

Hubby Holidays!

(act one)

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SAN DIEGO CITY - ESTABLISHING - DAY

One block inland from sand and surf, sky scrapers brighten the city with Christmas decorations.

FURTHER INLAND

half a mile is QUALCOMM STADIUM, where yellow lightening-bolts light up a gigantic marquee that reads:

"CHARGERS VS. RAIDERS, NOON SATURDAY"

NEARBY

a ten-lane freeway flows out of the city to

SUBURBIA

where a large construction site comes into view.

EXT. VON BRAUN CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

A ten acre tract of middle-class homes, half-framed.

- SUPER: "POWAY, CALIFORNIA. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30" -

INT. VON BRAUN CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Inside one partially-framed house, a boom box plays CHRISTMAS MUSIC. MATT VON BRAUN (28) sings along, off-key, crawls on all fours, and uses a builder's level to check the flooring. Happy in his world where everything measures up.

CHAINSAW (O.S.)
... be yours, if you are caller
number nine, at 1-800-K-WOW-WEE!

Matt takes out his cell phone and dials.

INTERCUT:

INT. K-WOW BROADCAST HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Wearing a Santa hat, CHAINSAW (55) speaks into a microphone.

CHAINSAW
Kay doubleyou-oh-doubleyou. May I
have your name, please?

MATT

Matt Von Braun.

CHAINSAW

Matt Von Braun - you are caller
number nine!

MATT

All right!

CHAINSAW

Merry Christmas from K-WOW! How
long you been a Charger fan, Matt?

MATT

All my life, grew up in San Diego.

CHAINSAW

Great! Who're you gonna take with
you to the game?

MATT

My two brothers, Luther and Skip.

CHAINSAW

You're not married, Matt?

MATT

Yeah, but Mary Jo doesn't like
football. She'd rather take our two
daughters out shopping.

END INTERCUT

INT. SUPER K MART - DAY

CHRISTMAS CAROLS serenade the happy SHOPPERS. Identical twins
MAGGIE and MOLLY (5) run up to a bin full of underwear.
Maggie spies the only pack of pink undies, scoops it up.

MAGGIE

This is for Elena!

MOLLY

No it isn't, it's for Rosa!

MAGGIE

Is not!

MOLLY

Is too!

A feminine hand descends, open-palmed, between the twins.

LUTHER
 Communication and trust. These are
 the things that money can't buy.

Fiancee stares at a photo of a bridal dress, worth 8 Marbles.

FIANCEE
 Pookie, can you help me out?

Groom counts his marbles - 5 - then looks at a photo of a
 stereo system worth 4 marbles.

GROOM
 How much you need?

FIANCEE
 Just two more, Pookie Bear.

Groom hesitates, finally forks over 2 marbles.

GROOM
 Okay... if you're happy, I'm happy.

She plunks 6 marbles in her jar, peels off the dress, sticks
 it on her paper doll. Glows.

LUTHER
 You see? Communication and trust -
 if you work on these two things,
 everything else falls into place.

MINUTES LATER

Luther ushers the couple outside, re-enters, shuts the door.
 The phone RINGS. He picks it up, listens.

LUTHER
 Fifty yard line! Press box? Way to
 go, little brother!

INTERCUT:

EXT. VON BRAUN CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

Matt walks away from other WORKERS, cell to his ear.

MATT
 Pick you up at nine?

LUTHER
 Wait a minute...

Luther flips a page on his desk calendar, reads -

LUTHER
December first... "Bless a Child?"

MATT
Man! It's that trip to Mexico to help those orphan kids. Shoot! Mary Jo signed us all up to go.

LUTHER
Oh... yes.

MATT
We are so screwed.

LUTHER
Lorraine couldn't stop talking about those "darling kids" this morning. Taking Larry and Billy out shopping for them, I think.

END INTERCUT

INT. FAO SCHWARZ TOY STORE - DAY

Enter LORRAINE (36) the woman who does it all - career, marriage, mothering. With bespectacled scientist LARRY (11) and critter-loving BILLY (9).

Lorraine holds up two Bless-a-Child papers, studies photos of two Mexican boys: "Pedro, age 11, likes cars and swimming." And "Roberto, age 9, likes soccer and dinosaurs."

BILLY
Mom, where's the pet department?

LORRAINE
Don't even start, Billy.

BILLY
Rats!

LORRAINE
And snakes and hamsters, too, darling, but not today - and in my house, not ever. The only animals I allow in my house, are children.

INT. FAO SCHWARZ TOY STORE - LATER

Lorraine watches as the CASHIER (18) reads the total -

CASHIER

One sixty-eight, fifty-three.

She bags a remote-control car, a leather soccer ball, a huge T. Rex, and deluxe swim fins.

Lorraine opens her wallet, flips through a bunch of credit cards, selects one, hands it over, turns to her boys.

LORRAINE

If Dad asks you how much we spent,
tell him you don't remember.

INT. SKIP AND SUSIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Shopping bags and Bless-a-Child papers litter the floor of a modest home, where SUSIE VON BRAUN (32) wraps presents with skater SCOOTER (11) and artist SAMMY (8).

Over a leotard and tights, Susie wears a blue work shirt, with "MISS SUSIE" embroidered above the pocket. Everything is graceful about Susie - except her temper.

Sammy lies on the floor, arranges the ribbons into designs.

Wearing a Chargers jersey with "RIVERS" and "17" on the back, Scooter dumps new boxer shorts on the floor, picks up a laundry pen.

SCOOTER

How do you spell "Eleazer."

SUSIE

E-L-E-A-Z-E-R.

SAMMY

Must be weird to have your name on
all your clothes. Kinda like being
at camp, only all the time.

SCOOTER

Dude, if it was a Philip Rivers
camp, Dad would write his name on
his forehead, just so he could go!

EXT. MABEL'S MINI MARKET, PARKING LOT - DAY

SKIP VON BRAUN (31) exits his car, followed by Matt and Luther. Skip's car is a rolling advertisement for the Chargers, especially Philip Rivers, #17.

Skip wears a conservative Century 21 Realtor's jacket and name plate. But his powder blue tie is wild - covered with footballs and lightening bolts.

As Team Von Braun saunters up to the market, Skip and Matt play catch with an invisible football.

INT. MABEL'S MINI MARKET - MINUTES LATER

Team Von Braun wait at the checkout. Faces grim. Buying beef stew, creamed corn, and Limburger cheese.

Skip speaks into an imaginary microphone, a la Peter Parker -

SKIP

"I made a choice to live a life of responsibility. A life she can never be a part of. Who am I? I am Spider-Man."

(then)

God, I hope Susie doesn't find out.

LUTHER

Or Lorraine! I'm feeling guilty, already.

MATT

Guilt I can live with. But the Chargers - man, I can't live without the Chargers.

SKIP

Fifty yard line!

MATT

Press box!

SKIP

And another shotgun touchdown pass - from Philip Rivers, QB!

EXT. MATT AND MARY JO'S HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A rambling ranch, a little outdated.

INT. MATT AND MARY JO'S HOUSE, THE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Matt locks the door, reaches under the sink. Pulls out his groceries and a pitcher. He unwraps the Limburger - phew! - looks at the door and MOANS. Then silently, he snickers.

He opens the cans, dumps them in the pitcher, MOANS LOUDER. Runs water into the pitcher, GAGS himself. Kneels by the toilet, GAGS again, then "HEAVES" like a pro.

Brown and yellow chunks pour into the toilet bowl. Matt holds the pitcher aloft and alternately POURS and HEAVES.

MATT

Oh God!

MARY JO (O.S.)

Matthew?

He smiles.

INT. LUTHER AND LORRAINE'S HOUSE, THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Luther staggers out of the bathroom, holding his stomach. Lorraine watches, full of concern.

INT. SKIP AND SUSIE'S HOUSE, THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Skip writhes on the bed, doubled up in pain. Susie watches. He crawls into the bathroom, shuts the door.

EXT. LUTHERAN CHURCH OF POWAY - DAY

The door to the Ladies' Room opens and Mary Jo rushes out, wearing a Santa hat. She hustles

TO THE PARKING LOT

boards the church bus, mounts the driver's seat, and drives

TO THE FRONT OF THE CHURCH

and up to a group of MERRYMAKERS - including all six Von Braun Kids. Waiting with gifts, a Christmas tree, four coolers, a gigantic barbecue, and some soccer balls.

INT. CHURCH BUS - CONTINUOUS

REV. JOHN (55) pokes his head inside the bus.

REV. JOHN

Thank God! I thought Matt was our only other driver, besides me.

MARY JO

Been drivin' tractors since I was
in pig tails.

REV. JOHN

If I didn't have tickets for the
Charger game, I'd be going with
you. You know that, don't you?

MARY JO

Now don't you fret, Reverend John.

She looks out at Larry, Billy, Scooter and Sammy who help
Lorraine and Susie load the luggage compartment.

MARY JO

I just wish one of us could "speako
el *Espanol*," like Matthew.

REV. JOHN

Right! Gotta run - kickoff's at
noon, and there's always traffic.
I'll be praying for your husbands!

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN BAJA, MEXICO - DA

The bus bounces down the road, next to a deserted beach.

CHILDREN'S VOICES (O.S.)

Rudolph, with your nose so bright,
won't you guide my sleigh tonight!

KERPOW! The bus fishtails back and forth, skids, slows down,
stops. A trail of shredded tire remnants litters the dirt.

MARY JO (O.S.)

Nobody panic!

INT. CHURCH BUS - CONTINUOUS

Everybody panics.

INT. QUALCOMM STADIUM PRESS BOX - DAY

Chainsaw ushers Team Von Braun into the room - past a row of
REPORTERS in headsets - and seats the brothers at an expanse
of window. They look out to see

CHARGER GIRLS dancing to the rockin' music.

MATT

All right!

EXT. DIRT ROAD IN BAJA, MEXICO - DAY

Mary Jo, Lorraine, Scooter and Larry kneel in the dirt, inspect the shredded tire. A jack, tire iron, and spare tire lie nearby. Scooter frowns.

SCOOTER

Dad always calls Triple A.

SUSIE (O.S.)

Look! Over there! I see horses!

Susie stands on the beach and points. In the distance, a group of HORSEBACK RIDERS approaches. The LEAD RIDER (50) waves his hat in the air, and the group charges forward.

LORRAINE

Oh my God --

MARY JO

Banditos! Everybody in the bus,
run!

A wild scramble. Mary Jo shoves the tire iron at Lorraine, grabs the jack for herself, then hurries inside the bus.

ON THE BEACH

sits Sammy - unaware - drawing in the sand.

Susie leaps off the bus, sails over three sand-drifts, scoops up her son, and charges back to safety.

INT./EXT. CHURCH BUS - CONTINUOUS

Mary Jo cranks the engine, hollers -

MARY JO

We're gonna make a run for it!

Lorraine crouches in the aisle next to Mary Jo, who CRUNCHES the gears, and the bus lurches forward.

MARY JO

I wouldn't mind a few prayers right
about now!

The Lead Rider, 100 yards in front of the bus, narrows his gap by the seconds. Other Riders join him, till suddenly the whole band stands in front of the bus and blocks it.

LORRAINE

Good Lord almighty.

The Lead Rider is the image of Pancho Villa - moustache, gold tooth, serape. But the other riders are young - BOYS and GIRLS. Most are barefoot, smiling. Some are on donkeys. One LITTLE GIRL arrives late, stops, and smiles up at the bus.

Mary Jo grins out the window, whispers to Lorraine -

MARY JO

They bring along kids, so you don't think they have *pistoles*!

The Lead Rider dismounts, takes off his hat and -

MAGGIE (O.S.)

It's Elena!

Maggie stands, points at the Little Girl on the donkey and waves her Bless-a-Child sheet in the air.

MAGGIE

Elena's come to help us!

The children in the bus CHEER. Mary Jo and Lorraine snicker. Behind them, happy kids tumble out of the bus, but these two gals are in a world of their own.

Mary Jo points her finger at Lorraine and guffaws.

MARY JO

We've seen too many cowboy movies!

Lorraine leans forward, cackling, and crosses her legs.

LORRAINE

I have to peeeeeeeeeee!

INT. CHARGER STADIUM, HALLWAY - DAY

The Men's Room door opens, and Matt walks out, then spies

Reverend John

coming down the hallway.

Matt pivots, runs right into a CODGER with a cane.

Matt tries to get past him, but Codger fends Matt off with his cane, squirrels him out into the middle of the hallway, then stalks off.

Alarmed, Matt pulls his shirt over his head, and gropes his way back to the bathroom, just as --

Six BOYS (8-9) in Pop Warner uniforms run out the door.

Matt ricochets from Boy - to wall - and back again, like a pinball. Dazed and confused, he drops onto all fours, feels his way along the wall, enters the first door he finds...

INT. CHARGER STADIUM, LADIES ROOM - CONTINUOUS

... and crawls inside. He pulls his shirt down and sees - FEMALE LEGS. Looks up - four FEMALE FACES gaze back at him.

MATT

Whoops!

He crawls back to the door and peeks into the hallway.

Reverend John is only a few feet away.

Matt ducks back inside, stands, comes face-to-face with a huge BIKER CHICK (40). Huge antlers on her Chargers ballcap.

BIKER CHICK

You got some kinda problem, buddy?

MATT

No!

Biker Chick folds her arms, stares.

MATT

Ah - my glasses - I lost them -
This isn't the press box?

INT. CHARGER STADIUM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Biker Chick carries Matt out of the Ladies Room, dumps him into a trash can, and saunters back.

Ten feet down the hallway stands Reverend John. CRASH! He looks over and spies

Matt's legs sticking out the can, as it rolls down the hall.

A SECURITY GUARD (65) rushes over. Reverend John cranes his neck, moves closer. Matt struggles to get out of the can.

GUARD

Hold on! I got ya, now!

Like a horse pulling a plow, Guard pulls Matt out. Matt's face is covered with garbage. He GAGS. Guard hands him a handkerchief. He GAGS again.

GUARD

Who did this to you?

Matt clamps his hand over his mouth, runs for the Men's Room.

Reverend John watches him go, interested, thoughtful.

EXT. OUR LADY OF ROSARITO CHILDREN'S HOME - DAY

A big cookout. Lorraine throws dogs and burgers onto a grill, while Susie shakes her head and sighs.

SUSIE

Look at all those nitrates and cholesterol.

LORRAINE

Yum!

SUSIE

We came all this way just to poison these innocent little children.

Behind them, adobe buildings and a chapel encircle a courtyard. Nearby, sits the church bus, new tire in place.

Scooter, Larry, Sammy, PEDRO (11), and ROBERTO (9) exit the bus, carrying gifts. Scooter stops to rest.

SCOOTER

If Dad wasn't home puking his guts out, we'd be finished by now, and playing soccer with the rug rats.

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH OF POWAY - DAY

Matt, bandaid on one eyebrow, sits in a pew beside Mary Jo.

They watch The Ideal Family up front - DAD (45), MOM (44), SON (16). Dressed in matching Christmas clothes.

On the altar, four white candles encircle one red candle. Mom and Son hold a butane fire-lighter up to the first white candle, as Dad steps up to the podium and reads -

DAD

"The virgin's name was Mary. The angel said to her, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.'"

A GRANDMA (65) stands, snaps a photo. On the third try, Mom and Son finally light the candle. APPLAUSE. They sit down.

Reverend John walks to the pulpit.

REV. JOHN

On the first Sunday of advent, I always like to tell the Christmas story. But first, I would like to say a word about promises. Reading from the book of Numbers, chapter thirty-two, verse twenty-three.

Mary Jo opens her Bible and Matt looks over her shoulder.

REV. JOHN

"If you fail to keep your promises, you will be sinning against the Lord; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out."

Matt freezes.

REV. JOHN

How many of us have broken our promises to one another? Promises we fully intended to keep - until something better came along?

He scans the room. Matt bends over to tie his shoe.

REV. JOHN

Let us pray.

Stuck, Matt prays over his shoe.

REV. JOHN

Father, help us to keep the promises we make, and to make only the promises we can keep. And help us all to remember that confession is still good for the soul. Amen.

Matt surfaces. He is a buck deer, caught in the headlights.

INT./EXT. MATT'S WORK TRUCK - DAY

Matt sits in his truck, in his driveway, talks on his cell.

MATT

He's really putting on the pressure, Luther. And if I don't tell her, then he will!

(listens, nods)

Yeah, and after Mary Jo calls Lorraine, then Lorraine will call Susie - and we're all screwed!

Matt hangs up, exits his truck, prepares to enter his home -

MATT

Confession might be good for the soul, but it's sure gonna be bad for my marriage.

INT. MATT AND MARY JO'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mary Jo sits at the table, reading an ad circular.

Matt enters, walks up behind her, rubs her shoulders.

MATT

Yesterday was hard on you, Baby. Why don't we go out for Chinese, just the two of us?

INT. SZECHWAN GARDENS - NIGHT

An expensive, romantic restaurant. A laughing Buddha, adorned with Christmas lights, graces the center of the room.

IN A QUIET CORNER

Mary Jo and Matt sit in a candle-lit booth, a steaming meal before them. Matt raises his wine, clinks glasses with his bride, and gulps down some courage.

AT A BOOTH NEAR THE DOOR

Luther and Lorraine study their menus.

LUTHER

Order whatever you want, Sweetheart. Nothing's too good for my girl.

Lorraine is surprised, suspicious - what's up with Scrooge?

IN ANOTHER CORNER OF THE RESTAURANT

A WAITRESS (25) shows Skip and Susie the dessert cart. Skip takes a piece of a coconut cream pie. Then, as Sean Connery:

SKIP
Mmmmm - just the way I like it.
Shaken, not stirred.

He inserts a bite into his mouth. Blows Susie a gooey kiss.

AT MATT AND MARY JO'S BOOTH

Matt drains his wineglass, begins -

MATT
I'm sorry you had to go without me,
Baby.

MARY JO
That's all right Sugar, it wasn't
your fault.

MATT
Ah... yes it was.

INTERCUT:

SPLIT SCREEN IN HALF:

AT LUTHER AND LORRAINE'S BOOTH

LUTHER
We weren't sick, we faked it.

LORRAINE
You... faked it!?

INTERCUT:

SPLIT SCREEN INTO THIRDS:

AT SKIP AND SUSIE'S TABLE

SKIP
Yeah, we all did... but it wasn't
my idea, it was Matt's!

SUSIE
Fake barfing?! But why would you --

MATT

Let me finish - please! Friday
afternoon, I won three tickets to
the Charger game, only I forgot all
about the orphans.

MARY JO

You forgot!?

LORRAINE

About the orphans?

LUTHER

Yes, and after we talked it over,
Skip said he thought our wives
might be upset if we cancelled --

LORRAINE

Upset?!

SKIP

So, we kinda faked being sick,
instead of, you know, telling you
the truth. And then we kinda went
to the Charger game, while you guys
were ah... in Mexico. Ah... sorry?

Susie stands - smashes Skip's dessert in his face.

MATT

I had to tell you Baby, cuz I just
can't keep secrets from the woman I
love.

Mary Jo runs off, SCREAMING.

END INTERCUT

END SPLIT SCREEN

INT. SZECHWAN LADIES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mary Jo bursts in the door and runs into a stall. She
collapses against the door, in tears.

From the stall next door, she hears SOBBING. She bends down,
peers under the stall, and sees red ballet slippers.

MARY JO

Susie?

SUSIE (O.S.)

Mary Jo!?

The bathroom door opens with a BANG and CURSES fill the air. Mary Jo and Susie stick their heads out of their stalls, see

Lorraine

freaking out in front of the mirror. They GASP.

LORRAINE
You!?! And you, too?

Three women stare at each other, as a realization sinks in.

MARY JO
Those little devils.

INT. DAIRY QUEEN - NIGHT

Mary Jo, Lorraine, and Susie sit at a table and slurp up chocolate blizzards - their collective drug of choice.

On a TV monitor in the corner, a UCLA FOOTBALL GAME plays.

MARY JO
You know what our problem is - we are too dang independent.

LORRAINE
We did just fine without them, at the orphanage.

SUSIE
We worked our butts off at the orphanage.

MARY JO
Because we're too dang independent!

Mary Jo glances at her watch, asks Lorraine -

MARY JO
Could I borrow your cell phone please? I have to call Matt.

SUSIE
No you don't have to call Matt!

LORRAINE
The twins will be just fine.

SUSIE
Make Matt squirm, for a change. We've gotta take advantage of every opportunity that comes our way.

LORRAINE

Yes! If only we could figure out how we could really capitalize on this one.

LATER

The football game continues, the gals sip coffee.

SUSIE

I think I'm going into sugar shock.

LORRAINE

I was going to buy Christmas presents today, but my feet hurt from standing at that grill, yesterday. Luther was thrilled that I couldn't go shopping.

(sighs)

It's hard to have the Christmas spirit, when you live with Ebenezer Scrooge.

SUSIE

Wait a minute! Wait just a minute. Why do we have to do all the Christmas shopping?

MARY JO

Cuz we like it?

SUSIE

I buy all the presents, every year, even my own!

MARY JO

Me, too.

SUSIE

Then I lug 'em all home, wrap 'em up, and write on every one of 'em, "Love, from Skip and Susie." Hah! Skippy Boy doesn't know what he's giving you, 'till you open it up, and show it to him! The big phony.

LORRAINE

I know what the fellas owe us! They owe us Christmas!

MARY JO

Dang! That's thinking big.

SUSIE

And not just the presents --

LORRAINE
But all the planning --

SUSIE
And the cleaning --

MARY JO
And the cookin', too!

LORRAINE
Oooh, we shouldn't forget the
Christmas cards!

They bask in the glow of mutual discovery, until -

MARY JO
Forget it! They might be feeling
guilty right about now, but they're
sure as heck not stupid. We can't
make them do Christmas. It's too
much dang work.

LORRAINE
Darn! I thought we had 'em!

SUSIE
Skippy could care less, whether or
not Christmas ever even happened --
let alone having to make it happen.

MARY JO
Hold your horses! I got an idea.

LORRAINE
Oooh, what's on your devious little
mind, girlfriend?

The three women put their heads together and huddle close.

UCLA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Time out, UCLA!

While the ladies rustle up a new game plan, the sound track
from the game swells. Fans CHEER, the band plays, and fans
yell, "FIGHT TEAM FIGHT!" Until all quiets down again.

The ladies sit back, amazed.

LORRAINE
It just might work!

UCLA ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
And the team is coming back onto
the field.

EXT. A CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE SEA - NIGHT

A moonlit night. Lorraine's pink Buick pulls off the road, onto the cliff. The women hop out - Lorraine with champagne. Susie with cups.

MARY JO

Matthew used to bring me here when we were dating.

LORRAINE

Really? Luther told me nobody else ever came here.

They look at Susie.

SUSIE

Yep! Been here before --
 (holds up a hand)
 -- didn't do that.

Guffaws. Lorraine POPS the cork. Susie gives each woman a cup, and Lorraine pours champagne. Suddenly, Mary Jo panics -

MARY JO

Good Lord! What if Matthew messes up Christmas?

Susie and Lorraine shrug - who cares!

MARY JO

But my girls! What if Santa doesn't...

LORRAINE

Mary Jo! Do you want to do Christmas, all by yourself, for the rest of your life?

MARY JO

No, but can't I help Matthew out just the teensiest little bit?

SUSIE

Okay, okay, let me think... I got it! We can help our guys - but only to the extent that they helped us, with the exact same things, last year. Okay?

MARY JO

Yeah. That sounds good.

SUSIE
And for me, that would be - *nada*.

LORRAINE
Then it's settled.
(holds up her cup)
This is the year that the wives...
do nothing!

Mary Jo WHISTLES, Susie WHOOPS.

LORRAINE
And the hubbies do Christmas!

SUSIE
Woo hoo! Happy Holidays!

LORRAINE
No... Hubby Holidays.

Drunk on giggles, they toast -

MARY JO/SUSIE/LORRAINE
Hubby Holidays!

INT. SKIP AND SUSIE'S MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Skip, shirtless at the mirror, bounces his pects.

SUSIE (O.S.)
Skippy?

SKIP
In here!

She enters. He scowls.

SKIP
You talking to me, yet?

INT. LUTHER AND LORRAINE'S BED - NIGHT

Lorraine joins Luther in bed.

LUTHER
So, do we have any money left,
after you walked out on me tonight?
Or do I have to sell one of our
boys, to make the mortgage payment.

LORRAINE
We need to talk.

INT. MATT AND MARY JO'S BED - NIGHT

Matt and Mary Jo lie in the dark, back to back, eyes open.

MARY JO
Matthew?

MATT
What.

MARY JO
Sorry about tonight.

MATT
Me too, Baby.

They turn, face one another, kiss.

MARY JO
It just hurt so bad, to think that
a stupid game was more important to
you than spending time with your
family.

MATT
Baby, you know that's not true.
Besides, I happen to love "that
stupid game."

MARY JO
More than you love your family?

MATT
(kisses her neck)
No.

MARY JO
Honest?

MATT
(kisses her shoulder)
Honest.

MARY JO
How do I know you're not lying?

Matt growls, sits up and...

INTERCUT:

SPLIT SCREEN IN HALF:

INT. SKIP AND SUSIE'S BED - CONTINUOUS

... Skip turns on the light and glares at Susie.

SKIP

You want honesty? I'll give you honesty! I honestly didn't want to tell you about the Charger game, because I knew you wouldn't want me to go.

SUSIE

Brilliant, Sherlock!

SKIP

And I wanted to avoid a big ugly scene like this one.

SUSIE

Well, nice try, Skippy Boy!

INTERCUT:

SPLIT SCREEN INTO THIRDS:

INT. LUTHER AND LORRAINE'S BED - CONTINUOUS

Luther and Lorraine argue -

LUTHER

You think football is just a waste of my time.

LORRAINE

I don't think - I know!

LUTHER

But to me, yesterday was the chance of a lifetime!

LORRAINE

Oh, please.

LUTHER

I mean, we had tickets to the press box!

MATT

I'm glad we went!

MARY JO

Glad?

SKIP

Yes! I'm thrilled, I'm deliriously happy!

SUSIE

But you lied to me.

LUTHER

I said I was sorry. What else do you want me to do - crawl on my belly and beg like a dog?

LORRAINE

Yes!

MARY JO

(in tears)

If you really loved me, you wouldn't want me to go down to Mexico all by myself... where I might get scurvy, or captured by banditos, or Lord knows --

MATT

Dysentery.

MARY JO

-- what?

MATT

They don't have scurvy in Mexico, they have dysentery.

MAR JO

I don't care! Don't go being smart, when I'm telling you my feelings!

SKIP

Oh God, just tell me what you want!

SUSIE

I want you to be sensitive, you moron!

SKIP

Touchy, feely stuff? I'm no good at that - that's what I married you for.

SUSIE

And I want you to do Christmas!

LUTHER

What!?

LORRAINE
I said, I want you to do Christmas.

LUTHER
I already do Christmas - I pay the bills.

LORRAINE
That's not what I meant, and you know it.

MARY JO
I want you to do all the shoppin', and wrap all the presents --

SUSIE
-- and plan all the parties, and send all the cards --

LORRAINE
-- and bake Christmas cookies! Everything! Instead of me.

MATT/SKIP/LUTHER
Why?

MARY JO/SUSIE/LORRAINE
Why!

LORRAINE
Because you need to know what it feels like to be me --

MARY JO
-- that's why!

MATT
I don't have time for all that fru-fru crap. I have a job.

MARY JO/SUSIE/LORRAINE
So do I!

SKIP
I am not playing Santa, just because you got your feelings hurt.

SUSIE
Fine! Then I am not spending Christmas with you.

MATT/SKIP/LUTHER
What?

MARY JO

As soon as school's out, I'm gonna
take my girls and go visit my mama
in Tennessee.

MATT

What!

LORRAINE

And I'll spend Christmas with my
mother.

LUTHER

You'd go to Florida?

SKIP

To Seattle?

MATT

Tennessee?

MATT/SKIP/LUTHER

Without me?

MARY JO/SUSIE/LORRAINE

Without you.

A beat.

MATT/SKIP/LUTHER

All right, go.

MARY JO/SUSIE/LORRAINE

I will.

MATT/SKIP/LUTHER

Good.

END INTERCUT

END SPLIT SCREEN

EXT. THE MAGIC WAND BEAUTY SALON - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A strip mall in old-town Poway. Painted on the salon window
is a cowgirl-style Mrs. Clause, who looks just like Mary Jo.

- SUPER: "MONDAY, DECEMBER 3" -

INT. THE MAGIC WAND BEAUTY SALON - DAY

SENTIMENTAL CHRISTMAS MUSIC from the CD player. Mary Jo tapes a string of lights around the mirror over her station.

Lorraine and Susie enter, plop onto the couch by the door.

Mary Jo sighs, sits in the barber's chair, rolls her eyes.

MARY JO

Well, my old rooster sure ain't no
mama hen.

LORRAINE

Ha! Neither is Luther.

SUSIE

Or Skippy Boy.

MARY JO

Matt won't budge one teensie little
inch. I think I hurt his pride.

LORRAINE

Whoa! How stupid can we be? We
forgot all about those Von Braun
male egos!

MARY JO

Oh, the ones we married 'em for --

SUSIE

That makes them all soooo easy to
live with.

LORRAINE

You know what? I think it's time
for a wake up call.

MARY JO

You're darn tootin', three of 'em.

INT. MATT AND MARY JO'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Matt and Mary Jo linger over the dinner table.

MARY JO

Sugar, I know there aren't many
guys out there who want to do
Christmas --

MATT

Show me just one!

MARY JO

-- but that doesn't mean you can't
be the first to try.

MATT

Mary Jo, I am a man. I don't like
shopping, I think wrapping presents
is stupid, and I am not going to
bake cookies. It just isn't me!

MARY JO

It'd make me powerful happy if
you'd just give it a try.

MATT

No! You might as well book your
reservations for Tennessee.

MARY JO

All right, Sugar, if you say so.

She walks to the phone and dials.

MARY JO

Hi, Pete? Mary Jo. I need three
round-trip tickets to Nashville.

INT. LUTHER VON BRAUN'S COUNSELLING OFFICE - DAY

Luther reads a book, "HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR SPOUSE."
The door opens, Lorraine enters. Luther scowls.

LUTHER

What.

LORRAINE

Which would you prefer - to drive
us to the airport for a 9:00 a.m.
flight, or a 1:00 p.m. flight?

LUTHER

I don't know!

LORRAINE

But I need to book the tickets now,
while they're still available.

LUTHER

Do whatever you want!

LORRAINE

(big smile)
Thank you, darling.

INT. SKIP AND SUSIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Skip fumes on the couch, sports page abandoned. He glares over at Susie - phone to her ear, calendar on her lap.

SUSIE

Either one is fine, Mom. The twenty-second or the twenty-third. Skip can drive us to the airport, whenever. Right, Skippy Boy?

EXT. VON BRAUN CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Matt studies blueprints at a makeshift table.

Skip and Luther drive up. Skip rolls down the window, barks -

SKIP

Get in!

EXT. PATIO OF MAMASITA'S MEXICAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Team Von Braun sits at a sun-bathed table, drinking beer.

SKIP

We are married to a three-headed monster. And no matter what we do, they're gonna win, cuz they've always got us outnumbered!

LUTHER

I've read about this! In third world countries - where the women work in the fields all day - all they talk about, all day long, is how to manipulate their men.

MATT

That's not fair!

LUTHER

It gets worse. Picture this: Three "civilized" women abandon their husbands - in the middle of what happens to be a very expensive restaurant - then head straight for the fields!

MATT

I thought they went to Dairy Queen.

LUTHER

And when they get back, they insist that their husbands take on a role which has traditionally been relegated to the females --

MATT

To do Christmas!

LUTHER

Exactly. And when the men say no, what do these three women do - the very next night, after a day out in the fields together?

MATT

They book airline tickets!

SKIP

Damn, they're good.

LUTHER

I hate to admit it, but we actually created this three-headed monster.

(off their looks)

When all of us decided to stay in Poway - and our wives bonded.

SKIP

Oh, that hurts.

MATT

(glowers at Skip)

I thought you were gonna move to Santa Barbara.

SKIP

I was. But little Susie Q didn't want to leave her girlfriends.

LUTHER

Aha! Female bonding - whole societies have crumbled because of it.

LATER

Sunlight fills the air, as the men finish eating.

MATT

Well I'm glad we went to that game, and I say, we stand our ground.

LUTHER
Have to.

SKIP
Fight to the finish.

The sunlight begins to fade.

SKIP
We could all get together Christmas
morning... for pizza.

MATT
Yeah.

LUTHER
Sounds good.

SKIP
Hang out...

MATT
Watch a little Jackie Chan...

SKIP
Shoot a few hoops...

LUTHER
It'll be... just... great...

The sunshine fades, all is gray. A BUSBOY (17) approaches.
The men are gray statues as he clears the dishes. Then -

MATT
How hard can it be?

LUTHER
To do Christmas?

MATT
Yeah. I mean, what's there to do?

SKIP
A few lights, a few presents --

MATT
We can do that.

LUTHER
Easy.

SKIP
So, what's all the fuss about?

MATT
I don't know.

Slowly, a ray of light penetrates the gloom.

SKIP

We can do it, if we want.

LUTHER

Of course.

SKIP

We can do anything we want!

LUTHER

Absolutely!

SKIP

Because --

Thumping the table, Skip creates a DRUMROLL. Luther and Matt join in. They're getting pumped! All eyes are on Skip - his head nods, the rhythm intensifies - until on his cue, three fists shoot out and meet, center-table.

SKIP/MATT/LUTHER

We da man!

Sunshine floods the scene.