

ERIC

"Livin' Your Best Lie"

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INT. BILLY AND RON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

ERIC NELSON, 16, sleeps on the couch. VANKA SMIRNOV, 30's, white, a heavy-set Russian woman, sits on top of him. She speaks in a Russian accent throughout.

ERIC
AAARRGGHH!!

Vanka moves off of him.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Vanka, what the heck?

VANKA
Aw, you need to get up, anyway. Where's the remote?

ERIC
Oh, I slept on it.

He sits up and grabs the remote from underneath his bottom. He hands it to Vanka.

VANKA
Ew!

ERIC
Hey, you sat on me. We're close! Here.

Vanka takes it. Eric's brother BILLY, 20's, black, enters from his room with some suitcases. Their roommate, RON TYSON, 20's, black, also enters with some boxes.

RON
What's goin' on, guys?

ERIC
Apparently, I'm getting up to start my day.

BILLY
Good, seeing that it's two in the afternoon. Help us with these.

Eric gets up and grabs a box.

ERIC
(to Billy)
Finally going to live with your family, huh?

Billy GRUMBLES.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Hey, happy wife, happy life!

BILLY
She's not my wife!

ERIC
And whose fault is that?

BILLY
Look, I ain't ready for marriage! I'm still with her. So what if Vanka's living with us? We ain't attracted to her at all! She's like one of the guys!

VANKA
Words every woman wants to hear.

SFX: Doorbell CHIMES.

ERIC
I got it.

Eric walks away.

RON
Well, Bill, you're still doing the responsible thing.

BILLY
Yeah, I know.
(pause)
Ya'll, please don't make me go!

Eric returns.

ERIC
Billy, do you guys have a guy who delivers water here?

BILLY
No.

ERIC
What about ice?

BILLY
What are you talking about?

ERIC
There's some guys standing outside with "ICE" printed on their jackets.

BILLY AND RON

What?

VANKA

Excuse me, I gotta go to the bathroom.

She gets up and quickly walks away. Ron walks to the door, where DOMINIC the officer stands.

DOMINIC

Hi, we received word that there's an illegal immigrant by the name of Vanka Smirnov here.

BILLY

(to Eric and Ron)

Well, see ya'll later!

Billy quickly walks out the front door with his suitcase.

INT. COMMISSARY - DAY

JACOB JACKSON, 18, white, walks through the commissary with a shopping cart full of groceries.

JACOB

Stupid Shana. Got me doing the grocery shopping. I haven't had to buy any groceries in my life!

SGT VIVIAN HOPPER, 30's, black, wearing her Army uniform, walks past Jacob with a shopping cart of food. Jacob reads from a package of cookies.

JACOB (CONT'D)

"Fat free"? Okay, so the fat is free. How much does the rest of it cost?

VIVIAN

Uh, look at the tag on the shelf.

JACOB

Oh. I knew that.

VIVIAN

(chuckles)

You never been to a commissary before, have you?

JACOB

(whispers to Hopper)

Only in jail.

(MORE)

JACOB (CONT'D)
(regular voice)
At least you guys have one and freedom.

VIVIAN
(chuckles)
Says who?

Jacob smirks.

JACOB
Where do I know you from? You from
Milwaukee?

VIVIAN
I was on base there. I'm Vivian. Hey,
aren't you Shana's husband?

JACOB
Yeah, even though I'm doing the shopping.

VIVIAN
That's cool! More men need to do the work
for their wives.

JACOB
I was doing more than that. I had a great
gig back home, before Shana drug us here.

VIVIAN
Aw, be glad she loved you enough to bring
you here. Lots of married folk can't wait
to leave their spouses behind. What was
your gig, anyway?

JACOB
I was teaching this drill team of teenage
girls.

VIVIAN
Oh. That sounds cool.
(pause)
You know, we have a military ball coming
up, and I need to learn how to dance for
my partner. You wanna teach me?

JACOB
Me? I don't know.

VIVIAN
It'll give you some work. I can even pay
you, so you can consider it a job. Bring
home the bacon to Shana.

JACOB

Alright, cool. Let me give you my number.

VIVIAN

No need. I work with Shana. I already got it. Later.

She walks away.

JACOB

Ooh, a candy bar. These guys won't miss it.

He picks it up, looks around, and stops.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Dang, I guess I can't shoplift on an Army base. This is new.

(stammers and shakes)

Must...keep...it...away...from...my...pocket!

He drops the candy bar in the cart.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Oh brother!

Three security guards stand behind Jacob with their arms folded. Jacob turns around and sees them.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I guess my reputation preceded me.

(to the guards)

It's all good. I'm good, guys! Carry on!

Jacob walks away from them. A black SAILOR in his uniform walks past Jacob and the security guards.

SAILOR

(to Jacob)

Security guards following a white guy around? Man, I'm scared of you!

The sailor walks away. Jacob frowns.

INT. BILLY AND RON'S APARTMENT - LATER

Ron walks Dominic to the door.

DOMINIC

If you see Ms. Smirnov, let her know we're looking for her. I'll be back!

RON

Yes sir.

Dominic exits.

ERIC

Man, what's Vanka gonna do?

RON

Look, don't worry. Everything will be alright.

Vanka sneaks out of the bathroom.

VANKA

Is coast clear?

RON

Vanka, man, you're in trouble!

VANKA

I know, I know! I don't wanna go back to Russia!

Billy enters the apartment.

BILLY

I was hiding in the bushes outside.

Eric SNIFFS.

ERIC

Was a dog peeing behind there?

BILLY

Come on, I left my shoes outside! Now what's going on?

VANKA

I'm gonna get deported soon! And I already made a life here!

ERIC

By sitting on your ass, watching TV?

VANKA

The American dream!

BILLY

Have you ever tried to get your green card, Vanka?

VANKA

No.

RON

That could take days, if she's lucky. She needs to do something before Dominic comes back!

BILLY

Dude, just pretend ya'll married until he leaves you alone.

VANKA

Pretend?

ERIC

Yeah, and to make it more realistic, I could be your son!

RON

But won't Dominic need some proof that we're a family?

ERIC

We can take some pics and put them up around the apartment.

BILLY

Pics. That's already a step up from what our real family does.

RON

You think that's really gonna work?

VANKA

Hey, I can pretend to be good housewife and mother. I cook somewhat, I clean somewhat, I can even give you guys space if you want to mellow out and have a smoke break. I'll even join you.

Eric GASPS.

ERIC

Wow!

He looks towards the ceiling.

INT. ERIC, RON, AND VANKA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY -
DREAM SEQUENCE

Background, cheerful music PLAYS. Vanka enters from the kitchen, wearing an apron over her clothes. Ron enters the home, wearing a suit and tie.

RON
Honey, I'm home!

VANKA
Hello, dear. I got your pipe for you here.

RON
What's in the pipe?

VANKA
You know!

Vanka winks. They both CHUCKLE in a snooty manner. Ron takes the pipe and sits on the couch. Eric, wearing a backwards red cap, a jacket, and carrying a backpack, enters the home.

ERIC
Mom, I'm home!

VANKA
Wonderful! I made you some "special" brownies!

ERIC
Oh, goody!

Vanka hands Eric a plate of brownies.

ERIC (CONT'D)
No-bake?

VANKA
Oh, there was some baking!

All three CHUCKLE in a snooty manner.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

ERIC
Oh my god! Ya'll the family I never had!

He throws his arms around Ron and Vanka.

BILLY
(to Eric)
You fool, I'm still here!

ERIC
Yeah, so get outta here! You're ruining a touching family moment!

Billy SCOFFS and exits.

INT. SHARON'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Billy sits at the kitchen table with SHANA JONES, 18, biracial, and Billy's baby boy, WILL, who speaks telepathically [writing in *italics*]. Will's mother, SHARON ROSS, 20's, black, arrives at the table with a tray of food.

SHARON

Alright, ya'll, I hooked us up for our first dinner together!

SHANA

Leftovers from your restaurant?

BILLY

They're not half-eaten, are they?

SHARON

Not this time! This is a special occasion!

She sits at the table.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Don't eat yet. Wait for Jacob.

BILLY

Don't worry.

Jacob BURSTS OPEN the front door with his hands full of grocery bags. He drops the bags.

SFX: Glass SHATTERS.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Whoa. Good luck taking that back.

JACOB

Yeah right. I'm not going back to that commissary again!

Shana gets up, closes the door, and helps Jacob with the bags.

SHANA

Aww, Jakey, it's gonna be alright. Sharon got dinner for us.

They head to the kitchen.

JACOB

Keep your leftovers, Sharon. I spent all that time in the store, I'm cooking something for us.

SHANA

Honey, we're kinda hungry now.

BILLY

Actually, I can wait.

Sharon KICKS Billy from underneath the table.

SFX: THUMP!

JACOB

I'm gonna whip up somethin' great, and you guys are gonna like it.

SHANA

No! Use that time to wash up, fix yourself up.

JACOB

What's that supposed to mean?

SHANA

Nothing. You been running around all day.

JACOB

Yeah, thanks to you!

SHARON

Guys, we have company.

JACOB

No we don't, Sharon! All of us live here now!

(to Shana)

Also thanks to you!

SHANA

Is this about you not finding a job again?

JACOB

Yeah, and the fact that you pulled me away from my drill team!

SHANA

That wasn't even a job, Jacob! You need a paying job!

JACOB

Why can't you accept me for who I am,
huh?

SHANA

Man, I knew this was a mistake!

JACOB

Oh, you did, huh? Then maybe it's time to
correct it!

SHANA

Fine!

JACOB

"Fine" yourself!

SHANA

No, you go "fine" yourself!

They both march to the bedroom.

SHANA (CONT'D)

Jacob, we can't march in the same
direction! How effective is that?

JACOB

There you go, telling me what to do
again!

SHANA

I wanna go to my room!

JACOB

It's my house, I say I'm going in my
room!

SHARON

Actually, it's m--

Billy KICKS Sharon from underneath the table.

SFX: THUMP!

SHANA

Fine, I'm going on base! Where there's
actual people who wanna work!

Shana marches out of the apartment. Jacob marches in
their room. Both SLAM the doors.

BILLY

There they go again.

SHARON

I heard they got married real quick.
Maybe they need some time apart.

BILLY

We got together quick, too. How come we
ain't taking time apart?

SHARON

No, you can't leave your loving family
that easily!

BILLY

"Loving family"?

WILL

*Yeah. You thought I was just here for one-
liners and zingers?*

PAUSE.

WILL (CONT'D)

That's all I got right now, though.

INT. ERIC, RON, AND VANKA'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Eric talks on his cellphone with his girlfriend, BERNIECE
WILLIAMS, 16, black.

INTERCUT - ERIC/BERNIECE

BERNIECE

I don't like this, Eric!

ERIC

Berniece, it's only for a little while.
I'll be back in Milwaukee soon! You don't
have to worry about any girls chasing me
up here!

BERNIECE

I wasn't.

ERIC

Well, dang.

BERNIECE

I just don't like this long-distance
thing. They never last.

ERIC

Well, we're gonna be the first couple
that makes it work!

BERNIECE

(sighs)

Okay. I guess being around Ron would
help.

ERIC

Yeah...wait, what do you mean?

BERNIECE

You know. He seems so put together.
College man, pretty handsome, knows what
he wants to do in life. Know what I'm
sayin'?

ERIC

(cautiously)

Yeah.

INT. ERIC, RON, AND VANKA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Ron and Vanka sit with Dominic. Pictures of Ron, Vanka,
and Eric are framed and placed around the living room.

VANKA

So, Dominic, you have any more questions
for us?

DOMINIC

Yeah, how long have you two been married?

Ron and Vanka begin to speak.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

Hold it. On the count of three, both of
you tell me how many months you've been
married. One...two...three!

RON

Two!

VANKA

(rapidly)

Yes, two! My English still rough.

DOMINIC

(sotto voce)

Not bad.

(regular voice)

Where is your son?

RON

He must be doing his homework. I'll go get him.

Ron gets up and begins to walk towards the bedroom. Eric exits from it and SLAMS the door.

ERIC

Ron, you tryin' to steal my girl?? I'll kill you!!

He runs up to Ron and wrestles him to the floor.

VANKA

We have our disagreements sometime.
Excuse me.

Vanka gets up and breaks the guys up.

VANKA (CONT'D)

Stop it, you two!

The three of them walk to the bedroom and close the door.

RON

(to Eric)

What's the matter with you? Are you crazy?

ERIC

No!

RON

Are you high?

ERIC

I...no comment.

VANKA

(to Eric)

You're gonna mess things up for me! Now, get out there!

The three return to the living room.

RON

I'm sorry about that, Dominic.

DOMINIC

It's alright. I've seen all I need to see.

VANKA
 (sighs)
 I'll pack my bags.

DOMINIC
 Why? You're at each other's throats.
 That's the definition of a family, if
 ever I've seen one!

VANKA
 (gasps)
 That's right! We're family!

DOMINIC
 Good day, everyone.

He heads for the door. The other three CLAMOR in excitement.

ERIC
 Yeah! Good job, everyone! Ya'll were great!

Dominic turns back around.

DOMINIC
 Uh, I haven't left the apartment yet!

ERIC
 Damn.

Vanka and Ron SLAP Eric on the head.

DOMINIC
 Ms. Smirnov, shame on you, pretending to be part of this family!

RON
 Wait! Who's to say we're not a family?

ERIC
 Yeah, you just saw them smack me upside the head!
 (to Ron and Vanka)
 "Ow", by the way!
 (to Dominic)
 That's a spanking!

DOMINIC
 (to Eric)
I should smack you up upside the head!
 That won't make me family!

VANKA

Come on now! This isn't fair!

DOMINIC

It's not fair to all of the other immigrants here illegally.

RON

But wait! I love this boy and this woman!

DOMINIC

Bull! You're not even married!

RON

Yes we are!

ERIC AND VANKA

(to Ron)

What?

RON

We just didn't have the ceremony yet!

DOMINIC

Well, when is it?

RON

(stammers)

Tomorrow. And you're invited!

DOMINIC

Well, thank you. I can't wait to see this!

Dominic exits the apartment.

VANKA

Ron, what's the deal?

RON

I don't know! You wanna stay in America, don't you?

ERIC

Yeah, after Dominic leaves, you guys could probably get a divorce or something. And Vanka, you could still apply for your green card.

VANKA

But who is gonna marry us in this short notice?

ERIC
I'll call Eleanor Dumbeck. She can do it.

VANKA
Okay, I hope this works.

RON
Me too.

ERIC
It will. Now that that's settled, let's have a bachelor party!

VANKA
Uh-uh, no way!

ERIC
Why not?

VANKA
Because you going to a bachelor party got you in the situation you're in!

RON
That's right!

ERIC
(grunts)
Ooooh! I hate you guys!

He STOMPS away.

VANKA
(sniffles, smiles)
I've been waiting all my life to hear that!

INT. DANCE STUDIO - DAY

Jacob and Vivian hold hands and do a two-step together as they limp. Jacob wears a brace on his left leg. Music PLAYS from a speaker.

VIVIAN
Sorry again about your shin, Jacob.

JACOB
It's alright. You have two left feet, I have one leg left. Let's stop for today.

They stop. Jacob TURNS OFF the music.

VIVIAN

You're pretty good, Jacob!

JACOB

I'm awesome, but thanks.

VIVIAN

I bet those girls in your drill team loved you.

JACOB

Yeah, too bad Shana didn't.

VIVIAN

What?

JACOB

Oh, nothing.

VIVIAN

Look, I'm sure she'll come around. Maybe she doesn't have the same kind of passion for dance that you have.

JACOB

Yeah, maybe you're right.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - DAY - SAME

Shana, her fellow soldiers, and SGT DARIUS MURPHY crowd around and dance to BLASTING MUSIC.

SHANA

(rhythmically)

Hey! Hey!

DARIUS

Yo, this is the bomb, right? It's just like the sailors pulling into port! Except we're not sailors, and we're not on a boat!

SHANA

Where's SGT Hopper?

DARIUS

Who knows? Probably on some date.

SHANA

Heaven help the man who's dealing with her!

DARIUS

Hey, that's your sergeant you're talking about!

(laughs)

You ain't wrong, though!

SHANA

I'm gonna get a drink.

DARIUS

What, milk?

Shana SCOFFS.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Alright, listen up, ya'll! I don't condone underage drinking. That said, you guys are grown, and...

He turns to Shana, who sips from a bottle of beer.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Hey!

SHANA

What? I agree with you so far!

DARIUS

Ah, screw it!

Everyone continues partying and drinking.

INT. SHARON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Billy and Sharon sit on the couch.

BILLY

How are Jacob and Shana doing?

SHARON

Real happy. Upbeat, even. Except when they're around each other.

BILLY

So like a regular married couple.

SHARON

I guess.

BILLY

You know, what if Will stayed with his grandparents until all of this cools down?

SHARON

My parents are out of town.

BILLY

Okay, I'll drop him off with my parents.

He gets up and begins to go to his room.

SHARON

Wait, shouldn't you ask them first?

BILLY

Nah, me and Eric left. They'll be glad to see him!

INT. NELSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Billy and Will enter the front door with Will's luggage.

BILLY

Mom? Matt? Got a surprise!

Billy and Eric's stepfather, MATT JAMES, 40's, black, walks in the living room. He wears white cream on his face and dons a black tank top, black boxers, and white gloves, similar to a mime.

MATT

Billy?

BILLY

I don't even wanna know! We'll be back!

Billy and Will begin to exit.

MATT

Yeah, come back in an hour, or five.

WILL

Hey, I wouldn't mind having an aunt or uncle I can push around!

Billy closes the door. Matt's wife, RHONDA NELSON-JAMES, 40's, black, wears the same outfit as Matt, including the cream. She walks up to Matt.

RHONDA

Did you say something?

MATT

Yeah.

RHONDA
 (seductively)
 You know you're not supposed to speak.

MATT
 (seductively)
 Neither are you. But you will be
 screaming!

Rhonda runs to their bedroom. Matt begins to run. He trips over Will's bag, then RAMS his leg into the couch.

MATT (CONT'D)
 Ow!
 (calls out)
 Rhonda, you have to start without me!

RHONDA (O.C.)
 You don't have to tell me twice!

Matt holds his leg in pain.

INT. VIVIAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jacob begins to exit Vivian's house.

JACOB
 Alright, Vivian, so we finally got the two-step down. Tomorrow, we'll practice dancing on beat.

VIVIAN
 Cool, can't wait!

JACOB
 Later.

Jacob closes the door behind him.

VIVIAN
 Alright now!

She TURNS ON her speaker. Music PLAYS. She starts dancing to the beat, then twirls, does a back-flip, and other dance moves. Jacob reenters.

JACOB
 Hey, you forgot to pay...

Vivian stops dancing.

VIVIAN
 Damn, you a good teacher! I can dance!

JACOB
 (smirks)
 Says who?

VIVIAN
 You wanna piece of me?

JACOB
 Bring it on!

They both go to the middle of the living room and do a dance-off of various moves. They grab each other and dance as a couple. Jacob dips Vivian and brings her back up.

JACOB (CONT'D)
 Why'd you lie?

VIVIAN
 To get to know you.

They stare into each other's eyes and kiss. Jacob pulls away.

JACOB
 Wait, hold up! I'm married to Shana!

VIVIAN
 I thought you said you were on a break.

JACOB
 Hmmph.

VIVIAN
 Well, are you?

JACOB
 I'm not sure.
 (shrugs)
 I'll get clarification from her later.

They continue kissing and fall to the floor.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - DAY

The soldiers dance, drink, and CLAMOR in a slightly dark room. A fast song BLASTS from the speakers, then SWITCHES to a different song. The crowd CHEERS.

SHANA
 Hey, that's my song!

DARIUS
 (to Shana)
 Let's dance!

SHANA
 Nah, that's alright, Sarge.

DARIUS
 Damn, I don't wanna marry ya! I just
 wanna dance!

SHANA
 Fine.

They both dance together. Their dancing gets more
 suggestive. PEOPLE around them CHEER.

GIRL
 Hey, get it, Jonesy!

Shana takes sips from her beer, turns around, and grinds
 on Darius.

SHANA (V.O.)
 (thinking)
 Hey, what's his wallet doing in his front
 pocket?
 (gasps)
 Uh oh!

SFX: Lights CLICK on. The crowd stops dancing and CLAMORS
 angrily.

DARIUS
 Who turned the lights on?

SHANA (V.O.)
 (thinking)
 Oh, thank God! I was about to lose it!

A SOLDIER calls out.

SOLDIER (O.C.)
 My bad!

SFX: Lights CLICK back off.

The crowd continues dancing. Shana hesitates but
 continues to dance on Darius.

SHANA (V.O.)
 (thinking)
 My butt has a mind of its own!

She continues to dance.

SHANA (V.O.)
Ass...can't...stop...twerking!

INT. SHARON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sharon sits at the table and drinks from her cup. Shana peeks in the kitchen from the living room. Shana tiptoes away. Sharon turns around.

SHARON
Shana?

SHANA
(yells)
I didn't do nothin'!

SHARON
What?

SHANA
Nothing. What are you doing up?

SHARON
I'm used to being up around this time,
when my son would cry.

SHANA
Really?

SHARON
(calls out)
Billy!

BILLY (O.C.)
(drowsily)
It's your turn, Sharon!

SHARON
(to Shana)
See?

SHANA
Jacob's not here, is he?

SHARON
Hasn't come home yet.

SHANA
Look, Sharon, I need to talk to you!

Shana sits at the table. The two speak in hushed tones throughout.

SHANA (CONT'D)

I've done something really bad!

SHARON

(sniffs)

What, bathe in beer?

SHANA

Something else. I was dancing with this guy at a party. We got real close. It was feelin' real good.

SHARON

(with interest)

What?

SHANA

Yeah. I started to get closer. So did he. Then, aw, man.

SHARON

What, you kissed him?

SHANA

Well, he kissed me, and I didn't exactly stop him right away.

SHARON

Oh.

SHANA

I mean, eventually, I did. But I felt everything in that kiss that I haven't from Jacob. Is that wrong?

SHARON

Well, maybe your heart's with Jacob, and you feel bad about how you left things with him. That's why you stopped kissing that guy.

SHANA

Maybe you're right.

SHARON

Just talk to Jacob about your feelings. You guys will make up, and that other guy won't even be a factor anymore.

SHANA

I suppose.

Sharon continues to drink from her cup. Shana sits in silence.

SHANA (CONT'D)

So what if I slept with that guy, too?

Sharon CHOKES on her drink.

SHARON

What??

Shana nods her head in disappointment.

INT. ERIC, RON, AND VANKA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room has a few flowers and balloons as decorations. Eric wears a shirt and tie. Shana's half-sister, ELEANOR DUMBECK, 17, white, and her BOYFRIEND, 19, a buff, white guy, approach Eric.

ELEANOR

Thanks for inviting me up here, Eric!
What's the occasion?

ERIC

(sighs)

Eleanor, I told you, we need someone to perform the wedding! Remember the text?

ELEANOR

Oh, that. You text probably said, "Read", but I didn't actually read the whole thing. Your texts are like novels!

ERIC

Well, we need a minister!

ELEANOR

Wait, so this has nothing to do with Billy?

ERIC

No!

ELEANOR

So I brought my boyfriend here for nothing!

ELEANOR'S BOYFRIEND

(booming voice)

It's okay, honey-poo. I'm just glad to be seen!

ELEANOR
 (to her boyfriend)
 That's great. Now go get me some water.

Her boyfriend exits.

ERIC
 (sotto voce)
 Look, the same thing you did for your
 sister, can you do for Ron and Vanka? She
 needs to stay in the country!

ELEANOR
 (sotto voce)
 Then why doesn't she get married in her
 country?

ERIC
 (loudly)
 No, she needs to...
 (hushed)
 She needs to stay in this country!

ELEANOR
 Oh! Got it!
 (pauses)
 So Billy didn't mention me at all?

ERIC
 Eleanor!

ELEANOR
 Fine.

Billy, wearing a shirt and tie, approaches them.

BILLY
 Eric, did you get her to do it?

ERIC
 Yeah.

BILLY
 Hey, Eleanor. Thanks for doing this for
 my friend.

ELEANOR
 Hi, Billy. I heard you're back with your
 son and his mother now.

BILLY
 Yeah. She couldn't make it here, though.

ELEANOR

Hmmph. Well, let's hurry up and get this thing started, so you can go back home and play house, "Dad"!

She turns her head, then turns back to Billy.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

If that's your real name!

Billy SIGHS. The front door opens. Eric and Billy's father, JUNIOR, 40's, black, slides to the middle of the floor. He dons a white sequined jumpsuit and a sequined headband wrapped around his large afro. He carries a boombox on his shoulder.

JUNIOR

What's up, son?

BILLY

Dad! What are you doing here?

JUNIOR

I heard you were getting married, and you know I never miss a wedding!

BILLY

I'm not getting married! Ron is!

JUNIOR

Oh. Well, bye!

He begins to exit. Ron and Vanka, wearing a tux and wedding gown, respectively, approaches him.

VANKA

No, stay! We need someone to give me away!

JUNIOR

Sure. I'd be honored!

ERIC

Alright, and Billy is Ron's best man...

(to Billy)

...which is inaccurate all around...

(to everyone)

...so we're all set.

RON

Great.

VANKA

I'm having second thoughts about this.
Shouldn't I be marrying out of love?

The others look at each other and BURST WITH LAUGHTER.
Vanka JOINS IN.

ERIC

Don't worry, Vanka, this will all work
out. And we got the best minister in the
business! She even got her sister and
Jacob married!

ELEANOR

Yep! When you think of loveless
marriages, think of me!

She turns and sees her boyfriend behind her.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Oh, hey, baby!

Dominic enters the house and approaches the group.

DOMINIC

Good afternoon. I'm here for this
"wedding".

RON

Hey, now, it's a real wedding!

DOMINIC

Then where are your parents?

VANKA

Other than the fact that they would kill
us, they live in different states and
countries!

RON

Now have a seat. Let's get started!

ERIC

Dad, you got any music?

JUNIOR

Do I got music?

He FLIPS ON his boombox. Trap music BOOMS from it. He and
Vanka walk down the aisle. The music STOPS, and a DJ
announces from it.

DJ (O.C.)
That was Murda Mike with "Ride on It,
Trick"!

JUNIOR
Guess the song's over.

He FLIPS OFF the boombox. They walk to the middle of the living room where the others stand.

ELEANOR
Dearly beloved, we are gathered here, you know the rest. Ron, do you take Vanka to be your lawfully...

She CHORTLES.

ERIC
Eleanor!

ELEANOR
Sorry. That part always gets me. Your lawfully wedded wife?

RON
I do.

ELEANOR
Vanka, "wife-wise".

VANKA
(puzzled)
I do.

ELEANOR
Then by the power "infested" in me, I now pronounce you man and wife!

Everyone APPLAUDS.

DOMINIC
Ron, aren't you gonna kiss the bride?

VANKA
Uh, that's a little private, don't you think?

DOMINIC
(sotto voce)
Damn, they thought of everything!
(to the group)
(MORE)

DOMINIC (CONT'D)

You guys are fools, but you must really love each other to go through all of this. I don't have any beef with Vanka now. Just keep your nose clean. Good day.

Dominic exits and SHUTS the door.

BILLY

Congrats on the wedding, guys, but what's gonna happen when one of ya'll wants to date?

ERIC

They can still do that! No one needs to know what happened here!

(to Eleanor)

Hey!

Eleanor takes selfies of herself and the wedding party.

ELEANOR

(in a confused manner)

What?

RON

Well, I guess that makes us a family.

ERIC

Hey, a family is what you make it.

He walks to the center of the living room. The lights dim around him. A spotlight shines on him. Melodramatic music PLAYS in the background.

ERIC (CONT'D)

You see, no matter what background we come from, what race, creed or color we are, or what country we were born in, when we come together, we...

(to Junior)

Dad, turn that music off!

The lights come back on. Junior FLIPS OFF the music.

JUNIOR

What? This is the recession!

ERIC

Oh. Go ahead, then.

Junior RESUMES the music. Ron and Vanka hold hands and walk away from the living room. The others APPLAUD and throw rice at them.

SFX: Eleanor repeatedly CLINKS a glass with a fork. The music STOPS. The crowd turns to Eleanor.

ELEANOR

Aw, you guys aren't any fun!

INT. SHARON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EVENING

Sharon sits at the table with her hands on her head. Billy enters from the bedroom.

SHARON

Where you goin'?

BILLY

It's Ron's wedding night, so I'm taking him out to a bar.

SHARON

Mmm.

BILLY

Hey, I understand why you didn't wanna go to their wedding with me.

SHARON

I told you, I overslept!

BILLY

Most people don't smile while they sleep!

SHARON

I'm one of a kind.

BILLY

Yes you are. That's my point. In the midst of all our friends getting married for the wrong reasons, I started to appreciate the woman who I wanna be with for real.

SHARON

Oh?

BILLY

I'm not saying marriage or anything yet. I'm just saying that I'm glad that I have you. And not just for birthing my kid.

He kisses her on the forehead.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I just don't want us to end up like Shana
and Jacob.

Billy exits the apartment.

SHARON

You have no idea.

Jacob sneaks in the kitchen.

JACOB

(hushed voice)

Sharon? Is Shana here?

SHARON

No, she's at work.

JACOB

Hey, listen, I got a friend who may have
done something very wrong with someone
who's not his or her wife or husband a
couple of times.

Sharon GROANS and PLOPS her head on the table.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(regular voice)

What? I didn't even say it was me yet! Or
at all.

THE END