves, kids start checking their smartphones. A cheerleader nudges her friend. The cheerleader's phone shows the Let's Dance App. It says "calculating your perfect match," then shows a boy's face. She looks across the room at the boy it shows. He has two chicken nuggets up his nose.

CHEERLEADER

Sick! Or, maybe. No, sick!

Across the cafeteria, a GOTH GIRL yells at her Goth friend.

GOTH GIRL

That's my boyfriend, you dick!

Within moments, a general melee has broken out. Principal Fauver gets on the mic, but is almost totally drowned out.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

Everyone, please-

A LUNCH LADY sprints towards him, her smart phone in hand. She grabs him, dips him, and kisses him.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER (CONT'D)

Helen, no!

INT. DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER - A LITTLE LATER

Kip's cell phone rings.

INT. PRINCIPAL FAUVER'S OFFICE - LATER

Phoebe, Marissa and Matthew sit in the Principal's Office with Kip, who looks livid.

MATTHEW

...and it's only really hacking if the network is protected.

KIP

Matthew.

MARISSA

It's true, Dad. I know you don't know anything about computers but what we did was perfectly legal.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

Still, it's against school policy to make an app telling everyone in school who they should (WHISPERING) go all the way with.

PHOEBE

We didn't design the app to suggest intercourse. It's to help everyone determine their best pairing for the homecoming dance.

MARISSA

Also, I memorized the handbook before school started and this isn't expressly forbidden, so it's not legitimate to punish us.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

I have five kids in the infirmary and one who's locked himself in the eyewash booth in a chemistry classroom and is, ironically, crying his eyes out! Also, I was personally sensually assaulted.

MARISSA

Including faculty in our search engine was our only mistake.

KIP

Guys, we need to fix this.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

Exactly. I know I'm usually super chill, and I was voted funniest Principal in my improv class, but I need the app deactivated.

MATTHEW

No.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

I'm sorry?

MARISSA

We're providing a service. The science is sound, right, Phoebe?

PHOEBE

People may find the notion of ending their relationships in favor of the ones we've recommended sad now, but they'll be happier in the long run.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

Guys, this isn't up for debate.

MATTHEW

Everything should be up for debate.

KIP

I am *ordering* you to take it down.

MATTHEW

Have you talked to mom about this?

KIP

No! Mom is working!

MARISSA

Dad, I'm happy to explain--

KIP

I don't need you to explain, I need you to do what I say!

MATTHEW

Sorry Dad, but on this one I think we know better.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

Then you are all suspended until you change your minds. Sorry bros.

Just then, the door opens. The secretary brings Gregory in.

SECRETARY

Sir, this student purchased everything from all the vending machines and was re-selling it.

PRINCIPAL FAUVER

Let's just throw him in with the others, shall we?

GREGORY

I'd like to speak to my lawyer.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. MITCHELL HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

The sound of a WHISTLE!

KIP
Go around again!

All of the kids except Thunder take laps around the yard in sweats. Celeste looks on. Thunder reads a Dostoevsky novel while floating in a giant inflatable swan in the pool.

KIP (CONT'D)
Everybody, drop and give me twenty.

MARISSA
Twenty what?

KIP
Really? Push ups!

They start doing the worst push-ups you've ever seen.

MONALISA
(O.S.) Helloooo - anyone...? Oh, hey. What's happening here?

CELESTE
Hot scandal alert! The kids got suspended for stealing and making sex apps.

MONALISA
Oh my god!

KIP
No no no! (THEN, SOTTO) Don't panic, M.L. I've seen this a million times in the military. I'm a new leader. They don't respect me yet, but they will. How'd the rest of class go today?

MONALISA
Great! Bianca showed me a dick pic her boyfriend sent her on accident.

KIP
Sounds like we are both already killing it.

MONALISA
Yup.

KIP
I am earning their respect!

CHYRON: THREE DAYS LATER

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

KIP
Lights out everyone! We're up at 5
AM for a fun run!

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kip enters to find MonaLisa.

KIP
Welp, they do not respect me.

MONALISA
Honey, I haven't wanted to
interfere, but I think maybe they
are just used to doing things my
way. So if you tried...

KIP
I'll try anything.

MONALISA
What about a sweat lodge
meditation? When we let toxins out
of the body it helps flush out deep
emotions as well. I've used it to
resolve lots of conflicts with the
kids. I think they are challenging
you for a reason. Find out why and
you might solve the whole problem.

KIP
I hope you're right, M.L. Now, how
'bout we turn this bed into a sweat
lodge?

MONALISA
Is that a pick up line?

KIP
That depends, is it working?

They start making out.

EXT. YARD - MORNING

The kids, dressed to run, walk into the yard where Kip has
set up a camping tent with a bunch of space heaters inside.

MARISSA

What is this?

KIP

It's a good ol' fashioned sweat lodge. We're gonna sit in there and sweat until we resolve our issues.

PHOEBE

Dad, while I admire your enthusiasm, this is not how a sweat lodge is usually done.

MATTHEW

Traditionally, the heat is created through the warming of rocks. And the entrance should face east to signify the rising of the sun.

KIP

I think it's close enough.

GREGORY

Also, Dad, most sweats are preceded by a full-day fast, avoiding caffeine, alcohol and other unhealthy substances. I see you've got a Jimmy Dean sausage muffin and a large coffee so I would advise--

KIP

Just get in the tent.

INT. SWEAT TENT - A LITTLE LATER

Kip and the kids are all sweaty. No one's talking.

KIP

Well, now that we've got sweat all over us, let's talk about the problem at hand. Kids, I love you very much, but your actions are upsetting me. Can you tell me why you won't listen to me?

MARISSA

Well, we...

KIP

Yes?

PHOEBE

We don't want to hurt your feelings, Dad.

KIP

Guys, I once survived in an Estonian cave for two weeks on just a half can of taco-flavored Spam and my own urine. I think I can survive your words.

MATTHEW

Okay, we aren't listening because, we don't think...

MARISSA

You're...

Everyone goes quiet.

KIP

My own urine, guys. And, full disclosure, I also ate a little of my poop.

MATTHEW

(BLURTING) You don't have anything to teach us Dad.

A beat. It actually stung.

KIP

Wow.

PHOEBE

Don't get us wrong! We think you're great at some parts of fatherhood. Like driving us places. And...

MARISSA

Driving us places.

PHOEBE

I said that. Um, paying for groceries.

KIP

Nothing to teach you?

MATTHEW

It's just we think - we all think - that it'd be better to leave the school stuff to us.

A BEAT.

MARISSA

Okay?

Kip's still quiet.

GREGORY

Now, if this is all wrapped up, I gotta Skype with a Russian Oligarch before he's totally drunk, so-

KIP

Sit down!

GREGORY

What?

KIP

Sit. Down.

Gregory sits. Kip looks really upset.

KIP (CONT'D)

All right, listen. I know you kids are very smart, but you haven't been alive very long, and I have.

MATTHEW

Dad, are you crying?

KIP

No! I'm sweating out of my eyes!

PHOEBE

Dad, try to stay calm.

KIP

No! You can't just go around breaking the rules all the time! It won't get you anywhere!

MARISSA

It got Steve Jobs somewhere!

MATTHEW

And Galileo.

GREGORY

And Bernie Madoff.

PHOEBE

And Ghandi.

KIP

You are not Ghandi! You are my eleven year old daughter and I-

Kip tries to rise, but is woozy.

MARISSA

Uh oh, dad, you're dehydrated.

PHOEBE

Get him out of here!

KIP

I'm fine!

He's not fine.

MARISSA

Get him out of the tent!

The kids pull Kip out of the tent and lay him on the lawn.

KIP

(DELIRIOUS) Oh look, a bird! Hi Steve.

He tries to sit up, then faints.

MATTHEW

Call mom!

INT. BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Kip lays on the bed, sipping from a juice box as MonaLisa enters. He has a plate of sausage next to him on the bed.

KIP

Hi. You didn't have to come home.

MONALISA

Oh, yes I did. I threw a book at one of the gals when she asked me what rhyming meant.

KIP

(OFFERING) Sausage?

She takes one.

MONALISA

Oh, Kip. This isn't working.

KIP

I'm sorry. I know. It's just. They really don't need me. And this is the last of the sausage.

MONALISA

I'm not just talking about you. No one in my class is even remotely interested in learning anything. The kids worshipped me! All my students care about is reality TV.

KIP

We're Caribou on a goddamned ice floe, Mona! We're out of our depth! I know what I should do. I'll re-enlist. I can take a desk position.

MONALISA

You'd hate that.

KIP

I'd get used to it! I can sit in a chair! Look. (HE SITS UP) See!? I'm sitting.

MONALISA

Oh, Kip. We've done so many hard things. It's crazy that the kids making a silly dating app is the thing that's tearing us apart.

Kip looks up sharply.

KIP

Wait, say that again.

MONALISA

The kids making a silly dating app is tearing us apart.

KIP

(LIGHTBULB) Oh my god. MonaLisa. That's it. *I have to pretend to surrender.* MonaLisa, I've been forgetting who I am!

MONALISA

I don't know what you're talking about but it seems exciting!

KIP

The kids may have read a lot of books, but I'm Kip goddamn Mitchell. I'm one of the best strategists in the Forces. I may or may not have helped figure out the plan to get Bin Laden. Allegedly! I know what to do!

He picks up MonaLisa and gives her a big sexy kiss, then she slaps his face, then kisses him.

MONALISA

Sorry, I just got excited.

KIP

Do it again!

EXT. BACKYARD - LATER

Kip and MonaLisa stand in the yard in long flowing robes, looking somber. A large white candle, held by Celeste, flickers between them. The kids walk out of the house.

MATTHEW

Mom? Dad? What's going on?

KIP

Kids, first of all, we want you to know that you were right. We tried your app, and it really is amazing. We no longer want you to take it down, and we support you one hundred percent.

MATTHEW

See, Dad? You just had to trust us.

MONALISA

And we've asked you out here to witness the extinguishing of our wedding candle. A symbol of mine and your father's life together.

KIP

Once it is out, our relationship will be gone with it.

Celeste sobs.

MARISSA

Uh, what are you guys talking about.

KIP

Like I said, we tried your app, and it said mom and I are incompatible. So we will no longer be attending the dance of life together.

PHOEBE

What? No. I haven't even given you couples counseling.

MONALISA

I will keep custody of the girls
and the boys will live with Dad.

THUNDER

Dammit.

GREGORY

Can I get a condo?

MARISSA

But you and mom were meant to be
together. You were a nineteen year
old soldier who wandered into a bar
in Dresden in a rainstorm and you
saw a beautiful American woman...

KIP

..reading the dictionary.

MONALISA

Madame Bovary.

KIP

Either way: boring. I know,
Marissa, I thought we'd be together
forever, but the app...

A beat. Celeste breaks down in wracking sobs.

MARISSA

(REALIZING) Ohhhh, I see what you
did there.

PHOEBE

Smart. Good play, mom.

MONALISA

It was your Dad's idea.

PHOEBE

(DISBELIEVING) Really?

KIP

Guess old Kit isn't so dumb after
all. I just called my self Kit,
didn't I?

MONALISA

You did.

KIP

So I'm not the smartest man in the world, but there is something I know. Love - real love - can't be predicted by a computer. A computer wouldn't match me with your mom. And I doubt a computer would say I'd be good at being your dad.

PHOEBE

Dad, we're-

KIP

Phoebe, wait. But, I am your dad. And I don't have to be smarter than you to be good at that.

MATTHEW

Dad, we're sorry. We should have listened to you. We'll take it down.

KIP

Thanks buddy. I may not know anything about building a sweat lodge or how to spell diarrhea without googling it, but I do know this; high school is just - hard. And there are going to be times when a guy like me - a guy with a keen sense of strategy who made my high school my bitch for four glorious years - may be of help.

MATTHEW

Okay, can you tell me why the cheerleaders I asked to the dance said no?

KIP

Because you're a nerd, son. At least they think so. They want to go with the tall, not as smart football captain. Let's just call him Kit.

MATTHEW

But don't they don't realize how successful I'll be later in life?

KIP

Not yet. But here's a tip from a guy who dated his share of Pom-Pom Ponies - try asking the smartest girl on the debate team instead. (HE WINKS AT MONALISA) She's the one who's gonna turn out to be a real firecracker.

CELESTE

(STILL CRYING) So, wait, you guys aren't splitting up?

INT. KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Kip eats a bowl of fruit. MonaLisa enters in a vintage dress.

KIP

Hey, what's with the get-up?

MONALISA

You inspired me to try something different with my class today. What's with the fruit salad?

KIP

I could actually feel the sausage in my heart.

INT. MONALISA'S CLASSROOM - A LITTLE LATER

MonaLisa enters the classroom in the sexy dress, holding a martini. The girls actually look up from their phones.

MONALISA

Oh hello there. My name is Sylvia Plath. From the cast of The Real Housewives of London. Tomorrow, I'm going to stick my head in the oven.

GIRL ONE

(GASPS) What did he do to you girl?

MONALISA

My husband, Ted Hughes, cheated on me with my friend Assia Wevill!

GIRL TWO

Wevill is evil! You should tweet that.

MONALISA

I did something even better. I wrote a series of poems about it...

INT. DUNE POINT SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - SATURDAY NIGHT

Kip and MonaLisa are there wearing chaperone sashes. Gregory sells shirts with Principal Fauver's Rico Fauv-ay Instagram handle and picture on them. The Principal buys one, then high-fives him. Marissa asks the DJ for the mic. The room quiets.

MARISSA

Hi. I'm Marissa. My siblings and I made the app that caused so much trouble. We know now that an app can never tell you who to love. That's why I came to the dance tonight not with my match, but with the coolest guy I know: my brother, Matthew. I'm proud to say: my brother is my date!

The crowd looks weirded out.

MONALISA

We probably should not have let her say that, huh?

KIP

Nope.

Mr. Fauver heads to the floor and starts awkwardly dancing. The Mitchells join him under...

KIP (V.O.)

A smart woman once said, "Hope is the thing with feathers," which I don't really get. But, a smart man once said, "We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance." That man was Harrison Ford. He's a goddamn treasure, and he's right. This is a second chance for the Mitchells. A chance for us to redefine ourselves. Like Harrison Ford did when he made Six Days Seven Nights with that crazy blonde lady. It was terrible, but hell if he didn't try.

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

TAG

INT. MITCHELL HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Close up on each family member in turn as they listen raptly.

CELESTE (O.S.)

"And then the Doctor turned to
Sonja, and said, 'It's not just
that I can't save the nail, Sonja,
you might lose the whole hand.'"

GASPS from the family.

MARISSA

Oh no!

PHOEBE

Not the whole hand!

CELESTE

Shh! Do you want me to keep reading
or not?

REVEAL Celeste is reading from "Manicure Massacre," The Sonja
Rockwell Story."

On, the cover, blood spills out of a nail polish bottle.

KIP

Yes, woman, keep reading! (THEN,
SOTTO TO MONALISA) She was right,
this is a really good book.

MONALISA

Mmm hmm.

CELESTE

"Oh no," gasped Sonja, "Not my
hand. I need it for hand j--"

MONALISA

Mother!

CELESTE

Oh, cool it. I was going to say
hand jives.

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW