

JOE TIME

“Pilot”

Written by
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ACT ONECOLD OPENINGINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

MORNING. WE'RE IN A COMFORTABLE, COZY, COUNTRY-STYLE KITCHEN. JOE GRUSHECKY, 43, STANDS BY THE KITCHEN COUNTER, IN FRONT OF A LAPTOP COMPUTER.

JOE

Andrew, hustle it up, buddy! Forty seconds to buy these tickets! Need that security code for my credit card!

ANDREW GRUSHECKY, JOE'S SON, 16, ENTERS WITH JOE'S WALLET.

JOE (CONT'D)

That's my boy. There when dad needs him. I raised you right. Except for parallel parking. The side of my car is like the boat at the end of Jaws.

ANDREW

Your wallet wasn't on the dresser so I checked the laundry and it was in the jeans you wore yesterday.

JOE

When I'm too tired at night I leave it in my pants.

ANDREW

Yeah, mom told me.

JOE

No one likes a smartass. (PUNCHES IN CODE) Bang! Joe Grushecky, you're going to see Tom Petty live in London.

ANDREW

It's a movie.

ANDREW CROSSES OUT, JOE YELLS AFTER HIM.

JOE

A concert movie on an IMAX screen!
Which means I'll be able to see, and hear, and there will be no line for the bathroom! Rock and Roll! (THEN) Hey, for the first time in a month, my neck doesn't hurt. Rock and Roll
Hoochie Koo!

JOE ROLLS HIS NECK AROUND. JOE'S WIFE, MAGGIE, EARLY 40S, ENTERS. SHE MAKES HERSELF A COFFEE, AND A DRINK FOR JOE.

JOE (CONT'D)

Everything's set for my birthday tomorrow. Got the tickets, then The Shack for a turkey burger, Scoops and Swirls for Fro-Yo-- sounds fun, right?

MAGGIE

Most people don't put 'fun' and 'turkey burger' in the same sentence. Are you sure that's all you want to do tomorrow?

JOE

I know what you're driving at, you think the last couple birthdays ended with me... let's call it grumpy.

MAGGIE

Let's call it angry. Last year, you ended up in the bath with a bottle of tequila and an Ipad and friended your 5th grade class.

JOE

Old friends are Gold friends.

MAGGIE

That closet is filled with things we've given you the last few years. Guitar. Fishing rod. Beer making kit. They were supposed to bring you lasting joy. None of them have ever been touched.

JOE

I don't have time to make beer. And the bottling seems tricky, I'd just end up drinking it out of a bowl like a dog. Look, maybe on birthdays past I dreamed big and didn't follow through. That's why this year I'm going to crush it.

MAGGIE

I love you, but can you stop using
that expression? You enjoy a
birthday, you celebrate a birthday.
You can't crush a birthday.

JOE

I can. I can crush all kinds of days.
Thanksgiving, Halloween, one year I
even crushed Veteran's Day. I can
crush anything.

MAGGIE

How about the cardboard recycling?
It's been sitting there a week.

JOE

You're funny. It's moments like this
I remember why I keep you around.
I swear that this year, what I want on
my birthday is concert --

MAGGIE

Movie --

JOE

-- Turkey burger, fro-yo. I'm a
simple man. A rugged loner. In a
previous life, I might have been a
pioneer... (SIPS DRINK) who loves
cinnamon in his hot chocolate. Yum.

END OF COLD OPENING

ACT ONESCENE BINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

ANDREW, DRESSED FOR SCHOOL, EATS BREAKFAST. LUCY GRUSHECKY, 22, HIS SISTER, JOE AND MAGGIE'S DAUGHTER, CROSSES IN, DISTRACTED. SHE WEARS THE JERSEY OF AN ENGLISH SOCCER TEAM.

ANDREW

Hey, that's an actual Chelsea jersey.

Where'd you get it?

LUCY

Guy gave it to me at a bar after I kicked his ass in foosball.

ANDREW

You're always hostile to guys in bars.

I am never going to be able to marry you off. You at least give him a phone number?

LUCY

Yeah, for that zit on your neck.

(THEN) I have to tell mom and dad the news today.

ANDREW

You're going to break their hearts and that'll be rough. But they'll love me more and that'll be awesome.

JOE CROSSES INTO THE KITCHEN, DRESSED FOR WORK.

JOE

Lucy, it's down to us and one other bid for the renovation of that Ridgewood house. Could be our biggest job ever. The only people I want handling it are you and me. Got it?

LUCY

Sure, but Dad, I don't know what your problem is with Uncle Scott.

JOE

I don't have a problem with Uncle Scott. He's my brother and I love him, kinda. He's a great business partner and I depend on him, not really. But it's okay, I have another partner at work -- my daughter -- and there isn't anybody in the world I'd rather have with me.

ANDREW

That makes me feel good.

JOE

I sleep well at night knowing the future of Grushecky Construction and Restoration is in good hands.

JOE PUTS HIS ARMS AROUND HIS KIDS.

JOE (CONT'D)

(TO LUCY) You okay, hon? You seem a little tense.

LUCY

I'm good. Just... I love you, see you at the office.

LUCY EXITS. ANDREW CHECKS HIS PHONE.

JOE

Good kid, your sister.

ANDREW

I'm mixed on her. (THEN) Crap, Jake can't come over. He's doing something with Glen. Glen is so making a play to be Jake's best friend.

JOE

Relax, you and Jake have an unbreakable bond. You finish each other's not-exactly-sentences.

ANDREW

Who's your best friend, dad?

JOE

I guess I'd have to say that my best friend is... your mom. Tomorrow's my birthday, mom's the only person I want next to me at the Tom Petty concert.

ANDREW

Movie.

JOE

The great thing about marriage is you wake up every morning next to your best friend. And there's a tax break.

MAGGIE ENTERS.

ANDREW

Mom... who's your best friend?

MAGGIE

Nina. Or Hannah from college. Rachel is like a sister. And Sarah, my sister. Love Linda, she cuts my hair.

AS ANDREW CROSSES AWAY, HE WHISPERS TO JOE --

ANDREW

I were you, I'd keep looking.

MAGGIE

So what time's Tom Petty take the stage... on the screen... in the movie theater... in the mall?

JOE

Noon. It's a hip matinee concert.

MAGGIE

I'm supposed to be teaching a class, but I can move it. Just have to make sure it works for all my patients.

JOE

Thanks. (LITTLE LAUGH) Patients.

MAGGIE

What?

MAGGIE CROSSES TOWARDS THE GARAGE. JOE FOLLOWS.

JOE

(IN TROUBLE) Nothing. They are your patients. That's what I meant.

RESET TO:

INT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - MAGGIE'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

JOE PURSUES MAGGIE INTO WHAT WAS A GARAGE BUT HAS BEEN NICELY MADE OVER INTO MAGGIE'S MEDITATION STUDIO/CLASSROOM. IT'S A BIG, AIRY, LOFTLIKE SPACE. VERY COZY, VERY WARM.

MAGGIE

You may not take it seriously, but the people who come to my classes genuinely need help.

JOE

Of course they do! Yes! I mean, what you do in here, teaching mindfulness meditation, is very real and very professional. I know that.

MAGGIE

When I started my medical practice, I worked nights, weekends. Until word gets out that this kind of medicine -- yes, I called it medicine -- really works, I have to put in the time.

JOE

I know.

MAGGIE

I wasn't happy before, Joe. So angry.
Do you remember my temper?

JOE

Tricky area. I'll go with "sort of."

MAGGIE

Look at me now. I'm better, right?
Centered?

JOE

Sure, why not.

MAGGIE

I want to do for people what I've done
for myself... something I never did as
a doctor...

JOE

Call our garage your office?

MAGGIE

Heal them. I know it puts pressure on
you to be the primary breadwinner, the
old-fashioned man of the house.

JOE

I can handle it. (RUBS HIS NECK) Ow.

MAGGIE

Lucy's out of college, she's working,
she'll get her own place. In a few
years, Andrew's on his own.
Are you really worried?

JOE

Of course I'm worried, I'm alive. But I hope you know, I think what you're doing with this meditation mum...

MAGGIE

Don't say mumbo-jumbo.

JOE

Don't interrupt. I think what you're doing with this fascinating, newfound craft of Meditation is very brave. I will push back our movie... concert movie... concert... to a little later so you can teach your class. I'm proud of you. You are crushing this new career.

MAGGIE

Doesn't make sense, you can't crush a career.

THEY HEAR A CAR PULL UP IN THE DRIVEWAY, MAGGIE LOOKS OUT.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Your parents are here? Are you kidding me? I haven't even had my motherfucking smoothie yet.

JOE

That was what, a two-year degree you did in mindfulness?

RESET TO:

INT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

MAGGIE AND JOE CROSS BACK IN.

MAGGIE

A clear violation of our call-first policy. What are they doing here?

JOE

Dropping off a birthday present?
Could be anything, my dad's been nuts since he stopped working.

MAGGIE

I'm going to count the seconds until your mom says something about my new career.

JOE

Ooh, fun. I'll see how long until she mentions her trainer, Phil.

JUDY AND MITCH GRUSHECKY, JOE'S MOM AND DAD, ENTER.

MITCH

Two days into my new car lease. What happens? Some kid in his parents' BMW almost knocks me into a tree.

JUDY

It's that medical marijuana, it's all over the place. Everybody's high. I am proud of you for never trying that stuff, son.

MAGGIE LAUGHS, JOE HITS HER IN THE ARM.

JUDY (CONT'D)

Hello, Maggie. You're looking well.
How are the concentrating classes?

MAGGIE

(SOTTO) 15 seconds, could be a record.
(THEN) Going well. You guys okay?

JUDY

Our car swerved, but I stayed rock
steady. That's my core talking.

JOE

Seat belt might have had something to
do with it.

MITCH

She doesn't need one. Her midsection
is as strong as gravity. And sexier.

JUDY

I'm very taut. And I owe it all to
Phil. My trainer.

JOE

(TO MAGGIE) Thirty seconds, a little
slow.

JUDY

Phil's a genius. Like Mandy Patinkin,
but about the body. So listen, we're
here because your father has an
important announcement. Join us in
the family room.

JUDY AND MITCH CROSS OUT OF KITCHEN.

MAGGIE

She's so bossy. This is our house.

We decide where the announcements are
made.

JOE

I know, I'll talk to her. But not
today, she's a little psycho.

CUT TO:

SCENE DINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

MITCH AND JUDY LEAD JOE AND MAGGIE TO THE SOFA. THEY STAND, PREPARING TO MAKE THIS BIG ANNOUNCEMENT. MITCH IS NERVOUS.

JUDY

As you know, your father recently retired. Mitchell, go on.

MITCH

I recently retired.

JUDY

He's been a little frustrated. Tell them, honey.

MITCH

I've been frustrated.

JUDY

So he's made a big decision.

MITCH

I've made a big decision.

JOE

The pace of this is killing me. Look, Dad... I know it's awkward because you gave me and Scott the business, but it's okay. Come back to work.

MITCH

I don't want to go back to work. That office was soul-sucking.

JOE

That office is where I spend my life.
(RUBS NECK) You said you were happy
to give me and Scott the company.

MITCH

I would have been happy to give
anybody the company. It was easier
giving it to you, I didn't have to
change the sign.

MAGGIE

So then what's this about?

MITCH

You know how my whole life I've been
interested in music?

JOE

No. I remember a lot of talk about
how to cook a steak and traffic on the
George Washington Bridge.

MITCH

I was a very musical child. Everyone
said I had a voice like an angel. But
it wasn't important to my parents so I
was never encouraged.

JOE

I have never heard that before. And
frankly, this is sounding a little
like the plot of Billy Elliot.

MITCH

About six months ago I was home,
feeling a little... useless, I guess.

JUDY

He took a BuzzFeed quiz. It said he
was depressed. It also said if he was
a city, he'd be Tokyo.

MITCH

And I saw a thing on Facebook about a
lady who gives voice lessons.

JOE

Buzzfeed? Facebook? When did you get
a computer? How do you remember your
passwords? None of this makes sense.

MITCH

And one thing led to another and now
I'm... (PROUD) a cabaret performer.

JUDY

He sings songs, has patter. Does a
bit about traffic on the GWB.

JOE

You'd rather do this than come back to
work? A couple days a week?

MAGGIE TOUCHES JOE'S ARM.

MAGGIE

Good for you, Mitch. I can't wait to
see you perform.

MITCH

Thank you, Maggie. You're in one of my jokes. But I say you have red hair or the punch line doesn't work.

JOE

(SOTTO) What are you doing? Why are you encouraging him?

MAGGIE

This is the stage of life where we need to take care of our parents. You can't fight it. My mom's got a bad hip, my dad's got his sinus infections. Look what I'm doing.

JOE

Trying to kill them?

MAGGIE

I moved them to Arizona.

JOE

Same thing.

JUDY CALLS OVER TO THEM --

JUDY

You guys want to see me do 50 crunches?

CUT TO:

SCENE EINT. GRUSHECKY CONSTRUCTION AND RESTORATION - DAY

WE ARE AT JOE'S OFFICE. HE SHARES IT WITH HIS BROTHER, SCOTT. THEIR DESKS FACE EACH OTHER. JOE IS IN FRONT OF A COMPUTER, AGAIN.

JOE

(CALLING OFF) Lucy, did you find my wallet? Need that code for my credit card so I can get these tickets!

LUCY CROSSES IN TO THE OFFICE, WITH JOE'S WALLET.

LUCY

It was on the front seat of your car.

JOE

Should never take it out of my pants.

LUCY

That's what mom says.

JOE

Everyone's a comedian. (PUNCHES IN CODE) And... boom! Tomorrow at 3, I will be seeing Tom Petty in concert.

LUCY

In a movie.

JOE'S BROTHER SCOTT, 37, CROSSES IN.

SCOTT

Sorry I'm late. Couldn't be helped.
Kooky morning, with a capital Koo.
You got my message, right?

JOE

Nothing, nope, did not get a message.

SCOTT

Are you saying my text didn't go through? (CHECKS PHONE) Never sent it. I am adorable. So look, about that Ridgewood job--

JOE

Yeah, don't worry about that. If it happens, great. If not, no big deal.

SCOTT

What? But this would be our biggest contract in-- Oh, I get it.

LUCY

Uncle Scott --

SCOTT

It's okay, Lucy. (RE: JOE) It's the way it's always been. I can't be trusted because I'm a flake.

SCOTT WALKS AWAY.

JOE

(SOTTO) And standby for melodramatic turn.

SCOTT TURNS BACK TOWARDS JOE.

SCOTT

(BEAT) And because I'm gay.

JOE

Come on. This morning's a perfect example. You're an hour late.

SCOTT

Would you like to know why?

JOE

It doesn't matter--

SCOTT

I was closing the Ridgewood deal.

JOE

(HUGGING HIM) You gay bastard.

SCOTT

The owner of the house showed up at my regular NOSH meeting.

JOE

You mean breakfast meeting?

SCOTT

NOSH. The support group I founded. Newly Out Suburban Homosexuals. Don't you listen when I tell you things?

JOE

Sometimes yes, usually no.

LUCY

Uncle Scott, that's amazing!

SCOTT

Thanks, honey. All I did was put up some flyers. We might get hats.

LUCY

I mean about the deal.

SCOTT

Should have known that guy was gay.

His favorite Soderbergh movie is Magic

Mike. They want to swing by the

office tomorrow to close the deal,

sign the papers, write a check.

JOE

But it's my birthday, I wasn't going

to come in.

SCOTT

No problem, stay home. I got this.

Or should I say... I Scott this.

JOE

Maybe I should be there. I'll get

tickets for the 9:00 concert.

SCOTT

I thought it was a movie.

JOE

The bathrooms are immaculate, and a

guy in a vest gives you a towel!

CUT TO:

SCENE HINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

JOE IS BACK ON THE COMPUTER BUYING TICKETS FOR A THIRD TIME.

JOE

(CALLING) My wallet's in the front
hall! Need that security code!

A WORKER RUNS IN CARRYING JOE'S WALLET, HANDS IT TO HIM.

JOE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

WORKER

I can never remember my code, either.
Which is crazy, it's 1-2-3. Oh, crap.
Now I have to kill you.

JOE

(LAUGHS) That's especially funny
because I've never seen you in my
house before and I have no idea who
you are.

MAGGIE CROSSES IN.

JOE (CONT'D)

We have tickets for the 9:00 concert.

MAGGIE

Movie. And we can't go at 9:00.

JOE

(RE: WORKER) I feel like this has
something to do with him.

CUT TO:

SCENE JINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JOE, WITH MAGGIE, STANDS ACROSS FROM HIS PARENTS. THE ROOM IS BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A THEATER-STYLE SETTING FOR MITCH'S CABARET PERFORMANCE. WORKERS MOVE TABLES AND CHAIRS.

JUDY

We're doing a cabaret show in your living room for your birthday! Not our first choice but you have a lovely piano, and the back room at Tenafly Cafe is booked for a Bar Mitzvah.

JOE

But I have plans I'm excited about. I'm going to a concert.

JUDY

Isn't it just a movie? This is going to be a hotsy-totsy big deal. There's an accompanist.

REVEAL THAT JOE'S SON, ANDREW, IS SITTING AT THE PIANO.

ANDREW

Hey, Dad. Pretty cool, right?

JOE

Seriously? You too, Fredo?

ANDREW

Can you try quoting a movie that was made in my lifetime?

JOE

Mom, dad... look. We talked about how one of the great things about you guys moving into that condo development was the chance to make new friends.

JUDY

And they are all coming over tomorrow night to celebrate your birthday!

JOE

But I don't know them.

JUDY

We've told them all about you, they'll enjoy putting a face to a name.

JOE

Then they can borrow my high school yearbook. It's all faces and names.

MITCH

It's okay, Joe. Tomorrow's not about me. I'll do the concert another time.

JOE SEES HIS DAD'S DISAPPOINTMENT. HE TAKES IT IN.

JOE

You know what, dad... This is looking fun. Do the concert. It's exactly how I want to spend my birthday.

MAGGIE

(SOTTO) You're a good son, trading Tom Petty for Mitch Grushecky.

JOE

(SOTTO) Thanks.

MAGGIE

(SOTTO) You know, Tom Petty might even be older than your dad.

LUCY CROSSES IN.

LUCY

Excuse me, I have news I need to share. My family has always been so supportive of me. Except for the 2008 Barack/Hillary primary.

MAGGIE

Well, honey, that was crazy. No one was for Edwards.

LUCY

In high school I wanted to quit the soccer team, I didn't think I was good enough because I was short. And Dad took me to see Mia Hamm play. And she was the shortest player on the field.

JOE

Yeah. I crushed that problem.

LUCY

Made me realize I could do anything I wanted. So I tried out and made a women's semi-professional soccer team. It starts tomorrow.

MAGGIE

Lucy! Angel! That's amazing! Why
the dramatic wind-up?

LUCY

Because I can't work with Dad anymore.

JOE

You said it's semi-professional.

LUCY

It's full-time.

JOE

Full-paid?

LUCY

Semi-paid.

JOE

Get your own place? Buy your own
food?

LUCY

Live here, you feed me.

JOE STARTS TO MASSAGE HIS NECK.

ANDREW

Neck bothering you, Dad?

JOE

Maybe a little.

JOE CROSSES TOWARDS THE KITCHEN.

CUT TO:

SCENE KINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - KITCHEN- MOMENTS LATER

JOE CROSSES BACK INTO THE KITCHEN, MAGGIE FOLLOWS.

MAGGIE

Come on, your daughter making a soccer team is pretty great. We have a professional athlete in the family.

JOE

Semi-professional. But yes, it's amazing. I am so proud.

MAGGIE

Ten years of scrambling to find her uniform, and filling up a water bottle that doesn't leech toxins, paid off.

JOE

Sometimes I gave her water in a plastic bottle. And one week I forgot water and just gave her a can of soda. And yes, I'm thrilled. Also, a little depressed.

MAGGIE

Why?

JOE

I am a happy husband, a proud father, an appreciative son. And I love being all those things.

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

But I look around, and you've all
landed on some newfound joy in your
lives... Cabaret, soccer, meditation.
My brother's gay... fun! You think I
don't want to go fishing, play the
guitar, make beer? Not all at once,
I'd end up with a wet guitar and fishy
beer. But guitar on Tuesday, beer on
Thursday, fishing on Saturday, sounds
pretty good to me. Could be the next
chapter of my brave, new, life. But I
can't do any of those things, because
today I realized I'm the guy who takes
care of everybody else, and is always
the pleaser, even on my birthday, the
day I'm supposed to cut loose, and
have fun!

JOE TURNS TO GO, BUMPS INTO A STACK OF CHAIRS. PICKS HIMSELF
UP, WALKS OUT.

JOE (CONT'D)

And I thought we were best friends!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOSCENE L

INT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - JOE AND MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

IT'S THE NEXT MORNING. MAGGIE AND JOE ARE IN BED.

MAGGIE

How are you feeling? While you were asleep you were making a kind of wolf-like, howling sound.

JOE

I was being chased. You were after me. You, my parents, Blake Griffin.

MAGGIE

Honey, no one is out to get you. Not your parents, not me.

JOE

Blake Griffin?

MAGGIE

Maybe. Were you driving to the basket? Because that's his house. I know you're not going to the movie --

JOE

Concert.

MAGGIE

But today's your birthday... What would make you happy right now?

JOE

I thought that usually happens on
birthday night.

MAGGIE

Oh yes, and it will. Don't worry.
But it's a beautiful day... what about
going out for a jog? You always feel
better after a jog.

JOE

I always feel better after that other
thing, too.

MAGGIE

And that's happening, probably twice.
But here... I got you a new pair of
running shoes. Designed them online.

MAGGIE HANDS JOE A SHOE BOX. HE TAKES OUT A PAIR OF STYLISH,
PSYCHEDELIC, DAY-GLO, RUNNING SHOES.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Because you are the most colorful
person I know, and your shoes should
reflect that.

JOE

Pretty sure they'd reflect anything.

CUT TO:

SCENE MEXT. STREET - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

JOE, DRESSED IN WORKOUT GEAR, WITH HIS NEW SHOES, JOGS THROUGH A NICE BUT NOT OVERLY FANCY SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD. JOE HOPS OVER A RAKE. JOE DARTS AROUND A KID WALKING A DOG. A SEXY WOMAN WALKS PAST. JOE TURNS HIS NECK TO LOOK AT HER.

JOE

Ow! Ouchie! Ow!

JOE STOPS, GRABS HIS NECK. HE MASSAGES IT, TURNS HIS HEAD.

JOE (CONT'D)

Snickerdoodle that hurts!

AT THE SAME TIME, AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN, THEODORE, IN HIS THIRTIES -- COULD BE YOUNGER, COULD BE OLDER -- IS WHEELING OUT A RECYCLING BIN.

THEODORE

That's some sad cursing, my friend.

JOE

It's like something's stabbing me in the neck.

THEODORE

My brother stabbed me in the neck because I drank his coffee. Also, I ate his sugar bun. Also he was crazy.

JOE

I wish I knew what was happening to my neck.

THEODORE

What's happening is you tried to get a look at that girl jogging and God said, 'nuh-uh'.

JOE

God's mean sometimes.

THEODORE

Well, he works long hours. Come in,
I'll get you some ice.

JOE

Thanks, I'm Joe. I live down the
street.

THEODORE

Nice to meet you, I'm Theodore. Can
you walk? Because I'd throw you over
my shoulder and carry you, but in this
neighborhood people will think I'm
stealing a white guy.

JOE LAUGHS.

JOE

I can manage. If this was a sporting
event I'd do that thing where I'd
slowly walk off, and the crowd would
cheer.

THEODORE

Ninety percent of my fantasies end
with me being cheered as I walk off a
field. The other ten percent are
about napping.

CUT TO:

SCENE PINT. THEODORE'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

THEODORE'S HOUSE IS COOL. REALLY COOL. IT'S BIG BUT NOT A MANSION, STYLISH BUT NOT IN AN ANNOYING WAY. JOE ICES HIS NECK AND CHECKS IT OUT.

JOE

Dude, you live here? Who are you?

THEODORE

Just another suburban dad.

JOE

Suburban dads don't have guitars on the wall autographed by Keith Richards... with a smiley face? That's unexpected. What's that big rock above your fireplace?

THEODORE

A movie prop. No big deal.

JOE

It looks like the boulder that almost crushed Indiana Jones. Are you freaking kiddin' me?

THEODORE

It's only half of it. George still has the other half.

JOE

You call him "George?" Come on, this is cooler than the home of a suburban dad. Who are you, really?

THEODORE

My name's Theodore Holly but I produce music under the name Big Teaneck.

JOE

You're Big Teaneck!

THEODORE

You don't know who I am.

JOE

Never heard of you. Which must mean you're cool. Because I'm not cool.

THEODORE

Your shoes are cool.

JOE

My wife just gave them to me for my birthday.

THEODORE

It's your birthday? What are you going to do?

JOE

Nothing. It's no big deal, right?
Just adding another number.

THEODORE STEPS OVER TO JOE, AND OPENS HIS ARMS.

THEODORE

Who hurt you?

JOE

Didn't we just meet?

JOE HESITATES, THEN STEPS INTO THE HUG.

THEODORE

I don't care if you're nine, or ninety-nine, everyone should do something fun on their birthday.

JOE

I wanted to go to a Tom Petty concert.

THEODORE

Sorta cool.

JOE

Concert movie.

THEODORE

Less cool.

JOE

And then I was going to get a turkey burger, and a fro-yo.

THEODORE

Somewhere in the dictionary, the word 'manhood' is crying. You always been like this?

JOE

I did some stuff when I was younger. Went to concerts, drove cross-country with my brother. We met some ladies in Santa Fe.

THEODORE

Anything happen?

JOE

No. They were older. Significantly older. Friends of my grandmother.

THEODORE

Joe, if I may... I feel like there's more life in you than you're letting out. What are you doing right now?

JOE

I probably gotta get to work.

THEODORE

If you didn't show up, could they really not manage without you?

JOE

Well, I'm the boss. And commissioner of the fantasy football league. But that's not as important as it sounds, I can't veto trades or anything.

THEODORE

Take out your phone, call the office, tell them you're not coming in.

JOE

Should I?

THEODORE

I got a feeling you need this.

CUT TO:

SCENE REXT. BATTING CAGE - DAY

JOE, HOLDING A BAT, WEARING A HELMET, LOOKS ON, AS THEODORE STANDS IN THE BATTING CAGE, ALSO WITH A BAT AND HELMET. THEODORE EFFORTLESSLY HITS PITCH AFTER PITCH. A TEENAGER ATTENDANT STANDS WATCH.

JOE

It's easy to forget the simple things
that make a fella happy. A great song
coming on the radio... putting on your
favorite pair of jeans... brownies.

THEODORE

Love brownies. (HITS THE BALL) How
great is this? Come here all the
time. No better feeling than hitting
it square on the sweet spot of the
bat. Get on in there, Joe.

JOE STEPS INTO THE BATTING CAGE, PUTS IN A COIN, GETS READY. THE PITCH COMES IN, HE MISSES IT.

JOE

Wasn't quite ready for that one.
Okay... in my stance... hands back...

ANOTHER PITCH COMES IN, ANOTHER WHIFF.

JOE (CONT'D)

Sweet Jesus that's fast!

ATTENDANT

You might be a little old for it.

THEODORE LAUGHS.

THEODORE

Oh, man. He just got you.

JOE

A little old? Buddy, all due respect,
I've been swinging a bat since before
you were born, and --

ATTENDANT

That machine is 90 miles an hour.

JOE

Well, that's insane. Where's 80 miles
an hour?

EXT. ANOTHER BATTING CAGE - MOMENTS LATER

JOE AGAIN SWINGS AND MISSES.

JOE

(TO ATTENDANT) Where's 70 miles an
hour?

EXT. ANOTHER BATTING CAGE - MOMENTS LATER

JOE SWINGS AND MISSES ONE MORE TIME.

JOE

(TO ATTENDANT) Sixty's over there?

EXT. ANOTHER BATTING CAGE - MOMENTS LATER

JOE STANDS AT THE PLATE, WAITING FOR A PITCH. A BEAT...

ATTENDANT

Forgot to tell you, I don't think that
one's working.

JOE

Great. You have anything else?

ATTENDANT

There's slow-pitch softball.

JOE

Not happening. What else?

ATTENDANT

I have a wiffle ball in my car, I
could throw that to you.

JOE TURNS AWAY FROM THE PITCHING MACHINE. UNSEEN BY HIM, IT
COMES TO LIFE.

JOE

Maybe I will try the softball, it's
better than --

THEODORE

Joe! Lookout!

BEFORE HE CAN REACT, A PITCH ZIPS IN. JOE IS STANDING OVER
THE PLATE. IT CATCHES HIM RIGHT IN THE BACK. JOE FALLS TO
HIS KNEES.

JOE

Red Velvet Cupcake! It got me! It
got me bad!

THEODORE

I'm coming, Joe! I'm coming right
now! That sounds weird but you know
what I mean.

BUT BEFORE THEODORE CAN MAKE IT IN, AND BEFORE JOE CAN GET
AWAY, ANOTHER PITCH ZIPS IN... THIS ONE CATCHES JOE IN THE
HEAD. (BUT HE'S GOT A HELMET ON.) HE FALLS TO THE GROUND.

JOE

That thing's like the American Sniper!

CUT TO:

SCENE 5INT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - JOE AND MAGGIE'S BATHROOM - LATER

JOE SOAKS IN A BATH, HE HOLDS AN ICEPACK TO HIS HEAD. MAGGIE SITS ON A CHAIR NEXT TO HIM.

MAGGIE

Honey, I could have told you it wouldn't end well. Remember the pick-up basketball fiasco?

JOE

At least I made a lay-up before your brother scratched my cornea. I couldn't hit one damn pitch today!

MAGGIE

You haven't swung a bat in twenty years.

JOE

Exactly! What have I been doing with my life?

MAGGIE

Being a husband, father, son. Running a business.

JOE

And what does that get me? A hardball to the ribs and a nineteen year old with smelling salts reminding me I signed a waiver.

MAGGIE

So, you think the world is out to get you, that there's some sort of vast conspiracy afoot to prevent you from enjoying your life?

JOE

That's exactly what I think.

MAGGIE

Joe, you may want to believe there's always a problem just outside this door that is going to land in your lap, but it's not the case.

THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. WE HEAR SCOTT'S VOICE.

SCOTT

Joe, I screwed up bad!

MAGGIE

But maybe sometimes.

THE DOOR OPENS AND SCOTT ENTERS. JOE IS STILL IN THE TUB.

SCOTT

You didn't come in today, and I said I could handle it but when the guy came in for the closing I thought he was giving me signals so I tried to kiss him and we lost the job!

JOE

See? See? This is exactly why I have to do everything myself and --

SCOTT

Gotcha! I'm just messing around.
It's all good. He signed the check,
we start the job on Monday.

MAGGIE

There you go. Turns out I was right.
Sometimes it's okay to relax. Lie
back, enjoy the bath. You're safe.

ANOTHER KNOCK ON THE DOOR. THIS TIME IT'S MITCH.

MITCH

Joey, a terrible thing has happened!

MAGGIE

I give up.

A DISTRAUGHT MITCH ENTERS. HE'S DRESSED FOR HIS PERFORMANCE,
IN A BLAZER AND TIE. IT'S NOW MAGGIE, MITCH AND SCOTT, ALL
STANDING OVER JOE IN THE BATHTUB.

MITCH

Your mother brought her trainer.
Something's going on between them! No
surprise, him grabbing all those yummy
parts of her body. Her insanely firm
legs, those tender armpits --

MAGGIE

I'm just going to... give you guys...
a little privacy.

MAGGIE EXITS.

JOE

Dad, you're being crazy.

MITCH

My marriage is over. I should have known I couldn't keep a woman like that. Unless --

JOE

You start taking your medication?

MITCH

I sing my Gershwins off tonight. But I'm not good enough.

JOE

You are good enough.

MITCH

You've never heard me sing.

JOE

No, but I've heard you talk my entire life -- except that trip to Florida when I had the double ear infection but you refused to come home early.

SCOTT

That was irresponsible. His fever was 106.

MITCH

I know, but our travel agent got us such a good deal on those rooms.

JOE

Dad, just from the way you talk, I can hear that you have a singing voice--

SCOTT

Like Tony Bennett.

JOE

Exactly!

MITCH

Stop it, both of you. You're being ridiculous. I'm no Tony Bennett. No one has that range. (BEAT) I'm more like Neil Diamond.

JOE

Totally.

SCOTT

I get that.

JOE

Dad. You can do this. Even if Mom was going to leave you, which she's not because, well, look at her... after she watches you perform, she's going to remember why you two fell in love.

MITCH

Thanks, boys.

MITCH HUGS SCOTT, THEN GOES IN FOR A HUG WITH JOE, WHO IS STILL IN THE BATH.

CUT TO:

SCENE TINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

THE LIVING ROOM HAS BEEN SORT-OF TRANSFORMED INTO A CABARET-STYLE THEATER. THERE'S A PIANO AND A MICROPHONE, MAYBE A HINT OF LIGHTING. STILL LOOKS LIKE A LIVING ROOM.

WE ARE MID-PERFORMANCE. MITCH STANDS IN FRONT. OUR CHARACTERS ARE THERE: JOE, MAGGIE, ANDREW, LUCY, SCOTT, JUDY. NEXT TO JUDY IS PHIL, A GOOD-LOOKING, FIT GUY. THE REST OF THE AUDIENCE ARE MITCH AND JUDY'S FRIENDS.

MITCH

This song is called Live Forever. By
The Oasis.

JOE

(TO SELF) Just Oasis. No 'the'.

MITCH BEGINS TO SING. IT'S A LITTLE SHAKY AT FIRST. AS THE SONG CONTINUES, HE GETS A LITTLE BETTER, BUT IT SHOULD NEVER GET TOO GOOD.

MITCH

*Maybe I don't really want to know /
How your garden grows --*

JOE LETS OUT A BIG, LOUD LAUGH, BUT LOOKS AROUND, REALIZES THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS LOVING IT. JOE FAKES A COUGH TO COVER. HE LEANS IN TO HIS WIFE.

JOE

I'm an idiot.

MAGGIE

Why?

MITCH

*Lately did you ever feel the pain / In
the morning rain --*

JOE

My dad's not crazy.

MITCH

*Maybe I just want to fly / I want to
live I don't want to die --*

JOE

My dad's happy.

MITCH

Maybe I just want to breathe --

MITCH STEPS AWAY FROM THE MICROPHONE.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, stop the music, stop it!

JOE

Crazy is back on the table.

MITCH

I can't do this. Excuse me...

MITCH CROSSES OVER TO HIS WIFE. HE SPEAKS TO HER SOTTO--

MITCH (CONT'D)

Judy... Don't throw everything away.

JUDY

Is this about your old army blankets?

MITCH

I'm talking about us. And him. The
man you're flaunting in front of
everybody. Your lover.

JUDY

Which lover?

MITCH

There's more than one?

JOE

He's talking about your trainer, mom.

JUDY

Phil's not my lover. He's gay. I brought him for Scott.

JOE

If I may... Phil, Scott. Scott, Phil.

MITCH

So you're still into me?

JUDY

Totally into you. Why else am I working out all the time? I'm married to a tiger and he needs red meat.

MITCH

(HAPPY) Oh, you know I do.

JOE

I don't love or, frankly, want to understand that metaphor. Dad, can we just get back to the show?

MITCH GOES BACK TO THE MICROPHONE.

MITCH

Sorry about that. Anyway, I think everyone in here knows that traffic on the George Washington Bridge can get pretty intense. But not as intense as my feelings for my wife, Judy.

CUT TO:

SCENE VINT. GRUSHECKY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

THE PERFORMANCE HAS JUST ENDED. PEOPLE MILL AROUND.

JOE

Dad, you crushed it! And such a surprising selection of songs. Not a lot of performers would go from Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah to Sexual Healing.

MITCH

I was a little worried that Martin Gaye was a risky choice.

JOE

Marvin.

MITCH

What?

JOE

Nevermind. But how could you suddenly decide, I'm going to sing? Why would you take a risk like that?

MITCH

I guess after all these years of being a husband, a dad, a boss, I wondered... What's just for me?

JOE

That's what I want to know! What's that new thing that's going to make me fulfilled and carefree?

(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

According to email, it's sexy singles in my area, and a weight loss solution without diet or exercise, but I'm skeptical.

MITCH

You're at a spot in your life where it's not easy to have fun, Joe.

JOE

But it's still a good life, right? Because there's a fine line between, 'This is it?' and 'This is it!'

MITCH

The fun is out there. You just have to find it.

MITCH CROSSES TO GREET SOME FRIENDS. LUCY COMES UP TO JOE.

LUCY

We haven't really talked, Dad. I know you're not happy with me right now.

JOE

Honey, I'm happy. And sad. We had the makings of a pretty good team.

LUCY

I'm still on your team, you know.

JOE

I'm proud of you. (HUGS HER) And the soccer thing pays a little, right?

LUCY

We share a practice field with a dog
park.

MAGGIE

Excuse me, everyone... Joe. We
haven't forgotten it's your birthday.

MAGGIE STANDS IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM. JOE'S FAMILY...
ANDREW, LUCY, SCOTT, MITCHELL, AND JUDY GATHER AROUND HIM.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

We love you, you're our hero. And
you're my best friend.

SHE HANDS HIM A CARD. HE OPENS IT.

JOE

Tom Petty Live. Thanks, I will get to
see my movie.

ANDREW

Read the tickets.

JOE

Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers...
Live at Madison Square Garden? No
way! I'm going to a concert! I'll
just go to the bathroom during the
slow songs. Rock and roll!

MAGGIE

There's more.

JOE

More? I am loving this birthday!

(READS) What's this? A contract for fun?

MAGGIE

Signed by all of us. You have to sign it, and stick to it. Get outside your comfort zone, go a little crazy.

JOE

Guys, I do not need a contract with my family so I can have fun.

MAGGIE

You totally do.

LUCY

Mom's right.

ANDREW

You're kinda pathetic.

JOE

Well, watch out. This year, I'm going to bring the fun. Hard. A little less behaving, a little more raving.

MAGGIE

Please, no.

LUCY

Let's start small.

ANDREW

Don't hurt yourself.

THE DOORBELL RINGS. JOE OPENS IT. IT'S THEODORE.

JOE

Theodore! Thanks for stopping by!

THEODORE

Glad you're up and around. I was afraid you'd spend the rest of your birthday in bed, dreaming about balls flying at you. I have got to be more careful with my choice of words.

JOE

Come on in, buddy. Let me introduce you to some of the people in my life.

THEODORE CROSSES IN, AS JOE CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND HIM, ANDREW RACES OVER.

ANDREW

Dad, that's Big Teaneck! What's he doing here?

JOE

He might be my new best friend.

ANDREW

But mom just said she was your best friend.

JOE

I can do better.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO