

Shrinx

An original sitcom by Mark Zegarelli
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Shrinx

Location:

Old Town Alexandria, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C.

Recurring Characters:

LOUIS: mid-30s, a therapist, specialty is couples counseling with his wife, Mabel. Often clueless – you get the impression he has been getting by in the business on his good looks for years.

MABEL: mid-30s, Louis’s wife, a more competent therapist, who never lets her husband forget that she is carrying both of them.

MARTY: mid-30s, a flamboyant gay therapist, self-promoting organizer of trendy overpriced spiritual events.

PATRICK: mid-30s, a therapist who is actually sane, whose main fault is a tendency to get dragged into other peoples’ messes every week.

BEN: mid-20s, Patrick’s perennial patient, a loose cannon whom Patrick keeps in check.

ESSENCE: late-teens, Marty’s daughter from a brief marriage, spoiled, foul-mouthed, and prone to threatening people with her lit cigarette.

KEVIN: early 20s, Essence’s long-suffering boyfriend whom Marty hypnotizes for amusement.

Characters This Episode:

TOBACCONIST: 40-ish, London working-class accent.

CUSTOMER and **WIFE**: both mid-50s, London working-class accents.

SID VICIOUS, NANCY SPUNGEN, and MOTHER THERESA

MAN and **WOMAN**: mid-30s, two characters who at first appear to be clients of Louis and Mabel, but turn out to be their therapists.

BARBIE and **KEN**: Mabel’s dolls, voices by Mabel.

WAITRESS: Waitress in a rundown diner, Southern accent.

COWBOY: Flatulent patron of diner, Western accent.

SHAMAN: 50-ish, reclusive yet pushy Native-American psychiatrist, New York accent.

Episode 1 - Valley of the Dolls

FADE IN

INTERIOR: A TOBACCONIST’S SHOP IN LONDON

The TOBACCONIST is ringing up two customers, a CUSTOMER and his WIFE. Between them is a rack of British tabloids - Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, and so on.

TOBACCONIST

Is that everything?

CUSTOMER

And a box of Marlboros.

TOBACCONIST

Comes to seven and eighty p.

The man pays, then points to the headline “Danish Mathematician Discovers Largest Prime Number.”

CUSTOMER

That’s a comfort, isn’t it?

TOBACCONIST

Bloody waste of time if you ask me.

CUSTOMER

Don’t say that.

TOBACCONIST

Why not?

CUSTOMER

Well, they always need new prime numbers.

TOBACCONIST

Why, what for?

CUSTOMER

Don't you know nothing? They use them all the time, (to his wife) don't they?

WIFE

(in wholehearted accord) Oh, yes.

TOBACCONIST

What for?

CUSTOMER

All sorts of marvelous things: Space exploration. Brain physiology. Public sanitation.

WIFE

Dentistry. They couldn't fill your teeth without nice, new, fresh prime numbers.

CUSTOMER

That's right. I don't know about you, but I don't want my teeth rotting out of my head. (reading from paper) It says here that it's a “Mersenne prime.”

WIFE

All the saints be praised. You can't open a new bowling alley without one of those.

TOBACCONIST

We need a new bowling alley in this part of town.

CUSTOMER

See, there you go.

Behind them in line, SID VICIOUS and NANCY SPUNGEN are getting impatient.

SID

(calling to the front)

Oi. Quit holding up the bloody works.

NANCY

Siiiiiiiiid, I need to shoot up. (She turns her head away from camera and starts to retch violently but out of view.)

SID

You hear that. (He approaches the couple in front of the line and gets in their faces.) Nancy needs a fix and Mother Theresa has to take a leak, so fuckin’ haul your fat carcasses out of here.

He opens a beer can by crushing it against his head. Foam sprays everywhere. He takes a sip.

The camera pans the line of customers to reveal Nancy wiping her mouth with the sleeve of her leather jacket and, behind her, a patient Mother Theresa smiling and nodding.

Then a second camera pulls back to reveal the television that all of this action has been occurring on. Next, a side shot of LOUIS and MABEL sitting together on their couch, watching TV and sharing a bowl of popcorn.

MABEL

Why is British TV always so much better than what we have here?

Louis starts to answer, but Sid Vicious enters and positions himself behind the couch.

SID

That’s because we Brits are better educated and generally much more *erudite*.

He smashes a beer can on his head. Foam sprays everywhere. He takes a sip.

OPENING CREDITS: Just the show title and episode title.
MUSIC OVER: First two lines of “Crazy” by Patsy Cline.

FADE IN

A PSYCHOTHERAPIST’S OFFICE

Louis and Mabel are seated across from MAN and WOMAN.

LOUIS

(thoughtfully)

I see by the clock that we are just about out of time, so let's see if there's anything anybody wants to say by way of ... closure.

They sit a moment. Just as Woman attempts to speak, Mabel cuts her off.

MABEL

I'd like to say something... if I may. (Woman yields to her.) I'd just like to express how close I feel to you both after only one session... (Woman appears to want to say something, but Mabel cuts her off again.) This... process... is such a forum for closeness to develop.

Now Man appears to want to say something, but Louis cuts him off.

LOUIS

Closeness. Wow, what a word. I'm sure I can speak for Mabel, too, when I say that there's nothing that truly brings a couple closer together than... (taking Mabel's hand) ... closeness.

WOMAN

Well, I think...

MABEL

(sitting forward in her chair, still holding Louis's hand)
Closeness is a mission with us – a deadly serious mission. Louis and I won't rest until every couple knows, as we know, “How bold one gets when one is sure of being loved,” as Carl

Jung put it.

LOUIS

(pulling back from her a bit)

Actually, that was Carl Rogers, but the sentiment is what matters most here.

MABEL

(a bit flustered)

Yes, of course it doesn't matter who said it. However it was Carl Jung in *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections*.

LOUIS

I don't mean to be contentious, darling, but it was, in fact, Carl Rogers in *On Becoming a Person*.

MABEL

(still mustering sweetness)

It's completely unimportant, of course, dear, but I think I know Carl Jung when I quote him, seeing as how he was the topic of my dissertation.

LOUIS

(dropping into defensiveness)

So we're back to that, are we? (speaking to the couple)
Mabel never misses an opportunity to point out that she wrote a dissertation for her degree, while the program that I attended (pointedly at her) did not require one.

MABEL

(dryly)

I know - that's why you went there.

WOMAN

All righty then. I think we can stop now. Why don't we just hold some of this discussion for the next time.

Man silently concurs. They all stand up.

LOUIS

Well, then, why don't we settle up accounts.

MAN

You can pay our receptionist by cash or check.

MABEL

Same time next week?

WOMAN

That's fine. Have a good week now.

Louis and Mabel leave. Man and Woman look at each other.

WOMAN

What do you think?

MAN

I think actually it was Freud who said it.

WOMAN

Hmmm. Who's our three o'clock?

FADE OUT

FADE IN

A MEETING ROOM

Marty is standing outside a circle of meditating patients who all have their eyes closed.

MARTY

Breathing in... breathing out... Vipassanic practice frees us from enslavement to our mind. We are in the here-and-now, focused only on breathing in... breathing out... breathing in...

A cell phone sounds loudly on his desk. He crosses over to turn it off, then jots down a note.

MARTY

... breathing out... breathing in... breathing out. We relinquish

our attachment to form. We are in the present and we allow this moment to be exactly as it is...

The phone goes off again. Marty’s face registers some annoyance. He checks it again and chucks it back on the desk.

MARTY

... exactly as it is. We are relaxed. We have nowhere else to be and nothing else to do...

His cell phone rings again, a different ring this time. He answers it, turning only slightly away from the group, still meditating.

MARTY

(into the phone)

Yes. No. How should I know, call the caterer. (To the group) Let's begin our affirmations. (Into the phone) Fine. In that case, I take absolutely no responsibility. None! (He angrily shuts off the phone and addresses the group.) "Number one: I take full responsibility for my experience in this moment... Number two: I radiate the peace that I wish to perceive...

The desk phone rings loudly. He answers curtly.

MARTY

Yes... What do you mean they're not coming! We booked them six weeks ago... Well, handle it, OK, just handle it. (He slams the phone down angrily and bemoans to himself.) Oh, Jesus Chr... (changing course, speaking to group) ...ist Consciousness can be attained by breathing in... breathing out... And when ready, you may open your eyes. I think we all feel more relaxed after that. Remember, no matter how hectic life gets, we all need to give ourselves the gift of slowing down in this moment...

Cell phone rings again. Marty grabs it and gathering up a couple of shoulder bags, moves towards the door.

MARTY
(rapidly)

This concludes our third session in Restorative Imaging. As you leave, could one of you make sure the blinds are closed, the plants are watered, the lights are off, and as you lock the top lock jiggle the handle, it sticks right here. (Indicating the lock, he exits.)

FADE OUT

FADE IN

PATRICK'S OFFICE

PATRICK is in session, sitting across from his client BEN.

BEN

Now follow my logic. In Muslim countries, they call God “Allah,” right?

PATRICK

That's right.

BEN

And the Hindus call God “Brahma” or “Krishna.”

PATRICK

I suppose.

BEN

And the Jews say “Jehovah.”

PATRICK

Where is this going?

BEN

And in other countries they say “Dio,” or “Dios,” or “Deus” or “Gott” or any of a hundred other names.

PATRICK

I'm wide open on this one.

BEN

But in America, we say “God.” That proves we're right, since His real name is God. (He waits a few seconds for Patrick to speak, then repeats.) OK, now follow my logic...

PATRICK

What logic?

BEN

(sitting back and folding his arms)

You know, as my therapist, I feel that you should be supportive of me.

PATRICK

Ben, I want to be supportive.

BEN

Really?

PATRICK

Absolutely. So why don't we look at something that you feel you're having a problem with, and then I can support you.

BEN

(taking a breath)

Wow, this isn't easy.

PATRICK

Just take your time.

BEN

(steeling himself)

I need to make a honey mustard sauce. Do you know the recipe?

PATRICK

(folding his arms)

Why don't you go online and Google it?

BEN

Oh my God, I'm having a breakthrough! Wait... what keywords should I use for my search?

PATRICK

You can Google that, too.

Closeup on Ben, nodding – the wheels in his head are turning.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

MABEL'S OFFICE

Closeup of Mabel holding up two dolls, BARBIE and KEN, and talking for them. She makes a high falsetto voice for Barbie and a deeper voice for Ken.

BARBIE

Ken...?

KEN

What is it, Barbie?

BARBIE

We need to talk.

KEN

Again? (Heaving a sigh.) What is it about this time?

BARBIE

We need to talk about our relationship.

KEN

How come? I'm already taking six (stumbling over the word) Vi-A-Gar-A every day.

BARBIE

Oh, no. It isn't about that.

KEN

Well, then, Barbie, what is it?

BARBIE
(whining)

I want more things!

KEN

But you already have a lot of things.

BARBIE

It isn't enough, Ken!

KEN

Not enough! Jesus Christ, Barbie, do you think I'm made of money?

BARBIE

As if!

KEN

I'm already working two jobs just to pay off your breast implants.

BARBIE

And?... You could work nights.

KEN

Well, I do need to sleep sometime.

BARBIE

You need! You need! It's all about you, isn't it? What about my needs? I need a house with jacuzzi and a kitchen with granite counters and a butcher block and a sectional reclining sofa made of Florentine leather and...

KEN

You're beginning to sound just like your mother, that

mercenary psycho bitchkitty.

BARBIE

Why did I marry such an asshole?

KEN

Keep lipping off and I'll unscrew your head and put it in the microwave.

BARBIE

You don't have the balls.

KEN

Why you little...

LOUIS

(calling from offstage)

Honey, it's almost dinnertime.

MABEL

(in her own voice)

Be right down, sweetie!

QUICK CUT

PATRICK'S OFFICE

Picking up from two scenes before.

BEN

I wrote a poem.

PATRICK

Great. Would you like to read it?

BEN

(elated, like a child)

I thought you'd never ask. (Settling in) It's called "Mr. Clean."
(clears his throat)

Mr. Clean is very clean

He cleans the whole day through
He cleans so much he's out of touch
Now if you ask me that's just too fucking clean.

PATRICK

(not knowing what to say)

I don't know what to say.

BEN

Well, listen up, it really takes off after the next ten or twelve verses.

QUICK CUT

MABEL'S OFFICE

Picking up from two scenes before.

BARBIE

I'm sorry, honey.

KEN

Me too, sweetie.

BARBIE

Let's never fight again.

KEN

It's a deal. Wanna kiss and make up?

BARBIE

Sure.

Mabel presses their faces together and makes loud smacking kissing sounds. It goes on for an uncomfortably long time.

KEN

Mmmm. This sure feels good.

BARBIE

Don't mess up my hair.

KEN

Aw, come on honey. (He starts rubbing up against her, then climbs on top. Mabel is rubbing the dolls together a bit too erratically, occasionally pounding them together. She is also making moaning noises in both voices.)

QUICK CUT

PATRICK’S OFFICE

Picking up from two scenes before.

BEN

Rex Harrison.

PATRICK

Rex Harrison? What about him?

BEN

He played Dr. Doolittle, right.

PATRICK

Right.

BEN

But he was also in “My Fair Lady,” which was about Eliza Doolittle.

PATRICK

OK.

BEN

Well, do I have to spell it out for you?

PATRICK

(after a pause)
Yes.

BEN

You know, doc, do you ever get the feeling that you should

be paying me?

PATRICK

Nope.

QUICK CUT

INT: WAITING ROOM with couches, magazine racks, etc. In one corner, stairs leading up. Also visible is a kitchenette area with microwave.

ESSENCE enters followed by KEVIN. She is frantically puffing on her cigarette and talking into her cell phone.

ESSENCE

Yes, Lorna, I know... I know... I know because I heard you the first 17 times you mentioned it, now climb off my back, will you... You heard me... Well, obviously I can talk to you that way, maybe you weren't listening... Lorna... Lorna...

MARTY enters from upstairs, also talking on his cell phone. Both he and ESSENCE scream simultaneously into their cells.

MARTY and ESSENCE

Don't you dare hang up on me!

Fuming, they both throw their phones onto a nearby chair.

MARTY

Excuse me while I pop home and prepare lasagna for a group of sixty convicted shoplifters. Let me see, if it wasn't me shouting at your mother today, it must have been you. How is she doing?

ESSENCE

On the warpath again. She's driving me nuts and that prescription isn't working.

MARTY

Hers or yours?

ESSENCE

Mine! Jesus! Up the dosage, will you, unless you want to see your ex-wife a rotting cadaver.

MARTY

(weighing it out)

Hmmm... would that reduce the alimony?

ESSENCE

(threatening him with her cigarette)

And double the child support.

MARTY

Only till you're 21, chicky sweets. Hello, Kevin. Still hanging in there?

KEVIN

(very formally)

Dr. Riggs, nice to see you again sir. How have you been...

MARTY

Gettysburg Address on rye.

KEVIN

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition...

MARTY

Starfish.

KEVIN

Thank you, Your Majesty. (Kevin sits down in the nearest chair and immediately falls asleep.)

MARTY

Classic case of repression.

ESSENCE

You're completely unethical, you know.

MARTY

Me! You're the one who wanted me to do him in the first place. Anyway, I can't hypnotize anybody to do anything they wouldn't do willingly...

ESSENCE

(finishing his thought)

... “in a normal, healthy, everyday state.” What a crock!

MARTY

We might try it on you, you know. Relieve a bit of the stress.

ESSENCE

In your dreams, Marty. I know how you operate.

MARTY

(bowing to her)

So to what do I owe the pleasure?

ESSENCE

Vicodin, 200 miligrams – enough to last a month, until my gallery opening.

MARTY

That's it? You could've phoned it in.

ESSENCE

(softening a little)

Maybe I wanted to see you.

MARTY

Sort of a Hallmark moment. Or maybe... (he waits).

ESSENCE

Oh, all right. Listen, Marty, I need to borrow the car.

MARTY

The Caprice? Well, that's not such a...

ESSENCE

The Edsel.

MARTY

What's that noise? Is it the wind? Did somebody leave the radio on? Is that a mosquito buzzing in my ear?

ESSENCE

(fuming)

Just score me the pills, OK? (to Kevin) Polar bear!

KEVIN

(standing up)

Nice to see you again, doctor. See you soon, I hope.

Patrick and Ben enter down the stairs from their session.

ESSENCE

(threatening Patrick with her cigarette)

Tell your boyfriend he's all heart.

PATRICK

Essence, always a pleasure.

Essence and Kevin exit.

BEN

(to PATRICK)

I thought you said you were straight.

PATRICK

(distracted)

I am.

BEN

Does your boyfriend know?

PATRICK

He's not my boyfriend.

BEN

Do you prefer the term domestic partner?

PATRICK

He's not my domestic anything.

BEN

I thought you said this was a non-smoking office.

PATRICK

It is – technically.

BEN

Well, technically, do you mind if I light one up?

PATRICK
(dismissively)

Yes. I'll see you next week, all right.

QUICK CUT

MABEL'S OFFICE

Picking up from three scenes before.

BARBIE
(moaning)

Mmmmmmmmm.

KEN

Yeah. Oh yeah.

BARBIE

Let me get on top.

KEN

OK.

BARBIE

Play with my bumps.

KEN

OK.

BARBIE

OW! You're not doing it right. (coaching) Remember, like you're petting a hamster with your thumb.

LOUIS

(calling from offstage)

Honey, you're crepes are getting cold.

MABEL

Sorry honey. I'm coming.

She resumes seamlessly as Ken.

KEN

I'm coming too. Uh. Uh Uh... ahhhhhhh. (He rolls off her.)
What's on TV?

BARBIE

(icily)

Well I'm glad one of us had a good time.

KEN

Whooooo baby. Where's the remote?

(Barbie bursts into loud tears.)

KEN

I know it's around here somewhere.

(Barbie cries louder, more desperate tears.)

KEN

It must've fallen behind the headboard again.

(Barbie cries impossibly loud tears.)

KEN

Is something wrong, honey?

BARBIE

No, Ken. Nothing's wrong. Not a thing. Not one single solitary thing.

KEN

Well OK, do we have any more of that microwave popcorn?

Louis enters. Mabel tries to hide the dolls behind her back, unsuccessfully.

LOUIS

I thought we agreed that we weren't going to play with the dolls anymore.

MABEL

No, you agreed we weren't going to play with the dolls....(she throws them on the floor in disgust)

LOUIS

Hostility.

MABEL

Oh really? What was your first clue?

LOUIS

The question to consider is: Are the dolls a want or a need?

MABEL

They're a want. I can give them up anytime, as long as I know that I don't really have to, ever.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

MUSIC OVER: TRANSITIONAL
WAITING ROOM

Louis is peering into the microwave. Ben enters from behind him.

LOUIS

Why are there rat hairs in the microwave?

BEN

Where?

LOUIS

Right there.

BEN

(examining them)

Those aren't rat hairs.

LOUIS

No?

BEN

No. They're pubic hairs. (Turning away satisfied.) I was kinda grossed out there for a minute.

LOUIS

What are you doing here? Didn't you just have a session?

BEN

That I did. And now I've got another one. But confidentially, doc, you look like you need it more than me. Aren't you sleeping?

LOUIS

No, I'm not.

BEN

You wanna talk about it?

LOUIS

With you? You’re Patrick’s patient.

BEN

Look at it this way, doc. If you don’t, we’re not gonna be able to advance the plot.

LOUIS

(after a pregnant pause)

All right. Mabel has been spending all her free time... (embarrassed) playing with dolls.

BEN

(excited)

You mean blow-up dolls?

LOUIS

No! Little dolls. Barbie and Ken and that other one, Barbie’s friend, what’s-her-name.

BEN

Beats me. Anyway, why is that so troubling?

LOUIS

Here’s why.

QUICK CUT

INT: MABEL’S OFFICE.

Mabel is dressed in a grass skirt, white flowers in her hair, wearing a colorful lei, with two coconut shells covering her breasts. Barbie is similarly dressed, Ken wearing a flower print shirt a la Magnum P.I.

MABEL

Weeeeeee! Let’s go Hawaiian! Kamanwanna-lei-ya!. Come and get it! Suckling pig hot in the sand. (singing) *They stab it with their steely knives but they just can’t kill the beast.* Wait a minute. I don’t eat pork, it goes straight to my hips. Come on, Barbie, lighten up, it’s a luau. Easy for you to say, Ken,

guys never gain weight. Waaaaaaa!...

QUICK CUT

INT: OFFICE WAITING ROOM

Picking up from two scenes before.

BEN

I can see how that would be troubling.

Patrick enters.

PATRICK

Ben, you can come right up.

LOUIS

Patrick, can I speak with you a moment.

PATRICK

I've got a session.

LOUIS

This is important.

BEN

Trust me, it's important.

PATRICK

Wait for me upstairs. I'll only be a minute.

Ben exits upstairs.

PATRICK

Louis, you shouldn't be confiding in my patients. It's unprofessional.

BEN

(calling from out of view)

You don't know the half of it.

LOUIS

It’s Mabel.

PATRICK

What about Mabel.

LOUIS

She’s been spending all her time... playing with dolls.

PATRICK

You mean blow-up dolls?

LOUIS

No. Dolls. Ken and Barbie, and that other one, you know, Barbie’s best friend. What’s her name again?

PATRICK

How do I know. Anyway, is this really a problem?

QUICK CUT

INT: MABEL’S OFFICE

Mabel dressed as Elizabeth Taylor’s Cleopatra, with black wig and bright blue eye makeup. Barbie and Ken are also dressed the part.

MABEL

This is the life! A barge on the Blue Nile, with Marc Antony heading south. You are “heading south,” aren’t you, darling – ah-ha-ha-ha. It’s still my turn, you know.

QUICK CUT

INT: OFFICE WAITING ROOM

Picking up from two scenes before.

PATRICK

OK, so it’s a problem.

LOUIS

Patrick, you have to help me.

PATRICK

She’s your wife, Louis. Talk to her yourself.

LOUIS

I’ve tried. Please. We could talk to her together. Remember, Patrick, there's no “I” in “teamwork.”

PATRICK

No, but there's three of them in “idiotic.”

Marty enters unseen.

LOUIS

Come on Patrick, please... I can’t do this by myself. I need you. If you won’t think about me, think about Mabel.

MARTY

Men are dogs, Louis, you should know that by now.

PATRICK

Stay out of this Marty. This doesn’t concern us.

MARTY

Oh, yes, that’s likely to work. Sniff of drama and intrigue around this place, everyone all hush hush about something, but, oh, it doesn’t concern us, you say? Well, then, I’ll just mind my own business. (He positions himself in the center of the conversation, and waits expectantly.)

LOUIS

Mabel has been... playing with dolls.

MARTY

You mean blow-up dolls?

LOUIS

No. Toy dolls. Ken and Barbie, and that other one, you know, Barbie’s best friend.

MARTY

(instantly reciting)

PJ? Casey? Francie? Christy? Skooter? Midge and Allan?
Skipper and Ricky?

LOUIS

Yeah, Skipper, that’s the one. How do you know all that? How
does he know all that?

Ben enters again.

BEN

Hey, doc, I hope we’re not on the clock.

PATRICK

I’ll be up in a minute.

MARTY

Hold on, Ben. For once, you’re needed. (He beckons Ben over
with one finger.)

PATRICK

We’ve got a session.

BEN

This looks more interesting.

PATRICK

I don’t want to hear any more about dolls. By the way, *now*
we’re on the clock.

Patrick exits upstairs. Marty circles Ben slowly, then stops
and looks at Louis.

MARTY

OK, now, Louis. Don’t be afraid, we’re here to help. But you
have to help us help you, OK? Now... show me on Ben where
Mabel was touching the doll.

Ben looks perplexed but game for anything. Louis reluctantly points to Ben’s chest, then the back of his pants, then the front. Marty, clipboard in hand, is taking notes.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: PATRICK’S OFFICE

Patrick and Ben are in session again.

BEN

I can understand why Louis would be uncomfortable about the dolls.

PATRICK

Stop it already with the dolls. For three days, that’s all anybody around here talks about. This session is supposed to be about you.

BEN

What if I want to talk about the dolls?

PATRICK

Well, don’t.

BEN

You mean don’t talk about the dolls or don’t *want* to talk about them?

PATRICK

Enough already!... Look, I apologize – I didn’t mean to raise my voice. It’s just that this place is screwed up enough over this issue. I don’t want it affecting my patients.

BEN

You mean patients like the people you help or patience like your mood?

PATRICK

Both!

QUICK CUT

INT: MARTY’S OFFICE

Patrick enters, slams the door behind him, and approaches Marty.

PATRICK

Marty, we’ve got to do something about the dolls.

MARTY

I thought you didn’t want to discuss the dolls.

PATRICK

(upset)

I don’t! Look, it’s getting out of hand. I just bit Ben’s head off in there.

MARTY

Well, hopefully, nobody will notice.

PATRICK

Look, how do we solve this thing without personally getting enmeshed in it?

MARTY

Well, I may just have the answer.

PATRICK

As long as it doesn’t involve everyone stripping down to our birthday suits, holding hands, and chanting to sitar music while you cleanse our chakras, I’m all for it.

MARTY

(momentarily phased)

OK, why don’t we move on to Plan B.

PATRICK

Look, we need a sane third party to help us out, which is

already two strikes against you.

MARTY

All right, I’ve got it. I know this guy...

PATRICK

Let’s cut to the chase... Is he a practitioner or just some quack?

MARTY

He’s sort of a “quacktitioner.” He’s a psychiatrist turned Native American shaman – I know what you’re thinking, but he really is Cherokee, so he’s strictly kosher.

PATRICK

A psychiatrist? A medical doctor?

MARTY

(holding up his left hand and crossing his heart)
Bona fidee.

PATRICK

I’m willing to try anything. Give him a call and see if he’s available.

MARTY

Now wait a minute. This guy hasn’t got a phone. He lives in a cabin by a lake out in the middle of nowhere.

PATRICK

Nowhere where?

MARTY

West Virginia.

PATRICK

West Virginia! Marty, that’s a five hour drive.

MARTY

We can take my Edsel.

PATRICK

Is this really the best you can do?

MARTY

Unless...

PATRICK

Unless what?

Marty touches Patrick’s chest with the palm of his hand, clasps his other hand and holds it up in the air.

MARTY

Why don’t we begin with a heart-chakra-cleansing “Ohhhhm.” By the way, you might want to take your shirt off for this....”

FADE OUT

FACE IN

EXTERIOR: PARKING LOT

MUSIC OVER: “Bike” by Syd Barrett

Marty and Patrick walking toward Marty’s Edsel. Once there, they catch Essence and Kevin trying to hotwire the Edsel. No dialog, just a visual of Marty pulling a chagrined Kevin from under the car and a loudly protesting Essence, arms and legs flailing wildly, from beneath the steering wheel.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: MABEL’S OFFICE

Louis and Mabel are both pulling Barbie in a tug-of-war.

LOUIS

Let go.

MABEL

You’ll pry her from my cold dead fingers.

LOUIS

Come on, honey, it's for your own good.

MABEL

You're sleeping on the sofa tonight.

LOUIS

Under the circumstances, that might be (he pulls the doll from her grip) ... therapeutic.

MABEL

No, thereapeutic was what Lorena Bobbitt did to her husband. Don't turn your back on me this night. Oh my God, she's got a knife! (Louis is startled, looks around, and lets his guard down. Mabel takes advantage and lunges for the doll. The struggle continues.)

MUSIC OVER: TRANSITIONAL

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT: A DUMPY-LOOKING ROADSIDE DINER

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: A DUMPY-LOOKING ROADSIDE DINER

Patrick and Marty enter and look around.

PATRICK

(under his breath to Marty)

This looks promising.

MARTY

Don't be so quick to judge. Think of this as a foray into Americana.

PATRICK

Are you kidding? One of the pickup trucks outside has a bumper sticker that reads "I smack my woman around and I vote!"

MARTY

Shhhhh!

The Waitress approaches with menus.

WAITRESS

You all can sit anyplace you like. But the only place to sit is over there. Hope you don't mind, it's right next to the facilities. (She scratches her chin with the menus, hands them to Patrick and Marty, and exits to kitchen.)

PATRICK

No problem, in a place like this, a spot close to the toilet could be the best seat in the house.

MARTY

They'll hear you.

PATRICK

Let 'em. What's the worst thing could happen?

They seat themselves, Patrick nearest the bathroom door, Marty opposite him.

MARTY

Come on, lighten up. (looking around with admiration)
Stained 1970s paneled walls, fluorescent lighting, drop ceiling with missing acoustic tiles. Just look at this table – solid particle board! Get into the spirit of this place.

PATRICK

What for?

MARTY

This is a box-seat overlooking a culture no less exotic and doomed than Paris of the 1920s.

As they open their menus, a Cowboy approaches. He passes their table, forcing them both to scoot in toward the wall, and

he exits into the rest room.

MARTY

I rest my case.

Cowboy’s ten-gallon-hatted head emerges.

COWBOY

Excuse me, could one of you fellers hook the lock for me. (He indicates that the rest room lock hooks from the outside.)

PATRICK

Yeah, sure.

Cowboy starts to close the door, then reopens it.

COWBOY

Did you all just sit down?

PATRICK

Yeah.

COWBOY

Then do me a favor and don’t you leave till I’m finished in here.

He starts to close the door, then opens it again.

COWBOY

By the way, have you folks ordered yet?

MARTY

Not yet, no.

COWBOY

The six-bean chili is something special.

He winks and sticks his thumb up, then closes the door. Patrick hooks it, and they return to their menus. The Waitress

comes to their table.

WAITRESS

You folks decided?

MARTY

I don't see the six-bean chili on the menu.

WAITRESS

Why, that's it right there, honey, the sticky red spot next to the oatmeal... Ha-ha, that's my little joke. (noting Marty's reaction) I'll come back.

A moment later a small noise issues from the rest room. They take a quick, embarrassed glance at the door, then at each other, and both look down again at their menus.

MARTY

(hoping to fill the silence)

You think the chili...?

Then the noise in there really starts up, followed by a flush.

PATRICK

Well, no, I guess it's not the best seat in the house after all.

Marty, defeated, silently concurs.

MUSIC OVER: TRANSITIONAL

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT: SHAMAN'S CABIN

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: SHAMAN'S CABIN

Patrick, Marty, and Shaman are talking.

PATRICK

That's what we're up against with Mabel. Now, do you think

you can help us.

MARTY

Before you answer, tell Patrick your credentials, aside from totally looking the part.

SHAMAN

I am a psychiatrist and brain surgeon, trained at Johns Hopkins.

PATRICK

A brain surgeon? That’s impressive. Why did you quit?

SHAMAN

I just hated to sew the scalps back on. (He cracks himself up, but nobody else.) Laugh it up, guys, the one-liners are free.

PATRICK

No offense, but you’re overcharging.

SHAMAN

While we’re on the subject, you know my fee, Marty: \$1,500 a day plus \$200 traveling expenses.

PATRICK

What do you mean, traveling expenses? We’re driving you there and back.

SHAMAN

Two-fifty. Do I hear three?

PATRICK

(to Marty)

You sure this guy is good?

MARTY

Far surpassing even my current skill-level. (Patrick gives him a look.) Yeah, yeah, he’s good.

PATRICK

All right. Let’s go.

SHAMAN

Not so fast. (He removes an ornate Native American robe and headdress from a hook on the wall and puts them on.)

MARTY

That’s stunning. Are those a handmade deer and porcupine fur headdress with a traditional pow-wow regalia?

SHAMAN

No. This is my shaman suit. (He exits.)

PATRICK

Seventeen-hundred dollars. For what?

MARTY

A straight man who knows how to accessorize. (He exits.)

PATRICK

(calling to Marty)

“Regalia”? Is that a Native word? No, it’s not. Nobody says “regalia”, Marty, nobody. (He waits for a response and when none comes, appears to feel foolish, then exits.)

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT: NEXT TO THE EDSEL

PATRICK

Where’s the Shaman?

MARTY

He went to get his Ipod and his magic power stone. Do you want the front or the back?

PATRICK

I’ll take the back, so I can stretch out on the ride home.

MARTY

(distracted by something off camera)

But you wouldn't mind sitting up front, would you?

Patrick glares at Marty, then notices what he is looking at.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT: LONG SHOT OF THE EDSEL DRIVING ON A WINDING MOUNTAIN ROAD.

QUICK CUT

INT: INSIDE THE EDSEL.

Shaman, Patrick, and Marty are all squeezed into the front seat, because there is a massive totem pole filling up the entire back seat. Marty is driving, so he has some room to move around. Shaman is nearest the passenger door wearing his headdress and Ipod, shaking his head to hip-hop music that can be heard through his headphones. Stuck in the middle is Patrick, looking miserable. The feathers from Shaman's headdress are hanging in his face. He waves them away with his hand and spits out a feather.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: OFFICE WAITING ROOM

Louis, Patrick, Marty, and Shaman are there, seated in a semi-circle, with the totem pole in the center.

PATRICK

Well, everybody's here except Mabel.

MARTY

I left a message that there's been a tiny little catastrophe. I also alluded to doorprizes. She'll be here.

Mabel enters, huffing as if in a hurry.

MABEL

(concerned)

I’m sorry I’m late, I came as fast as I could. What’s going on, is someone ill?

MARTY

In a manner of speaking. Mabel, honey, this is an intervention.

MABEL

An intervention for what? (She looks at Louis.) Oh, I get it. So I take it there’s no doorprizes either. I’m out of here.

LOUIS

Now, honey...

MABEL

Don’t you honey me. You put them up to this, didn’t you? (He tries to answer.) This doesn’t involve anybody but us.

LOUIS

Yes, but...

MABEL

But nothing! Listen, Louis – when you were going through that little “Liza Minelli” phase of yours, I didn’t blab to any of them, did I?

PATRICK

(perking up)

Liza Minelli phase...?

LOUIS

Just drop it, OK. (to Mabel, pleading) Look, Mabel, I...

MABEL

Don’t even speak to me. I know how these things work. (to Shaman) Are you the one in charge? Look, I’m sorry you came all this way for this... inquisition.

MARTY

Intervention.

MABEL

Yeah, right.

SHAMAN

Tell you what, darling. Just answer me one question, then you can go. Fair enough?

MABEL

(folding her arms)

OK.

SHAMAN

In your deepest heart of hearts, where all truth resides, are you really happy being a freaky chick who spends all her free time playing with dolls.

MABEL

Yes.

SHAMAN

(to the others)

My work here is done. I'll send you my bill. (He starts to leave.)

PATRICK

What?

SHAMAN

She's happy, she's not hurting anyone, and – as anybody can see who's not blind - she's over 21. Her husband, however, is not happy. What these two need isn't a shaman or a psychiatrist, it's a marriage counselor.

LOUIS

We *are* marriage counselors.

SHAMAN

You gotta hand it to them – their schtick is almost as good as mine. By the way, I don’t take checks.

PATRICK

Don’t worry – I’m not writing any checks. I mean, open your eyes, buddy. This woman is not stable. She’s in the grip of a regressive psychosis. Where did you get your degree anyway, off a box of Mr. Bubble?

MABEL

(to Louis)

Oh, honey, isn’t that where you got yours from?

LOUIS

Shut up, Mabel!

MABEL

Excuse me?

LOUIS

For once, just shut the hell up.

MABEL

You can’t speak to me like that...

LOUIS

The hell I can’t...

Mabel and Louis descend into a toe to toe screaming match. Behind them, Marty orchestrates, waving his arms, silently urging them on to express themselves fully. They notice him doing this, stop and stare. He is the only one in the room still moving. All eyes are on him.

MABEL

Do you mind?

MARTY

Sorry. It’s just – in bite-sized doses, anger therapy like this can be very cathartic and...

MABEL

Yeah, yeah, whatever. Look, all of you. I know you’re trying to help. And I know I look completely nuts. But no more nuts than you (indicating Louis) or you (indicating Marty) or him (indicating Shaman). (Softening) Look, I’ll work it out. In my own time, in my own way. With you, Louis. OK?

They take each others’ hands, look into each others eyes, and kiss.

MABEL

Now, if you all will excuse me, PJ, Skipper, and I are having a girls night out.

Mabel exits.

MARTY

(to Patrick, referring to the totem pole)

You know, this office could use one of these.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: WAITING ROOM

Louis enters with two huge blow-up dolls, male and female, walks past Marty and Patrick, and exits up the stairs. Marty and Patrick look at each other. A moment passes. Then a piercing scream from Mabel offstage.

MARTY

That was cathartic.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT: THERAPIST’S OFFICE FROM EARLIER SCENE

The scene opens with everyone sitting in exactly the same

positions as in the earlier scene.

MAN

Well, how was your week?

Mabel and Louis exchange glances.

MABEL

Oh, the usual. (too innocently) Why?

WOMAN

We’re just interested in hearing about how you’re doing.

LOUIS

I received my waiting room copy of “Psychology Today.”

Mabel takes Louis’s hand and leans forward, exactly as in first scene.

MABEL

You’ll find we’re a (making finger quotes) “highly-functional” couple. (too giddy) You guys’ll never bankroll a cruise to the Virgin Islands on us.

LOUIS

(out of nowhere)

Virgin?!

MABEL

(returning to an overly measured tone)

Well, maybe, just for this week, we can help you with any issues you may be having in your marriage. (A long pause follows.) Anything, really. (Another longer pause.) OK, who wants to go first?

ROLL CREDITS

MUSIC OVER: Last two lines of Patsy Cline’s “Crazy.”

While credits are rolling, we see a closeup of the microwave.

The hand of an unseen person opens the door, places Barbie, Ken, and a few more dolls inside, closes the door and starts the microwave.

NANCY SPUNGEN (v.o.)

Siiiiiiiiid! Who took my fuckin’ dolls? Siiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiid!!!

Camera pulls back to reveal Mother Theresa, smiling as we hear the dolls begin to sizzle and pop.

END