

OUR TIME

By Ken Levine

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SYNOPSIS: *Our Time* is a loosely autobiographical comedy about breaking into the world of comedy in 1975 Los Angeles during a golden era for comedy. Four young baby boomers come of age and try to find their place in this inspiring new world. They face levels of talent, degrees of desire, jealousy, confusion, competition, the sexual revolution, parental pressure, ego, insecurity, religion, discrimination, luck, struggle, and decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Who will make it and who won't?

DURATION: 90 minutes.

TIME: 1975

SETTING: A tacky West Hollywood Apartment

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 3 males.)

SARAH (f)..... 20's, Jewish, attractive, earthy,
and not shy. *(284 lines.)*

ALAN (m)..... 20's, Jewish, gay but not
extreme. *(281 lines.)*

DOUG (m)..... 20's. Force of nature. Robin
Williams-type. *(134 lines.)*

BOBBY (m)..... 20's Jewish, sweet disposition.
(204 lines.)

ACT ONE, SCENE 1
APARTMENT—DAY

AT START: *Over black. Music up: The theme for “The Mary Tyler Moore Show.” When they get to the line “You’re going to make it after all” we hear two voices:*

ALAN: *(Voiceover.)* Hell yeah, we are! We’re coming, Mary.

SARAH: *(Voiceover.)* Just let us in, Goddamn it!

Once the theme ends, lights up. Fall, 1975. A somewhat tacky West Hollywood two-bedroom furnished apartment.

There’s a small kitchen area. A phone and now-primitive answering machine on the counter. An upstage hallway leads to two offstage bedrooms. Furnishings are sparse. Small kitchen table with chairs, cheap bookshelves, couch, and the back of a portable TV.

NOTE: *Characters have appropriate hair and wardrobe but not extreme. This isn’t “Boogie Nights.”*

ALAN STEIN and SARAH SZIGETI are at the kitchen table. Both in their mid 20’s. ALAN is gay (but not extreme.), Jewish, nice looking with an easy charm and wicked wit. SARAH is Jewish, attractive, earthy, funny, and not shy.

ALAN is playing with a Rubik’s cube. SARAH is hunched over a portable typewriter. They are writing a script, both lost in thought. Finally:

SARAH: Okay, what about this? Lou is fiddling with a Rubik’s Cube and Mary says, “Mr. Grant, what do I have to do to get your attention? Jump out of a cake?”

ALAN: What? Our modest Mary Richards would never say that. You know in the opening titles where she’s all bundled up and flings her hat in the air?

SARAH: Yeah?

ALAN: It was summer.

SARAH: Mary Richards is not a prude. She's just... cautious. You can't be too careful these days. Sexual Revolution be damned. She's read "Looking For Mr. Goodbar." A one-night stand can lead to murder. Okay, Rhoda's the one who gets killed, but still. Mary realizes that meaningless sex eats away at your self-respect and very soul. GOD, I GOTTA GET LAID!

ALAN: Yes you do. (*Takes her hands.*) Sarah, darling, as your partner and best friend in the whole world, I order you to sleep with the first guy you see. I don't care if he's from Arkansas.

SARAH: I can't do that.

ALAN: It's been eight months. You can and you must.

SARAH: Whatever happened to the "three-date" rule?

ALAN: Oh, honey, it's 1975. It's the "three-drink" rule.

SARAH: No. I'm sorry but I have raised my standards. If I'm going to surrender my precious body to a guy now—One—I must want to see him a second time. Two—(*Beat.*) actually there's only one.

ALAN: Well, please look harder. Or use that vibrator you won at the B'nai Brith raffle.

SARAH: (*Changing subjects.*) Okay, Mary comes in, says "Can we talk, Mr. Grant?" And he says, "Just let me finish this Rubik's Cube," and she says, "Fine. I'll come back in four years."

ALAN: Good.

SARAH: Or she says... "Imagine you're color blind and it is finished."

ALAN: Okay.

SARAH: Or... "Open a jar. It's much more satisfying."

ALAN: Wow.

SARAH: Wait. I've got another. He's fiddling with the cube and says, "If anyone asks, I have Ted's brain."

ALAN: (*Considering.*) Hmmm. I just wonder if there's a better "Ted's an idiot" joke.

SARAH: Gotcha. Ted comes in, sees the Rubik's Cube, and eats it.

ALAN: (*Laughs, then.*) You're on fire today.

SARAH: So you're going with that?

ALAN: No.

SFX: *The phone rings.*

SARAH: Don't say hello. Say "KHJ plays the hits." If it's them you win a thousand dollars.

ALAN: The machine will get it.

SARAH: What machine?

ALAN: I just bought a 'telephone answering machine.' You answer your phone "KHJ plays the hits" and wonder why you haven't found Mr. Right?

SARAH: It's a thousand bucks. I sell caramel corn at Farmer's Market! Is there any cockamamie new gadget you don't have?

ALAN: We live in a golden age of invention. Mark my words, someday everybody will have their own computers—in their homes.

SARAH: Really?

ALAN: Yes. And they'll be cheap pieces of shit. But eventually they'll figure it out.

SFX: We hear a beep, then:

MOTHER: *(Voiceover.)* Alan, it's your mother. What is this thing? I hate it. Where are you? Listen, I was watching the "Merv Griffin Show" last night and he had on your Elton John.

ALAN: *(Rolls his eyes.)* My Elton John.

MOTHER: *(Voiceover.)* And all I can say is—thank God I taught you how to dress.

ALAN: *(Re his clothes.)* She takes credit for this?

MOTHER: *(Voiceover.)* So aren't your two years up already? You and Sarah were going to give this silly pipe dream two years, right?

ALAN: Now you know why I have the machine. And bald spot already.

MOTHER: *(Voiceover.)* Sarah's a funny girl. So if you can't break in with her then clearly it's not meant to be.

ALAN: You're the son she never had.

MOTHER: *(Voiceover.)* And don't tell me you're a writer. You're a waiter. At DuPar's no less, which makes the I-Hop seem like a kosher deli. Call me. Get rid of this thing.

SARAH: Wow.

ALAN: Yes. This was my life growing up—"Gypsy" without the songs.

SARAH: It's a wonder you're not running down the street naked with a rubber glove on your head yelling, "Hey, I'm a squid!"

ALAN: Thank you. That's why we have to make it, so one day my mother can say: "Oh well. At least he's successful."

SARAH: Okay, so let me ask you—does it have to be in sitcoms?

ALAN: Huh? What?

SARAH: Well, there may be another opportunity. It's not exactly what we planned, but a friend in New York just got a job writing on some new weekly sketch show NBC is starting next month. I don't know the details. There will be skits and music but all done by people our age. So we're not writing ninety-year-old Bob Hope in a Beatles' wig chasing after Brooke Shields. It's supposed to be edgy and topical.

ALAN: How can it be topical?

SARAH: It's going to air live on Saturday nights at 11:30. Yeah, I know that's late, but that'll give them more freedom to be subversive. It sounds kind of intriguing, doesn't it?

ALAN: Variety is dead, Sarah. It's old, it's tired, it's pop stars in tuxedos doing Beach Boy medleys with John Wayne.

SARAH: This is supposed to be revolutionary.

ALAN: And 11:30 on Saturday night? That's the one time of the week we all go out. So who's going to be watching? Babysitters and old people who can't figure out the remote.

SARAH: You could move to New York. And forget to tell your mother.

ALAN: Excuse me, but aren't you the one who couldn't wait to get out of that hellhole?

SARAH: That's when I was a stand-up and New York robbed me of my youth and dignity. But those bagels—you can't get 'em anywhere like that.

ALAN: I love L.A. I don't want to move to New York. It snows there, it's crowded, it's where Mr. Goodbar lives.

SARAH: I'll only date rabbis.

There's a knock at the door. ALAN crosses to answer.

ALAN: Sarah, we're going to make it. All we need is one break. And no one has more talent than us.

ALAN opens the door. DOUG MANOOGALARARIAN ENTERS. (Ma-noog-a-lararian.) He's in his 20's, scruffy, charming, a force of nature.

He's a young Robin Williams type but with an edge. He is carrying two old suitcases.

DOUG: Hi, where's Bobby Drucker? Which one of you ordered a Filipino bride? I'll cuddle but I won't drive carpool. Hey, do you realize there are only men out at the pool? It's like the Sea World cast of "Chorus Line." (*Simulates underwater.*) "One singular sensation." And they're all wearing Speedos. Have some decency! (*A la preacher.*) "God Almighty will smite down you sinner boys at the pool for those grape smugglers, those banana hammocks, those ouch pouches. Say hallelujah!"

ALAN patiently waits for him to finally finish. Then:

ALAN: And you are...?

DOUG: Doug Manoogalararian. I like to make an entrance. Bobby said I could crash a few days.

ALAN crosses to the hallway and knocks on an offstage door.

ALAN: Bobby, there's a disturbed Jehovah's Witness to see you.

BOBBY: (*Offstage.*) Huh? Oh, Doug!

BOBBY DRUCKER (Mid 20's, Jewish, sweet disposition.) enters.

DOUG: Hey there, rowdy.

BOBBY: You made it.

They hug, then:

BOBBY: Everyone, this is Doug Manoogalararian. We were disc jockeys together in Fresno...

DOUG: People make fun of Fresno but they had the first modern landfill in the United States.

SARAH: Really? Is there a gift shop?

BOBBY: And he just got hired here at KHJ—the biggest, most influential radio station in the country.

DOUG: Yeah, maybe ten years ago.

ALAN: Wasn't KHJ where one of the disc jockeys shot and killed his wife and the station asked listeners to help find him?

BOBBY: Yeah, what a contest!

DOUG: Those were the glory days. Now they're doing "Cash Call."

SARAH: "KHJ plays the hits."

DOUG: Yeah, who's dumb enough to answer their phone that way? The odds of us calling have to be like a billion to one.

SARAH: (*Scoffing, but overdoing.*) I know. Gawwwd. Who is that monumentally stuuuuuupid?

BOBBY: (*To DOUG.*) Who cares? You're going to be on K-H-J. Every jock in the world would kill to work there—including one who did—and you made it all the way from Fresno.

DOUG: Still. It's radio, which is one notch above shadow puppets.

ALAN: So what name do you use on the air?

DOUG: Doug Manoogalararian.

ALAN: Was your real name too long?

DOUG: Every station wanted me to change it. But I won't.

BOBBY: It's long but it's not Jewish.

SARAH: They wouldn't let you use Bobby Drucker?

BOBBY: Not even in Jerusalem. I was Bobby Stevens in Fresno, Bobby Williams in Utica, Wolfman Bruce in Pittsfield.

ALAN: Wolfman Bruce?

BOBBY: I was not allowed to shave for a year.

DOUG: Once they change your name they got you. Pretty soon you have to follow their format, take listener requests (*Shudders.*), and then it's just Nazi Germany. (*German accent.*) "You vill play disco music and you vill like it!"

ALAN: "Everybody goose step to Donna Summers!"

DOUG: (*A la ALAN.*) And you are...?

BOBBY: Oh. Right. Doug, this is my cousin and roommate, Alan Stein and his writing partner Sarah Szigeti.

Ad lib "hello's," then:

DOUG: So what do you write?

SARAH: Sitcoms. We're trying to sell a "Mary Tyler Moore Show."

DOUG: So what's the script about?

SARAH: (*Proudly.*) Well... Murray, the news writer is unhappy at WJM, quits to go to another station, but that place is worse. So he tells Mary and she has to help get him his old job back.

DOUG: Uh huh, uh huh. (*Beat.*) Wouldn't it be funnier if Murray took a job working for Sue Ann? Instead of hearing about his lousy new job we see it? We get the fun of watching Sue Ann turn him into a bootlicking flunky.

ALAN and SARAH look at each other. Shit! That IS better.

ALAN: Yes, well, we of course thought of that but rejected it.

SARAH: When?

ALAN: (*Sotto.*) Shut up.

DOUG: Well, good luck. And you, Bobby, stand-up comedy? (*A la Rodney Dangerfield.*) "I get no respect. My parents hated me. My bath toys were a toaster and a radio. I bought a cemetery plot. The guy said, 'There goes the neighborhood.'"

BOBBY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's a whole different comedy now. By and for our crowd. There's this new club called the Comedy Store. No one over thirty. It's a great chance to work on your craft and be seen. One comic, Richard Lewis has been on "The Tonight Show" six times already.

DOUG: So how's it going for you?

BOBBY: Shitty. Richard Lewis beat me to my act.

DOUG: Let me hear one of your jokes.

BOBBY: Okay, I do a bit where I'm talking about my mother. She's so fearful. Here's how crazy this woman is—remember the Red Dye Number Five scare? Eat one cherry and get cancer. Well, when I was a kid, she would go through my box of Trix cereal and remove all the pink pieces. Can you believe that?

ALAN and SARAH laugh politely. DOUG just stares.

BOBBY: Oh, I left out a key element. You have to be drunk.

DOUG: Instead of "Trix", what if she got alphabet oat cereal and removed all the sharp letters?

ALAN and SARAH really laugh.

BOBBY: Sure. That could work. Thanks. Hey, why don't we get you settled? (*Pointing.*) You'll be staying in my room.

DOUG grabs his suitcases and starts down the hall.

DOUG: Nice to meet you, kids.

DOUG exits. BOBBY starts to follow.

BOBBY: I am so screwed. Even the goyim write better Jew jokes than me.

SARAH: Wolfman Bruce?

BOBBY rolls his eyes and exits. ALAN and SARAH return to the kitchen table.

ALAN: Okay, Murray works for Sue Ann. We do a scene on the "Happy Homemaker's" set. Maybe see him peeling potatoes, cleaning her oven...

SARAH: Modeling bras, buying "Summer's Eve"... God, this just makes the whole show!

ALAN: I know! (*Then.*) And I hate him for it.

Lights dim.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

APARTMENT—THAT NIGHT

AT START: *Lights up. ALAN and SARAH still writing, now a little frazzled. An empty KFC chicken bucket sits on the table.*

From the bedroom, we hear lovemaking between a man and a woman. SARAH softly growls through her teeth.

ALAN: Just ignore them.

SARAH: I'm fine.

She continues to growl and simmer.

ALAN: This is like writing with 'Cujo.'

SARAH: I'm sorry. Where were we?

ALAN: Well, I think we need a moment for Mary and Murray here.

SARAH: For what?

ALAN: For her to tell him that even though it didn't work out, he was brave to take a risk.

SARAH: What's funny about that?

ALAN: Nothing. It's not supposed to be funny.

SARAH: Yes it is. We're writing a comedy.

ALAN: That doesn't mean we can't take a moment and show some genuine emotion.

SARAH: You want to see some genuine emotion? (*Calling out to bedroom.*) COME ALREADY!

ALAN: I am going to assume we're now on a break.

The lovemaking continues.

SARAH: Jesus Christ! Can you believe this guy? In town for six hours and already he's fucking his brains out.

ALAN: He doesn't have your willpower.

SARAH: Well, she is going to hate herself in the morning, that's for damn sure. GOD, WHY CAN'T I DO THAT?

ALAN: It's after eleven. Let's pick it up tomorrow.

SARAH: What, and miss the part where she comes out and makes him an omelet?

ALAN: C'mon, I could use a drink. (*Holding up the bucket.*) And you could use a martini the size of this. Join me.

SARAH: What? No thank you. Being in a bar where every guy has slept with you is not exactly the comfort I seek.

ALAN: Not every guy. Just the ones who would give mother a stroke.

SARAH: That's okay, you take off. I'll pack up.

ALAN: You sure?

SARAH: Absolutely. Go. I'll just swing by 7-11 and pick up some batteries for my... you know—then head home.

ALAN: I have some batteries. How many do you need?

SARAH: Fifty-two.

ALAN: Oh wait, I just thought of a great guy for you. Yes. Howard. Of course. He's smart, he's funny, he's straight.

SARAH: Far out. What does he do?

ALAN: Okay, he's a Judy Garland impersonator, but—

SARAH: Leave.

ALAN: I'm telling you, you're too picky.

She waves him off and he exits. SARAH gathers up the takeout debris and dumps it in the kitchen.

The lovemaking continues, as does the soft growling under her breath. She can't help but get swept up by the passion going on in the next room. Especially in her state.

She listens intently and starts getting turned on. She sits on the couch. With one hand she begins caressing her breast. The other starts on her knee and slowly works its way up her leg. She closes her eyes. And then:

BOBBY bursts through the front door. SARAH is startled but tries to cover. BOBBY doesn't notice.

BOBBY: Where is he? *(Hears the lovemaking.)* Oh hell!

BOBBY crosses to the bedroom door and begins banging on it.

BOBBY: Hey, Doug! You're on the air in one hour!

DOUG: *(Offstage.)* Almost done. We just have to climax and exchange names.

The lovemaking resumes. BOBBY flops down on the couch next to SARAH.

BOBBY: Unbelievable. His midnight break-in show on KHJ, the biggest moment of his career, and he doesn't care if he's late. If it were me, I'd have been at the station by noon.

SARAH: Y'know, I never used to be this way.

BOBBY: What way?

SARAH: Bitter. Envious. Petty. Competitive. Although, in Doug's case, Hare Krishnas would beat him to death with their tambourines.

BOBBY: You're still a sweet person.

SARAH: I dunno.

BOBBY: No, you are. You're kind, caring... so very beautiful.

She's so into her train-of-thought that the "beautiful" compliment goes right by her.

SARAH: I was at Woodstock. Five-hundred thousand of us. You'd think one person would bring deodorant. But we all loved each other and wished each other nothing but success and joy. I handed out flowers. And the most gorgeous boy wanted to make love to me, but the bathroom facilities were so disgusting that I didn't go for four days and it was like concrete down there.

BOBBY: Hey, I wasn't at Woodstock, but I was nearby. Grossinger's in the Catskills. But had that same comforting feeling, being with "your people," y'know?

SARAH: (*Wistful.*) Janis Joplin...

BOBBY: (*Equally wistful.*) Jan Murray...

SARAH: What happened to the love and brotherhood of those five-hundred thousand people?

BOBBY: They found out there were only twelve good jobs.

SARAH: Good point. (*Beat.*) Everyone always talks about "the Hungry Years"—how exciting they are. Yeah, well, "the Hungry Years" are only romantic and nostalgic when you've made it and look back at them. During: they're frustrating, soul crushing, you question your life, and you feel you're wasting other opportunities.

BOBBY: Oh, if only you had spoken at my graduation.

SARAH: Bobby, what if we don't make it?

BOBBY: Okay, this is why two Jews should never be left alone in a room together.

SARAH: I wasted a year doing stand-up. Now two years of this.

BOBBY: But I've seen your act. You were very good.

SARAH: Yeah, but you know the scene. As hard as it is for men, it's almost impossible for a woman to break in. Do you know Johnny Carson won't put a woman comic on "The Tonight Show?" He

doesn't think any of us are funny. I'm maybe the first woman to ever have "penis envy" so I can get on a talk show.

BOBBY: *(Laughs, then.)* See, he's wrong? You are funny.

SARAH smiles and squeezes his hand.

SARAH: Thanks. I'm sorry. I don't mean to be a bummer.

BOBBY: You're not. We're all going through it. And to answer your question, yeah I worry. I just hope my "Match Game" prize money doesn't run out. But I hold onto my faith. God has a plan for all of us. I just have to believe... and never follow Richard Pryor.

SARAH: Well, next time you chat with God, ask him what my plan is.

BOBBY: You and Alan are going to be successful writers. You won't be selling caramel corn; you'll be buying it.

SARAH: Thanks. That helps... sorta. *(Beat.)* It's just...

BOBBY: *(Beat, then.)* Just what?

SARAH takes a deep breath, then:

SARAH: Sometimes I feel so goddamn lonely.

BOBBY: Yeah, me too.

SARAH: *(Re lovemaking.)* And this is not helping. *(Calling out, pointedly.)* "Where's my pet rattlesnake? Oh shit, it's in Bobby's room. My deadly poisonous SNAKE!"

It has no effect. SARAH settles back down and resumes softly growling.

BOBBY: It's been a while for me too.

SARAH: Eight months. Eight lonnnng months.

BOBBY: Six months.

SARAH: *(Chuckles.)* Talk about a couple of losers.

BOBBY makes a decision.

BOBBY: Well, we don't have to be.

BOBBY leans over and kisses her. SARAH is a little startled. She doesn't pull away but doesn't lean into it either. He can sense this was a tactical error. When it's over:

BOBBY: Okay, that was stupid.

SARAH: I uh... oh boy...

BOBBY: No, no, you don't have to say anything. I'm sorry. I don't know why I did that. Although... between us that's fourteen months, and—

SARAH: Bobby, it's not that I didn't like it.

BOBBY: You did? Then what's the problem?

SARAH: The timing isn't right. Bobby, I think you're dynamite. And if this were three years ago I'd be all over you. But you're a comic. And I was in that world. I know that world. And all the qualities that make you guys so special, so insightful, such geniuses are also the qualities that make you the most fucked up human beings on the face of the earth. And again, I say that with deep regard.

BOBBY: We're not all neurotic, narcissistic, needy sociopaths.

SARAH: Oh no?

BOBBY: No. Absolutely not. *(Proudly.)* There's Bob Newhart.

SARAH: Look, I dated a stand-up and the craziness and drama was so off-the-charts that even with mind blowing sex it just wasn't worth it. I know I shouldn't over-generalize and it's not fair to you, and maybe in time I'll think differently, but for now I'd rather have my tubes tied than date a comedian.

BOBBY: Okay. I respect that.

SARAH: Thank you.

BOBBY: *(Beat, then:)* Who was he?

SARAH: What?

BOBBY: The comic. The one who was so insane.

SARAH: Oh. Uh... that's not important.

BOBBY: No, really. I want to know.

SARAH: He was just a stand-up. It makes no difference.

BOBBY: Yes, it does. If it's an LA or New York comic I'm sure I know him, and from now on I'm going to torture myself, always wondering. Is it a close friend? Has he been in my house? Have we noshed together at Canter's? Have I loaned him money? Money that he

spent on you? Can I ever trust any of these guys again knowing that one is—

SARAH: Oh for crissakes, it was Richard Lewis.

BOBBY: WHAT?!

SARAH: Richard Lewis. Are you happy?

BOBBY: Are you kidding me? Are you fucking kidding me?

SARAH: I didn't know you at the time.

BOBBY: Richard Lewis? I can never do summer camp jokes because of that son of a bitch!

SARAH: Okay, calm down.

BOBBY: I got ticks, lice, whooping cough, bitten by a squirrel—and I can't use any of it!

SARAH: Seriously, you've got to mellow out.

BOBBY: Mind-blowing sex?!

SARAH: Let me roll you a joint.

BOBBY: No. I have to drive Doug to KHJ—because I'm not a big enough putz as it is.

BOBBY stomps to the bedroom door and begins loudly banging on it.

BOBBY: Let's go, goddamnit!

DOUG: (Offstage.) Okay. Jesus.

SARAH: You're not a putz. And maybe I confused the mind-blowing sex with a Yeshiva student I once dated.

DOUG dashes out and heads for the front door, still zipping up his pants.

DOUG: (A la the Lone Ranger.) "Hi-yo Silver. AWAY!!!"

DOUG exits. BOBBY peeks into his bedroom.

BOBBY: Holy shit! I think that's Cher.

BOBBY crosses to the door.

BOBBY: Who goes to Taco Bell and picks up Cher?

BOBBY exits. SARAH falls back onto the couch.

Lights dim.

Over dark we are listening to a radio broadcast. The song "Half Breed" by Cher ends and we hear:

DOUG: *(Voiceover.)* That's Cher who is back on top, which I happen to know is her preference. 1:06 KHJ Cash Call time. When your phone rings, don't say hello. Say "KHJ welcomes their newest bossjock, Doug Manoogalararian... who starting Monday will be on every day Monday through Friday from three-to six... and Saturday two-to-six ...playing all the hits from the Boss Thirty... along with your solid gold favorites." Say that easy-to-remember phrase and win a thousand dollars.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3
APARTMENT—EARLY NEXT MORNING

AT START: *Lights up. BOBBY is alone on the couch listening to DOUG on a transistor radio. The song "Someone Saved My Life Tonight" ends, then:*

DOUG: *(Voiceover.)* There's Elton John with "Someone Shaved My Wife Tonight" at 2:17. KHJ weather—mostly sunny with highs in the... wait a minute, is that smoke I smell? Yikes! There's a fire in the studio. Hang on.

SFX: Sound of a phone ringing, then:

DOUG: *(Voiceover.)* Hello? Nine-one-one?

DOUG: *(Voiceover.)* Is this
nine-one-one?

I need the fire department!

Yeah, yeah, but there's a
fire here!

The hell with that! There's a
FIRE HERE!
I CAN'T BREATHE!

DOUG: *(Voiceover.)*
(In pre-recorded filtered goofy
voice.) KHJ welcomes their
newest bossjock, Doug
Manoogalararian, who starting
Monday will be on every day
Monday through Friday from
three-to six, and Saturday
two-to-six playing all the
hits from the Boss Thirty along
with your solid gold favorites!

DOUG coughs violently. SFX: A "93/KHJ" Jingle and the start of a song.
BOBBY just shakes his head. He turns off the radio then looks to the
sky.

BOBBY: O' Lord our God, King of the Universe, not that I question the
wisdom of your wondrous ways, but what's the point of fasting and
not eating pork and planting trees in Israel when you bestow such
a miraculous gift of talent on some sheitz from Fresno?

ALAN enters the apartment and crosses to the kitchen.

ALAN: Well now, you're up late.

BOBBY: Yeah. Was listening to Doug.

ALAN: Who says I don't keep up with current events? I slept with my
first Vietnamese refugee tonight. Want some coffee? I have this
new machine. "Mr. Coffee." It comes with individual miracle filters.
Some person on TV named Joe DiMaggio raves about it.

BOBBY: You don't know who Joe DiMaggio is?

ALAN: Of course I do. I may be gay, but come on, I'm part of the world.
He was married to Marilyn Monroe.

BOBBY: He was? *(Then.)* Sure, I'd love a cup.

ALAN: So how was your friend?

BOBBY: Phenomenal. He may be the best disc jockey in America. It's
like... if Mozart could do shtick and talk up to vocals.

ALAN: He does have a flair. Too bad he knows it. But so what? You're no longer in competition with him.

BOBBY: Actually I sent out a few tapes to stations in the area.

ALAN crosses to the couch with two cups of coffee.

ALAN: Why? I thought you had given that up, "Wolfman Bruce."

BOBBY: I've gotta keep my options open. Things aren't exactly taking off for me at the Comedy Store.

ALAN: You'll get on "The Tonight Show."

BOBBY: I don't know. I pray to the wrong God. You know who got picked this week? Some doofus named David Letterman. Why? America likes gentiles. He's got no real act. Just this wholesome-from-Indiana routine with a space between his teeth. Hollywood still hates Jews. We're "in" now so they can't be overt, and it's complicated because the town is run by Jews so they let Richard Lewis on six times to cover their ass, but at the end of the day, Christ wins.

ALAN: You'll make it. (*Holding up cup.*) And as you know, I can see into the future. (*Sips, then grimaces.*) Jesus. Joe DiMaggio should be arrested!

BOBBY: Y'know what I love about you, man? You're always so positive. I don't know if it's a gay thing, a grass thing, or wanting to be Lucy Ricardo when you were little, but it's a wonderful quality and I hope you never lose it, even being related to me.

ALAN: I have reason to be positive. We all do. Bobby, these are sweet days. Especially for comedy. Look at sitcoms. After ten years of dreck like "Gilligan's Island" we're now in a golden age. We have "The Mary Tyler Moore Show", "All In The Family", "MASH"—groundbreaking shows that make us laugh and challenge us. You can be a sitcom writer now without having to apologize! And you said it yourself, that Comedy Store scene is really happening. People are being discovered left and right.

BOBBY: This kid Freddie Prinze got a sitcom out of it.

ALAN: Does he need writers? Sorry. But seriously, this is our time. There are a million opportunities out there for us. We just have to be ready. (*Singing, from "Don't Rain On My Parade" but badly.*) "Hey, Mr. Arnstein, here I ammmmm!"

BOBBY: How can you be gay and not know that tune? But thanks, man. And you're going to make it too.

ALAN: Absolutely. (*Drops the bravado.*) Of course I have only five more weeks to do it. (*Beat.*) And I have to keep Sarah.

BOBBY: She is great, isn't she?

ALAN: More than great. We're Fred & Ginger—except she's Fred.

Lights dim. SFX: Over dark we hear a radio broadcast. A song ends, then:

DOUG: (*Voiceover.*) Doug Manoogalararian driving you home. And hey, it's my one month anniversary on the Big 93.

He honks a party noisemaker.

DOUG: (*Voiceover.*) Let's celebrate! If you're driving, every time I honk my party horn change lanes. Won't that be fun? Let's try it. (*HONK.*) Here's a reminder from KHJ (*HONK.*)—Hollywood High is holding its (*HONK.*) ten year reunion (*HONK.*) on October 22nd (*HONK.*) at the (*HONK.*) Airport (*HONK.*) Hilton. (*HONK.*) Call 'em. (*HONK.*)

SFX: Sound of a car crash then a 93/KHJ Jingle and a record. It establishes then quickly fades:

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

APARTMENT—DAY (A MONTH LATER)

AT START: *Lights up. BOBBY is on the phone.*

BOBBY: Jay Leno is going to be on the "Tonight Show" Thursday? You're shitting me. Jay Leno? You can't put that canned ham of a face on TV. Unbelievable.

He hangs up. ALAN enters from the bedroom and crosses to the TV, which now has a cable box atop it.

ALAN: Good morning. Behold the future of television. We are now getting cable TV.

BOBBY: What's cable TV?

ALAN: A seven-dollar-a-month miracle. Instead of pulling in stations with an antennae, they all come in through a cable. And it means we get everything now. Twenty-four channels! Mexican, Korean, religious, even something called "Public Access" where they'll let any nimrod on the air. Charles Manson could host a cooking show.

BOBBY: Why would we watch any of those?

ALAN: You don't want the recipe for Prison Blintzes? Actually, the real reason to get cable is this: The "Z" Channel. They show movies—rare movies and first-run movies and, are you ready? (*Beat for emphasis.*) No. Commercials.

BOBBY: What?

ALAN: They're shown in their entirety—uncut, undoctored, uncensored. Butch and Sundance jump off the cliff and don't yell "Ohhh Piffle!"

BOBBY: Nudity?

ALAN: They run those erotic French "Emmanuelle" movies. "Emmanuelle Goes to Tahiti," "Emmanuelle Goes to Greece," "Emmanuelle Goes to the Free Clinic."

BOBBY: I gotta sit down for this. Holy shit! Y'know, a few weeks ago when you were talking about the future and how bright it'd be, I nodded and just kinda shined you on, but this: Complete movies on TV where you can see tits and hear fuck—here truly might be a brighter tomorrow.

ALAN: That's what I've been telling you.

BOBBY: (*Excited.*) So what movies are on tonight?

ALAN: (*Scanning the guide.*) "Herbie Rides Again" and "The Amputee."

BOBBY: Oh.

ALAN: Yeah. Seven dollars a month for this shit?

DOUG bursts through the front door.

DOUG: Okay, so there's this girl who works in the record library. Linda. Hot blonde. Long hair, beauty pageant type. Former "Miss Pacoima" or some such place. (*A la contestant.*) "Do I believe in Euthanasia?"

Oh yes. I believe in children of all nations.” (*Then.*) So I take her out last night. We go to the Palm. I do all the little things every guy does to impress a chick. We sat underneath my caricature. Then I...

ALAN: Wait. What? You have a caricature in the Palm? Up there with Redford and Streisand and Pacino?

DOUG: Yeah.

ALAN: After only one month?

DOUG: The owner thinks I saved radio.

BOBBY: Richard Lewis doesn't have a caricature, does he?

DOUG: Yes. But mine is larger.

BOBBY: Son of a bitch!

DOUG: Then later we're at the Rainbow Room. I look into her eyes and realize this truly sick thing. I think I really like her. This little filly did something to me. I felt feelings I don't remember ever feeling.

BOBBY: That's far out, man.

DOUG: No it's not. She wouldn't bang me.

ALAN: (*Mock outrage.*) What? After you had spent an entire hour with her?

DOUG: And you wanna know why she wouldn't bang me?

ALAN: They have higher standards in Pacoima?

DOUG: (*Ignoring.*) Because I'm too... what's the word she used? "Mercurial" for her.

BOBBY: Mercurial?

ALAN: That's code for "scary crazy."

DOUG: It's bullshit! I'm not mercurial. I'm... exhilarating. I'm a bottle rocket without the inevitable loss of an eye.

ALAN: So what'd you do?

DOUG: What any gentleman would do. I dropped her off and banged someone else.

ALAN: (*Sotto, to BOBBY.*) Why hasn't he moved out?

BOBBY: (*Sotto.*) He's too lazy, and he's offered to pay our full rent.

ALAN: (*Turns to DOUG.*) My heart now goes out to you.

DOUG: I'm going to get her, goddamnit. If mercurial is a bad quality, then I'll be something else. Something more attractive and loving. I'll shower her with gifts, I'll sing underneath her window, I'll fake a fatal disease.

BOBBY: Doug, I don't get it. So what if some chick blows you off?

DOUG: That's not supposed to happen. The earth must be off its axis.
(*A la the WB cartoon character Foghorn Leghorn.*) "We're in big... I say, big... I say big trouble!"

BOBBY: You're a KHJ Bossjock. You can get women you have no business getting with your looks. Move on.

DOUG: Have you guys ever been in love?

ALAN: Not to where I've faked cancer, no.

BOBBY: Yeah, I've been in love. And she didn't love me back either.

DOUG: That bitch, whoever she is!

ALAN: (*To BOBBY.*) Really? Who is it?

BOBBY: (*To DOUG.*) Look, it's a drag, man, but you live with it. Things are tough out there. It's a cold brutal world. You can't always get what you want.

DOUG looks at him like he's crazy.

DOUG: Sure you can.

DOUG exits into the bedroom.

ALAN: Wow. Confidence is one thing, but that's believing you can shit silver dollars.

ALAN hits play on the answering machine.

MOTHER: (*Voiceover.*) Alan, it's your mother. I hate this thing. Anyway, I was playing golf yesterday at Braemar and this Jerry Markowitz person joined our foursome. Have you ever heard of him? He's the... wait, I wrote it down... He's the story editor of a new show called "The Jeffersons."

ALAN: Please don't say you killed him.

MOTHER: (*Voiceover.*) I mentioned you and how funny Sarah was and he'd be willing to read a script of "The Jeffersons" if you two write one.

ALAN: Wow.

MOTHER: (*Voiceover.*) Call me for the details. Get rid of this thing.

BOBBY: Outta sight, man. That could be the break you've been waiting for.

ALAN: I know. Can you believe it? Who needs William Morris when you have a yenta mother who plays golf?

BOBBY: Can you write a “Jeffersons”?

ALAN: Sure. Why not?

BOBBY: Well, you’re not exactly from Watts.

ALAN: Yes, well, we can’t all be “soul brothers” like Jerry Markowitz, now can we?

BOBBY: Good point.

Knock at the front door. ALAN answers. It’s an excited SARAH.

SARAH: Did you see it? Did you see it? Ohmygod! Say you saw it!

ALAN: Saw what?

SARAH: “NBC’s Saturday Night.” It premiered last night.

ALAN: No, I was watching “Son of Dracula” starring Harry Nilsson and Ringo Starr on the Z-Channel.

BOBBY: Those two starred in a movie? That’s news to me.

ALAN: I’m sure to them too. One of the fun surprises they’ll learn someday in rehab. *(To SARAH.)* So was it good?

SARAH: No. It was unbelievable! They made fun of everything—the news, commercials, people with missing limbs. When have you ever seen a missing-limb joke on “the Mary Tyler Moore Show?”

ALAN: That would make flinging her hat in the air a lot more memorable.

SARAH: There was also a film by Albert Brooks—

BOBBY: Albert Brooks? Christ! How do these other Jews find their own thing? We all grew up eating the same pulverized chicken.

SARAH: George Carlin hosted, they had the Muppets, sketches with improv actors, and Andy Kaufman. He did that weird Mighty Mouse bit where he sings along with the record and everyone laughs even though no one knows why it’s funny.

BOBBY: Even Andy Kaufman has a thing—“The Jew whose parents were first cousins.”

SARAH: Alan, that’s the kind of show we should be writing. Zany, radical, cutting edge.

ALAN: Sarah, sitcoms are cutting edge now. And they’re about real people. P.S.—they’re on when viewers are awake.

BOBBY: Tell her your news.

SARAH: What news?

ALAN: Well... putting aside your “radical” show featuring the Muppets—My mother was playing golf with the story editor of “the Jeffersons” and if we write a sample “Jeffersons” he’ll read it and maybe give us an assignment.

SARAH: An assignment? Really?

ALAN: Yes.

SARAH: Actual work? Actual money? An actual credit? Fuck “Saturday Night!”

ALAN: That’s my pragmatic princess.

She hugs ALAN.

BOBBY: (*Singing.*) “Siman tov, u’mazal tov/ U’mazal tov, v’siman tov/Siman tov—

ALAN: It’s only an opening. We didn’t get the assignment yet.

BOBBY: Right. Sorry. I sometimes just hear the call of the Klesmer.

SARAH: (*To ALAN.*) One question: Can we write a “Jeffersons?” Are you forgetting our heritage? (*With finger quotes.*) We’re “Red Sea Pedestrians” you know.

BOBBY: I asked the same thing.

ALAN: Okay, let me tell you a story. When “Sanford & Son” went on, Redd Foxx had a whole Jewish writing staff. But then he thought, “this is a black show, I should have black writers.” So he fired the staff and replaced them with black writers for season two. The cast comes together to read the first script out loud and when they finish Redd Foxx yells out: “WHERE ARE MY JEWS? GET ME MY JEWS!”

SARAH: We’re movin’ on up.

Lights dim. SFX: We hear a few seconds of “the Jeffersons” theme, then:

ACT ONE, SCENE 5
APARTMENT -- EVENING (TWO WEEKS LATER)

AT START: *Lights up. ALAN and SARAH are at the kitchen table writing.*

SARAH: *(Imitating George Jefferson but really exaggerated.)* “Weezy, you get your own self out here!”

ALAN: Your own self?

SARAH: I dunno. That’s an expression he used last week.

ALAN: It makes him sound like Super Fly.

SARAH: Yeah, like you’ve seen “Super Fly.”

ALAN: I have. It was on the Z-Channel last month. If this TV writing career doesn’t pan out I’m considering “pimp.”

SARAH: That should be a fun conversation with your mother.

ALAN: Okay, how about: *(Imitating George Jefferson, also exaggerated.)* “Weezy, come out here a minute!”

SARAH: Or *(Imitating George Jefferson.)* “Weezy, I need to talk to you, woman.”

ALAN: Fine.

SARAH: You realize we both sound like idiots.

ALAN: I don’t think we could pass for tan, much less black!

SARAH: *(Chuckles, then.)* So anyway, she enters and says, “What is it, George?”

ALAN: And he says, *(Imitating.)* “Weezy, you spent twenty dollars on a book?”

SARAH: Then she says, “Yeah, so what?”

ALAN: And he says: “Weezy!” *(Beat.)* And then a joke.

SARAH: Yes, a joke.

They sit in silence for several beats.

ALAN: Doesn’t have to be a great joke.

More silence.

SARAH: Nope. Just a joke.

More silence.

ALAN: Any joke. (*Beat.*) Any joke at all. (*Beat.*) Just something to make us laugh. (*Beat.*) Or even smile.

More silence. Finally:

SARAH: (*Calling out.*) GET ME REDD FOXX'S JEWS!!!

ALAN: Sarah, we'll get it.

SARAH: When?

ALAN: I dunno.

SARAH: Maybe Redd Foxx had the wrong black writers because who are we kidding? Black writers should be writing these shows. Jesus. Imagine how hard they have it? As tough as it is for us, they can't even break in on their own goddamn shows!

ALAN: That's very true and unfortunate, but at least their people are portrayed on TV.

SARAH: What do you mean?

ALAN: How many gay characters do you see on current sitcoms?

SARAH: Uh....

ALAN: None. It's okay to watch bigots. Or straight men wearing dresses to get out of the army. But American households must be shielded from those deviant males who dare to watch "Charlie's Angels" for the plot.

SARAH: I know. Like Batman and Robin are just "pals" who dress up in Spandex suits and hang out together in a secret cave.

ALAN: The point is, I don't get to write for someone like me. Not that that's a prerequisite. If we were on your "Saturday Night" we'd be writing for giant bees, and samurais, but just once it would be nice to write in my voice.

SARAH: It's what we keep talkin' about—someday we'll create our own show and do that.

ALAN: Y'know what? Maybe if we took a moment to picture that it might re-energize us.

SARAH: Right. Okay. (*Beat.*) We get our first Emmys. We're standing on that stage. Me in a pastel Halston gown, you in Elton John's Captain Fantastic suit just to piss off your mother.

ALAN: We thank the cast, our staff, the network for "letting a couple of crazy young dreamers create a groundbreaking show that

celebrates alternative lifestyles and is changing the thinking of America.”

SARAH: Wow. Really?

ALAN: We also win a Peabody.

SARAH: Sure. Why not? But for now... (*Acceptance speech.*) We thank “Wolfman Bruce” and say “fuck you” to Doug Manoogalararian ‘cause for once we have something he doesn’t.

ALAN: I love it, I love it. Yes. We’re the best.

SARAH: We are the best.

ALAN: Now, turning back to the script, George says, (*Imitating.*) “Weezy....”

They return to silence. Neither can think of a line. Finally:

SARAH: We suck.

ALAN: So it would appear.

SARAH: Look, I’m pooped. Let’s call it a night.

ALAN: What? We have to finish this.

SARAH: We’ve been slaving over it for two weeks and we’re at the point where we can’t write one joke. Let’s pick it up tomorrow.

ALAN: Maybe we should take the scene another way. Not go for laughs. George has lost confidence in himself—that’s the point of our episode, right? What if he shared his true feelings?

SARAH: True feelings? Alan, this is “the Jeffersons.” Last week George confessed his love for possum stew.

ALAN: Well, we somehow have to power through this.

SARAH: We’ll be fresh tomorrow.

ALAN: The days are passing.

SARAH: Don’t you think I know that? It’s now been ten months, one week, and two days! I had a dream last night that I was in a threesome with Ronald McDonald and Nixon.

ALAN: Sarah, you’ve got to end this.

SARAH: I know. (*Shudders.*) Nixon!

ALAN: Seriously. Go into any frat house and grab the first boy who doesn’t throw up on you.

SARAH: No. We’ve been through this. It has to be someone I know. Someone who gets me and has my best interests at heart. You’d think in ten months, one week, and two days in a city the size of Los

Angeles at least four of them would fall out of palm trees. This is nuts! I'm going insane! I let Ronald McDonald go down on me with his rubber nose!

ALAN: Okay, Sarah, get up. Come with me.

SARAH: Where we goin'?

He leads her to the couch where they sit and face each other. He takes a beat to formulate just how he's going to broach this subject. Then:

ALAN: I've been thinking about this for a while now. It's a little out there, but I think it might solve many problems. You need to have sex with someone who cares about you, and I need you to once again be the Sarah who could come up with ten jokes in eleven seconds.

SARAH: So what are you saying?

ALAN: I'm saying I volunteer.

SARAH: What?

ALAN: I'm saying you and I should consummate. There won't be any of the usual complications that invariably follow in heterosexual relationships. It will be purely physical and loving. You can let out all that anxiety and frustration. We share a smoke, bask in our post coital glow, then dive back into the second act.

SARAH: You're serious?

ALAN: Yes, I am.

SARAH: Alan, that's very sweet but... *(It's absurd.)* really?

ALAN: Yes. This is something you need. It's eating away at you. Your growling is scaring the neighbors. I see what you're saying that to just sleep with anybody would only make you feel worse. So why not turn to your best friend? What could be better for an uncomplicated relationship than someone who's not attracted to you?

SARAH: Look, Alan, sleeping with me is a lovely gesture. Most good friends aren't that considerate. But you and I go back and... *(A thought occurs.)* can you even?

ALAN: What do you mean? Can I perform? Of course. I've been with a woman before.

SARAH: You have? When?

ALAN: High School Drama Club. Twenty hot girls, three boys. Even the gay guys got lucky. Meanwhile, five hundred horndogs all go after the same cheerleader. Straight males are such idiots.

SARAH: So how did it go... with a girl?

ALAN: I did so well that on my acting resume I listed it under "special skills."

SARAH: (*Laughs, then.*) I do love you, but—this is looney...

ALAN: Ten months, one week, two days...

SARAH: You know, you're not the first person to suggest we sleep together?

ALAN: Oh God. My mother?

SARAH: She offered to pay off my student loans.

ALAN: That is beyond appalling. On the other hand, she does have a birthday coming up.

SARAH: Okay. I'm not saying "yes." But let's maybe fool around a little. See where it goes, okay? I can't believe I'm saying this.

ALAN: Ooooh. Heavy petting. Yes, let's!

SARAH: Since it's been awhile since you were with a woman, what can I do to help get you sexually stimulated?

ALAN: Read lines from "Arsenic and Old Lace."

SARAH: (*Laughs, then.*) Tell ya what, let's start with a kiss.

ALAN: (*Impressed.*) You've done this before.

SARAH: Shut up.

They lean in and share a long kiss.

SARAH: Mmmmmmmm. Nice.

ALAN: You too.

SARAH: Who were you imagining?

ALAN: What do you mean?

SARAH: During the kiss. Who were you imagining?

ALAN: It couldn't be you??

SARAH: Not with that smooch. Yum.

ALAN: Who were you imagining?

SARAH: Paul Newman.

ALAN: (*Feigning amazement.*) Me too!

They kiss again.

SARAH: Now it's you.

ALAN: Now it's Clint Eastwood.

She laughs. One more kiss.

ALAN: You.

SARAH: You.

They begin to make out. But they're both self-conscious, not sure where to put their hands, what to grope. Get as much comic mileage as you can out of this, and then SARAH pulls back.

SARAH: *(Imitating George.)* "Weezy, you spent twenty dollars on a book? Why didn't you just see the movie?" And Weezy says, "Learning to Quilt?"

ALAN: Yes! I love it.

They both spring from the couch and return to the table. SARAH types in the line.

ALAN: And George says, "Weezy, for ten cents you can get a pamphlet called 'Learning to Sew.'"

SARAH laughs. They share a smile, then SARAH puts her hand on ALAN'S.

SARAH: Thank you for trying.

ALAN: Hey, it's what partners do.

SARAH: Not really. But thanks.

DOUG enters followed by BOBBY.

BOBBY: You can't run him over with your car. He's your boss. Besides, this is LA. Who walks?

DOUG: I don't care. He's banging Linda.

BOBBY: He's your program director. The man hired you, gave you the break of your life.

DOUG: Oh, so I'm just supposed to take it? He steals my girl, the only one I've ever loved, and I'm supposed to just lay down and let it happen?

BOBBY: Yes!

DOUG: Well, I can't do that. Buzz Baron. What kind of name is Buzz Baron? Who's he trying to impress? Roger Ramjet?

BOBBY: She's not your girl.

DOUG: I'm way less mercurial than I was a month ago.

BOBBY: This is crazy.

ALAN: Roger Ramjet would be a great gay porno name.

DOUG: And what about all that shit that she didn't want to get involved with anyone she worked with? What, did he promise her a promotion? "Service me for six months and you can drive the prize van."

SARAH: Oh, that elusive glass ceiling.

BOBBY: So bang someone else.

DOUG: I do. Practically every night. If I don't get it at least four or five times a week I can't function.

As if SARAH wasn't frustrated enough:

SARAH: A week? Did he say a week?

SARAH begins growling.

ALAN: Heel.

DOUG: But it's not her. I keep seeing this image in my mind. (*Really milking it.*) The two of them together, naked, undulating, thrusting, her legs wrapped around him, breathing heavy, almost gasping, sweat pouring off both of them, practically melding into one.

A beat and then SARAH snaps. She grabs the cable box with both hands and would crash it over DOUG'S head if the cord wasn't attached and ALAN didn't grab her. NOTE: This section moves very fast. The dialogue almost overlaps.

ALAN: Whoa! Easy!

DOUG: What the hell?

SARAH: One clonk! One good clonk!

ALAN: Give me the box.

SARAH: Not until he's dead.

BOBBY: This isn't the way.

DOUG: What'd I do?

ALAN: Sarah, that box is rented.

SARAH: You couldn't have gotten a longer cord?

ALAN: (*Re cable box.*) Let me have it.

SARAH: (*To DOUG.*) Come closer you coward!

DOUG: What'd I do?

SARAH: Undulating, sweating, legs every which way.

DOUG: Oh. Okay. I get it now.

ALAN: Sarah, I'm going to lose my deposit!

SARAH finally releases the box. ALAN returns it to the top of the TV.

ALAN: Thank you.

DOUG: Listen, Sarah. I'm sorry. I forgot about your... noble experiment. I usually don't mind being an asshole, but only to people I think are bigger assholes—which is pretty much everybody. But when there's someone I respect—like you... and Bobby... and Alan's getting there—I feel bad if I crossed a line. So mea culpa.

SARAH: Well... okay. Thanks. It's nice to see there's a human side to you—

DOUG: Thank you.

SARAH: Buried way down deep inside there, hidden in a teeny tiny crevice—

DOUG: Got it.

SARAH: Undetectable by microscopic equipment so fine that—

DOUG: Stop already. I'm blushing.

ALAN: Sarah, I'm getting a drink and you're coming with me. I don't care if we have to go to a bar where there are women.

SARAH: I'm there.

DOUG: Wait. I have something for you. I know this won't totally make up for my insensitivity, but it's from the heart.

DOUG ducks into his bedroom.

BOBBY: This is unbelievable. He never gives gifts.

DOUG re-enters with a KHJ T-shirt.

DOUG: Here. It's a real collector's item.

SARAH: Gee. A KHJ T-shirt.

DOUG: The only way to get one is to lose one of our contests.

SARAH: Oh wow! Thank you. My grandmother used to have a name for a treasure like this.

DOUG: What was it?

SARAH: Schmatah.

DOUG: I also have jewelry but that's for Linda.

SARAH: No, no, this is fine. Anything more than a stolen giveaway item would be inappropriate.

DOUG laughs. ALAN crosses to the front door.

ALAN: *(A la George Jefferson, to SARAH.)* "Weezy, get your own self over here. We gotta go."

SARAH: Yes, George. You're such a noodge. *(To DOUG.)* Thanks again.

ALAN and SARAH exit. Before the door shuts completely, we hear:

SARAH: *(Offstage.)* "Made in Bhutan." Not even China.

SFX: The phone rings. They ignore it.

BOBBY: Does Buzz know how you feel about this? Because this could get you fired.

DOUG: Of course not. Am I an imbecile? He thinks the goat delivered to his apartment was just a shipping snafu. Every day for a week.

SFX: A beep, then:

LINDA: *(Voiceover.)* Doug? It's Linda. I know that's you calling and hanging up. Please stop doing that. I don't get it. You're so talented

and funny. Just be nice and we can be friends. Okay? Well, have a nice day and STOP IT.

BOBBY: Oh, man. That is not cool. Not cool at all.

DOUG: Sometimes I just want to hear her voice. (*Re recording.*) Now I have this.

BOBBY: What is wrong with you? I've got a real jones for Sarah, probably more than you and Linda. We're talking love with a capital L, my friend. I'd marry her even if she wanted to raise our kids reform. But you don't see me doing psycho shit.

DOUG: No, you're right. This woman should not have this much control over me.

BOBBY: Absolutely.

DOUG: Let me hear it one more time.

BOBBY: No!

DOUG reaches for the machine. BOBBY blocks him and DOUG backs off.

BOBBY: At least you get calls. Another day goes by without hearing from "the Tonight Show."

DOUG: You still doing the same material?

BOBBY: Well, yeah. But I'm always tweaking it, y'know. Still trying to nail down my Jewish persona. Woody Allen is the cerebral Jew, Richard Lewis is the neurotic Jew, Robert Klein is the frustrated Jew, Mel Brooks is the crazy Jew, Jackie Mason is the Jew Jew. I had been the Long Island Jew, the self-loathing Jew, the delicatessen Jew, and now I'm the observational Jew.

DOUG: Jesus, what's left?

BOBBY: Just the happy-go-lucky Jew but there's no such thing.

DOUG: Okay, so let me hear some of your routine.

BOBBY: Right now?

DOUG: Yeah. Pretend I'm a "Tonight Show" producer. (*A la Johnny Carson.*) "Fred, find me some new blood. A Jew who can observe things."

BOBBY: All right. Let's see. (*Considers a beat.*) Okay. Got it. "Have you ever been to one of those 'Same Day' Cleaners? I think their idea of a 'day' is the same as 'God created the world in seven days'."

So yeah, it's a 'day' but give or take three billion years. Yeah, it's unbelievable.

And have you noticed that on every shirt you get back there's a note saying they found a stain they couldn't get out? On TV you watch those Tide commercials—they're taking out blood, tar, axle grease, wine stains from the third century. But at the 'Same Day' Cleaners a smudge of dust, they're stymied. Throw the shirt away. I'm telling you, it's unbelievable.

DOUG: Okay, I think I get the gist of the hilarity.

BOBBY: And...?

DOUG: It's fine. But may I make a suggestion? Another completely different way to go?

BOBBY: Move to Michigan and teach middle school?

DOUG: No. Go to the market, get a bunch of packs of gum.

BOBBY: What?

DOUG: Then get up on stage and say, "Hey, who would like a stick of gum?" Lots of people are going to raise their hands. So you take your mic, go into the audience, hand out the gum and chat with the folks.

BOBBY: Are you having a brain aneurism?

DOUG: Look, you're naturally funny. You say hilarious goofy things when you're not trying. So just be yourself. Ask people where they're from, schmooze. I bet you'll get more laughs and if you're looking to do something no one else is doing, I guarantee you that's it.

BOBBY: So you're saying I should just go up there and wing it?

DOUG: Yes. Bobby, you're better than your material. And all these personas you're trying on—none of them are you. You win an audience by being authentic. Keeping it real.

BOBBY: Doug, with all due respect, you have no idea what it's like standing on that stage.

DOUG: I talk to fifty-thousand people every afternoon.

BOBBY: Yeah, but it's not the same. You don't see them. You can't tell if they're not laughing. Not me. When I'm on stage they're right there. In my face. You either make them laugh or they hate you. That glare. Oh man, that glare. Like you accidentally blew up their motor home. And their silence is so deafening you can hear a kitten

peeing on cotton. Fifty thousand pairs of ears is much easier to please than twenty pairs of eyes.

DOUG: So why do you do it?

BOBBY: 'Cause it's my way of serving God. My people believe that humor is the balancing pole of the tightrope of life, and Jews have always used humor to remain upright. If I can make people happy, lessen their burdens, then this gift of laughter will be used for good. I just hope I'm not fifty working cruise ships and making balloon animals during the day.

DOUG: Okay, well, good luck then.

BOBBY: I'd like to see you try it.

DOUG: (*Suave French accent.*) Vill it impress ze mademoiselle?

BOBBY: Linda again? Jesus! Y'know, normally I wish I were you. But right now, this minute, I don't. So thank you, man, because it's like the weight of the world has been lifted off my shoulders. What a great feeling.

DOUG: You're right not to envy me. The one thing I want in the entire world I can't have.

BOBBY: (*A little too pleased.*) Yeah. Ain't it a shame?

DOUG crosses to his bedroom. As he exits:

DOUG: Jeez, you'd think getting a star on the Hollywood Walk-of-Fame would mean something to her.

BOBBY: Right. (*Realizing.*) Wait. What? Fuck!

Fade out.

END OF ACT ONE

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OUR TIME

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