

# Effed Up!

a family saga

pilot script for  
limited series  
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**"Effed Up!"**

By

Russ Woody

FADE IN:

RUSSELL NIRTH, mid-30s, handsome, somber, in a dark suit, as he trudges uphill in the summer heat of Sacramento.

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
When one of your parents dies, it  
can hit you like a brick in the head.

PULL BACK to see...

**EXT. HILLSIDE GRAVE SITE - DAY**

FIFTEEN OR TWENTY MOURNERS are gathering. Russell arrives at the side of a casket over an open grave.

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
I remember a few days ago seeing my  
mother lying in a hospital bed, tubes  
running in and out of her like a 30s  
switchboard. The next thing I know,  
I'm staring into a giant void...

A PRIEST looks over the obsequies he will read, as Russell takes his place and finds himself standing next to a NUN. The Nun and he exchange a look.

NUN  
I'm so sorry for your loss, Mr.  
Nirth.

RUSSELL  
Thank you.

NUN  
I hope your family is of great  
comfort to you in this difficult  
time.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL

Oh, well, they're... uh, thanks.

A beat.

NUN

My mother passed last year.

RUSSELL

I sorry.

NUN

I remember I was tending Monsignor  
Sigratto's radishes when Sister  
Margaret Rose came out to tell me...

(then)

It's funny how you remember exactly  
what you were doing the moment you  
get bad news...

RUSSELL

Yes, it's funny.

BECKY (O.C.)

Oh God, Russell, yes, that's so  
good... so good...

**INT. RUSSELL'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK**

As CAMERA TRACKS CLOSE ALONG THE FLOOR beside Russell's bed,

BECKY (O.C.)

Oh, God ...and there's five of 'em...  
EMTs rollin' 'em in... and, oh yeah,  
God yes!...

We see CLOTHES STREWN about in a haphazard fashion -- a man's  
shirt, his tie, his slacks, wildly intermingled with white  
nylons, a white sneaker, a NURSE'S UNIFORM.

BECKY (O.C.) (CONT'D)

...all from the same TA... uh-huh,  
that's it, yes... they're all in bad  
shape. Bad shape...

CAMERA EMERGES over the crest of the bed, where we see only  
the TOP HALF OF BECKY, her head on a pillow, her arms bound  
above to the headboard by surgical tape.

BECKY (CONT'D)

...and one, his eye hanging out of  
socket, his arm on ice... in other  
room... Oh God, yes, right there,  
right there!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BECKY (CONT'D)

Jesus, Russell, your tongue is... is amazing... and that guy's tongue, bit it off... You're so good! Feels so good! And then I realize I'm standing on a liver...

(she stops, looks  
down at Russell)

What's the matter?

Russell crawls into frame.

RUSSELL

Well... it's just, uh...

BECKY

You don't like this? 'Cause I've never been so turned on. God, I can't wait to do this to you.

RUSSELL

To me? Uh, hmmmph...

Russell rethinks, then edges back out of frame... as Becky throws her head back, picks up where she left off.

BECKY

Oh yeah, baby, that's right, uh-huh...  
(writhing)

...so his intestines rolling out,  
drop on floor... and his pelvic...  
his area, couldn't find... penis.

She stops, realizing Russell has stopped.

BECKY (CONT'D)

What?

RUSSELL

Nothing... I just...  
(an idea)  
Hold on!

He tears off a piece of surgical tape, slaps it across her mouth.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Okay.

He smiles, pleased with this, as he disappears again to continue his efforts. Becky mumbles her approval.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

ANSWERING MACHINE

It's Russell. Leave a message.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL'S VOICE (ON ANSWERING MACHINE)  
 Russell T.? It's your dad. Yell-ow?  
 Russell? Ya there? Russell T.? It's  
 your dad. Very important...

Russell sits up, looks apologetically at Becky, picks up.

RUSSELL  
 (to phone)  
 Dad? What's up?

PAUL (ON PHONE)  
 Russell. I'm afraid it's your mother.

Becky moans plaintively to Russell.

PAUL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 What's that noise?

RUSSELL  
 Oh, I taped a woman to the bed. What  
 about Mom?

PAUL (ON PHONE)  
 Well, she's he's very sick. And I'm  
 pretty sure it's real this time.

RUSSELL  
 Uh-huh...

PAUL (ON PHONE)  
 In fact, I think she's dying.

RUSSELL  
 Right. Boy, that's no good.

Becky groans loudly and thrusts her pelvis against Russell.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Listen, Dad, can I call you back in  
 a little --

PAUL (ON PHONE)  
 We found some blood in her poop this  
 morning, so I took her over to the  
 hospital. There was some greenish-  
 black chunks of somethin' or other  
 in there. Kinda spongy. Fell apart  
 when I poked it with a pencil 'cause--

RUSSELL  
 Right, right, I don't need all the--

PAUL (ON PHONE)  
 Dunno what in the hell it was.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 Looked like it mighta been a chunk  
 of her spleen or something. Maybe  
 tofu.

Russell realizes his lust doesn't stand a chance, sits back,  
 reaches over and pulls the tape off Becky's mouth.

RUSSELL  
 So, what hospital did you say she's  
 at?

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

The small, seemingly harmless woman in the hospital bed is  
 HELEN NIRTH. To the untrained eye, she looks very much a  
 sweet little old lady.

PAUL (ON PHONE)  
 St. Matthew's over here on Sunrise.

In a chair beside the bed, Russell's father, PAUL NIRTH, a  
 nice looking man, mid 60s, sits calmly reading something by  
 Louis L'amour.

HELEN  
 Paul?

He keeps reading, hoping to continue doing so without having  
 to deal with whatever bullshit she wants now.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
 Goddamnit, Paul, you're ignoring me!

He looks up from his book, casts a weary eye in her direction.

PAUL  
 (with a sigh)  
 Yes, Helen...

HELEN  
 Listen to that. Do you hear it?

They both listen.

PAUL  
 I don't hear anything.

HELEN  
 Exactly. My heart thing. The beep,  
 beep, beep... It stopped.

PAUL  
 Well, I'll be. Must be unplugged.

He goes back to his book. She steams a moment, then,

(CONTINUED)

HELEN

So... why don't you get up and plug  
it back in?

PAUL

Helen, the nurses don't want us  
fooling with the stuff back there.

HELEN

Well, there it is, isn't it?

PAUL

There what is?

HELEN

You enjoy the sound of my dead heart.  
You can't wait for this to all be  
over.

PAUL

Oh, for Pete's sake...

He puts the book down, extracts himself from the chair and  
crosses to the bank of machines to plug in the monitor, while  
Russell enters with a bouquet of flowers.

RUSSELL

Mom?

HELEN

(looks up, squints)  
Leonard? Is it you, Leonard?

RUSSELL

(irritated)  
No, it's your other son. The one  
with a job.

PAUL

(from the monitors)  
Hiya, Russ.

RUSSELL

Hey, Dad.

Russell leans in to kiss his mother--something he's not  
comfortable doing.

SFX: HEART MONITOR BEEPS TO LIFE

Paul steps out from behind the monitors.

PAUL

(shakes Russell's  
hand)  
Nice of ya to swing by.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
 (sitting down)  
 Don't see much of you these days.

RUSSELL  
 Yeah, well, job, career. Work. Job.  
 (then)  
 I brought some flowers. For Mom.

HELEN  
 Well, isn't that thoughtful. Maybe  
 if your father pulled his nose out  
 of that stupid Hoot Gibson book,  
 he'd get up and find something to  
 put them in.

Paul shoots his wife a look.

RUSSELL  
 That's all right, Dad, I'll just...  
 (looks around)  
 ...put 'em somewhere.

Paul extracts himself from the chair.

PAUL  
 Here, Russ.  
 (takes flowers, then)  
 So, Helen, where you want me to stick  
 'em?

HELEN  
 See, Russell, there's the hostility  
 I was telling you about.  
 (to Paul)  
 Just go to the Nurses' Station and  
 ask for a vase.  
 (to Russell)  
 You know, he didn't even care this  
 morning when my heart stopped.

RUSSELL  
 You're heart stopped?

PAUL  
 (on his way out)  
 The monitor was unplugged, Russ!

He's gone.

HELEN  
 (to Russell)  
 Honey, you mustn't get so upset.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL  
I'm not upset. But you said your  
heart stopped.

HELEN  
(sympathetically)  
So maybe next time you'll listen a  
little more closely.

Russell slow burns, he's familiar with this setup/spike  
routine. She takes his hand and looks into his eyes.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I don't want to die, Russell.  
(a sigh)  
Not like this...

RUSSELL  
Right...  
(confused)  
You mean... in a hospital?

HELEN  
In a hospital...  
(then)  
...before my children.

Russell takes this in, then,

RUSSELL  
So, what exactly did the doctors say  
was wrong?

HELEN  
They won't tell me.

RUSSELL  
Okay, but... they have to. It's a  
rule. Or a law.

HELEN  
Whatever it is...  
(looks away, pensive)  
...childbirth...

RUSSELL  
(waits, then)  
Childbirth?

HELEN  
Childbirth...

RUSSELL  
Childbirth what?

(CONTINUED)

HELEN  
Childbirth weakened my body.

Russell considers this.

RUSSELL  
Yeah, well... I hear it's taxing.

Silence. Awkward, deafening silence.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
(winging it)  
So... you look good. At least. You know... better than pale. I mean, not pale. Robust and un-pale. All good... good, good.

Another glaring silence, as Helen comes up with another way to torture her son.

HELEN  
And how is Trisha?

RUSSELL  
Trish? I haven't talked to Trish since the divorce.

HELEN  
(releases his hand)  
I thought you two were going to work things out?

RUSSELL  
We did. We got a divorce.

HELEN  
Such a shame. Giving up on your sacred vows to the Lord. Well, I suppose "Til death do us part," means different things to different people...

RUSSELL  
Yeah, well, for us, it meant murder-suicide.

Paul returns with the flowers stuffed in a mason jar. He crosses to set it next to her bed.

HELEN  
What is that?

PAUL  
What?

(CONTINUED)

HELEN  
That, that jar.

PAUL  
It's a jar.

HELEN  
It's a mason jar.

PAUL  
So, it's a mason jar.

HELEN  
So, a mason jar isn't a vase, is it?

PAUL  
It is now.

HELEN  
One simple thing, Paul. A vase. And you bring back a mason jar.

PAUL  
(simmering)  
They didn't have a baseball bat. I asked.

HELEN  
You see, Russell? You see the way he treats me?

PAUL  
Helen, it's all they had.

HELEN  
So, I guess it's too much to ask for a tinge of dignity in death.

PAUL  
It's all... they... had.

RUSSELL  
You know what, they must have vases in the gift shop. I'll just go down...

Russell starts for the door, but Paul takes Russell's arm to stop him.

PAUL  
No, Russ. I'll go.

RUSSELL  
Please, Dad, it's no trouble. I'll go. Please.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL  
You stay here with your mom.

HELEN  
Russell, really, let him do something  
around here.  
(then, yells to Paul)  
And make sure it's nice! That way,  
in a couple of days, you can chuck  
the flowers, and use it for my ashes!

PAUL  
(heads out, mumbling)  
...Keef aflurs... chucka fuggen  
ashers.

He exits. Russell is again alone with his mother.

HELEN  
(shakes her head)  
He's such an angry, angry man. So  
bitter. No wonder your brother and  
sister despise him.

RUSSELL  
They despise him?

HELEN  
Well, they never come see us. So  
what else could it be?

Russell manages not to answer.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Maybe if you go talk to them? Tell  
them to come see me. Will you do  
that, Russell?

RUSSELL  
What? No, actually, they're not people  
I'm... comfortable with.

**EXT. DARLINGTON HOUSE - DAY**

Perfect two story, lawn, white picket fence. RUSSELL'S BMW  
PULLS UP in front. We see him turn off the engine and  
contemplate, while we still HEAR HELEN from the last scene.

HELEN (V.O.)  
Please, Russell. It's the one thing  
I ask of you. Before I'm gone.

**INT. DARLINGTON'S DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Jesus smiles down from a framed picture on the wall beside a  
perfect breakfast table, covered by plates that were moments

(CONTINUED)

ago brimming with scrambled eggs, bacon, toast and homemade jelly. DARLENE DARLINGTON, Russell's sister, 40, sits at one end of the table opposite her husband DARRYL, early forties, white shirt and tie, newspaper in front of his face. They are flanked by two symmetrically perfect children -- A BOY, A GIRL, (ten-ish, twelve-ish; respectively) -- dressed and ready for school.

DARLENE

(to the boy)

Now remember, Danny, you have Bible study at 3:15 sharp, band practice at 4:30 and then I'll pick you up as soon as I drop off your sister's pep squad uniforms.

DANNY

Okay, Mom.

DARLENE

And, Debbie...

DEBBIE

(smiles)

I know, Mom. Bible study, piano practice, pep squad... on top of it.

Darryl checks his watch, folds the newspaper and lays it on the table. As soon as he does, everything is swept away by Darlene and the kids.

SFX: DOORBELL

**INT. DARLINGTON ENTRYWAY - A SECOND LATER**

Darlene opens the door to reveal Russell.

DARLENE

Russell? Oh, my gosh. What a surprise.

RUSSELL

Hi, Darlene.

He steps in as they manage a perfunctory embrace and kiss.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Listen, I just stopped by because --

Darryl appears in the entryway with his briefcase.

DARRYL

Well hello, Russell.

RUSSELL

Hi, Darryl.

(CONTINUED)

Darryl stops and puts an avuncular hand on Russell's shoulder.

DARRYL

Have you given any thought to what we talked about last time?

RUSSELL

Yes. Yes, I have.

DARRYL

And?

RUSSELL

And... I'll be sure to let you know as soon as I decide to accept Jesus Christ as my personal savior.

DARRYL

(a smile)

All I ask.

(turns to Darlene)

Listen, sweetheart, don't forget I've got the Carlyle account tonight, so I'm gonna be a little late.

DARLENE

I'll heat up something umptious-scrumptious.

She kisses him. He exits as Danny and Debbie appear and pass through the entryway.

DANNY

Bye, Mom.

(kisses her)

Love you.

DARLENE

I love you too, honey. You have your lunch, right?

DANNY

(holding it up)

Right here. Hi, Uncle Russell, bye, Uncle Russell.

RUSSELL

Hey, Dan.

DEBBIE

(passing them)

Hi, Uncle Russell. Bye, Mom. Love you.

They kiss.

(CONTINUED)

DARLENE

Love you too, angel.

They're gone. Darlene closes the door, leans back against it and runs a hand through her hair.

RUSSELL

Well, look, I just dropped by to let you know--

DARLENE

God, I want to drink a jug of acid.

RUSSELL

Right. So I'm guessing you're off the meds?

Ignoring him, she pushes off the wall and pads into the kitchen. Russell looks at the front door, considers bolting -- resigns himself to follow her.

**INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Darlene enters, opens the cupboard beneath the sink and reaches behind the detergent to pull out a half-empty (half-full?) BOTTLE OF JACK. She grabs one of the near-empty orange juice glasses next to the sink, tosses the juice, pours a hearty shot and quaffs it down. Russell enters to see.

RUSSELL

And the AA thing, not so much?

DARLENE

(pours another)  
You're here why?

RUSSELL

Mom is sick.

We hear a young man calling out from the back of the house.

YOUNG MAN

(sing-songy)  
Olly-olly-oxen-free! Where's my  
little kitty? Time to get the little  
kitty wetty wet! Justin wants to  
play with his favorite little...

A MUSCULAR YOUNG MAN in shorts and t-shirt appears at the back entrance with a grin that disappears as soon as he sees Russell.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(weakly)  
...kitty.

(CONTINUED)

Darlene, taking a moment to consider her options in this brief moment of awkwardness, decides to go with... umbrage.

DARLENE

How dare you, you filthy pervert! My husband and I pay you to clean the goddamn pool and that's it, you sick sonofabitch! Now get out of my fucking house before I call the police! Out! Get out!

The young man, still wide-eyed, backs cautiously toward the door.

YOUNG MAN

I'm sorry, Darlene. I thought everyone was... I'm sorry.

He's gone. Darlene downs the Jack, turns back to Russell.

DARLENE

So, Mom's sick you said?

RUSSELL

(enjoying this)  
He seems nice. And a cat lover?

DARLENE

You want a drink?

RUSSELL

Poolboy. Classic.

DARLENE

So, you don't want a drink?

RUSSELL

As tempting as it sounds at eight in the morning, thanks, no.

DARLENE

(pouring another shot)  
God, you're a stump.

RUSSELL

Right. So, anyway, I think Mom is really dying this time.

DARLENE

(downs the Jack, then)  
Well, lemme know when she's dead.

**EXT. FUNERAL - AS BEFORE**

The Priest is reading from the Catholic Book of the Dead, as CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY ALONG the faces of those attending --

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST

...and the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him. And His righteousness unto the children's children...

We see Russell, the Nun, then Darlene, prim/proper, beside her perfect husband and perfect children. She's crying.

RUSSELL (V.O.)

Sometimes people surprise you...

**EXT. LENNY'S HOUSE - DAY**

A one-bedroom, dilapidated shithole. Paint peeling off the side, a gutter droops limply from the eave, shingles are missing. Weeds have replaced the lawn. RUSSELL'S CAR DRIVES UP the cracked and grease-stained driveway.

RUSSELL (V.O.)

...and sometimes they don't.

**INT. LENNY'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER**

TWO BODIES are SNORING beneath a tangle of colorless sheets.

RUSSELL (V.O.)

My brother Lenny... is an "artist."

Beside a dirty and cracked window, there's a "Pink Lloyd" POSTER clinging to the wall, one of its corners sagging lifelessly. Russell is still in another part of the house.

RUSSELL (O.C.) (CONT'D)

(calling)

Lenny?

A corner of the sheet comes down, and we see the face of Russell's brother LENNY, 45, balding, long gray hair.

LENNY

Aw, fuck.

Russell appears now at the open doorway and sees his brother is still in bed.

RUSSELL

Lenny?

(checks his watch)

It's two o'clock.

LENNY

Yuh...

Russell looks down on the floor, sees a SCHOOLGIRL'S UNIFORM.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL

Aw, fuck.

He picks up the plaid skirt for his brother to see.

LENNY

Aw, fuck.

Lenny quickly flips the sheet back to reveal the open-mouthed sleeping schoolgirl, who might've been a schoolgirl once, but long, long ago.

RUSSELL/LENNY

Aw, fuck.

Lenny flips the sheet back over her, sits on the side of the bed to hold his face in his hands.

LENNY

My fucking head.

RUSSELL

(pulling up a chair)

Boy, I'd never get tired of this.

LENNY

Hey, I had a gig last night, dickweed.

RUSSELL

(nods to woman)

Where, a nursing home?

LENNY

Fuck you. And, in my defense, I have no idea who that woman is.

RUSSELL

Good defense.

Lenny stands, naked, looks around for his clothes, while he absently scratches his testicles beneath a sagging belly.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Jesus, Lenny...

LENNY

You got no fuckin' idea 'bout the world of rock 'n' roll, man.

(sees some socks)

Ah...

He bends to pick them up, giving Russell a clinical view of his naked ass.

RUSSELL

Mother of God, Lenny...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

(turns away)  
 Could you just please...

LENNY

For your information, turdbrain, the band's starting to take off. This could really be it, man.

RUSSELL

(trying)  
 Oh? Well, good. So, where are you playing?

LENNY

You know what, I don't need the fuckin' third degree from some piss-ant lawyer! I'm not lying, okay.

RUSSELL

Well, all sounds very promising. And you do know I'm not a lawyer, right?

LENNY

(jabbing a finger)  
 People love Pink Floyd, man! Pink Floyd's perennial, man! Pink Floyd speaks to the fuckin' ages!

RUSSELL

Right. Anyway--

LENNY

Fuckin' ay, right! Pink Floyd is for-fucking-ever, man!

RUSSELL

Okay...  
 (cautiously)  
 But, Lenny... you do realize you're not actually in Pink Floyd. You're in Pink Lloyd.

LENNY

Is there a reason you're here?

RUSSELL

(a beat)  
 I think Mom is dying.

Lenny stops, incredulous, like the wind has been knocked out of him. He sits back down on the bed. Russell is surprised to see his response.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

Lenny, I'm sorry. I didn't know you'd take it like--

LENNY

You fuckin' woke me up for that?

**EXT. FUNERAL - AS BEFORE**

Russell standing at the grave beside the Nun, feels someone pushing into the crowd and then nudge his way in between Russell and the Nun. Lenny. He's cleaned up... for him. The Nun smiles politely. Lenny returns the smile, then leans back to check out her ass. She shoots him a him.

LENNY

(smiles)

You enjoy music, Sister?

She smiles politely, edges away, as mourners toss handfuls of dirt onto the casket.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

START CLOSE on a CD of "Pink Lloyd's Greatest Hits" being clutched to Helen's sheet-covered bosom as an ATTRACTIVE NURSE hangs an IV drip and laughs at something Helen has said.

NURSE

Oh my God, Helen, you are the funniest thing! You're an absolute hoot!

(done with IV drip)

Now, you just let me know if there's anything else I can do.

HELEN

Carla, thank you so much.

Russell enters as the Nurse is exiting -- they are close in the doorway.

NURSE

(sexy)

Well... you must be the rock-n-roll star.

RUSSELL

Uh, no.

HELEN

(calls out)

No, Carla, that's just Russell.

(CONTINUED)

NURSE  
 (with disdain)  
 Russell...  
 (a whisper)  
 Let me tell you something, mister.  
 That sweet woman over there is super.  
 And you have no idea how much she's  
 done for you in your miserable  
 lifetime.

RUSSELL  
 Actually, I do...

The Nurse turns abruptly, exits. Russell watches her go,  
 turns to his mother.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 Why was that nurse mad at me?

HELEN  
 Well, honey, she's young. The young  
 people are confused about privilege.

RUSSELL  
 (considers this, then)  
 So... where's Dad?

SFX: TOILET FLUSHES

HELEN  
 Where else?

Paul enters from the bathroom, Louis L'amour novel under his  
 arm.

PAUL  
 Hello there, Russell T.

RUSSELL  
 Hi, Dad.

HELEN  
 Would you be a dear, Russell, and  
 open that window? I asked your father  
 to do it an hour ago, but I guess  
 he'd rather see me suffer in this  
 stifling room.

PAUL  
 Helen, an hour ago you weren't  
 speaking to me.

He puts down the book and moves to the window (where we'll  
 only hear him).

(CONTINUED)

HELEN

You see, Russell. You see how he treats me? How he tries to divide?

RUSSELL

So... did Darlene come by?

PAUL (O.C.)

(at the window)

Looks like they painted the sonofagun shut.

HELEN

Oh, she came by all right. Honestly, Russell, I wish you hadn't told her I was here.

RUSSELL

You're welcome.

PAUL (O.C.)

(pulling on window)

Geeza criminy! Come on, you ol' so-an'-so!

HELEN

(to Russell)

After all, she was the one who abandoned the Catholic church. But now all of a sudden, I'm the bad guy just because I mention that her children will burn in eternal hell for it.

RUSSELL

Boy, try to help someone.

HELEN

And Lenny's so thoughtful. He had someone from his record company drop off his new CD.

RUSSELL

Okay, Mom, it's the same CD he gives you every Christmas. He just puts a new cover on it.

HELEN

(shakes her head)

Honey, you make yourself sound so small, so petty. I know it can't be easy seeing your brother's band on posters and magazines. It's all very glamorous. But there's no shame in being an lawyer.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL  
I'm not a lawyer.

PAUL (O.C.)  
(struggling with window)  
Doggone it to heck!

HELEN  
(to Russell)  
Well, whatever you are, there's no  
shame in it.

RUSSELL  
I've told you a hundred times. I'm a  
Claims Adjuster! And Lenny's not in  
Pink Floyd! He's in Pink Lloyd! It's  
a goddamn tribute band! It's fake!  
They pretend they're Pink Floyd!

PAUL  
(from the window)  
Russell, don't yell at your mother.  
She could still be very sick.

Helen takes Russell's hand.

HELEN  
(sincerely)  
Maybe if you saw someone about this  
anger issue of yours. I know therapy  
hasn't helped your sister, but that's  
no reason it couldn't help you.

We STAY ON RUSSELL stifling himself, as WE HEAR PAUL GRUNTING  
at the window, then,

PAUL (O.C.)  
Ah, here we go!

Now we HEAR THE WINDOW SLIDE OPEN: *Whoosh!*

PAUL (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Whah-whoop...

Russell and Helen look over and see an opened window, but  
Paul has disappeared.

**EXT. FUNERAL - DAY**

From a LONG SHOT, we see the gathering at the graveside, as  
we HEAR THE PRIEST reading from *Book of the Dead*.

PRIEST  
...in company with Christ, who died  
and now lives in peace...

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
I'm still in shock, I guess. Numb  
maybe. And sad...

CAMERA MOVES ALONG THE FACES OF THE MOURNERS -- Darlene and  
family, the Nun, Lenny, Russell...

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Suddenly I wish I'd known my dad  
better. Certainly I loved him. I  
even liked him. But I didn't know  
him...

PRIEST  
May they rejoice in Your Kingdom,  
where all our tears are wiped away...

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
...maybe I didn't know him because I  
only saw him in the shadow of my  
mother.

Finally, CAMERA COMES ACROSS Helen, regal/stately in her  
grief, decked out in black and purple -- Mary Todd Lincoln.

RUSSELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Curiously, the funeral was just the  
antidote my mother needed to rebound  
from death's door. The doctors were,  
of course, flabbergasted. The truth  
is, "Martyred Widow" was a role she  
was born to play.

As the Priest puts the book down, and clears his throat,  
Lenny turns and digs his guitar out of its case.

PRIEST  
And... now, uh... Paul's loving  
son Lloyd...

LENNY  
Lenny.

PRIEST  
What?

LENNY  
Lenny. My name's Lenny. Not Lloyd.

PRIEST  
Lenny... has written a song. A  
loving tribute to his father...  
that he'd like to sing now...

(CONTINUED)

LENNY  
 (latching the strap)  
 Thanks, man.  
 (to mourners)  
 S'cool you're here, man. 'Cause a  
 my dad, ya know. Paul Nirth. This  
 is for you, Dad...

HE PLAYS A FEW CHORDS, as we see people sweating in the  
 afternoon sun, barely hanging on.

LENNY (CONT'D)  
 (sings)  
*What courage it took./Didn't matter  
 the cost./When you so bravely  
 battled/That window and lost.*

The CAMERA PANS across a few baffled faces.

LENNY (CONT'D)  
 (sings)  
*You took to the air/With a final  
 heave-ho,/And dropped like a sack/To  
 the sidewalk below!*

Now many faces look fairly astonished.

LENNY (CONT'D)  
 (sings)  
*So you've shuffled off,/In a twitchy  
 blink./And you ended up dead,/Like  
 the skin in my sink.*

Helen listens blithely oblivious, somehow extending a  
 wide margin of artistic latitude here.

LENNY (CONT'D)  
 (sings)  
*Goddamn, goddamn that window, man!  
 /Goddamn I say to it!/That fucking  
 window ate my dad,/And left me with  
 a pile of shit!*

A beat. Some HESITANT/AWKWARD APPLAUSE, while the Priest  
 looks like he might actually be on the verge of a stroke.

**EXT. GRAVEYARD PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

As CARS PULL OUT of the adjacent parking lot, MOURNERS  
 APPROACH THEIR CARS. Russell accepts a hug from a  
 mourner. The mourner moves off, Darlene approaches.

DARLENE  
 Why hasn't Mr. Rock 'n' Roll choked  
 on his vomit and died?

(CONTINUED)

But Russell is distracted by something -- he sees a BOAT-LIKE '99 CADILLAC parked askew across two parking spaces.

RUSSELL  
(watching it)  
Darlene? How did Mom get here?

We now SEE HELEN approach the car, open the door, get in and virtually disappear behind the wheel. Russell's eyes widen when he hears the ENGINE FIRE UP.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Shit.  
(yells)  
Mom!  
(starts running)  
Mom!

He gets to the car and bangs on the window. The window rolls down and Helen's little face looks up at him.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
Mom, what are you doing?

HELEN  
I'm going home.

RUSSELL  
But this is dad's car. You can't drive this.

HELEN  
Russell, he's dead. I don't think he'll mind.

RUSSELL  
No, I mean you can't drive it. You don't even have a driver's license.

HELEN  
(looks at him)  
Where did you learn to be so hurtful?

RUSSELL  
I'm sorry, but... Listen, why don't you scoot over? I'll drive you home.

HELEN  
I just buried my blessed husband of 50 years, and this is how you treat me?

RUSSELL  
But you can't even see the road.

(CONTINUED)

HELEN  
I drove here, didn't I?

RUSSELL  
(looks at the haphazard  
parking job)  
Well, yes... in a manner of speaking.

HELEN  
And now you're determined to take  
away the only thing in life that  
matters to me now?

RUSSELL  
(thinks about it)  
Dad's car?

HELEN  
(you moron)  
My in-dependence.

RUSSELL  
Oh. Okay, look, just let me get you  
something to sit on. Something to  
lift you up a little.

HELEN  
(pointedly)  
A booster seat?

RUSSELL  
A box or something. Something so you  
can see the road.

HELEN  
(exhales)  
Fine. Get it.

Russell smiles apologetically and hurries off. Helen grips the top of the steering wheel and pulls herself up to see. Then, while she clutches the steering wheel with one hand, she reaches for the gear shift with the other, throws the car in gear and hits the gas pedal. THE CAR FLIES OUT OF FRAME... BUT BACKWARD -- hurtling at breakneck speed past SEVERAL DIVING AND SCRAMBLING MOURNERS, PLOWING INTO AND OVER A PARKED MOTORCYCLE, crumbling it, rolling it under its belly and then finally THE CAR SMACKS INTO one of Sacramento's MAJESTIC OAKS.

For a brief moment, people are, of course, stunned -- Russell being not the least of them. Then, suddenly, FROM THE GRAVE SITE, WE HEAR A MAN SCREAM and see a Hispanic man RUNNING DOWN THE HILL, THROWING A SHOVEL ASIDE AS HE DOES. The man HURLS HIMSELF ONTO HIS MOTORCYCLE... now little more than a METAL DOOBIE.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

Esa es motocicleta! Tu chocastes mi  
motocicleta! Oh, Dios Mio! Tu  
chocastes mi motocicleta!

He tries in futility to piece the bike together like a  
delirious madman beside a fallen comrade.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Que boy hacer sin mi motocicleta?  
Como boy atrabajar? Como boy darle  
de comer a mi familia? Estoy jodido!

Everyone watches him, including Helen who has pulled herself  
up to see. After a moment, he stands and yells at Helen --  
who quickly locks the car door.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Tu! Tu hicistes esto!

WOMAN STANDING NEARBY

(to her husband)  
What did he say?

MAN STANDING NEARBY

I don't know.  
(to Jesus)  
What did you say?

JESUS

(to man)  
Que?

MAN STANDING NEARBY

What?

JESUS

Yo, no hablo Ingles! Pero esa mujer  
choco mi motocicleta!

MAN STANDING NEARBY

(quietly to wife)  
He's an illegal.

Helen's eyes widen at Jesus's points at her. She then opts  
for the only alternative to being raped and killed by an  
angry and dirty illegal Mexican -- SHE PUTS THE CAR IN DRIVE  
AND FLOORS IT, ZIPPING PAST THE HISPANIC MAN AND OVER HIS  
FOOT. Jesus grabs his crushed foot and falls over, and as  
various mourners again scramble and dive out of the way,  
Russell chases after his mother.

**EXT. NIRTH HOUSE - LATER**

This is the house where Russell, Darlene and Lenny grew up.  
It's small, a lawn, a large living room window looks out.

**INT. NIRTH LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME**

A knock-off painting of horses running in a meadow, a knock-off Hummel on the side table next to a floral couch. There are doilies, framed pictures, knickknacks -- it's, well, the living room of an elderly couple.

A modest spread of food is on the dining room table, where THREE OR FOUR MOURNERS MILL ABOUT (including some MEN PAUL'S AGE). Darlene's husband and kids are there somewhere. Lenny, on the couch, has the Nun cornered.

LENNY

No, seriously, I love the way you guys help those little hairlip kids.

Russell enters. Lenny sees him.

LENNY (CONT'D)

(to Nun)

Gotta talk to my brother.

Lenny struggles to get up with his drink. The Nun finally gives him a shove to help him stand.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Russell, ya got a minute?

RUSSELL

Oh God no.

LENNY

Need to talk to you 'bout some stuff...

Russell stops impatiently.

LENNY (CONT'D)

(confidentially)

What'd ya think this house is worth? Ballpark.

Russell just stares at him.

LENNY (CONT'D)

I'm guessin' around 500-k. Now, lemme ask you this...

RUSSELL

No.

LENNY

'Cause this is where all your law school crap is gonna come in handy.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL

Didn't go to law school.

LENNY

There's a legal thing, y'know, that you can do legally, so as to have a person of obvious mental incontinence locked up in a nut house.

RUSSELL

A nut house?

LENNY

Yeah, okay, Mr. PC -- an "insane asylum." The point is, what judge is gonna look at her an' say, "Whoah yeah, she's not fuckin' crackers"?  
(off Russell's look)  
State pays for everything.

Darlene has entered from the bathroom with tissues.

DARLENE

(wiping tears)

Oh God, Russell. What happened? What happened here?

RUSSELL

I don't know, Darlene. He slipped is all. Although, some of his friends think he may have jumped.

DARLENE

No, no. How did this happen? You said she was dying.

RUSSELL

She said she was dying.

LENNY

Darlene, there's still half a bottle of gin over there. Better hurry.

DARLENE

Fuck off, Lenny.

LENNY

Him and me were talking here.

DARLENE

(ignores Lenny, takes out pills)

So, Russell, how long is this shit gonna go on?

(CONTINUED)

RUSSELL

Go on? You mean, when is she gonna die?

DARLENE

I'm askin'.

She gobbles the pills.

LENNY

(to Russell)

Okay, another thought, and don't say no right away--

RUSSELL

No.

LENNY

What if there was an accident of some sort?

Russell looks off, shakes his head.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Not talkin' 'bout nothin' elaborate. A brake fluid situation, for instance. She can barely drive as it is.

DARLENE

You're an idiot, Lenny.

RUSSELL

Wait a minute. Mom. Where is she?

DARLENE

Ask Lenny. He was supposed to go down and post bail.

RUSSELL

Darlene, you were supposed to do it.

LENNY

How'm I supposed to post bail, Darlene? I don't even have a credit card.

(then)

Next time, think.

RUSSELL

Shit!

As Russell scrambles for the door,

**INT. POLICE ADMITTING DESK - CONTINUOUS**

This is a BULLETPROOF GLASS ENCLOSED AREA just down from the holding cells. One side faces the lobby where civilians can enter and post bail, the other side is a security door where A COP HAS BEEN BUZZED IN. The Cop crosses to TWO OTHER COPS.

COP #1  
Eighty-one-twenty, Nirth... I thought someone was coming in to post?

COP #2  
(checks an overhead greaseboard)  
Nope. Nothin' yet.

COP #1  
Well, here...

Cop #1 pulls a DIRTY SOCK out of his pocket, and dumps its contents on a table -- CRUMPLED DOLLAR BILLS AND CHANGE.

COP #2  
What's this?

COP #1  
The other inmates took up a collection for bail.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - LATER**

Russell is walking his mother out to the car. She is silently fuming.

RUSSELL (V.O.)  
They say that a mother is the glue that binds a family.

He opens the door for her. She slides in, silently. He closes the door, walks around.

RUSSELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
My mother is more than glue, she's an ancient tar pit. Her children, the hapless egrets and wildebeests struggling in futility to escape, certain only of a slow suffocating death.

He gets in the car, smiles apologetically his mother. Chilly.

RUSSELL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
My brother, my sister, yeah, they're messed up. So how did I turn out so unscathed?

**INT. RUSSELL'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

Dark. Russell is propped up against the headboard, torso exposed... thinking out loud, a trail of cigarette smoke wafts up beside him.

RUSSELL (V.O.)

Okay, I might have a few issues.

He brings the cigarette up, takes a drag. Now we see a woman next to him -- the Nun. She stares straight ahead. They talk, but not to each other.

NUN

My God, what've I done?

RUSSELL

Here's the thing -- this family, they keep fucking up their lives. Over and over and over.

NUN

Please don't swear.

RUSSELL

My dad... the one decent human being in the whole goddamn bunch. He was always there to fix things...

(takes a drag)

But not anymore... Not anymore.

NUN

I'm a whore.

RUSSELL

Guess who's gonna fix things now?

NUN

My life is ruined.

RUSSELL

(considers this)

You and me both, Sister. You and me both.

They both stare ahead, contemplating their lives. The Nun elbows him, nods at the cigarette. As he hands it to her...

FADE OUT.

THE END