VODKA BOREALIS

By Alex Wasowicz

punkstyle@yahoo.com

703.963.8277
EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY

The sign says STERLING GLEN ASSISTED LIVING ESTATES.
ELDERLY PEOPLE mingle about the quaint, well-kept grounds.
A STATION WAGON parks in a VISITOR space.
Zack (9) and Caleb (12) hop out, ready for action.

ZACK AND CALEB
Grandpa!

They race off across the parking lot.

ELLEN (38) and BRUCE (41) climb out, weary.

ELLEN
Kids!  Wait!

BRUCE
I’m telling you, we really don’t have the time.
(chacks watch)

ELLEN
I know, I know.  I’ll just give him his stupid paper and we’ll be out of here in five minutes.

She grabs a NEWSPAPER and heads after the kids.

BRUCE
Right behind you.  Just gotta check my email.

Bruce looks at his PDA and sighs.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

GRANDPA (77), a handsome old gentleman, pours a ridiculous amount of SYRUP onto a stack of PANCAKES.

Zack and Caleb barge into the room!

ZACK AND CALEB
Grandpa!

They stick to him like magnets, almost knocking him over!
GRAMPS
Oof! You little rascals!

They giggle as he tickles them!

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
You two get bigger every week!
And your ears get bigger!

He pulls a COIN out of Zack’s ear and hands it to him.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
And your noses get bigger!

He pulls a COIN out of Caleb’s nose and hands it to him.

The kids are thrilled.

Ellen arrives, out of breath.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
You brought the Times!

ELLEN
Of course. I know how important it is to you. Although I’ve never understood why.

He eagerly takes the newspaper from her.

ELLEN (CONT’D)
So, how’s everything?

Gramps scans the headlines.

GRAMPS
No complaints. Hey, anybody want a pancake?

Zack and Caleb each grab a pancake with their bare hands and stuff their faces.

Ellen dips her finger in some Syrup and licks it.

ELLEN
Mmm. Good syrup.

Gramps turns the page, and stops cold.

GRAMPS
(dread)
Oh no.
ELLEN
What’s wrong?
The kids exchange confused looks.

GRAMPS
The Borealis story!
He points to an article.

ELLEN
Huh?  Borealis?
Gramps takes a deep breath.

GRAMPS
Nobody panic.  Things might be okay.  As long as there’s no vodka ad.

He quickly flips through the pages.

As he holds the newspaper, we can see the back has a full-page ad for RED KREMLIN VODKA.

Bruce strolls in, still focused on his PDA.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Please, don’t let there be a vodka ad.  Please, oh please, don’t let there be a vodka ad.

Bruce and Ellen exchange worried looks.

BRUCE
What happens if there’s a vodka ad?

GRAMPS
You don’t want to know.

ZACK
(points)
Look, Grandpa!  On the back page!

Gramps discovers the vodka ad, and almost faints!

ELLEN
Uh.  Dad?

BRUCE
(whispers)
He’s lost his mind.
ELLEN
(whispers)
Shhh!

Gramps tries to think.

ELLEN (CONT’D)
Dad? Are you feeling okay?

GRAMPS
Quick! I need a pen and paper!

Zack and Caleb dash off in opposite directions!

BRUCE
(whispers)
He needs a straight jacket and a tranquilizer.

ELLEN
(whispers)
You’re not helping.

The kids instantly return. Zack has PAPER, Caleb has a PEN.

GRAMPS
Excellent!

Gramps writes quickly, almost mechanically.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
We must collect the following list of things.

Zack and Caleb are confused.

A crowd of interested ELDERLY PEOPLE starts to gather.

A STAFF MEMBER approaches Bruce and Ellen.

STAFF
Everything alright here?

Bruce looks at Ellen -- She bites her lip.

ZACK
What’s all this stuff for?

GRAMPS
It’s top secret. But there isn’t a moment to lose. If I don’t assemble these materials and complete my mission by noon tomorrow, we’ll all be dead!
ZACK

Cool!

The kids get excited. Bruce and Ellen are perplexed.

GRAMPS
First things first! I need to find a pay phone! Immediately!

ZACK

What’s a pay phone?

CALEB
Here, Grandpa, you can use my cell phone.

Caleb offers his CELL PHONE.

GRAMPS

No, thank you, but it has to be a pay phone. It’s protocol.

CALEB

Protocol?

GRAMPS

Carlos! Where’s Carlos?

CARLOS (80) sits in the corner with a HAM RADIO and a giant antenna, listening through headphones.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)

Carlos!

CARLOS

Huh? What’s up?

GRAMPS

You know where the nearest pay phone is?

CARLOS

Um. There’s one behind the supermarket on Vine.

GRAMPS

Great! Where’s Jerry?

JERRY looks up from a game of DOMINOES.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)

Jerry! I need to borrow your car! The fate of the nation depends on it!
JERRY
(amazed)
The fate of the nation? Wow!
You got it!

Jerry tosses his KEYS to Gramps.

Gramps stuffs a pancake into his mouth, grabs his WALKING CANE and hobbles towards the exit.

ELLEN
Wait! Dad! Stop!

STAFF
Sir, please.

GRAMPS
Out of my way!

He shakes them off and keeps moving.

EXT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Gramps approaches a pristine 60’s CONVERTIBLE.

Suddenly a POLICE CAR pulls up, blocking his path!

The SHERIFF (40) climbs out--

SHERIFF
Howdy!

Gramps tries to walk around him--

SHERIFF
Hold on just a minute, buddy.

GRAMPS
I have important work to do, Sherriff.

SHERIFF
That’s fine. Listen, I hear you like pancakes?

Gramps perks up!

SHERIFF (CONT’D)
So why don’t we head back inside and get you a short stack, and you can tell me all about it?
GRAMPS
You don’t understand. My mission is of grave importance.

SHERIFF
I’m sure it is.

GRAMPS
Many thousands will die if I fail.

SHERIFF
What kind of mission are we talking about?

GRAMPS
(whispers)
The Russians have initiated operation Vodka Borealis. I was informed of it through a secret message in this morning’s paper.

The Sheriff nods.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
(whispers)
Very few have the training and expertise to counter such an attack. I may be our only hope. I must not fail.

SHERIFF
I fully understand.

GRAMPS
Good. Then you can help by escorting me to a pay phone. I have to check in with headquarters and let them know I’m activated. There’s no time to lose.

SHERIFF
I hear what you’re saying. And I support you. But first, why don’t we just go back inside, eat some pancakes, and maybe take a nice long nap? How does that sound?

GRAMPS
(sighs)
It seems I have no choice.

SHERIFF
That’s right. Come along now.
Suddenly Gramps grabs the Sheriff’s PISTOL!

SHERIFF (CONT’D)
Oh crap!

The Sheriff runs for his life!

SHERIFF (CONT’D)
He’s got a gun! Everyone down!

Everybody takes cover!

Gramps cocks and aims--

BOOM! BOOM! The front tires of the Police Car go FLAT!

Gramps hops in the Convertible and speeds away!

Zack and Caleb dance with joy!

ZACK
Yay Grandpa!

CALEB
Omigosh! Did you see that?

Bruce and Ellen are speechless.

The Sheriff comes out of hiding to inspect his flat tires.

SHERIFF
Dag gummit!

He throws his hat on the ground, and kicks it!

BRUCE
I guess we should go after him?

ELLEN
We have to.

BRUCE
Kids? Get in the car.

Zack pretends to shoot tires--

ZACK
Kapow! Kapow!

Caleb finds the list Gramps made lying on the ground and pockets it.

FADE TO:
EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Gramps talks on a PAY PHONE--

GRAMPS
This is agent whiskey Romeo Sierra, in receipt of assignment one, one, five, seven, alpha. Proceeding as per protocol. Out.

He hangs up.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
(sighs)
It finally happened. After all these years. I’m gonna get to be a hero.

He wipes a TEAR from the corner of his eye.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY

Ellen sits nervously. Bruce paces, irritated.

RING! They both reach for the PHONE -- Bruce gets it.

BRUCE
Hello? Boy, that was quite a stunt you pulled.

ELLEN
Dad?

BRUCE
Let me put you on speaker.

Bruce puts Gramps on SPEAKERPHONE.

ELLEN
Dad?

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Ellie?

ELLEN
Where are you?

GRAMPS (V.O.)
I’m laying low.
BRUCE
That’s probably smart. The cops must be looking for you.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
It’s not the cops I’m worried about.

ELLEN
What the heck’s going on, Dad? Talk to me.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
I know this will come as a shock. But I’ve been a sleeper agent throughout the cold war, waiting for the Soviets to initiate operation Vodka Borealis. They finally did. And now I have to stop them.

Bruce and Ellen stare at each other.

ELLEN
Bruce thinks you should turn yourself in to the police.

BRUCE
Immediately.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Are you two listening? There’s an evil rooskie plot underway!

BRUCE
It’s all in your head.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
I have a mission to accomplish, and I’m going to accomplish it. I don’t care what you say.

BRUCE
For crying out loud! As if Sibyl wasn’t giving us enough trouble!

GRAMPS (V.O.)
How is dear Sibyl?

BRUCE
Impossible. Delinquent.

ELLEN
Bruce!
BRUCE
Let me see. She dropped out of school. She’s living with a bunch of bohemians.

ELLEN
Those are her bandmates.

BRUCE
Oh yeah, that’s right. She’s in a band.  
(shakes head)

INT. APARTMENT - DAY
A ROCK BAND practices a grunge jazz song.
SIBYL (19), the one girl, is lead singer and bassist.
A CLOVE CIGARETTE hangs from her mouth. Lavender lipstick compliments her pink/purple streaked blonde hair.
She wears a ton of eyeliner. Numerous TATTOOS and PIERCINGS. All her clothes are BLACK.
The drummer suddenly stops--

DRUMMER
Eight o’clock! Game time!

He grabs the REMOTE and turns on a FOOTBALL GAME.
The GUITARIST tosses him a BEER.
Sibyl rolls her eyes.

INT. SIBYL’S ROOM - DAY
Sibyl plops down on her “lunar surface” bedsheets, puts on HEADPHONES to drown out the football game, and opens a book about UFOs.
Her room is painted BLACK, specked with white stars. Science fiction POSTERS hang on the walls. Images of flying saucers and extraterrestrials are everywhere.
INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY

BRUCE (V.O.)
She’s been going downhill ever since she started believing in aliens a few months ago.
(shakes head)

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Is her band any good?

BRUCE
Who knows? Who cares? Sibyl isn’t the issue right now. Let’s handle one disaster at a time.

ELLEN
Dad? How can we convince you to give up this spy fantasy?

GRAMPS (V.O.)
It’s not a fantasy, Ellie. You have to trust me.

BRUCE
Turn yourself in, you crazy old man!

ELLEN
Bruce!

BRUCE
You’re not a spy. There aren’t any Russians out to get anybody.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
I got work to do. I’ll call you back later.

ELLEN
Be safe. Love you, Dad.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Love you too, Ellie.

CLICK. Gramps hangs up.

Bruce shakes his head.

ELLEN
Humor him. He’s old. Old people say weird stuff.
Ellen knows Bruce is right.

ELLEN
What if he’s telling the truth?

BRUCE
Don’t you start.

ELLEN
I mean, sleeper agents really exist, don’t they?

BRUCE
Ellen.

ELLEN
My instincts are to take his side. He’s my dad.

BRUCE
He stole a gun from a cop! This is already totally out of control.

ELLEN
When my dad sets out to do something, you can either get behind him or get in his way. He’s set on this. And I’m gonna support him, with or without you.

Bruce sighs, shakes his head and loosens his tie.

His PDA CHIMES!

BRUCE
Please don’t let this be important.

He checks his PDA--

BRUCE (CONT’D)
Ugh. Wouldn’t you know it? Emergency meeting.

Ellen pats Bruce lovingly on the back.

He tightens his tie.
INT. SELF STORAGE FACILITY - DAY
Gramps unlocks a locker--
Inside is a SHOEBOX and a SUITCASE.

EXT. BOULEVARD - DAY
Gramps drives with the shoebox sitting on the passenger seat.

EXT. DONUT SHOP - DAY
The Sheriff struts into the shop.
Gramps pulls up and parks next to the POLICE CAR.
He tosses the Sheriff’s PISTOL through the open window--

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY
It lands perfectly on the driver’s seat.
Gramps backs out and drives away.
The Sheriff returns with his mouth and hands full of DONUTS.
He opens the door, climbs in, sits down.

SHERIFF
(mouth full)
Ruruh huh?
He reaches down and finds his gun!
Shocked, he quickly looks for Gramps!

INT. LOBBY - DAY
Gramps swaps CASH for a ROOM KEY.

INT. MOTEL - DAY
Gramps pokes around his room, opening and closing drawers.
He suspiciously peers out the blinds.
Opens the dusty SUITCASE. Sorts through the contents.
Pins a giant AMERICAN FLAG to the wall.
Takes a few deep breaths.
Stretches--

    GRAMPS
    Oh. Ah! Eh. Ugh.

His joints crack and pop!

    GRAMPS (CONT’D)
    Who needs to stretch anyway? On to push-ups.

He lies down into a push-up position.

    GRAMPS (CONT’D)

Down is easy. Up is impossible.

    GRAMPS (CONT’D)
    Up! Up I say!

He struggles, but can’t do one pushup.

    GRAMPS (CONT’D)
    (sighs)
    What’s next? Sit-ups.

He rolls over and tries to do a few sit-ups.

    GRAMPS (CONT’D)
    (sighs)
    This sucks.

He tries to stand -- POP!

    GRAMPS (CONT’D)
    Ah, my back! Why didn’t I stretch?

He collapses to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

Gramps unwinds a JUMP ROPE.

He focuses, and swings the rope over his head--
It gets caught on the ceiling fan!

        GRAMPS (CONT’D)
        What the holy mother?!

The rope twists around and whips him!

        GRAMPS (CONT’D)
        Ah! Mercy!

He runs to the wall and switches off the fan.

KNOCK KNOCK!

        BELLHOP (O.C.)
        Room service!

Gramps peers through the peephole--

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

The BELLHOP carries a COVERED TRAY.

Gramps opens the door with a pleasant smile.

The bellhop tries to ignore the giant American flag and the jump rope hanging from the fan.

        BELLHOP
        Your food, sir.

        GRAMPS
        Lovely, lovely.

Gramps takes the tray and shuts the door.

The Bellhop is bummed.

Gramps opens the door again--

        GRAMPS (CONT’D)
        Almost forgot. Keep the change.

He hands the Bellhop a HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL!

        BELLHOP
        A hundred?! Really?!

        GRAMPS
        That’s how I roll, son.

Gramps shuts the door. The Bellhop is speechless.
INT. MOTEL - DAY

Gramps removes the cover from his tray--

A stack of PANCAKES, a pitcher of MAPLE SYRUP, a bowl of EGGS and an empty glass.

He takes the eggs and cracks them into the glass--

One. Two. Three. He stirs them up.

GRAMPS
Here goes nothing.

He drinks the eggs. Makes a yuck face.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Never doing that again.

He gathers the jump rope and finds a spot away from the fan.

Takes a deep breath, and swings the rope over his head--

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Whoop!

He trips and falls on his face!

The jump rope lands in the trash can.

Gramps practices throwing slow, weak punches.

He does a few weak kicks.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
(sighs)
Little rusty.

Gramps looks at himself in the mirror.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
You sure you’re up for this?

Gramps opens the shoebox, which contains a PISTOL and several thick wads of CASH!

He casually stuffs a few thousand dollars in his pocket and closes the shoebox.

Peers suspiciously out the blinds..

Grabs his keys and exits.
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ellen pulls an APPLE PIE out of the oven.

RING! She answers the phone--

ELLEN

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

The station wagon pulls up to a towering skyscraper.

Bruce waits nervously at the curb. He gets in--

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

ELLEN
Hey hun! How’d it go?

BRUCE
Not bad, not bad.

Bruce loosens his tie.

Ellen senses something is amiss.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Gramps holds a SHOVEL and a roll of DUCT TAPE. He stares at the selection of SPOOLS of wire.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
Can I help you find something, sir?

The EMPLOYEE (19) looks eager and competent.

GRAMPS
I need two feet of copper wire.

EMPLOYEE
What gauge?

GRAMPS
Sixteen.
EMPLOYEE
Let’s see. Here we are.

The Employee finds the right spool.

GRAMPS
This is a hundred feet. I only need two feet.

EMPLOYEE
I’m sorry, sir. That’s the smallest size we have.

GRAMPS
This thing costs six bucks! I’m not paying six bucks for ninety-eight feet of wire I don’t need.

EMPLOYEE
I’m not sure what I can do.

GRAMPS
Where’s the manager?

INT. CUSTOMER SERVICE - DAY

The MANAGER looks skeptically at Gramps.

GRAMPS
Hear me out. Six dollars for fifty feet works out to twelve cents a foot. I only need two feet. That’s twenty-four cents. With sales tax let’s call it twenty-five. I’m prepared to pay twenty-five cents for two feet of copper wire, or I’m prepared to take my business elsewhere.

MANAGER
Sir?

GRAMPS
Business which includes the purchase of this thirty-dollar shovel. I’m no cheapskate. I’ll shell out for quality.

MANAGER
I’m glad you like our shovel.
GRAMPS
Like it? The craftsmanship astounds me. Just look at the riveting on the tang!

MANAGER
Uh huh. I’ll tell you what.

GRAMPS
May I add that I’m also buying forty-five yards of duct tape, when all I really need are a few inches?

MANAGER
Geez. You want me to sell you duct tape by the inch?

GRAMPS
No, I’ll take the whole roll. Duct tape is awesome.

The Manager rolls his eyes. He inserts his MASTER KEY into the register and punches the keypad.

MANAGER
I can give you sixty percent off the copper wire. How’s that?

GRAMPS
You drive a hard bargain, son.

MANAGER
That’s why I’m the manager.

GRAMPS
It’s a deal.

They shake on it.

The manager rings Gramps up. BEEP BEEP BEEP.

MANAGER
And your total comes to thirty-six, seventy-two.

Gramps whips out a wad of cash--

GRAMPS
Can you break a hundred?

The Manager is speechless.
EXT. BOULEVARD - DAY

Gramps cruises along with the shovel in the back seat.
He keeps checking his rear-view mirror.
A POLICE CAR is right behind him!
He makes sure he’s going the speed limit.
He turns, but the police car follows him.
He turns again, and it keeps following him!
He drums his fingers on the steering wheel.
Suddenly the police car activates its SIRENS and LIGHTS!
Gramps gulps!
He pulls over.
The police car accelerates, swerving around him!
It zooms down the road, screeching around a corner, and disappears!
In the distance, more SIRENS join the chase.
Gramps breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY

ZACK
Lemmie see it!

CALEB
Shhh! It’s top secret. Remember?

Zack and Caleb covertly review Grandpa’s list:

1. Tube radio.  2. Wind-up pocket watch.  3. Jumper cables.

ZACK
I don’t know what half this stuff is. Gurascope?
CALEB
Gyroscope. It’s this metal thing that spins. There’s one in the attic.

ZACK
What’s it for?

CALEB
It’s like some kind of old toy kids used to play with back before there were video games.

ZACK
Huh. Well if it’s in the attic, you’re getting it.

CALEB
Zack. How many times do I have to tell you the attic isn’t haunted?

ZACK
I stand by my conviction.

CALEB
Whatever. In the mean time, I’ll get the paperclips.

ZACK
I’ll get the duck tape.

They race off in opposite directions!

INT. GARAGE - DAY
Zack dumps out a drawer full of TOOLS, making a big mess.
He finds the SCREWDRIVERS--

ZACK
I got the screwdrivers!

He crosses them off the list.
Caleb finds a SOCKET WRENCH--

CALEB
I’m pretty sure this is a socket wrench. Boom! It says right on it. Socket wrench.
ZACK
Where are the bits?

CALEB
Right here.

ZACK
(checks list)
We need seven sixteenths.

Caleb looks for it--

CALEB
Aw, man.

ZACK
What?

CALEB
It’s the stupid metric system.

ZACK
Ugh! Not the metric system!

CALEB
How do you convert millimeters to American?

ZACK
Psh! Good luck with that.

Caleb frowns, stumped.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY

Ellen PAINTS her toenails while listening to HEADPHONES.
Bruce watches TV.

RING! They both go for the phone -- Ellen gets it.

ELLEN
Hello? Dad?

She puts Gramps on SPEAKERPHONE.
Zack and Caleb rush into the room--

ZACK AND CALEB
Grandpa!
GRAMPS (V.O.)
Hey you little rascals!

ZACK
We found some of that stuff you need.

Bruce and Ellen exchange awkward looks.

GRAMPS
Oh really?

CALEB
We got the paper clips, the duct tape--

GRAMPS (V.O.)
--Shhh! Just say the numbers. Your phone might be tapped.

BRUCE
Don’t be ridiculous!

ELLEN
You’re being paranoid, Dad. You’re gonna make yourself sick worrying like that.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Better sick than dead. Never underestimate the K Agents.

CALEB
K Agents?

GRAMPS
Naturally the Russians have sleepers to counter our sleepers. If I’ve been activated, certainly one of them has been activated to stop me.

BRUCE
(shakes head)
Oh brother.

ZACK
(checks list)
We got items four, five, nine, eleven and thirteen.

CALEB
And maybe twelve.
ZACK
(mutters)
Stupid metric system.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Great! That’s great work, kids!

The kids are proud. Ellen shares their pride.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
See if you can locate item number ten. I have a pretty good handle on the other stuff.

The kids check the list, and frown.

ZACK
(whispers)
I’ve never even heard of that.

CALEB
(whispers)
Me either.

ZACK
We’ll do our best, Grandpa.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
That’s all anybody can ask.

CALEB
How can we reach you, after we find it?

ELLEN
Yes. How can we reach you?

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Let’s meet somewhere at sixteen hundred. I don’t want to name the location out loud, but you know that diner with the pizza you kids like?

ZACK
What pizza don’t we like?

GRAMPS (V.O.)
It’s on the way to the mall.

CALEB
I know the place you mean.
GRAMPS (V.O.)
Good. Ellen, dear?

ELLEN
Yes Dad, I’d be glad to give the kids a ride to meet you at sixteen hundred.

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Beautiful! See you then. Be careful, boys. Keep an eye out for anything suspicious. And try to focus on item number ten. I’m counting on you. Over and out.

ZACK AND CALEB
Bye Grandpa!

CLICK. They hang up.

ZACK
He’s counting on us.

The kids exchange serious looks.

Ellen nods proudly. Bruce shakes his head.

INT. BUNKER - DAY

A TAPE RECORDER stops, rewinds, and plays back:

GRAMPS (V.O.)
Let’s meet somewhere at sixteen hundred. I don’t want to name the location out loud, but you know that diner with the pizza you kids like?

A hand wearing a black GLOVE takes notes in Russian.

ZACK (V.O.)
What pizza don’t we like?

GRAMPS (V.O.)
It’s on the way to the mall.

The tape recorder stops.

The hand pours a SHOT of Red Kremlin Vodka and drinks.

FADE TO:
INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY

With the help of a CHAIR, Zack and Caleb manage to unfold the LADDER leading up to the attic.

It’s dark and spooky.

    ZACK
    Go on. You said you weren’t scared.

    CALEB
    I’m not.

A CREAK makes them both jump!

Caleb musters his courage and climbs the ladder.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

Caleb looks around with a FLASHLIGHT.

BOXES are marked “WEAPONS,” “BLOCKS,” “WOOD TOYS,” “SPORTS.”

He finds the “METAL TOYS” box.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY

Caleb dumps everything out, making a big mess.

Inside are ROBOTS, RACE CARS, MAGNETS, AIRPLANES, ACTION FIGURES, and other metal toys.

Zack immediately plays with them--

    ZACK
    Vroom! Pew pew! Kapow!

Caleb finds the GYROSCOPE!

He crosses it off the list.

Ellen strolls in.

    ELLEN
    Wow. This is quite a mess you guys made.

    CALEB
    We’ll clean it up later.
ZACK
Yeah. Later.
They hurry out of the room.
Ellen puts her hands on her hips.

EXT. PATIO - DAY
Bruce sits drinking a BEER and consulting his PDA.
Ellen marches outside--

ELLEN
Honey?

BRUCE
Just a sec. Gotta shoot off this email.
She waits impatiently. Looking around, she notices messes
the kids have left:
WATER GUNS. BASEBALL GLOVES. Little plastic ARMY MEN.
She puts her hands on her hips.

BRUCE (CONT’D)
Okay. Okay. Just give me like five minutes.

ELLEN
Nevermind.
She goes back inside.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Ellen puts on HEADPHONES and opens her COOK BOOK.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY
Zack and Caleb sit at the COMPUTER.

ZACK
What’s an anticky?
CALEB
Antique. It means old enough to be in a museum.

ZACK
So how are we supposed to find this thing?

CALEB
Does it have to be in working condition?

ZACK
(checks list)
Doesn’t say. But I would think so.

CALEB
And we need it tonight.

ZACK
Grandpa’s counting on us.
Thousands of lives are at stake!

The kids are worried.

CALEB
Hey! Look up Vodka Borealis.

ZACK
How do you spell it?

CALEB
Just type something. Google will figure it out.

Zack types and clicks.

ZACK
Vodka Borealis was the code-name given to a theoretical Russian missile delivery system. Citation needed. Due to lack of funding, the project was abandoned in the mid-seventies. Citation needed. That’s all it says.

CALEB
Sounds like they never got off the drawing board. You think Grandpa’s making it all up?

ZACK
The internet’s not always right, you know.
Where’d you hear that?

I read it on the internet.

The kids are worried.

Let’s call Sibyl.

Sibyl uses a LOUPE to examine a photograph of a FLYING SAUCER.

Her ringtone is the theme from FRAGGLE ROCK.

She answers--


She hangs up.

ZACK

I told you she would brush us off.

CALEB
(shouts)
Mom! We need a ride!

The kids speak with the OWNER (40), who apologizes that he can’t help.

The kids plead with the SUPERVISOR (31), who can’t help them.
EXT. THIRD ARCADE - DAY

The MANAGER (27) smokes a CIGARETTE by the door.

MANAGER
You guys still looking for that zombie game?

ZACK
Yes sir.

CALEB
Nobody has it. They can order it, but we need it tonight.

The kids are depressed.

The Manager thinks of something.

MANAGER
I’ll tell you what. It’s a long shot, but there was this old collector guy. Mister Humphrey. I think I got his address around here somewhere.

He stubs out his cigarette and heads inside.

The kids regain some hope.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - DAY

Ellen breaks apart pieces of PEANUT BRITTLE and arranges them on a plate.

RING! Bruce goes for the phone, but Ellen gets it--

ELLEN
Mom’s taxi service. (checks watch)
Kay. See you soon. Love you.

She hangs up.

BRUCE
You going to pick up the kids?

ELLEN
And take them to meet Dad. Don’t you remember the rendezvous at sixteen hundred?
BRUCE
You’re not really going through with that.

ELLEN
Uh. Yeah, I am. See you in a bit.

BRUCE
I honestly don’t know what’s gotten into you. Setting such an example for the kids. Encouraging such reckless, lawless behavior when you should be working with the police.

ELLEN
There you go again.

BRUCE
I’m not saying lock your dad up in the rubber room right away. Although I wouldn’t object to it.

ELLEN
Never!

BRUCE
He’s a madman!

ELLEN
He’s my dad! Quit patronizing him!

BRUCE
You heard all that gibberish. I mean, come on.

ELLEN
You talk a fair amount of gibberish yourself, honey.

BRUCE
But this is full-on delusion!

ELLEN
What are you, a doctor?

BRUCE
I understand it’s difficult to accept. But your dad’s lost his mind.

ELLEN
He’s not crazy.
BRUCE
No. I’ve always known him to be quite sane, even after a few cocktails.

ELLEN
Exactly.

BRUCE
Which is why it’s so obvious something has snapped. Maybe he had an aneurysm. Or a stroke? I don’t know. I’m not a doctor.

ELLEN
(worried)
You really think that’s what happened?

BRUCE
Could even be schizophrenia.

ELLEN
No.

BRUCE
We should refer him to a specialist.

ELLEN
Hm. Let me think about it.

BRUCE
At least run some tests. Have him checked out. For his own good.

ELLEN
You’re probably right.

EXT. RADIO PLUS - DAY
Gramps parks the convertible in front of the giant store. SHOPPERS leave with huge sets of SPEAKERS.

INT. RADIO PLUS - DAY
Gramps is overwhelmed by the size of the place. TEENS play LOUD MUSIC to test various audio equipment.
You call that music?

Gramps looks at the Teens like they’re insane.

The Teens look at Gramps like he’s insane.

Gramps finds a WORKER (18) stocking HEADPHONES--

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Hey, kid. I need a tube radio.

WORKER
Tube? I’m not familiar with that company.

GRAMPS
All this stuff is solid-state. Where do you keep the old vacuum tube gear?

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
We don’t sell vacuums, sir. Just radios.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
No, tubes. Tubes! You know? They’re like these glass bulbs.

WORKER
Light bulbs? We don’t sell those either.

GRAMPS
How old are you, kid?

WORKER
Eighteen.

GRAMPS
What are you doing working here? You should be out living life, being eighteen.

WORKER (shrugs)
I need the money.

GRAMPS
Listen, kid. What you need is a hockey stick and a root beer float.

Gramps gives him several HUNDRED DOLLARS.
GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Here’s your severance package.
Congratulations. You quit.

The worker is speechless.
Gramps turns and leaves.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Gramps barges in. People wave to him.

OLD TIMER
Hey! Woodrow’s back!

GRAMPS
Can’t stay long. I need Carlos.

Carlos sits monitoring his ham radio.
Gramps yanks him to his feet!

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Come on buddy, I need your help.

CARLOS
Where are we going?

GRAMPS
In search of vintage electronics.

Carlos grins.
They run into Jerry--

JERRY
How’s the car treating you?

GRAMPS
Handles like a dream, Jerry.
Thanks again. Hey! Wanna go for a quick ride with me and Carlos?

Jerry shrugs.

EXT. BOULEVARD - DAY

Gramps, Carlos and Jerry cruise along in the convertible.
They stop at a RED LIGHT..
A sleek, modern CONVERTIBLE pulls up next to them, with THREE YOUNG MEN in it.

The old and young exchange looks of mutual respect.

The light turns GREEN. They go their separate ways.

INT. THRIFT STORE - DAY

Carlos searches through old RADIOS.

Gramps pokes through BOOKS.

Jerry pretends to look at LAMPS, but really admires all the ELDERLY LADIES walking around.

He’s so captivated by a passing SKIRT that he strains his neck--

JERRY

Ow!

Carlos comes up empty handed--

CARLOS
I couldn’t find anything. It’s all modern plastic junk.

GRAMPS
Hm. We could try an antique store?

CARLOS
Maybe. How soon do you need this?

GRAMPS
Tomorrow morning at the latest.

CARLOS
That’s awful short notice.

GRAMPS
As a last resort we can burgle the museum.

CARLOS
Pardon me?

GRAMPS
Nevermind. Let’s get outta here.

Jerry hands his BUSINESS CARD to a little old lady named GERTIE (70)--
JERRY
Here’s my card. Call any time.

GRAMPS
Come on, Jerry.

They pull him away.

JERRY
Hope to hear from you! Ciao!

Jerry blows Gertie a kiss. She giggles.

EXT. PARKING LOT – DAY

GRAMPS
You have a business card?

JERRY
More or less.

GRAMPS
Let me see.

Jerry hands Gramps his CARD--

It belongs to a staff member at the Sterling Glen nursing home. The name is crossed out, and “Jerry” is written in.

JERRY
Hey. It works.

GRAMPS
Whatever.

Carlos is suddenly distracted--

CARLOS
Holy poley.

An unmarked VAN with a towering array of ANTENNAE is parked nearby.

CARLOS (CONT’D)
Look at the size of that relay!

He walks towards it.

GRAMPS
Careful! Might be K Agents!

Carlos knocks on the side of the van.
The door slides open--

NANCY (67), with thick GLASSES and wild hair, is pleasantly surprised.

    NANCY
    Why, hello.

    CARLOS
    Sorry to bother you, young lady.

She giggles.

    CARLOS (CONT’D)
    I couldn’t help but--
    (looks past her)
    Is that a CTX three forty?

She turns to an OSCILLOSCOPE.

    NANCY
    You betcha! With a tri-cam expansion module.

Carlos is smitten.

    GERTIE (O.S.)
    Ready to roll, Nancy?

Gertie gets behind the wheel.

    CARLOS
    Where you gals headed? If you don’t mind my asking.

    NANCY
    Nowhere important. Why? You fellas wanna tag along?

Carlos looks at Jerry, who grins like a fox.

INT. NANCY’S HOUSE – DAY

LOUNGE MUSIC fills the air.

Jerry and Gertie sit on a couch, eating CHEESE and CRACKERS, laughing.

Gramps POPS the cork off a bottle of CHAMPAGNE and fills a few glasses.
INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Carlos and Nancy rummage though HARDWARE like kids in a candy store.

    CARLOS
    Unbelievable! The original Datamax
    Wave Drive! I haven’t seen one of
    these in thirty years!

    NANCY
    I used to work for Datamax.
    My team designed that thing.

    CARLOS
    Get outta here!

    NANCY
    No, really. I got the schematics
    around here somewhere.

She searches.

Carlos is smitten.

INT. NANCY’S HOUSE - DAY

    JERRY
    Now watch very closely.

He points at his open palm.

Gertie pays close attention.

    JERRY (CONT’D)
    Nothing up either sleeve.

Jerry pulls back his sleeves--

A plastic FLOWER falls out!

    JERRY (CONT’D)
    Dammit! I mean, ta-da!

He makes a magical gesture!

Gertie giggles!

Gramps checks his watch.
Carlos emerges from the basement carrying a BOX full of ELECTRONICS! Nancy follows him, giggling.

CARLOS
This woman is amazing! You know she has a Master’s in aerospace engineering?

GRAMPS
Were you able to find the necessary hardware?

CARLOS
You should see her workshop! She fabricated these rotors, which have integrated--

GRAMPS
--Carlos! Focus! Did you collect the gear I need? Or what?

CARLOS
Oh, yeah. No sweat.

He sets the box down.

CARLOS (CONT’D)
We even tested all the circuits. Everything works perfectly.

GRAMPS
Outstanding!

NANCY
Also, there’s a device in there to secure telephone lines. You said you thought someone might be tapping your calls?

GRAMPS
Brilliant! Honestly, I can’t thank you enough.

Carlos and Nancy exchange proud looks.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
(checks watch)
Well, fellas. We oughta get going.

Jerry gives Gramps a dirty look.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
At least, I gotta go. You can stay if you want.
GERTIE
Stay! Stay!

JERRY
Would it be inconvenient?

NANCY
No, no, no. Don’t be silly.

CARLOS
We’d hate to impose.

GERTIE
Stay! Stay!

Jerry refills their glasses.

JERRY
(to Gramps)
We’ll see you back at the fort.
(winks)

GRAMPS
Okay. You kids behave.
(to Nancy)
Thanks again for all the kit.
You’re a life-saver.

NANCY
(waves it off)
Don’t mention it. Good luck with your project.

Gramps takes the box and leaves.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Ellen drops off Zack and Caleb.

ELLEN
Call me when you need a ride home.
Love you! Bye!

The kids ignore her and run inside.

Ellen sighs and drives away.
INT. DINER - DAY

ZACK AND CALEB

Grandpa!

The kids stick to Gramps like magnets!

GRAMPS

Oof! You two should play football!

A WAITRESS (20) shows up--

WAITRESS

Can I get you fellas some drinks?

GRAMPS

I’d like a mango smoothie please.

CALEB

Chocolate shake, please.

ZACK

Vanilla shake, please.

WAITRESS

Coming right up.

GRAMPS

We’re also ready to order.

WAITRESS

Okay. What would you like?

GRAMPS

A stack of pancakes and two slices of pepperoni pizza.

WAITRESS

No problem.

GRAMPS

Thanks.

The Waitress departs.

ZACK

Man! The pizza here is the best!

GRAMPS

The pancakes aren’t too bad either. (winks)
CALEB
So. Bad news, Grandpa. We can’t find the pinball machine anywhere.

GRAMPS
Really? I thought it would be pretty easy to track down Zany Zombies. That game was huge in the forties.

ZACK
I never heard of it.

CALEB
Me either.

ZACK
The forties? I’m surprised they even had electricity back then.

GRAMPS
This is a troubling development. I really need that component.

CALEB
We’ll keep looking.

Gramps is worried.

The Waitress brings out everything but the smoothie.

WAITRESS
Your smoothie will be out in a moment.

GRAMPS
Terrific.

The kids chow down!

ZACK AND CALEB
Mmmmmmm!

Gramps drowns his pancakes in SYRUP.

A shady SERVER (25) brings out the SMOOTHIE.

SERVER
(Russian accent)
Your smoothie.

GRAMPS
Thank you, young man.
SERVER
Pozalujsta.

Gramps gets suspicious. He keeps an eye on the server.

GRAMPS
I don’t remember that Russian kid working here. Is he new?

The kids shrug, focused on their food.

CALEB
I can’t believe you like vanilla more than chocolate.

ZACK
I like em both. How’s your smoothie, Grandpa?

Gramps hasn’t touched it. He pushes it away.

CALEB
Aren’t you even gonna try it?

GRAMPS
On second thought, I don’t want it.

ZACK
I’ll have it!

GRAMPS
No, we’ll just throw it away.

A FAT LADY (30) turns around--

FAT LADY
You can’t throw away a perfectly good smoothie!

She snatches it from him!

Gramps is speechless.

The Fat Lady drinks a huge gulp!

FAT LADY (CONT’D)
Mmmm. Delicious!

She suddenly coughs and chokes!

FAT GUY
You okay, darlin?

The Fat Lady collapses!
FAT GUY (CONT’D)
Holy crap! Somebody call an ambulance!

The Fat Lady convulses and drools!

GRAMPS
Check please!

EXT. DINER - DAY
Gramps leads the kids to the convertible.

ZACK AND CALEB
Shotgun!

CALEB
I called it first!

They race to the car.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY
A COP (30) arriving on the scene spots them.

COP
Hey dispatch? Wasn’t there an APB out for an elderly gentleman in a classic convertible? Over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
Uh. Roger. Let me pull that up. Over.

The cop waits. An AMBULANCE arrives.

Gramps drives away.

The cop shifts gears from PARK to DRIVE.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
Negative. According to the computer, the elderly gentleman in question has federal immunity and is not to be apprehended. Repeat, do not apprehend. Over.

The cop shifts back into PARK, confused.
EXT. BOULEVARD - DAY

The convertible cruises along. Zack and Caleb share the front bench seat.

GRAMPS
Hand me that shoebox, would you?

The kids hand it over. Gramps pokes through it.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Here’s some dough. If you have any trouble getting that pinball machine, break this out. Everyone has a price.

He gives them each a wad of CASH. They’re astonished!

Gramps checks his rear-view mirror.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
You kids wearing your seatbelts?

CALEB
There aren’t any seatbelts.

GRAMPS
Nevermind then.

The kids exchange nervous looks.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
There’s a K Agent following us. I’m going to try and lose him.

ZACK
Nuh uh.

CALEB
Omigosh!

The kids look back--

A sleek and sinister BLACK SPORTS CAR follows them!

GRAMPS
Hold on!

Gramps yanks the wheel!

They swerve in and out of traffic!

HORNS HONK at them!
MOTORIST (O.S.)
Watch it, ya jerk!
The black sports car stays on their tail.

ZACK
Go faster!

CALEB
Yeah, faster!

Gramps grins and accelerates.
The black car accelerates.
The speedometer climbs past 60.
Suddenly Gramps brakes and turns!
They SKID around a corner!

ZACK
Woohoo!
The black car SKIDS around the corner!
Gramps drives off the road!
They plow through a FENCE!

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY
A GOLFER prepares his shot.
Suddenly the two cars come barreling down the fairway!

GOLFER
Sweet Sally McGee!
He runs for his life!
The cars zoom right past him!
His GOLF BAG gets obliterated!
The convertible drives in a wild loop! The black car stays on their tail!
The vehicles tear up the course, carving deep trenches in the delicately groomed grass.
The poor Golfer has a nervous breakdown!
GRAMPS
Sheez! Where’d this guy learn to drive like this?

Gramps yanks the wheel, and plows through a HEDGE!
Zack and Caleb hang on, astonished and thrilled!

EXT. CLUB HOUSE – DAY

GIRLS in BIKINIS lounge by the POOL.
Svelte SERVERS deliver DRINKS.
Suddenly the cars approach! Somebody SCREAMS!
Everybody runs for their lives!
The cars crash through tables and chairs!

EXT. PARKING LOT – DAY

A gaggle of GEESE scatter!
The cars jostle for position!
The black car pulls alongside the convertible--
Gramps whacks at it with his cane!
Its tinted window lowers a few inches--

    GRAMPS
    Duck!

They all duck! The rear-view mirror SHATTERS!
A NINJA STAR lands on the floor!
Gramps picks it up and throws it back!
The cars jump the curb and destroy more landscaping!

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD – DAY

The cars zoom past a WRONG WAY DO NOT ENTER sign!
EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY
Gramps weaves through oncoming traffic!
Panicked MOTORISTS swerve and HONK!
The kids are petrified!
A truck bears down on them!
Gramps yanks the wheel--
The convertible screeches down an embankment!
The black car stays on their tail!

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - DAY
The cars sail through a RED LIGHT, causing havoc!
They whiz past signs warning RR CROSSING and BUMP.
Up ahead, there’s a ridge where RAILROAD TRACKS cross the road.

GRAMPS
Prepare for liftoff!
Both cars sail through the air!
SPARKS fly as they land!
Gramps yanks the wheel and they SKID around sideways!
He floors it! Tires spin!
They head back in the opposite direction!
The black car is slow to turn around after them.
Gramps pulls onto the railroad tracks!
EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

The convertible rattles like a paint mixer as it drives along the bumpy tracks!

The black sports car follows them!

Up ahead, a busy street crosses the tracks. Farther ahead, the tracks disappear into a tunnel.

CALEB
I hope we’re not going into that tunnel.

Suddenly the railroad crossing BELLS DING and SIGNAL ARMS lower to block traffic!

ZACK
I hope there isn’t a train coming!

A train WHISTLE blows!

Gramps accelerates!

The convertible speeds into the tunnel!

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

PITCH BLACK.

The kids can’t resist making crazy tunnel noises:

CALEB (V.O.)
Areoreoreoero!

ZACK (V.O.)
Ooga wooga wooga!

FADE IN:

A faint LIGHT grows as they reach the end of the tunnel.

Suddenly the oncoming TRAIN bears down on them!

A deafening WHISTLE blows! The kids scream!

EXT. TUNNEL - DAY

The convertible emerges from the tunnel and pulls off the tracks just before the TRAIN flashes by!
ONLOOKERS are awestruck.
Zack and Caleb are speechless.

GRAMPS
You boys okay?

They’re petrified.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
I better get you back home.
I didn’t realize it would be so
dangerous so soon.

Gramps pulls onto the road and joins the flow of traffic.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE – DAY
Ellen sits nervously at the computer.
She reads an article about “ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE.”
She clicks a link and reads about “DEMENTIA.”
Reads about “DELIRIUM.”
Reads about “SCHIZOPHRENIA.”
Bites her fingernails.
The front door opens!
She closes the internet browser.
Gramps walks in--
He slips on a toy RACE CAR!

GRAMPS
Whoopsa!  Hiya!  Ho!
He uses his cane to regain his balance.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Cripes!  I almost broke my gizzard!

Zack and Caleb exchange guilty looks.

ELLEN
How many times have I told you kids
to clean up after yourselves?
Ellen puts her hands on her hips.
The boys dutifully clean up their toys.

Bruce strolls in--

**BRUCE**
We were just talking about you!

Gramps fakes a smile.

**ELLEN**
Dad, we have concerns about your mental health.

**GRAMPS**
Oh, for Pete’s sake. I don’t have time for this.

He turns to leave, but Bruce blocks the way--

**BRUCE**
Frankly, old man, you’ve lost it. There’s simply no way you could be a secret agent without either of us knowing about it.

**GRAMPS**
That’s why it’s called secret, isn’t it Bruce?

Ellen bites her lip.

**BRUCE**
And exactly how long have you been at this spy business?

**GRAMPS**
I started working with military intelligence in the seventies.

**ELLEN**
I thought you worked at a tire factory in the seventies.

**GRAMPS**
That was my cover story.

Bruce shakes his head.
GRAMPS (CONT’D)
During the sixties, I worked with special forces in the Caspian theater. Some commie shot me with a harpoon!

BRUCE
Yeah right, pops.

GRAMPS
How do you think I got this scar?

Gramps lifts up his shirt.

ELLEN
Mom said you fell off a ladder with a pair of gardening shears.

GRAMPS
That was my cover story!

BRUCE
You and your cover stories.

GRAMPS
I’ve been undercover for decades. I’m still undercover. This cane is part of my disguise. I could manage perfectly without it.

Bruce snatches the cane away!

Gramps wobbles unsteadily, then falls over!

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Ah! My back!

ZACK AND CALEB
Grandpa!

ELLEN
Dad! Are you okay?

Ellen and the boys help Gramps to his feet.

GRAMPS
Of course I am. It’s all an act.

Bruce gives Gramps his cane back.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
In the fifties I was a test pilot for all the famous spy planes.

(MORE)
I even worked on classified aircraft at area fifty one.

BRUCE
Area fifty one?

Bruce and Ellen exchange worried looks.

ELLEN
There is no area fifty one.

GRAMPS
(laughs)
Of course there is! I worked there for years!

Ellen sighs.

BRUCE
Enough of this farce! I’m sorry, old man. You’re loony as a lark. We’re going to have to put you somewhere safe. I don’t know where, but I’m going to make a few calls and figure something out. You need serious help.

He paces.

ZACK
He’s telling the truth! A K Agent really did chase us down the train tracks through a tunnel!

CALEB
Yeah! And they tried to poison Grandpa’s smoothie too!

BRUCE
Look what’s happening. Look what he’s doing to the kids. I swear, this entire family is a disaster.

GRAMPS
(sighs)
I think I should leave.

BRUCE
You’re not going anywhere until the authorities get here.

Gramps heads for the door.

Bruce tries to grab him--
Suddenly Gramps whacks Bruce with his cane!

    BRUCE (CONT’D)
    Ow! So help me!

Bruce lunges at Gramps!

In a flash, Gramps uses his cane to hook Bruce around the neck and send him crashing into the wall!

Everyone is shocked!

Gramps calmly exits the house.

    ELLEN
    Honey?

Dazed, Bruce staggers to his feet--

    BRUCE
    That man is a menace! I won’t rest until he’s locked up!

Bruce storms out of the room. Ellen rushes after him.

    CALEB
    We need to do something. Quick.

    ZACK
    Let’s call Sibyl.

    CALEB
    (shrugs)
    Okay.

INT. SIBYL’S ROOM – DAY

Sibyl listens to CLASSICAL music and smokes a CLOVE CIGARETTE as she surfs the internet.

Her PRINTER spits out images of CROP CIRCLES.

The FRAGGLE ROCK theme cuts through the music--

She casually answers her phone.

    SIBYL
    What’s up?
INT. AVERY RESIDENCE – DAY

CALEB
Hey. We didn’t know who else to call. Dad flipped out and said he’s going to have Grandpa locked up.

(beat)
They think he’s nuts because he said he used to work at some place called area fifty one.

INT. SIBYL’S ROOM – DAY

Sibyl is gobsmacked. She drops her phone!

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE – DAY

Bruce tries to avoid Ellen, who tries to rub his shoulders.

ELLEN
I know. I know. Just try to relax, hun.

Bruce checks his PDA--

BRUCE
Oh Lord.

ELLEN
Don’t tell me they need you at the office.

BRUCE
(reading PDA)
They needed me at the office five minutes ago. It’s an emergency.

ELLEN
There’s always an emergency at the worst possible time.

BRUCE
What can I say? Business is business. Gotta fry while the skillet’s hot.

He puts on a DRESS SHIRT.
ELLEN
Can’t they get somebody else? Tell them you have a family crisis to attend to.

BRUCE
They wish they could call somebody else. But the client wants me, because I’m the best. Sorry honey. Duty calls.

Ellen sighs, and ties Bruce’s NECKTIE.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY
A decommissioned AIRPLANE is mounted out front.
The sign reads J.R. ROYCE AERONAUTIC LIBRARY.
Sibyl parks her VESPA and hurries inside--

INT. LIBRARY - DAY
The male CLERK (16) at the front desk waves--

CLERK
Hi Sibyl!

A male LIBRARIAN (19) waves--

LIBRARIAN
Hi Sibyl!

SIBYL
Hey guys.
She hurries past. They watch her go.
She turns around--

SIBYL (CONT’D)
Anyone wanna help me look for something?

The boys drop what they’re doing.
EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY
Bruce exits the station wagon.

ELLEN
Good luck!

They both wave goodbye.

Bruce tucks in his shirt as he enters the building.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY
Bruce hits the button for the ELEVATOR.
He tightens his tie as he waits.
The elevator arrives. The doors open.
Bruce just stands there.
The doors close.
Bruce loosens his tie.
He turns and walks to the end of the hall.
He slips out a FIRE ESCAPE door.

EXT. BAR - DAY
Bruce crosses the street and enters the bar.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY
Ellen drives along, tapping idly on the steering wheel.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY
The station wagon pulls up to a pump.
INT. STATION WAGON - DAY
Ellen notices her FUEL gauge is about half full.

ELLEN
Ah, forget it.

She drives away.

EXT. CUL DE SAC - DAY
The station wagon crawls leisurely down the street, turns around and returns.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY
Ellen stops at a 4-WAY STOP.
Waits, despite there being no other traffic.
Switches on her LEFT TURN signal. Looks both ways.
Switches instead to the RIGHT TURN signal.
Sighs. Closes her eyes.
HONK! A car is behind her!
She switches off the turn signal and drives straight.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY
The station wagon parks in the middle of nowhere.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY
Ellen stares off into space.
She makes a call--

ELLEN
Hi honey, it’s me.
(checks watch)
(MORE)
Just wanted to know if you needed a ride home. Call me back. Love you. Bye.

She hangs up and sighs.
Stares off into space.
Throws her phone!
Holds her head and cries..

INT. BAR - DAY

Bruce stirs a glass of BOURBON and checks his PDA.

   BRUCE
   Bah! Not you again!

He puts it away, and signals for another drink.

   STRANGER (O.S.)
   Let me guess. Your old lady busting your chops. Wants to know where you are. When you’ll be home. Blah blah blah blah blah.

The STRANGER (40), wearing a suit, sits down next to Bruce.

   BRUCE
   Buddy, you don’t know the half of it.

   STRANGER
   Lay it on me, brother.

   BRUCE
   Her father, my father-in-law, as of yesterday has gone completely utterly batty. I’m talking insane. Worse than the tea party.

The stranger cringes.

The BARTENDER (35) brings them each a DRINK.

   STRANGER
   Say. That’s a heck of a suit. I thought I was the best-dressed guy in here.
BRUCE
Here’s to the business lunch.

They clink and drink.

STRANGER
What line of work you in?

BRUCE
Real estate, mostly.

STRANGER
No way! I’m actually looking for a three-bedroom in the mid to upper twos. Got anything?

BRUCE
I specialize more in acreage. Developed and undeveloped plots.

STRANGER
Oh. How developed are we talking?

BRUCE
(embarrassed)
Actually, it’s mostly undeveloped.

STRANGER
Ah. Interesting. So how’s business? Good?

Bruce clears his throat and stirs his drink.

The Stranger feels awkward.

STRANGER (CONT’D)
Let me buy you a shot. You drink tequila?

BRUCE
Sure. Why not?

THUNDER RUMBLES.

EXT. ROY’S MUSIC SHOP - DAY

Gramps exits the store carrying a BOX marked “Dunlop Crybaby Classic Wah Pedal.”

A crack of THUNDER! It starts RAINING!

PEOPLE run for cover!
Gramps hobbles to the convertible and puts the roof up.
He doesn’t notice the black sports car lurking across the parking lot.

**INT. KITCHEN - EVENING (RAINING)**

Ellen listens to HEADPHONES and hums along as she measures two teaspoons of BAKING POWDER and half a teaspoon of SALT into a SIFTER full of FLOUR.

She sifts everything into a bowl, then pours it back in and sifts it again.

Using a manual EGG BEATER, she lovingly mixes the batter.
Lines a CUPCAKE PAN with paper cups.
Carefully fills each cup.
Slides the pan into the oven.
Zack and Caleb lick the leftover batter.

**INT. BAR - EVENING (RAINING)**

Bruce is drunk. He looks idly around the bar.
A HOUSEWIFE (45) sits alone.
He swallows the rest of his drink, and looks at his wedding ring.
He tries nonchalantly to slip it off.
It won’t come off. He pulls harder.
It’s stuck. He twists and yanks.

**BRUCE**
Sonofa!

He uses his teeth.
Finally he tries to put it between his feet--
He falls off his stool!
DINK! The RING rolls across the floor--
It disappears behind the JUKE BOX!
Bruce slaps himself in the forehead!
PATRONS laugh at him.

PATRON (O.S.)
Look at that old drunk!

The housewife shakes her head.

INT. LIBRARY - EVENING (RAINING)
Sibyl scans old articles on a MICROFICHE projector.
The Librarian sifts through stacks of INDEX CARDS.
The Clerk pores over old YEARBOOKS.

CLERK
Bingo. Woodrow R. Sanderling.

He shows Sibyl the PHOTO:
A YOUNG GRAMPS in uniform, rank Airman First Class.

SIBYL
Hm. Interesting.

She absently rests a hand on the Clerk’s shoulder.
He cherishes her touch.

EXT. MOTEL - EVENING (RAINING)
The convertible pulls in and parks.
A few blocks behind, the black sports car does a U-turn and sneaks away.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - EVENING (RAINING)
Ellen artfully applies FROSTING to her cupcakes.
Zack and Caleb stuff their faces.
RING! -- Ellen answers the phone.
EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - EVENING (RAINING)

Bruce sits on the curb, soaked, trying to get his wedding ring back on.

The station wagon pulls up, splashing him.

INT. STATION WAGON - EVENING (RAINING)

ELLEN
Everything alright at the office?

BRUCE
Actually, things kinda fell apart tonight.

ELLEN
Oh. I’m sorry, honey.
(rubs his arm)
What happened to your finger?

Bruce’s ring finger is all scratched.

BRUCE
My ring was irritating me. I had to take it off. I think it might be getting too tight.

ELLEN
Maybe a few more shots of liquor would help?

BRUCE
What’s that supposed to mean?

ELLEN
How much have you had to drink?

BRUCE
I haven’t been drinking.

ELLEN
For cry sake. You smell like Charlie Sheen.

BRUCE
I swear. You’re just as crazy as your old man.

Ellen pulls over!
BRUCE (CONT’D)
What are you doing?

ELLEN
Get out.

BRUCE
Honey.

ELLEN
Out!

BRUCE
Listen.

She punches him!

BRUCE (CONT’D)
Ow!

ELLEN
Out!

BRUCE
Okay, okay. I have been drinkin.

She punches him!

BRUCE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry!

ELLEN
No you’re not.

BRUCE
I’ll make it up to you.

ELLEN
No you won’t.

She starts to cry.

ELLEN (CONT’D)
Get out.

BRUCE
I’m not getting out.

She grabs his PDA and throws it outside!

BRUCE (CONT’D)
What? No! Ellen!

She drives away.
INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - EVENING (RAINING)

BRUCE
This is BS! How am I supposed to deal with so much BS? I take it all day at work. Lord knows I take it from you and your dad. I even take it at the bar! And don’t get me started on Sibyl’s BS!

ELLEN
Keep your voice down!

BRUCE
Why should I? This is my house!

ELLEN
You want the whole neighborhood to hear you?

BRUCE
To hell with them!

ELLEN
What about the kids?

BRUCE
You think I give a damn?

Ellen throws cupcakes at him!

ELLEN
You selfish, lousy, good-for-nothing drunk!

BRUCE
Don’t forget ugly.

ELLEN
You think I don’t know about your emergency meetings? You filthy liar!

A cupcake hits him in the face!

ELLEN (CONT’D)
You think I don’t know you cheat on me?

She frisbees the plate at him!

It hits him square in the gut!
BRUCE
Ow! The hell you talking about?
You crazy old bat! Just like your idiot father!

ELLEN
You! You!

EXT. AVERY RESIDENCE - EVENING (RAINING)
The rain almost drowns out the voice--

ELLEN (O.C.)
You God damn asshole!

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - EVENING (RAINING)

BRUCE
Let it all out, baby!

ELLEN
I just did!

She marches off to the kitchen.

Bruce flops down on the couch. Rubs his sore gut. Picks up a nearby cupcake and eats it.

EXT. AVERY RESIDENCE - EVENING (RAINING)

LIGHTNING and THUNDER!

A WIND CHIME dances wildly in the wind!

A BIRD BATH overflows.

The driving rain washes away the plastic army men.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - EVENING (RAINING)

Bruce tries to find something to watch on TV.

Ellen sips TEA and watches the rain batter the window.

Bruce finally turns the TV off.
ELLEN
Something is terribly wrong with my
dad. I don’t know what. He might
be sick. He might be dying. But
I’m scared, Bruce. I’m really
freaking out. I could use your
support. In fact, I’m not sure
I’ve ever needed it more.

Bruce embraces Ellen.
They hold each other tight.
The boys timidly enter, and join the hug.
The family shares a moment together.

ZACK
Mom?

ELLEN
Yes?

ZACK
We need a ride.

Ellen smiles and looks out the window.
The rain has stopped.

EXT. MR. HUMPHREY’S HOUSE – EVENING

Ellen waits in the station wagon as Caleb and Zack ring
the DOORBELL.
Nobody answers.
They ring it again. No answer.

ZACK
(points)
Is that him on the roof?

MR. HUMPHREY (60), a gruff old curmudgeon, shuffles
unsteadily across the slippery wet roof.

CALEB
Mister Humphrey!

Startled, he slips and almost falls!
MR. HUMPHREY
Who said that?

CALEB
Down here!

MR. HUMPHREY
Oh. Whatever you’re selling, I don’t want it. Scram!

ZACK
We’re not selling anything. We’re just looking for mister Humphrey.

MR. HUMPHREY
Never heard of him. Now beat it.

CALEB
He’s supposed to be a leading expert on pinball machines.

MR. HUMPHREY
Oh, he’s an expert alright. Hold the ladder, would you?

The kids hold his LADDER steady as Mr. Humphrey climbs down.

CALEB
He’s supposed to have a collection of nearly every pinball game ever.

MR. HUMPHREY
Yes, his collection is quite impressive.

ZACK
So surely he would have Zany Zombies.

MR. HUMPHREY
I imagine he might. But you must excuse me. I have to clean my gutters.

Mr. Humphrey opens the door to his GARAGE--

ZACK
What’s that?

MR. HUMPHREY
What’s what?

Zack runs into the garage!
INT. GARAGE - EVENING

Zack pulls the cover off a PINBALL MACHINE!

ZACK
A pinball machine!

MR. HUMPHREY
Hey! You little devil!

Zack plugs it in -- It lights up, flashes and DINGS!

Mr Humphrey lights up too. A smile grows on his face as he watches Zack play.

DING! DING! DING! DING! DING!

MR. HUMPHREY (CONT’D)
You gotta hit the blue bumper. That’s the bonus.

Zack hits it! DING! DING! DING! DING!

MR. HUMPHREY (CONT’D)
Alright! Now try to get it up that ramp. It unlocks the extra ball.

Zack hits it! DING! DING! DING! DING!

MR. HUMPHREY (CONT’D)
Nice shot!

They high-five!

MR. HUMPHREY (CONT’D)
Now whatever you do, don’t hit the green kicker--

Zack hits the green kicker! His ball shoots back too fast, ending up in the gutter -- GAME OVER!

ZACK
Aw, man. Now you tell me.

Mr. Humphrey resumes his gruff demeanor.

MR. HUMPHREY
Good game, kid.

Caleb dusts off an old machine -- ZANY ZOMBIES!

CALEB
Omigosh! Found it!
ZACK
Woo hoo!

MR. HUMPHREY
I’m sorry, but it’s time for you children to leave.

Caleb clings to the machine!

CALEB
We have to buy this game, mister!

ZACK
How much do you want for it?

MR. HUMPHREY
Look, son. It’s not for sale.

Zack whips out his wad of CASH!

Mr. Humphrey lights up! DING!

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The Librarian shows Sibyl a PHOTO.

LIBRARIAN
You’re not gonna believe this.
Groom Lake, baby.

SIBYL
Nuh uh.

Sibyl examines it:
A YOUNG GRAMPS wearing a FLIGHT SUIT seated in a U-2 cockpit!

SIBYL (CONT’D)
Groom Lake! He’s not crazy!

Sibyl kisses the Librarian on the cheek. He blushes.

She jumps on a table!

SIBYL (CONT’D)
He’s not crazy!
INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

BRUCE
What do you mean he’s not crazy?

Sibyl slaps the PHOTOS on the table.

SIBYL
He’s not crazy!

Ellen puts on her glasses and examines the evidence.

BRUCE
Are you still smoking cigarettes? You are, aren’t you?

Sibyl rolls her eyes.

BRUCE (CONT’D)
It’s a disgusting habit. And why don’t you take a few classes this fall? It wouldn’t kill you.

ELLEN
(excited)
It’s him! It’s really him!

SIBYL
There’s more!
(shuffles papers)
Best of all, I found his name on a classified airforce roster from nineteen seventy-two. His rank is listed as Technical Sergeant, and he was awarded the Bronze Star.

BRUCE
Did you say classified? Or declassified?

SIBYL
Um.

BRUCE
This has a classified stamp on it!

SIBYL
Ignore that part.

Bruce skeptically looks at the documents.
BRUCE
You aren’t pulling our leg, Sibyl?
You didn’t whip this up on the computer?

Sibyl gives him a dirty look.

Ellen claps her hands!

ELLEN
My dad isn’t crazy! Hallelujah!

She does a victory dance!

Sibyl dances too!

Caleb and Zack run in and start dancing!

BRUCE
You people.

ELLEN
We’ll see who’s right tomorrow morning.

BRUCE
Tomorrow’s Monday. I have work. The kids have school. Sibyl probably has nothing planned. Besides smoking cigarettes.

Sibyl rolls her eyes.

BRUCE (CONT’D)
Are you spending the night?

SIBYL
If that’s alright.

ELLEN
Of course, of course. And for the record, the boys do not have school tomorrow. I’ll write them a note.

CALEB
Omigosh!

ZACK
Alright, Mom!

Zack and Caleb exchange high-fives!

Bruce shakes his head. Ellen gives him a hug.
ELLEN
Honey. Just think. This will all be over tomorrow morning.

BRUCE
Whatever. I’m through arguing.

ELLEN
Aw. Thanks, hun.

She kisses him on the cheek.

BRUCE
(checks watch)
Did anybody check the mail? I’m gonna go check the mail. Be right back.

Bruce slides out of the house.

The rest of the family keep dancing.

EXT. AVERY RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The Sheriff sits in his POLICE CAR.

Bruce climbs into the passenger seat--

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

SHERIFF
Mister Avery.

BRUCE
Sheriff.

They shake hands.

SHERIFF
I understand you want your father-in-law forcibly taken to a mental institution.

BRUCE
Sure do.

SHERIFF
I feel the Zacke way about my mother-in-law.
They both chuckle.

BRUCE
This guy’s legitimately crazy though. Psychiatric examination will bear that out.

SHERIFF
Does he have any money?

BRUCE
Nah. Not a nickel. Why?

SHERIFF
Too bad. You can repossess a lot of property when you lock up a loved one.

The Sheriff hands Bruce a thick FOLDER.

SHERIFF (CONT’D)
There’s quite a bit of paperwork involved.

BRUCE
I’ll get right to it.

SHERIFF
Your wife has to sign a few parts. Is she on board with this?

BRUCE
I’ll figure something out.

SHERIFF
Okay. Here’s my card.

The Sheriff hands Bruce his BUSINESS CARD.

SHERIFF (CONT’D)
Give me a ring when you got everything filled out, and I’ll come snag the old geezer.

BRUCE
I don’t exactly know where he is. He’s been staying at some motel.

SHERIFF
Well, you better find him. And you and your wife need to bear witness when we take him away.
I see.

Well, I think that’s about it.

Thanks, Sheriff.

They shake hands.

Gramps connects an electronic device to the telephone.

RING! Ellen reaches for the phone--
Sibyl gets it!

Avery residence? Grandpa!

Loud obnoxious static.

The hand wearing the black glove adjusts instruments, but to no avail. The signal is scrambled.

The hand clenches a fist and pounds the table!

That’s terrific news, kids. Terrific! I’ll tell you what. Leave it by the bird bath and I’ll pick it up some time tonight. Okay? Awesome. You two are heroes in my book.

He crosses the final item off his list.
INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Caleb wraps the ZANY ZOMBIES SCOREBOARD up in a TOWEL.
The boys race out of the room!
Ellen wanders in.
The disassembled pinball machine is in A THOUSAND PIECES,
scattered everywhere. A huge mess.
She puts her hands on her hips.

EXT. AVERY RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Zack and Caleb nearly run into Bruce!
They all look guilty.

BRUCE
Hey kids.

Bruce tries to hide the Sheriff’s paperwork behind his back.

CALEB
Hey Dad.

Caleb tries to hide the wrapped scoreboard behind his back.
An awkward beat.

ZACK
Great night for stargazing. Nice and clear.
(looks up)

BRUCE
Oh yeah, you bet. Stars are looking good tonight.
(looks up)

BEEP! BEEP! The Sheriff honks and waves as he drives by!
Bruce ducks inside.
The kids hurry over to the BIRD BATH.
INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sibyl lies curled up in an army SLEEPING BAG, reading her UFO book.

Ellen knocks on the door frame.

ELLEN
Why don’t I fix up the pull-out couch? It won’t take two minutes.

SIBYL
I’m fine, Mom. Really. Thanks. Good night.

ELLEN
Night dear. You want this light on or off?

SIBYL
Everything’s good. I love you. Go to sleep.

Ellen smiles and leaves.

Sibyl keeps reading.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Zack and Caleb finish cleaning up the mess of pinball machine parts.

Ellen walks in. She looks around, pleasantly surprised.

They all exchange smiles.

INT. KID’S ROOM - NIGHT

Ellen tucks the boys into bed.

ELLEN
Sleep tight.

ZACK
I’ll try. Even though it feels like Christmas eve.

ELLEN
I know what you mean.
INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Gramps drops a set of JUMPER CABLES onto the floor.

He puts on a pair of BIFOCALS and rummages through the box Nancy and Carlos prepared.

Gramps fully disassembles an OSCILLOSCOPE, CALCULATOR, TUBE RADIO and POCKET WATCH.

Using a SOLDERING IRON, he constructs bizarre circuitry which doesn’t look like it would work.

He checks his watch. Makes COFFEE.

Adds a dash of milk and a generous amount of MAPLE SYRUP.

Gets back to work assembling the device:

Calculator buttons and radio dials go on the sides.
The pinball scoreboard display attaches to the front.
The wah pedal and jumper cables attach to the back.
The GYROSCOPE fits into a bracket on top.

He checks his watch. Sighs. Lies down on the floor.

   GRAMPS
   Okay. Down, up.

He manages to do a push-up!

   GRAMPS (CONT’D)
   Alright! Down, Up!

Unfortunately, he can’t do another.

   GRAMPS (CONT’D)
   One is better than none.

He pulls the jump rope out of the trash can.

Jumps rope for a good while.

Takes a break to catch his breath.

Jumps rope some more.

Wipes sweat from his face.

Throws a few awkward but strong punches.
Practices a few good kicks.
Takes a break to catch his breath.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Getting there.

He drinks some WATER. Eats some PANCAKES.
Finishes the coffee and makes another pot.

INT. AVERY RESIDENCE - NIGHT
Bruce sips COFFEE as he fills out the Sheriff’s paperwork.
He comes to a part he has trouble with.

BRUCE
Hm.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT
Bruce flicks on the LIGHT.

BRUCE
Honey?
Ellen sits up, disoriented and alarmed!

ELLEN
Is there a fire?

BRUCE
No.
She goes back to sleep.

BRUCE (CONT’D)
I need your signature.

ELLEN
Mmm hmm.

BRUCE
Here. Just sign your name. It’s for the kids.

He puts a PEN in her hand and extracts her signature.
BRUCE (CONT’D)
Perfect. And here. And here.
Lovely. And here.

She SNORES as he moves her hand across the final page.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT
Gramps lays down his tools, removes his bifocals and steps back to admire the completed GIZMO.

GRAMPS
This thing better work.

He packs it snugly into the suitcase.
Suddenly he hears something outside!
He grabs his PISTOL and peers out the window--

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT
A SHADOWY FIGURE lurks near the convertible!
Gramps runs outside in his underwear!

GRAMPS
Hey! You!
The shadowy figure runs away!

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Stop!
The figure disappears around a corner--
Tires SCREECH!
The black sports car zooms away!
Gramps aims, but decides not to shoot.
Suddenly his convertible EXPLODES!
A massive FIREBALL rises into the air!
Gramps is speechless.

FADE TO:
INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Ellen melts BUTTER, sifts FLOUR, cracks EGGS--
She pours perfect circles of BATTER onto a hot GRIDDLE.
RING! She licks her finger and answers the phone--

ELLEN
Morning!

INT. MOTEL - MORNING

GRAMPS
Hey Ellie. It’s me. Things are on schedule, but I need a big favor.
I need a lift.

He looks out the window at the SMOLDERING CAR WRECK.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Yeah. I did have a car. But not anymore. Thanks, Ellie.

He hangs up, waits, and dials another number.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
This is agent whiskey Romeo Sierra. The ball is in play. Repeat, the ball is in play. Out.

Gramps hangs up. He looks at himself in the mirror.
With deliberate seriousness, he puts on a BERET.

He unfolds dark SUNGLASSES and puts them on too.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Too much?

He takes off the glasses. Straightens his beret. Gives himself a tough look in the mirror.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Let’s do this.

EXT. AVERY RESIDENCE - MORNING

The whole family piles into the Station Wagon. Sibyl rides in the trunk. Bruce drives.
EXT. MOTEL – MORNING

POLICE have cordoned off the CAR WRECK. DETECTIVES investigate the remains of the convertible.

The station wagon pulls into the parking lot.

Gramps sits on his suitcase, holding a shovel and his trusty cane.

The kids roll down their windows--

ZACK AND CALEB

Grandpa!

SIBYL
Nice beret!

BRUCE
What the heck happened here?

ELLEN
That’s not your car, is it?

GRAMPS
Good morning everybody! I smell pancakes!

INT. STATION WAGON – MORNING

Ellen hands Gramps a plate of PANCAKES.

GRAMPS
Well bless your heart, darling.

ELLEN
And since it’s kind of a special occasion, I broke out some of the good stuff.

She hands him a fancy bottle of SYRUP.

GRAMPS
Ah, Miller’s Creek Black Maple reserve! Ninety-seven! Quite a vintage!

He opens, sniffs and tastes it.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Holy sweet mother.
BRUCE
Which way are we headed, captain?

GRAMPS
Get on the interstate. Westbound.

EXT. INTERSTATE - MORNING

The station wagon cruises along.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

GRAMPS
(licking fingers)
I gotta hand it to you, Ellie.
Nobody makes pancakes half as good
as you.

ELLEN
Aw. Thanks Dad. I learned from
the best.

GRAMPS
I’m not just saying that. If they
needed improvement, I would tell
you. I’m not afraid to be honest
about your cooking.

For instance, I don’t especially
care for your peanut brittle.

ELLEN
What’s wrong with my--?

GRAMPS
--And frankly, your lasagna sucks.
I don’t know how you can screw up
lasagna, but you do.

ELLEN
Really?

BRUCE
He does have a point. There’s
something wack about your lasagna.

ELLEN
Kids? What do you think?
ZACK
Wack.

Caleb makes a yuck face.

ELLEN
Huh. So much for that.

GRAMPS
But your pancakes are divine! They couldn’t possibly be any better. Honestly. Honestly.

Ellen is touched.

ELLEN
Glad you like them, Dad.

BRUCE
So where exactly are we headed? Am I going the right way?

GRAMPS
You’re doing fine, son. Just keep your foot on the gas. I’ll tell you when to turn.
(checks watch)

Bruce gives Ellen a skeptical look. She shrugs.

SIBYL
So Grandpa. Tell us about Vodka Borealis.

ZACK
Yeah Grandpa! Tell us!

GRAMPS
Let’s see. Vodka Borealis is the most advanced Soviet missile guidance system ever developed. It incorporates random variable trajectories into the flight path, resulting in a missile with an erratic course, like a knuckleball.

SIBYL
Sneaky.

GRAMPS
You can’t predict where it’s going to land, and worse, you can’t intercept it.
SIBYL
So you have to stop it before it launches.

GRAMPS
Can’t. All you know is the general area it’ll come from, and the approximate time, based on lunar phases.

BRUCE
(laughs)
Lunar phases? You mean astrology?

GRAMPS
No, Bruce. It’s called rocket science.

SIBYL
Wait. So how do you stop the missile?

GRAMPS
Luckily, our boys finally developed a sophisticated mechanism whereby an operator can manually steer a similarly erratic missile close enough to disable the warhead electromagnetically.

(pats his suitcase)
But it’s a tricky operation. Never tested in the field. And we only get one shot.

SIBYL
(astounded)
You’re gonna launch a missile?

GRAMPS
(grins)
That’s the plan.

Zack and Caleb excitedly bounce up and down!

Bruce looks incredulously at Ellen. She bites her lip.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Farm land on either side. LIVESTOCK grazes in lush fields. CROPS grow in neat rows.
The station wagon coasts along.

**INT. STATION WAGON - DAY**

Everybody’s bored. Caleb yawns.

Suddenly Gramps perks up--

**GRAMPS**

Wait! I think. Yes! I’m sure of it! There should be a creek up ahead, and a small bridge.

He fidgets excitedly. His enthusiasm is contagious.

**ZACK**

Is that it?

(points)

**GRAMPS**

(squints)

I can’t see that far. Ah!
I think you’re right!

They approach and pass over a BRIDGE.

**GRAMPS (CONT’D)**

That was it! Pretty soon we’ll come to a fork in the road. Bear left.

**BRUCE**

Will do.

They keep driving. Everyone waits anxiously.

They pass the fork, bearing left. Confidence grows.

**GRAMPS**

Next we’ll see an old chimney, and a gravel road, which we take.

**BRUCE**

Got it.

Excitement builds as they spot the chimney and turn in.

**EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY**

The station wagon parks. The family unloads.
Gramps triumphantly points to a row of old FENCE POSTS--

GRAMPS
See those fence posts? The panel’s buried next to the seventh post.

Caleb and Zack grab the shovel and run ahead!

Sibyl lights a CLOVE CIGARETTE.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
(surprise)
You smoke?

SIBYL
(shame)
I’m quitting.

She throws away the cigarette.

Bruce and Ellen exchange surprised looks. Ellen shrugs.

GRAMPS
If you carry the battery, I’ll dig.

SIBYL
What battery?

GRAMPS
The car battery.

BRUCE
My car? This car? Oh no. No way.

GRAMPS
We need a battery, Bruce.

BRUCE
Yeah? We also need a way home. Look around. We’re in the middle of nowhere. Ellie? You’re with me on this one.

GRAMPS
We need a battery, Ellie.

ELLEN
They need a battery, Bruce.

Sibyl pops the hood.
BRUCE
(to the sky)
Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change.

Sibyl extracts the BATTERY.

Gramps hauls his suitcase over to the seventh post.

BRUCE (CONT’D)
Honey, can I borrow your phone?
Seems somebody threw mine out in the rain last night, and I need to call the office.

Ellen hands over her PHONE.

BRUCE (CONT’D)
Thanks, babe.

Bruce steps aside to make his call.

He pulls out the Sheriff’s business card and dials.

EXT. SEVENTH POST – DAY

Caleb and Zack are exhausted.

Sibyl, sweating, digs a big hole.

SIBYL
Am I getting close?

GRAMPS
Another inch or two. You should hit it any second.

Sibyl keeps digging.

And digging.

BRUCE
That’s right. Any second.

The family exchanges looks of doubt.

Sibyl keeps digging.

And digging.

Finally she stops.
SIBYL
It’s not here, Grandpa.

GRAMPS
(confused)
It has to be here! It has to be!

Gramps takes the shovel and digs.
The family quickly loses faith.
Bruce shakes his head and impatiently checks his watch.
The kids are disappointed. Ellen winces.
Sibyl thoughtfully watches the clouds.
Gramps stops digging. He sits, defeated.
The boys head back to the car.

ELLEN
Well? What do you say we pack it up?

GRAMPS
But. But. I don’t understand.

ELLEN
It was fun, Dad. We all had fun. But it’s over. Accept it.

BRUCE
You really had us going there for a while.

They all head back to the car.
Gramps is depressed.
Bruce smirks at Ellen.

Suddenly Zack trips and falls on his face!

ZACK
Ow! What the heck?

CALEB
Watch where you’re walking, dum--

Caleb trips and falls too!
CALEB (CONT’D)
Ow! There’s something here. Under the grass.

They pull and dig, and uncover a piece of WOOD.

CALEB (CONT’D)
What’s this doing here?

SIBYL
It’s a fence post! This is the first fence post, not that one!

CALEB
Omigosh!

Everybody exchanges excited looks.

Zack races to the real seventh post!

The rest of the family is close behind.

Bruce grabs the shovel and digs like a machine!

Dirt flies! The hole quickly grows.

The kids run amok. Ellen nervously wrings her hands.

Gramps calmly checks his watch.

DINK! The shovel jolts.

SIBYL
I hit something!

Everyone exchanges anxious looks.

They use their hands to quickly uncover a METAL PLATE!

ELLEN
It says high voltage!

GRAMPS
That’s just to scare people.

BRUCE
It’s bolted shut.

Gramps hands Bruce the socket wrench.

Bruce unscrews the bolts and pulls off the plate--

Inside are a tangle of multicolored WIRES.
Gramps attaches his gizmo by connecting the appropriate wires.

CALEB
This is so cool.

ELLEN
Dad. I think we all owe you an apology.

GRAMPS
Not now, Ellie. I have to concentrate here.

Ellen shuts up.

Gramps checks his watch, licks his finger to test the wind speed, and adjusts dials on the gizmo.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
Okay. Now we hook up the jumper cables.

SIBYL
Got it.

Sibyl reaches for the battery--

Suddenly the black sports car zooms up the road towards them!

ELLEN
Who on earth could that be?

The driver’s window rolls down--

VERONIKA (65), a femme fatale wearing the black gloves we recognize, leans out the window with a TOMMY GUN!

GRAMPS
Get down! Now!

The Avery family hits the deck!

TAT! TAT! TAT! TAT! TAT! TAT! TAT!

Bullets kick up dirt as Gramps runs, rolls, ducks and dives!

He pulls out his pistol and returns fire!

PAP! PAP! PAP!

A BULLET splinters the sports car windshield!

The car skids to a halt! Veronika leaps out, shooting!
Gramps keeps moving and returning fire as bullets whiz by.

CLICK!  Veronika runs out of ammo and discards her gun.
CLICK!  Gramps runs out of ammo and discards his gun.
The Avery family exchange looks of disbelief.
Veronika and Gramps glare at each other.
Veronika peels off her gloves.
Gramps rolls up his sleeves.
Veronika steps out of her high heels.
Gramps kicks off his shoes.
Veronika removes her earrings.
Gramps straightens his beret.
They glare at each other.
Suddenly Veronika whips out a pair of NUNCHUCKS!
Gramps unsheathes his cane, which contains a SWORD!

CALEB
Omigosh!  Yes!

Sibyl takes a picture with her PHONE.

Ellen faints!

BRUCE
Honey?

Veronika and Gramps glare at each other.
Suddenly she charges at him!
Their weapons clash!  TINK!  TINK!  TINK!  TINK!
They separate, circle, and clash again!
TINK!  TINK!  TINK!  TINK!
The nunchucks wrap around the sword--
Veronika yanks and Gramps is suddenly disarmed!

He kicks and she is suddenly disarmed!

She kicks! He blocks.

She punches! He grabs her arm—

They exchange elbows!

She head-butts him!

He’s momentarily dazed.

She picks up his sword!

He cautiously backs away.

She advances!

He trips and falls!

She closes in!

He raises his hands in defense!

She prepares to stab!

TZKZTIKTZTKIZITKZ! Veronika spasms and falls over!

The Sheriff stands there holding a TAZER GUN!

Bruce faints!

SHERIFF
Somebody wanna tell me what the hell’s going on here?

Gramps points to the sky.

GRAMPS
Here it comes!

They all look up:

A MISSILE flies erratically across the sky! It dives, climbs and turns randomly, even going in circles!

SHERIFF
Holy cow! Is that a rocket?

The Sheriff reaches for his RADIO.
SHERIFF (CONT’D)
Dispatch? Dispatch, come in.

Gramps quickly hooks up the jumper cables--

SPARKS FLY as the gizmo whirs to life!
The pinball scoreboard lights up!
Gramps checks his watch. Adjusts the dials. Flips a switch.

GRAMPS
Fire in the hole!

He presses a button!
SPARKS FLY! But the gizmo goes dead!

Gramps frowns.

ZACK
Did it work?

Gramps bites his lip.

SIBYL
What’s supposed to happen?

GRAMPS
See that water tower over there?
(points)

SIBYL
Yeah.

GRAMPS
It’s not really a water tower. It’s a missile silo, containing an anti-ballistic missile which should have just launched.

Gramps looks dismally at the gizmo.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
I don’t get it. I thought I did everything according to protocol. What went wrong?

Suddenly a RUMBLE like THUNDER!

CALEB
What was that?

The ground QUAKES!
ZACK
Earthquake!
They all lose their balance and fall over!
The RUMBLE gets so loud they cover their ears!

EXT. WATER TOWER - DAY
The tower shudders violently! Pieces break away!
SMOKE billows!
The roof caves in! Walls crumble!
A sudden FLASH!
A MISSILE LAUNCHES as the tower collapses!
FIRE jets skyward!

EXT. FIELD - DAY
The Sheriff faints!
The American missile rises higher and higher.
It arcs towards the Russian missile.
Gramps spins the gyroscope. The gizmo BLINKS and CLICKS!
Gramps presses buttons and turns dials. The scoreboard flashes random numbers.
The American missile starts to jitter erratically.
Zack and Caleb cross their fingers.
Sibyl is gobsmacked.
Veronika struggles against her HANDCUFFS.
Gramps keeps calculating and making fine adjustments.
His foot rocks on the wah pedal.
The American missile dips and turns just as randomly as the Russian missile!
The two crazy missiles get closer and closer together..

GRAMPS
Yes! Yes!

VERONIKA
Nyet! Nyet!

Gramps holds the controls steady.

GRAMPS
Almost. Almost.

Everyone holds their breath.

The missiles collide!

KGPHOOOM! A huge EXPLOSION!

FLAMING DEBRIS rains down!

Gramps pumps his fist!

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!

Zack and Caleb dance!

ZACK AND CALEB
U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!

Sibyl takes pictures.

Veronika cries. Her makeup runs down her cheeks.

FADE TO:

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

An OLD MAN bursts in--

OLD MAN
Woodrow’s back!

OLD WOMAN
Woodrow!

ELDERLY PEOPLE cheer as Gramps enters, still wearing his beret. Somebody throws CONFETTI!

GRAMPS
My! What a welcome!
Jerry and Carlos hurry over--

    CARLOS
    Thank God! We thought you were dead!

    JERRY
    They said the car was totaled!

    GRAMPS
    They were right about the car.

Nancy and Gertie hurry over.

    GERTIE
    You’re okay!

    NANCY
    This calls for a celebration!

    CARLOS
    I got some booze hidden in my room!

He hurries off.

An ORDERLY frowns.

    JERRY
    So what the heck happened?

    NANCY
    There was an explosion?

    GRAMPS
    Well, you know. Sometimes cars explode.

    GERTIE
    Do they?

    GRAMPS
    It happens.

    JERRY
    You wouldn’t believe how big my insurance is paying out! What do you say we all go on a cruise to Bermuda?

    GRAMPS
    Why not?

    CARLOS (O.S.)
    Here here!
Carlos returns with the BOOZE and starts filling cups.
The Orderly sighs and takes a cup.

    NANCY
    By the way, I love your hat.

Gramps straightens his beret.

    GRAMPS
    So do I.

Somebody puts on an old MILES DAVIS record.
OLD TIMERS sway nostalgically.
Jerry and Gertie waltz.
Zack and Caleb do the twist.
Gramps sniffs the air--
A cart full of PANCAKES is wheeled out!

    GRAMPS (CONT’D)
    Alright! I thought it was getting to be lunch time.

Gramps tucks a napkin into his collar and grabs a PLATE.
Zack and Caleb mimic him.
Gramps piles his pancakes high and drowns them in SYRUP.
Zack and Caleb do likewise.
Ellen and Bruce think it’s hilarious.

    SIBYL
    Everybody, shhh. Check this out.

Sibyl turns up the TV volume--

    ON TV:
    “BREAKING NEWS” wipe.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A REPORTER (38) holding a MICROPHONE stands near where the missiles collided. Behind her, FIREFIGHTERS search the area.
REPORTER
I’m standing in a field where witnesses say an explosion of some kind occurred in the sky earlier today.

The CAMERA pans the scene. WORKERS collect SMOULDERING DEBRIS.

REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT’D)
A spokesperson from the Department of Defence denied speculation that a missile test had been conducted, and assures us that at no time were any civilian lives in any danger.

INT. PRESS CLUB - DAY

A SCIENTIST shrugs and says something.

REPORTER (V.O.)
NASA has issued a statement attributing today’s unfortunate event to a faulty weather balloon, which apparently malfunctioned and caught fire.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

REPORTER
In an unrelated incident, a nearby water tower seems to have collapsed. No injuries are reported. Back to you in the studio.

INT. NEWS ROOM - DAY

ANCHOR
Alright. Thanks, Tina. Coming up, weather and sports. But first, your local traffic.

CUT TO:
Sibyl turns off the TV.

SIBYL
A weather balloon, huh?

BRUCE
See? I knew there was a logical explanation. And you guys really thought Grandpa launched a missile.

Sibyl rolls her eyes.

Zack and Caleb roll their eyes.

Ellen gives Bruce a dirty look.

BRUCE (CONT’D)
I swear. It’s amazing the things people believe.

OLD TIMERS nod in agreement.

GRAMPS
Wait a second. What’s this?

Gramps picks up a MAGAZINE.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
An ad for hiking boots?

He flips through it.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
There better not be an article about soy milk in here.

Bruce and Ellen exchange worried looks.

Zack and Caleb get excited!

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
(worried)
Uh oh.

He removes the napkin from his collar, picks up his trusty cane and stands.

GRAMPS (CONT’D)
I need to get to a pay phone.

Ellen and Bruce are petrified!
GRAMPS (CONT’D)
(laughs)
Just kidding! It’s all over. I’m
Done. Retired. Finito.

Ellen breathes a sigh of relief.

They all laugh.

BRUCE
Thank goodness! I couldn’t handle
another assignment.

ELLEN
Me neither.

GRAMPS
No sir. No more top secret
missions for me.

Behind his back, Gramps has his fingers crossed!

Zack and Caleb, who see this, exchange excited looks!

Sibyl sees it too.

Gramps turns and winks at them!

FADE OUT.

THE END.