

MODERN FAMILY

"SUPPORT SYSTEM"

Written by

Brian Diamond

5130 Coldwater Canyon Ave. #4

Sherman Oaks, CA 91423

323-440-7642

Dime49@gmail.com

ACT ONEINT. FAMILY CAR -- DAY

Phil driving, distracted, while Claire (shotgun), and the kids (in back) argue.

HALEY

I can't believe I'm getting a C in Government. Mr. Devengenzo is so sexist.

ALEX

Just because you don't know what the executive branch is, doesn't make him sexist.

HALEY

What do you know about sexism? People still mistake you for being a boy.

ALEX

That only happened once!

LUKE

Twice. Remember at the waterslides?

Claire turns back to break things up.

CLAIRE

Okay you guys, enough. Haley, why do you think Mr. Devengenzo is sexist?

HALEY

He's always saying things like, 'Haley you're really smart, but you don't apply yourself.'

CLAIRE

That's not exactly screaming sexism to me.

HALEY

Well it is! God, I guess I'm the only one here who cares about women's rights.

CLAIRE

Right, you're a regular Susan B. Anthony.

HALEY

Who?

ALEX

And that's why you're getting a C in government.

Finally, out of nowhere, Phil—

PHIL
I'm quitting my job!

CLAIRE
What?

PHIL
I'm quitting. Tomorrow. I'm done with real estate for good.

CLAIRE
Wow, Phil, where is this coming from?

PHIL
It just hit me today. As long as I'm in real estate, I'll never finish that novel I've been working on. So I'm going for it. I'm going to become a novelist!

CLAIRE
You've been working on a novel?

INTERVIEW — CLAIRE & PHIL

PHIL
I've had a novel in progress, up here (pointing to his head) since college. I haven't had time to really work on it with all the distractions in my life—

CLAIRE
Distractions? Like your wife and kids?

PHIL
I was thinking of the internet, but you're so right. Wife and kids. Major time suck.

INT. BEDROOM -- DAY

Mitchell rocks a crying Lilly, trying to get her to sleep. Cameron peeks in.

CAMERON
How is it going?

MITCHELL
Not good. I think she's got another soar throat.

CAMERON

Another one?

MITCHELL

Well if you didn't let her stick pennies in her mouth all the time.

CAMERON

But she loves pennies...

MITCHELL

Maybe we should call the doctor.

CAMERON

Or maybe, we should try out these scented massage oils I picked up the other day.

Mitchell looks at the bottle of massage oil Cameron is holding.

MITCHELL

You can't put this on a baby.

CAMERON

I meant for us.

MITCHELL

Oh, very funny.

CAMERON

I'm serious. We haven't been very...intimate lately.

MITCHELL

Oh my God, do we have to talk about this here?

CAMERON

You mean in the privacy of our own bedroom?

INTERVIEW — CAMERON & MITCHELL

CAMERON

Mitchell is not exactly comfortable talking about intimacy issues.

MITCHELL

When I was in seventh grade, I forged a note from my mom excusing me from Sex Ed so I could go home and watch *Mystery Science Theater* on television. Such a great show.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Jay reading the paper. Gloria next to him. Manny enters, home from school.

MANNY

I need you to sign these.

GLORIA

What is this?

MANNY

It's a liability release so if I get hurt wrestling, you can't sue anyone.

GLORIA

And why would you get hurt wrestling?

MANNY

I've decided to join the wrestling team.

Now Jay is interested. He comes over to look at the forms.

JAY

Good for you. I was on the wrestling team when I was younger. It's great exercise, and it teaches you about competition.

MANNY

It's not a real team. It's more like a non-competitive club dedicated to promoting wrestling and self-esteem in young people.

JAY

Right. Of course it is.

GLORIA

Why do you want to do this?

MANNY

Amy Malis.

JAY

Doing it to impress a girl, huh?

MANNY

No. She's the one I'm going to wrestle.

GLORIA

Ay. Of course she is.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Phil and Claire at the kitchen table.

CLAIRE

So, let's go over your plan again.

PHIL

I quit my job. Put all my energy into the novel. Try to bust that thing out in the next couple weeks. Become a novelist.

CLAIRE

And while you're working on this novel, what will we be doing for money?

PHIL

Do you have any idea how much those *Twilight* books made? If my novel grosses half of that, we're set.

CLAIRE

Uh-huh. So, what's this novel about?

PHIL

Oh, honey, my writing style is very free-flowing and organic. To ask a writer to pin-down his ideas at this stage—it's really unfair to the process.

Claire nods, trying to keep it cool.

CLAIRE

So you don't know what it's about.

PHIL

I have a theme: Ominous.

CLAIRE

Is that really a theme? Or an adjective?

PHIL

It's more like a mission statement.

CLAIRE

What if you took a week vacation to give this a test run without actually, quitting the job we all depend on for our livelihood?

PHIL

That does make sense, I guess. Of course I already set all my business cards on fire—

INTERVIEW — PHIL

PHIL

When I go after something, I go after it all the way. That's why when I play poker, I'm literally all in on every hand.

(considering this)

I don't really understand what the different hands in poker are.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cameron and Mitchell watching TV. Some science program.

MITCHELL

It's amazing to think that the universe is billions of years old.

CAMERON

What's amazing about that?

MITCHELL

Only everything. Did you know that they think the universe may be a hologram?

CAMERON

Uh-huh. Maybe instead of talking about holograms, we could be doing something more...productive?

MITCHELL

So you're finally willing to talk about weather proofing our windows?

Cameron nudges closer. Mitchell sees what he's really talking about.

MITCHELL (CONT.)

Oh—with Lilly asleep in the other room? I don't know.

CAMERON

A lot of new parents struggle with their love life.

MITCHELL

We're not struggling. Things are a little crazy right now. That's all.

CAMERON

We're parents—it's not going to get easier. Maybe we should get some help. My stylist told me about this couple's intimacy class she takes with her husband. What do you think?

MITCHELL

I think we should talk about the part where you have a stylist.

INTERVIEW — CAMERON

CAMERON

Yes I have a stylist. Her name is Nadia Borkawitz and she's a recent Russian émigré. She once did Boris Yeltsin's hair. I believe he's some kind of dancer.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Gloria reviews Manny's liability forms while Jay looks on. Manny pounds a giant glass of milk.

GLORIA

(reading the form)

In case of accidental death or dismemberment? Who is getting death and dismembered?

JAY

Relax Gloria. He's more likely to get hurt on the bus ride to school than wrestling.

GLORIA

Then he's not riding the bus anymore. I told you busses were dangerous.

MANNY

I need to try and put on at least ten pounds by the end of the week for my match with Amy.

JAY

You have to bulk up to wrestle a girl?

MANNY

Amy Malis is the biggest girl in our school, and she challenged me to wrestle her. I can't back down. It would impinge my honor.

JAY

So you're going to wrestle a girl in the name of honor? You wanted women's rights, you got them.

Gloria slaps Jay on the arm.

GLORIA

Stop being stupid. I don't want Manny getting injured. Or dismembered. Or drinking milk like a *persona loca*.

She takes the milk from him.

MANNY

Can I have a raw egg before bed?

GLORIA

No!

JAY

Tell you what—why don't I take Manny to the gym tomorrow and we can practice a little. Show him some tricks of the trade.

MANNY

No offense Jay, but you're no Amy Malis. That girl is vicious.

INTERVIEW — MANNY

MANNY

Once, Amy Malis ate a lizard. It was very upsetting. But also kind-of cool.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Claire getting the kids' stuff together before school. Haley, Alex, and Luke on their way out the door.

CLAIRE

Haley, I want you to promise me you'll put in a better effort in Government. You're smarter than a C student.

HALEY

What's the point in knowing about government? Isn't that what we have a government for?

Phil enters in a tweed jacket with patches on the elbows. Way too small for him.

PHIL

Look what I found in the closet? I haven't worn this baby since college.

CLAIRE

Yet another reason why we didn't date in college.

PHIL

Yeah, this used to get me tons of chicks. The smart, angsty types.

CLAIRE

So, I guess you have a pretty busy day ahead of you?

PHIL

Well I think finding this jacket was a big start. I don't want to burn myself out the first day. Writing a novel is a daunting task, you know?

CLAIRE

Oh, I know.

CLAIRE — INTERVIEW

CLAIRE

We have some CDs about to mature. 1.3 percent interest. That's not horrible. And if Haley's grades keep tanking, that might free up some college money—

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Phil, rummaging through the cupboards as Claire looks on.

PHIL

Pop Tarts! Major score.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Mitchell carries Lilly, packing up her "baby bag" before heading out. Cameron watches.

MITCHELL

Okay, I'm taking Lilly to the doctors.

CAMERON

Sounds good. By the way, do you remember how we were talking about taking that couple's intimacy class?

MITCHELL

No. I remember you mentioning it and then getting into a 45-minute fight over how much you spend on getting your hair styled.

CAMERON

See, that is exactly why we need to take this class.

MITCHELL

I don't think one class is going to help me deal with the fact that you're spending \$500 a month on your hair.

CAMERON

Agreed. That's why I signed us up for ten.

Mitchell sets down the baby bag.

MITCHELL

Ten? I don't even want to go to one.

CAMERON

But it's buy nine get one free.

MITCHELL

Cameron...

CAMERON

The class is called "Unleashing the Forbidden Tiger Within, A Roadmap to Unrequited Love." Doesn't that sound great?

CAMERON

It sounds like a bad Jackie Chan movie.

MITCHELL

Says the person that saw *The Tuxedo* three times in the theater.

CAMERON

Oh come on, that movie was charming. He still does all his own stunts!

MITCHELL

It's a man in a tuxedo kicking people for two hours. You owe me.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Claire, drinking coffee and chatting with three other

women, one of them Gloria. A book club.

CLAIRE

I found the protagonist totally unsympathetic.

BOOK CLUB WOMAN

I think he was supposed to be endearing, but I thought he was pathetic.

BOOK CLUB WOMAN 2

All I know is, if my husband made love to me like this guy, I could deal with pathetic.

GLORIA

Oh, yes, I know exactly what you mean.

Claire looks at Gloria. A little freaked out.

CLAIRE

Uh—

GLORIA

Oh, is that weird for you to hear?
About me and your father having sex?

Phil enters the room, dressed only in a bathrobe.

PHIL

Honey, do we have any more pudding pops?

He sees the room full of women.

CLAIRE

Phil, remember I have my book club today?

PHIL

Oh right. Hey Gloria. You know what? I should probably sit in on this. Get in touch with the literary community. Let me grab my tape recorder.

He runs off. Claire takes a very deep breath.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Jay walks down the hall. Knocks on Manny's door.

JAY

Hey Manny, are you almost ready to go to the gym? Luke is going to come too so you have someone to practice with.

Manny steps out of his room, wearing a BATMAN MASK along with a SUPERMAN CAPE and SPIDER MAN shirt. All covered in glitter.

MANNY

Who dares challenge the great Manny-a-tor? That chump Luke is gonna feel the wrath of these twin pythons. Mannyasoraus is hungry for fools!

JAY

Uh—

MANNY

What's a more intimidating wrestling name, the Manny-a-tor, or Mannyasoraus?

JAY

I probably should have seen this coming.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Back at the book club.

GLORIA

What's the deal with the penises? On every page, more penises. It's too much.

CLAIRE

I think the word is peonies. The Admiral's daughter cultivates peonies.

Uncomfortably close to them, Phil, recorder outstretched.

PHIL

Oh man, that is such great banter. Really good stuff. You know, I think this is going to help me nail women. Characters. Nail writing for women characters.

Phil's stretches his legs apart. The robe clinging for dear life to the outside of his thighs. A clear shot at whatever is underneath. The women avert their eyes.

CLAIRE

Honey, please tell me you have something under that robe.

PHIL

If I had something under the robe, why would I be wearing a robe?

INT. GYM -- DAY

An old-school gym. Jay, Manny, and Luke on an open mat. Manny in costume. Luke, not. Jay demonstrates proper wrestling technique.

JAY

This is not like the wrestling you see on TV. It's about technique. Leverage. It's not just about the pin, it's about points.

LUKE

When do we get to do inverted headlock backbreakers?

JAY

Come on you two. Starting positions.

Jay gets them in position. Manny on all fours. Luke kneeling beside him, one arm across Manny's chest.

MANNY

How is this wrestling? Luke doesn't even have a mask on.

JAY

Trust me. Now Luke, when I say go, you try to pin Manny to the ground. Manny, you try to stop him. Okay? Ready-go!

Luke tries to knock Manny's arm out. Manny SHRIEKS in reaction and starts rolling away, right into a wall.

MANNY

Aieeeeeeeee!

Luke HEADPLANTS into the ground.

LUKE

Oomph.

They both writhe on the floor in pain.

JAY

Okay. Good. That was...as expected.

INTERVIEW - JAY

JAY

They teach ballroom dancing in PE now. I'm not saying it's wrong, I'm just saying you make a decision like that, there's bound to be consequences.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE WAITING LOBBY -- DAY

Mitchell with Lilly in the waiting lobby of the doctor's office. Across from him, a couple that is basically the HETEROSEXUAL version of Cameron and Mitchell.

Mitchell listens in as they fuss over their baby.

WOMAN

It's been two months.

MAN

Let's not talk about it here, okay?

WOMAN

You never want to talk about it.

MAN

I'm sorry, I'm just not comfortable discussing our love life in public.

(a beat)

Did you hear about the universe being a hologram?

WOMAN

Not this again. You're trying to change the subject.

MAN

I happen to think it's pretty interesting. The universe affects us all.

MITCHELL

I know! I mean, can you imagine the implications?

They look at Mitchell. Not appreciating the ease dropping.

MITCHELL (CONT.)

Sorry.

INT. PHIL'S HOME OFFICE -- DAY

Claire peeks her head into Phil's office. He's not there, but a stack of typed pages sit beside a bunch of empty pudding pop wrappers.

CLAIRE

Phil? Are you around?

PHIL

(off-screen)

I'm in the kitchen. Just getting a few snacks to power through the afternoon.

CLAIRE

Looks like you got some writing done.

PHIL

(off-screen)

Oh yeah. I'm on a roll.

Claire picks up the document. The first page has the title:
THE REAL ESTATE AGENT'S WIFE. Claire flips through.

CLAIRE

Huh. Interesting.

(reading)

*Sophia was more than just a real estate
agent's wife. She was a curvy Latina
with a fiery temper and an insatiable
appetite for—*

(setting down the manuscript)

Are you kidding me?

Phil enters with another pudding pop.

PHIL

Pretty good, huh?

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Mitchell heading inside with Lilly. Not paying attention.

MITCHELL

Okay Cameron, I think you're right. We
do have to address our intimacy issues.
So, as uncomfortable as it makes me,
I'm willing to take a sex class.

Mitchell looks up to see Cameron. Along with Jay, Manny,
and Luke. The kids bandaged up with ice. All staring.

CAMERON

Oh, hi Mitchell. Look, it's your Dad.
And Manny. And Luke.

MITCHELL

Oh God.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. CAMERON AND MITCHELL'S HOUSE -- DAY

Cameron wraps up Manny's knee.

CAMERON

I learned this little trick from my football days. You should be all set. And I love your little costume. It's adorable.

MANNY

It's not supposed to be adorable. It's supposed to strike fear into the hearts of my victims.

CAMERON

Then you might reconsider the glitter.

MITCHELL

Look Dad, sorry about the—

JAY

We don't need to talk about it. Some things are better left unsaid.

CAMERON

Jay, you should know that we aren't taking sex classes because your son isn't an attentive lover.

MITCHELL

Oh boy.

JAY

See, that is one of those things I wish we could have left unsaid.

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Phil reads through his manuscript-in-progress, tucked in. Claire flossing as she gets read for bed.

PHIL

(re: his work)

This is good. I've got a real noir thing going here.

CLAIRE

So the real estate agent's wife is named Sophia? She seems like an interesting character.

PHIL

I needed something a little exotic to spice things up.

CLAIRE

You felt things needed to be spiced up?

PHIL

Well, I don't want my novel filled with a bunch of boring suburbanites.

CLAIRE

And where exactly did you get the inspiration for Sophia?

PHIL

Hard to say. The muse is a fickle goddess. It just came to me somehow. Right after that book club.

CLAIRE

You know who she kind-of sounds like—Gloria.

PHIL

Just because they're both sexy Latinas? A little racist, don't you think?

CLAIRE

So you think Gloria's sexy?

PHIL

From a literary point-of-view. You have to distinguish between Phil the author and Phil the husband.

Claire pulls her nightgown tight around her.

CLAIRE

Which one should I tell to take a cold shower tonight?

IN THE KITCHEN

Just Claire. Looking around to make sure no one can hear her. She picks up a cell phone, calling MITCHELL.

CLAIRE

Hey, are you up?

INT. BEDROOM, CAMERON AND MITCHELL'S — NIGHT

Mitchell talks with Claire on the phone, filling out forms with Cameron, next to him.

MITCHELL

Yeah, I'm just filling out a form for this class Cameron and I are taking.

KITCHEN, PHIL & CLAIRE'S

CLAIRE

Oh really? What kind of class?

BEDROOM, CAMERON & MITCHELL'S

CAMERON

(to Mitchell)

How would you rate your willingness to experiment erotically? Very willing? Somewhat willing? Not willing at all

MITCHELL

(to Claire)

Uh-Spanish. I've always wanted to learn.

WE CONTINUE CUTTING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THEM

CLAIRE

I have a question for you?

MITCHELL

What's up?

CLAIRE

How do I get my husband to quit his dream of becoming a novelist?

MITCHELL

Phil's writing a novel? That's cool.

CLAIRE

Yeah, sure. How do I make him quit?

MITCHELL

If you nag him he'll think you're not being supportive and push back. I don't know, Dad's really the master of discouragement.

CLAIRE

Yes—you're so right. Dad is great at talking people out of their dreams.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Manny getting ready for another day of school.

JAY

You know, maybe wrestling's not for you. There are so many other sports.

MANNY

So what am I supposed to do about Amy Malis?

JAY

No shame in pulling the old fake appendicitis trick.

Gloria walks in. Hears this.

GLORIA

Why are you so discouraging? You should be making Manny feel confident in himself. Manny, I know you can wrestle and defeat this girl.

JAY

I'm being realistic. If he wrestles a girl and loses, his playground rep will be damaged for years.

MANNY

Jay may be insensitive, but he's not wrong. I didn't want it to come to this, but at this point, I see no other choice.

Manny grabs a flower from a vase on the table.

MANNY (CONT.)

I am going to seduce Amy Malis.

Manny leaves for school. Gloria glares at Jay.

JAY

Don't look at me. He's your kid.

GLORIA

You should encourage Manny instead of being so negative. He needs to build his confidence.

JAY

First of all, you're the one that said wrestling was dangerous. Second, that kid may be lacking lots of things, but confidence isn't one of them.

GLORIA

So he's lacking lots of things? Like what? What things is my only son lacking?

JAY

Ah—

A knock at the door. Claire enters the FOYER with Phil. Phil wears a t-shirt that reads AUTHOR.

CLAIRE

Hey Dad, are you guys home?

JAY

(eager to be rescued)
Yes, we're in here.

CLAIRE

Hey! We were out and I thought I'd stop by to see if we could borrow some...corn starch?

JAY

You came all the way over here to borrow corn starch?

CLAIRE

Well, I know Gloria does a lot of cooking. So, here we are.

JAY

Why didn't you just go to the store?

CLAIRE

They were out.

GLORIA

Which store? Because I was—

CLAIRE

All of them. It doesn't matter. Anyways, Phil has some exciting news—

JAY

Close another big property?

PHIL

I've decided to become a novelist.

CLAIRE

That's right dad. Phil has quit his job as a successful real estate agent, to write a novel.

Jay is about to say something negative. Sees Gloria out of the corner of his eye. Changes course.

JAY

I think that's a great idea.

CLAIRE

You do?

JAY

Sure. Why not? It's a growing market.

PHIL

Well, I have to say, as a writer,
having the support of my loved ones
means everything.

He puts an arm around Claire and Jay.

GLORIA

I get the corn starch.

PHIL

Thanks Sophia.

Claire stares down Phil, who is unaware he just called
Gloria, Sophia.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Cameron and Mitchell sit in a semi-circle with about six
other couples. Cameron waves to NADIA, the Russian-looking
woman and her husband.

At the front of the room, DR. WALDMAN leads the class.
Dressed in flowing black robes.

DR. WALDMAN

Welcome students of love. Let us greet
Eros, the bittersweet.

She stands. So does the class. They know the routine. As
she chants, she bows to each corner of the room.

DR. WALDMAN (CONT.)

I bow to the priestess of the west.
Goddess of love and intimacy. I bow to
the warrior of the east, champion of
virility.

Cameron exchanges a look with Mitchell.

MITCHELL

I'm going to kill you.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Phil in his easy chair, eating potato chips. Claire enters.

CLAIRE

Taking another break, I see.

PHIL

Yeah. Today's been brutal.

CLAIRE

Remember, we have a conference with Haley's government teacher this afternoon.

PHIL

Afternoon? But that's when I watch Dr. Phil...

INTERVIEW — PHIL AND CLAIRE

PHIL

One of the real plusses to being a novelist is I get to be around the house more. More quality family time.

CLAIRE

Yes, he has been around the house more.

MONTAGE OF PHIL BEING AROUND THE HOUSE MORE

- Claire, making sandwiches for the kids. As she's about to pack them up, she turns to discover Phil is eating one.

PHIL

Is this raspberry jelly? It's good.

- Claire, trying to vacuum around Phil, who sits on the couch in his robe, watching TV.
- Alex and Luke, putting away dishes. Phil steps in to help.

PHIL

Okay, let's pick up the pace here. One, two, three pass. One, two, three—

He immediately drops several plates to the ground.

BACK TO INTERVIEW

CLAIRE

It's been so...

PHIL

Great?

CLAIRE

Different.

BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

CLAIRE

So, any new characters in the novel?
Like, maybe, a blonde, supportive,
attractive woman in her mid-30s?

PHIL

A supportive blonde? No offense honey,
but isn't that a little cliché?

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Mitchell and Marcus facing each other, along with the other
couples in the class.

DR. WALDMAN

Look into your partner's eyes. Deep
into their eyes. See your partner's
inner tiger. Listen to it growl.

Cameron peers deep into Mitchell's unhappy eyes.

CAMERON

Your eyes are very green when you're
angry.

DR. WALDMAN

Now put your palm against your lover's
heart. Feel the vibrations. The sweet
sensations.

MITCHELL

And now she's quoting Marky-Mark and
the Funky Bunch.

CAMERON

Ooooh. I love that song!

INTERVIEW - CAMERON & MITCHELL

CAMERON

(singing)

It's such a good vibration. It's such a
swee-ee-eet sensation. Feel it! Feel
it!

MITCHELL

And I get to wake up to this every morning.

CAMERON

Five-time karaoke champion at the Lizard Lounge. Undisputed.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND -- DAY

Manny stands on the playground, lilies in hand. Down the way, a big girl (Amy Malis) punching the hell out of a tetherball. Manny approaches.

MANNY

Hi Amy. You're really good at tetherball.

AMY MALIS

Want to play me?

MANNY

No, my hands are more suited for other tasks. Flower picking for example.

He hands the flower to her. She stares, bewildered.

AMY MALIS

I'm allergic to pollen.

MANNY

Oh. Has anyone ever told you that you have a beautiful voice? Very melodious.

AMY MALIS

It's just my asthma.

MANNY

I have an extra Kool-Aide cooler if you'd like to join me?

AMY MALIS

I'm allergic to fructose.

MANNY

Fine. Let me just cut to the chase. Regarding our wrestling engagement—

AMY MALIS

I quit the wrestling team.

MANNY

Really? Why?

AMY MALIS

I didn't like it. I like tennis better.

MANNY

I'm pretty good at Wii tennis.

AMY MALIS

Me too. It's my favorite game.

MANNY

It is? Me too!

INT. MR. DEVENGENZO'S OFFICE -- DAY

A small office at the High School. Mr. Devengenzo behind a desk. Claire on the other side.

CLAIRE

I'm sure my husband will be here any moment. He wanted to take the bus here. For inspiration.

MR. DEVENGENZO

It's not my daughter who's failing Government.

CLAIRE

Failing? I thought she was getting a C?

MR. DEVENGENZO

She is. But I grade on a curve so a C is really a D.

CLAIRE

That doesn't make sense.

MR. DEVENGENZO

Let me guess, you weren't good at math when you were in school-

Phil comes in before Claire can respond. Out-of-breath.

PHIL

Sorry I'm late. I had a breakthrough with my novel. I just realized my protagonist's husband is having an affair with the babysitter. Even I didn't see that coming!

CLAIRE

And now we need a new babysitter.

PHIL

It's true what they say—you don't write the novel, the novel writes you!

MR. DEVENGENZO

In any case, if we might get started?
Haley is a very nice girl, but she
doesn't apply herself.

PHIL

You know, there's a character just like
that in my novel.

CLAIRE

Enough Phil. I don't want to hear
another word about your stupid novel.

PHIL

Honey, as a novelist—

CLAIRE

You're not a novelist. You're a real
estate agent who quit his job to write
a thinly veiled story about my stepmom
and the babysitter, who is only 17 by
the way—

PHIL

My work is not autobiographical!

CLAIRE

Oh please. Your main character's name
is Paul. That's two letters way from
Phil!

Mr. Devengenzo sets down Haley's file.

MR. DEVENGENZO

I can see where Haley gets her
emotional nature from—

CLAIRE

Emotional nature? Oh, yeah, I get it,
because Haley and I are women we're
overly emotional. And bad at math? Is
that it? I suppose we shouldn't even be
able to vote.

MR. DEVENGENZO

I never implied anything like that—

CLAIRE

You know what, Haley was right. You are
a sexist jerk. And I am not a cliché. I
do not need to be spiced up!

Claire storms out.

PHIL
 (to Mr. Devengenzo)
 For the record, she is bad at math.

INT. CAR -- DAY

Cameron and Mitchell heading home.

MITCHELL
 So, can we admit how weird that was?

CAMERON
 No one is more tolerant of other people
 than me. But that woman was a freak.

MITCHELL
 And your stylist? Nadia? You know her
 husband is Russian mob, right?

CAMERON
 That would explain all the mink coats
 and Faberge eggs.

MITCHELL
 Every time Dr. Waldman said 'spiritual
 intercourse,' I thought I was going to
 pee.

CAMERON
 I just kept picturing something very
 serious. Like Meryl Streep in *Sophie's
 Choice*.

MITCHELL
 Oh, don't make me think of that. I'll
 start crying.

Cameron reaches out and puts his hand on Mitchell's arm.

CAMERON
 See? This is nice. Just spending time
 together. That's all I really wanted.

MITCHELL
 It is nice.
 (a beat)
 We don't have to go back to that class,
 do we?

CAMERON
 Lord no.

INT. FAMILY ROOM -- DAY

Manny enters through the front door with Amy. Gloria is there to greet him.

MANNY

Hey Mom. Is it okay if Amy and I play for a little bit?

GLORIA

Of course. Do you two want some lemonade?

MANNY / AMY

Okay.

IN THE KITCHEN

Looking in on them, Jay and Gloria.

GLORIA

Look, you see? They are friends now.

JAY

You know, with a little practice, I think Manny could have taken her. See, she carries her weight high. That means she's be easy to take down.

GLORIA

I know my Manny. He is a gentle soul. He did not want to wrestle with a girl.

IN THE FAMILY ROOM

Manny and Amy jumping up and down, playing Wii tennis.

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

JAY

Enjoy it while it lasts. He'll be in high school before you know it.

INT. FAMILY CAR -- DAY

Phil and Claire driving home.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry about snapping at you.

PHIL

It's okay. And I don't think you're a cliché. Truth is, you're spicier than

PHIL (CONT.)
any character I could dream up.

CLAIRE
That's sweet.

PHIL
Of course, it's only the rough draft.

CLAIRE
You know what—

Claire makes a sudden turn at the light.

CLAIRE (CONT.)
Let's try a different route home.

PHIL
Down Greenway...we'll hit every light—
They drive past a big home with a for sale sign.

CLAIRE
Looks like the Clark's put their place
on the market.

PHIL
I feel sorry for the people that still
care about that.
(after a beat)
I wonder what they listed it at?

CLAIRE
I heard 750.

PHIL
Are you kidding me? They could get
twice that much.

CLAIRE
I don't know.

They drive past another home with a for sale sign. Now Phil
is paying attention.

PHIL
Wow, I've been waiting for that
property to go on the market for years.

CLAIRE
Listed at 1.2 million. So I heard.

PHIL
Okay, that is insane. Who is showing
it? I bet it's Patterson. That guy is
always at least 20% over-value on his
listings.

CLAIRE
Someone else's problem.

PHIL
Totally.

They drive past yet another home for sale.

PHIL (CONT.)
How many houses have come on the market
this week? This is incredible.

Pulls out a cell phone.

PHIL (ON PHONE)
Hey Jenny, it's Phil. Yeah, I know, but
I need you to check a few properties
for me and tell me who's listing them.

INTERVIEW — CLAIRE

CLAIRE
So I did a little browsing in the Real
Estate section today. There are five
new homes for sale on that street.
Sometimes being supportive means giving
someone a helpful nudge in the right
direction.

BACK IN THE CAR

Phil off the phone, punching numbers into a calculator.

PHIL
The thing about novels is, there isn't
a market for the kind of literary
fiction I'm interested in. It's all
online now. Maybe I'll turn it into a
blog...

CLAIRE
If you put a story about a real estate
agent who sleeps with the babysitter
online, I will kill you.

INTERVIEW — CLAIRE

CLAIRE
Support only goes so far.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOURINT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alex sits at the table, asking Haley questions from a textbook.

ALEX

Which two branches of government can introduce bills to become laws?

HALEY

Legal and Congress.

ALEX

Wrong. How long are Supreme Court Justices appointed for?

HALEY

A year.

ALEX

Wrong. What is the only branch of government that can declare war?

HALEY

Department of Defense.

ALEX

Wrong.

Claire enters.

CLAIRE

What are you studying for?

HALEY

Stupid Government. I'm trying to boost my grade.

CLAIRE

Oh Haley, honestly, save your energy. You have no chance in that class.

HALEY

I don't? Why not? What did you do?

CLAIRE

I didn't do anything. It's Mr. Devengenzo. You were right—he's a sexist jerk.

END OF ACT FOUR