

BROKE OR BANKROLLED

A Play in Two Acts

by

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Synopsis: Painful financial woes take a family's relationship to an unbelievable place. A normal argument spirals into an absurdist nightmare. What could possibly push a parent to act so irrationally?

Cast of Characters

- LIONEL: A young man capable of great things but frequently weighed down by family and history.
- CHLOE: A seemingly naïve middle-aged woman who likes to think she always is in control of her life.
- DALLAS: A misguided entrepreneurial spirit.
- JO: A woman who loves her job and connecting to interesting people through it.

ACT I

SCENE 1

*SETTING: In the living room of CHLOE's house.
AT RISE: CHLOE is waiting anxiously on the couch.
LIONEL Enters. CHLOE has a long sleeve shirt on.
CHLOE pops up and goes in for a hug. LIONEL dodges
it dives into an interrogation.*

*General Staging Note: The living room set and dark
room set should align on at least one wall and
slightly more center or upstage and next to
eachother but in opposite orientations. All other
spaces should be downstage of those rooms to allow
for the greatest flexibility.*

LIONEL
Is that car outside yours?

CHLOE
No, Lionel it's--

LIONEL
No. It's not.

Short pause.
Is it his?

CHLOE
Yes--

LIONEL
Really?

CHLOE
Not really.

LIONEL
So it's mine then?

CHLOE
Yes.

LIONEL
You know, when a car's red the insurance is higher.

CHLOE
I didn't know that.

LIONEL
Would it have made a difference?

CHLOE

Probably not.

LIONEL

What were you thinking?

CHLOE

I don't--

LIONEL

You meet some douchebag and suddenly you're a criminal.

CHLOE

That's not fair--

LIONEL

Not fair? Are you insane?

Pause.

That computer mine too?

CHLOE nods.

And the T.V?

CHLOE

Yes.

Pause.

I'm sorry.

LIONEL

Sorry's a start. But it ain't gonna fix anything.

CHLOE

It's not that bad, Lionel.

LIONEL

I'm gonna have to file bankruptcy--

CHLOE

No--

LIONEL

And I'm only 20 years old!

CHLOE

No. You won't have to do that.

LIONEL

Really?

CHLOE

Really.

LIONEL

What the hell am I supposed to do then?

CHLOE

I'm a doctor, I fix problems.

LIONEL

Ha! You're a fuckin'--

CHLOE

Watch it!

LIONEL

-nurse's aid! And this isn't the same kinda problem.

CHLOE

I'll figure it out.

LIONEL

Oh Yea?

CHLOE

I'm your mother. I'm supposed--

LIONEL

My mother. Exactly! You're supposed to help me.

CHLOE

I am. I just made a mistake.

LIONEL

More like a hundred mistakes. Thousands in mistakes.

CHLOE

I'm sorry.

LIONEL

How the fuck did you do this?

CHLOE

Watch your mouth, Lionel! Please.

LIONEL

Are you serious?

CHLOE

Yes, I'm still your mother.

LIONEL

You keep saying that, but you're acting real fucking un-motherly lately.

CHLOE

You have time to pay it back!

LIONEL

Right.

Stops to take a deep breath.

Let's pretend that you're sane for sec and look at this--

CHLOE

I'm sane.

LIONEL

Let's look at the situation.

CHLOE

Fine.

LIONEL

The cards, we can pay back. Sure. Eventually. But what about the loans I still need?

CHLOE

That's on me. I'll get it back to--

LIONEL

No shit! It's on you. But where's it gonna come from?

CHLOE

I can work--

LIONEL

What real place is it gonna come from, mom?

CHLOE

I can work overtime and I can go back to cleaning houses.

LIONEL

And even if that could cover the cost, I still have two years left.

CHLOE

We can get more loans!

LIONEL

Do you watch the news?

CHLOE

Sometimes--

LIONEL

They're not giving loans to people who deserve 'em. Let alone someone with this kinda credit.

CHLOE

I'll help you.

LIONEL

No. I'm not taking any of your help. I'm getting my shit out of this house. I'm gone.

CHLOE

You don't have to do that.

LIONEL

I don't know where I'll go--

CHLOE

You can't leave.

LIONEL

--But anywhere is better than here.

CHLOE

Please stay.

LIONEL

No. I don't trust you.

Pause.

CHLOE

Well, I'm sorry you feel that way.

LIONEL

Me too. Do you think I want to be like this to my mom?

CHLOE

Then why are you?

LIONEL

'Cause you put me in a hole so deep, I can't climb out.

CHLOE

I'll pay you back. It's my debt, not yours.

LIONEL

Maybe true. But it's all in my name, not yours.

CHLOE

I said I'll pay you back. I'll pay you--

LIONEL

I have a lawyer.

CHLOE

You're going to sue me?

LIONEL

What other option do I have?

CHLOE

You don't have a lawyer.

LIONEL

Hesitates.

We'll, I'm sure I can get one.

CHLOE

Not without losing more money in fees.

LIONEL

If I - When I win, it'll be worth it.

CHLOE

It doesn't matter. What's worse is you not going back to school because of this.

LIONEL

You care?

CHLOE

Of course.

LIONEL

THEN WHY DID YOU DO THIS TO ME IN THE FIRST PLACE?

CHLOE

I wasn't aiming at you! I was trying to pick myself up-- Get my life together.

LIONEL

And I get shafted in the process?

CHLOE

I'm so--

LIONEL

SO Sorry. I know, I know, I know! But you screwed up my whole life.

CHLOE

I've tried to do the right thing.

LIONEL

Well you just flushed 20 years of raising me down the toilet.

CHLOE

I never wanted to do this. I just got caught up.

LIONEL

Unlike your other problems, you can't fix this one with drugs.

CHLOE

She starts to speak, only to freeze when LIONEL makes eye contact with her.

I don't do that--

LIONEL looks unconvinced. Pause. LIONEL starts to pack up his things. CHLOE suddenly has an idea.

Look, can't we just sell a lot of it back?

LIONEL

For less than what you paid.

CHLOE

But it's a start.

LIONEL

The travel expenses, massages, insanely expensive dinners. How are you gonna get that back?

CHLOE

I...I--

LIONEL

You can't.

CHLOE

But--

LIONEL

Let me pack.

CHLOE

What if we work together on this?

LIONEL

I'd be risking you screwing me over again. I just need to do this on my own.

CHLOE

Please. I'm begging you to work with me on this.

LIONEL

Mom. You're family. You're always gonna be family.

CHLOE smiles as LIONEL pauses.
But this isn't gonna work.

CHLOE

Honey.

LIONEL

Mom. I'm going back up to school and I'll sort it out there. On my own.

CHLOE

...

LIONEL

I'm not gonna throw a lawsuit at you. And I'll -

CHLOE

Thank you. I--

LIONEL

Please. Let me finish.

Pause.
I'm still gonna see you. Like I said, we're family.

Long pause and a deep breath.
But you're never gonna get my trust back.

CHLOE drops her head. Pause. LIONEL quickly finished packing his bag and he awkwardly hugs CHLOE. He turns to leave as DALLAS enters cool and collected with a calming voice.

LIONEL (cont'd)

Are you Dallas?

DALLAS

Yes, I am. It's very nice to--

LIONEL

Really? Let's skip the BS intros. Ever since you and my mom got together, I've been drowning in debt. What have you done to her?

CHLOE

That's not a nice way to start a conversation.

LIONEL

This has never been a conversation. This is trial.

DALLAS

I am so sorry you feel this anger inside but I assure you, there is a lot more to this than you realize.

LIONEL

What line of crap are you going to give me that my mom hasn't already said?

DALLAS

DALLAS smirks and sighs.
This has always been about you.

LIONEL

Of course it has, it's my mon--

DALLAS

That's not what I mean. This is going to sound crazy but your mother has pulled off something outrageously amazing!

LIONEL

Why are we still talking about this? I'm done.

LIONEL attempts to leave, CHLOE gently grabs his arm.

CHLOE

I know we don't deserve it but give him a chance to explain. I promise you, it will be worth it.

LIONEL

Fine. What. What do you have to say?

DALLAS

You just WON a million dollars on "BROKE OR BANKROLLED!"

CHLOE smiles like a huge weight has finally been lifted off her shoulders. DALLAS is grinning ear to ear. LIONEL is cautiously confounded.

LIONEL

What!? No. This is bull--

DALLAS

I'm Dallas Reid, the host of BROKE OR BANKROLLED, and you and your mother are our very first winners! In the short history of the show, no one has made it past the final round until now! Congratulations!

LIONEL

Looks around suspiciously.

There is no one here. Where are the cameras?

DALLAS

There are two on the shelves, one hidden camera in my glasses, and our camerawoman is outside.

CHLOE starts clapping and leans over to hug and kiss her son.

CHLOE

I'm so sorry. I couldn't tell you. I knew if I got through it, we would be okay. I love you.

LIONEL

Is this legit?

DALLAS

It is, Lionel. It's all real. You see our crew van out there?

DALLAS points offstage.

LIONEL

Yeah?

DALLAS

It has all the video and surveillance equipment we've been using. I can show once you wrap your brain around this whole thing.

DALLAS (cont'd)

It's a lot to handle.

LIONEL

Finally lightens up.

This is real? Is this happening?

CHLOE

It is, sweetie. It really is.

She gets choked up.

We're gonna be okay, baby.

LIONEL

Genuinely relieved.

Oh. Thank god.

DALLAS

Thank you for playing. You were wonderful contestants and we couldn't be happier for you.

LIONEL

This is unbelievable.

DALLAS

Not only did you win a million dollars but on top of that, we will wipe away your debt.

LIONEL

I am blown away.

CHLOE

It's impossible to describe.

LIONEL

I can't... I don't know wh--

CHLOE

Still choked up.

It's been so hard, and I can't--

LIONEL

It's okay. And I'm sorry about before.

CHLOE

It's okay, hun. I love you.

LIONEL

I love you too mom.

Beat.

DALLAS

I hate to be a stickler but we will have to fill out the release forms before we get too far into the post-win interviews. You're mom signed hers just before you arrived. Hopefully you'll be okay with starting that?

LIONEL

Caught off guard at first.

Uh...Sure thing. Yeah. Let's get the ball rolling.

DALLAS

Pulls forms out of his bag.

Do you have a pen?

LIONEL

Uh, no. I don't think I do.

DALLAS

Whips out his pen.

Here you go.

LIONEL starts to fill out the form per DALLAS' instructions.

LIONEL

I don't know how you pulled that off.

DALLAS

You can just sign next to the 'X's.

CHLOE

It was one of the hardest things I've done.

DALLAS

Sign and date.

LIONEL

I'm impressed. I was really mad at you. I couldn't imagine anything making things better after that.

DALLAS

Everything works out in the end, huh?

LIONEL

I guess it does.

DALLAS glances at the paperwork. LIONEL leans back.

I think this is all set.

LIONEL Slides the paperwork to DALLAS. DALLAS quickly double checks it.

DALLAS

Wonderful.

DALLAS swings his empty beer bottle over LIONEL's head as CHLOE screams.

CHLOE

Lionel! I--

DALLAS

We got what we need.

DALLAS urges CHLOE to move.

DALLAS

Let's go!

CHLOE stands frozen in shock, crying as she turns away from LIONEL's limp body. DALLAS drags CHLOE's broken soul offstage. Lights out.

END SCENE

SCENE 2

SETTING: The office of a bank.

AT RISE: JO is sitting behind a desk. LIONEL enters with a set of partially completed forms in is hand.

JO

May I help you today?

LIONEL

Hi. How's it going?

JO

Great. Is there something I can do for you?

LIONEL

I'd like to get a credit card.

JO

Sure thing. Sit down and relax. I'll walk through it with right now and it won't take more than a few minutes.

LIONEL

Cool. Sounds good.

JO

Alright. Can I get your name?

LIONEL

Lionel Wright.

JO

Okay, Lionel. I'm Joanne, but you can call me Jo. Everybody does.

LIONEL

Got it.

JO

Do you have a credit history?

LIONEL

Uh. No. I've never owned my own card before, if that's what you mean.

JO

Okay. That's fine. I'm sure we can still pull something together for you.

LIONEL

Where do we start? Do I give this to you?

JO

Yes. Actually. Can you write down your social on that line though? Then I can start typing everything in.

LIONEL

Okay.

JO

Are you a student nearby?

LIONEL

Berkeley.

JO

Wonderful. That's a step in the right direction.

LIONEL

Does being a student help me?

JO

We offer cards specifically geared towards students so it helps a lot.

LIONEL

That's awesome.

JO

Sure is. Where do you live when school's not in session?

LIONEL

At my mom's place... in SLO.
(Pronounced like the word 'SLOW.')

San Luis Obispo.

JO

Is that so? My sister lives there. Whereabouts is your mom?

LIONEL

Technically in Santa Margarita, last house on F street.

JO
No kidding. My sister is downtown. Such a beautiful city.

LIONEL
Yeah. It's nice. Small town for me though.

JO
That's part of the charm, right?

LIONEL
I suppose so.

JO
Do you have any other credit cards or lines of credit?

LIONEL
No.

JO
Student Loans?

LIONEL
Definitely.

JO
Ok. Do you know--

LIONEL
They are all in my mom's name so they are probably not on my report.

JO
I would not think so.

LIONEL
Do you need anything else from me?

JO
Nothing. I'm just going to run this report quickly and then hopefully we can help you establish some credit.

Pause. JO fiddles with a few numbers at her desk or on her laptop/computer. She stares at the screen. LIONEL stares at her. He taps the desk. JO stares at him tapping.

Alright. It looks like everything went through.

LIONEL
Good or bad?

JO
It appears that you have been approved to get a card!

LIONEL
That's what I'm talking about.

JO
Congrats! I do have to tell you that it is going to be a starter card, so the limit is relatively low.

LIONEL
How low?

JO
It is \$10,000.

LIONEL
I think I'll manage.

JO
Great. I have a temporary card I'll give you today and the real one will come in the mail in the next two weeks.

LIONEL
Simple enough.

Pause.
And that's it?

JO
Really. That's it.

LIONEL
If I knew it would be that easy, I would've done this sooner.

JO
In this case, better late than never.

LIONEL Nods.

LIONEL
Thank you very much.

LIONEL gets up to leave. LIONEL and JO shake hands.

JO
You're welcome! Have a great day!

LIONEL exits SR. Lights out.

END SCENE

SCENE 3

*SETTING: The dining room at CHLOE's house.
AT RISE: DALLAS, well dressed, is sitting
patiently. There are documents all over the table.
CHLOE is pacing around the room.*

CHLOE

I need your help.

DALLAS

What reason do I have?

CHLOE

I can pay you.

DALLAS

You know the way to my heart.

CHLOE

It's held-up money through.

DALLAS

I'm guessin' if I unhold it, I get to keep some of it.

CHLOE

It is an inheritance.

DALLAS

Ugh. For you son? Whats his--

CHLOE

Lionel.

DALLAS

All these years and I don't think I have ever met him.

CHLOE

I wouldn't take it personally.

DALLAS

I'm offended. Distraught, really.

CHLOE

I don't like to introduce my son to my former drug dealer.

DALLAS

Former? Am I feelin' a reunion comin' on?

CHLOE

I'm not going down that hole again. Besides, you are too big time for my tastes now anyway. This is only about--

DALLAS

The inheritance. How could I forget that beautiful word.

CHLOE

That's it. I don't want to turn it into something it's not.

DALLAS

With something like this we are gonna have to wait out the transfer.

CHLOE

I figured. We can keep a close watch on him while we're waiting.

DALLAS

More than a close watch. We should be with him at all times. Don't leave the house kinda thing.

CHLOE

I understand.

DALLAS

Who left him the money?

CHLOE

My husband.

DALLAS pauses in mini-memorial.

DALLAS

I'm sorry for your loss. What happened?

CHLOE

He died on us thanks to Cancer.

DALLAS

That's horrible.

CHLOE

And it was only a week after that my mom died from Huntington's Disease.

DALLAS

Huntington's? I've never heard of that on.

CHLOE

It's a mess. Twitching, slurred speech, dementia, anger issues. No control.

DALLAS

Does that come on all of a sudden.

CHLOE

Not exactly. It's like Parkinsons. It slowly takes over.

DALLAS

How long did that last?

CHLOE

A decade at least. I was her caretaker too. It sucks the life outta ya.

DALLAS

Sounds like a prison sentence in your own body.

CHLOE

I couldn't take it. My husband was more sudden.

DALLAS

He was clearly thinking about the kid

CHLOE

He always did.

DALLAS

Why do you want to tap into that money?

CHLOE

Lionel's a mess. I'm worried he will burn through it all the minute he finds out it's there.

DALLAS

I would.

CHLOE

I'm trying to protect him from himself.

DALLAS

I'll help you however I can.

CHLOE

Whatever gets you to your paycheck.

DALLAS

You know me too well.

CHLOE

I don't care how it happens as long as it happens.

DALLAS

I know what could work for this situation. It's bizarre but it will at least pull out the truth you're looking for.

CHLOE

I'm open to the easiest way to get what we need.

DALLAS

Remind me of something. Tell me what you told me when we first met.

CHLOE

I don't remember.

DALLAS

Yes you do. Think about it.

CHLOE

I probably said I hate being broke.

DALLAS

Okay. That's right. Right.

CHLOE

But this is--

DALLAS

--The perfect solution?

CHLOE

Seems like my only solution.

DALLAS

You'll be fine if you loosen the fuck up.

CHLOE

How do you do that? How do I do that. What do I do to do that?

DALLAS

You need experience. Time.

CHLOE

Which I don't have.

DALLAS

But you'll learn. You'll learn. Just go with it and lead the way. It'll fall into place.

CHLOE

How? How am I going to do this?

DALLAS

You need to--

CHLOE

Really. Stop dancing around it. Just tell me. How?

DALLAS

Once you open your mind and think that you are on a new reality show and the 'you' on TV is not the 'you' in real life, ironically.

CHLOE

I make the change, just like that?

CHLOE snaps her fingers. She looks at her fingers. She snaps her fingers several more times vigorously.

DALLAS

Frustrated.

Yep. Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

CHLOE

She falters briefly but follows through.

I ignited this little flame. Obviously I want to keep it going.

DALLAS

Sounds like it's time for a drink!

DALLAS gets up to walk off stage.

CHLOE

What if he calls the cops?

DALLAS

As DALLAS exits and while he is offstage he speaks to CHLOE.

He won't. He will come to you first.

CHLOE

Hesitates, then speaks softly outward.

I wish he wouldn't.

Blackout.

SCENE 4

SETTING: A dark and nearly empty room.

AT RISE: LIONEL is crammed into a dog cage. The lighting is reminiscent of an interrogation scene. A single microphone is dangling from the ceiling. Footsteps can be heard as someone is walking into the dark room. Suddenly the lighting changes to match the mood of a happy-go-lucky game show. LIONEL is a contestant. DALLAS enters.

DALLAS

Welcome to Broke or Bankrolled, the game show where the contestants own money is on the line, and more importantly so is their life.

LIONEL

What is this... what's going on?

DALLAS

Lets hand it over to the ever beautiful Chloe Wright. Tell us what's in store for our contestant tonight?

LIONEL

Let me out of here.

CHLOE enters.

CHLOE

Thank you Dallas. Tonight our contestant will have to truthfully answer 3 pointed questions about his personal life and finances. If he answers the questions from this round right, he will continue to move on to the next round.

DALLAS

And continue breathing.

LIONEL

Mom? What the hell happened? What are you doing?

DALLAS

Sounds exciting Chloe. Give us question number #1.

CHLOE

Why did I charge my many recent purchases to your credit card?

LIONEL

You mean, why'd you steal my money?

DALLAS

That's not what she asked.

LIONEL

I know what she said.

CHLOE

Then answer the question.

LIONEL

You're delusional about whose money you're taking.

CHLOE

All of your school loans. Whose name are they in?

LIONEL

Yours but that--

CHLOE

And who took care of you? For the last 20 years, who paid for everything for you?

LIONEL

You're taking the normal parental guilt trip too far.

DALLAS

That money she 'stole' from you is a drop in the hat. She earned it.

LIONEL

Turns to CHLOE.

You are not entitled to everything I earn for the rest of my life.

CHLOE

Why the hell not?

LIONEL

It's my money.

CHLOE

You've been taking my money for years.

LIONEL

You gave me all of that.

DALLAS

Why the fuck for? You think you can get away with theft like that at such a grand scale?

LIONEL

Because that's parenthood. Something you'd don't understand.

Turns to CHLOE.

You raise your kids and hope they pay it forward in life.

CHLOE

Are you a parent? You don't know parenthood.

LIONEL

I know enough to know this isn't it.

CHLOE

You ever think you haven't exactly been the easiest son?

DALLAS

Oh. Burn.

LIONEL

I'm trying to better myself. Isn't that what you want?

CHLOE

I want to be paid for the time I put in.

LIONEL

That's not how it works.

CHLOE

Raising you was hard enough with you father dying and your grandma sucking the life outta me for years.

LIONEL

And you think I'm the disrespectful one in this family?

DALLAS

Lionel, what's your answer?

LIONEL

She stole my money to save starving kids in a third world country.

DALLAS

Oo. That's one wrong. Next question.

CHLOE

Who should be in charge of your finances?

LIONEL

Me.

CHLOE

You would think that, but that the wrong answer.

LIONEL

You seriously think it's you.

CHLOE

Of course I do.

LIONEL

This is absurd. Am I dreaming this shit?

CHLOE

Your spending habits have been all over the place.

LIONEL

Mine? You blew through my credit card and all my savings in a few weeks.

CHLOE

That was overdue money. The day to day costs need to be maintained and I'm the only one who can handle that.

LIONEL

There is zero logic to what's you're saying.

DALLAS

It seems that once again, you have failed to correctly answer a questions.

LIONEL

Aw gee, that stinks mister.

DALLAS

Next question. Last one for all the marbles.

CHLOE

Do you know what you signed before Dallas knocked you out?

LIONEL freezes. He thinks about it.

LIONEL

I have nothing left to take.

CHLOE

That's not true.

DALLAS

You're dad left you something.

LIONEL

What did you do?

CHLOE

You did everything for us.

LIONEL

What did I sign?

DALLAS and CHLOE grin.

CHLOE

I thought in this game, I asked all the questions.

LIONEL

What the hell did you-- How much!?

DALLAS

Yells.

\$150,000! Aw shit.

CHLOE

Dallas, I wanted--

LIONEL

Your stealing my inheritance on top of the debt you've already racked up?

CHLOE

I preserving it so you don't keep blowing it on nonsense.

LIONEL

Like what? School? An education? A future!?

CHLOE

You don't know how hard it is to raise a kid in this world on pennies.

LIONEL

No matter how many times we talked about it, the cost of my school still hasn't sunken in for you.

CHLOE

What about unexpected costs?

LIONEL

I'm doing everything I can to--

CHLOE

What about costs that throw you for a loop.

LIONEL

I'm doing the best--

CHLOE

What about the life costs?

LIONEL

I need that money.

CHLOE

You already signed it over to me.

DALLAS

We set up the transfer while you were sleeping.

LIONEL

While I was knocked out because you assaulted me with a beer bottle to the my head!?

DALLAS

Your loss.

CHLOE

You are missing what necessitated all of this?

LIONEL

WHY? WHY IN GOD'S NAME WOULD YOU TORTURE ME LIKE THIS?

CHLOE

The burden of caring for someone else is too much.

DALLAS

Was life too overwhelming for you?

CHLOE

I need to pull my self out of the equation.

DALLAS

That was the third and final question.

CHLOE

You've been lying to me, Lionel.

LIONEL

I've answered all your ridiculous questions.

CHLOE

One more, Lionel. One more. What haven't you told me?

LIONEL

I don't know.

CHLOE

Such a negative attitude. You should be more upbeat.

LIONEL

Sarcastically Optimistic.

I don't know.

At this taunt, DALLAS pull open the cage and pulls LIONEL out of it by his mouth, like with a fishing hook.

DALLAS

You can't forget about the bonus question.

CHLOE

What is the question Lionel?

LIONEL

What is wrong with you?

CHLOE violently screams and snaps. She goes apeshit crazy!

CHLOE

That's it! That's completely it.

DALLAS and CHLOE exchange a quick look amidst her raging moment. DALLAS throws a pill into LIONEL's mouth and clamps his hands over his mouth and nostrils.

DALLAS

Swallow it.

LIONEL swallows the pill. DALLAS release his clasp on LIONEL.

CHLOE

First guess and you got it.

LIONEL

What was that?

DALLAS

Your prize.

LIONEL

I don't even know how I did that.

CHLOE

Thats the beauty of it.

LIONEL

Why does my face feel numb. I feel like I'm-m-m-
falln' asle--

CHLOE

You've won a night out on the town!

*LIONEL Collapse as he tries to stand and exit
quickly. Lights out.*

INTERMISSION

ACT 2SCENE 1

SETTING: Downtown San Luis Obispo (SLO), Downstage

AT RISE: The stage is empty. LIONEL stumbles onstage. He has been drugged. He is fidgety, has slurred speech and extreme highs and lows with his emotions. LIONEL struggles to get up. DALLAS and CHLOE enter behind LIONEL. DALLAS goes to pick up LIONEL.

CHLOE
Don't.

LIONEL
Ugh. I caaa--

CHLOE
This could be your future.

LIONEL struggles, but manages to push himself up.
I can't watch you live your life like this.

LIONEL
I nevr d-d-drugs!

CHLOE
You are missing my point.

DALLAS
While we're here, I have some work to do. I have to meet a guy.

LIONEL
I can b-b-ase!

CHLOE
If I surround myself with this, I'll crack.

LIONEL
No. Ya w-w-nt!

DALLAS walks over to shady corner. He pulls out a brown paper bage. He drops it on the ground as if accidentally. Then he scopes out the area and finds an envelope. DALLAS picks it up and tucks it into his pocket.

Suddenly, JO enters SR. She is heading SL. DALLAS, CHLOE, & LIONEL are walking SR. They bump into each other.

JO

Oh my dear, Lionel?

LIONEL mumbles and falls over. DALLAS realizes the woman knows him so he picks LIONEL up.

DALLAS

Come on.

JO

Lionel? Excuse me. What's wrong with him?

CHLOE

Who are you?

JO

I work in Berkeley. I know your him from up there.

CHLOE

Well. As you can tell he's a little intoxicated.

JO

Seems like more than a little.

DALLAS

He over did it alright. We just came downtown to pick him up.

CHLOE

Better that than letting him drive home.

JO

I've never seen him like this.

CHLOE

It is a shame that he falls back into this habit some times when he's back home during his breaks from school.

JO

It seems so. My, my.

JO turns to LIONEL.
Are you okay?

LIONEL

Glossy eyed he looks at JO and mumbles.
Hmm. mm. meh.

LIONEL touches JO's face. CHLOE swats LONELS hand away.

CHLOE

You're far from home?

JO

I'm visiting my sister. She lives nearby.

CHLOE

Oh. That's nice.

DALLAS

We don't want to keep you from your family.

JO

It's no problem.

CHLOE

His only cure is to sleep this off.

DALLAS

We should get him home.

JO

Okay.

*CHLOE, DALLAS, and LIONEL head toward the exit.
Night.*

CHLOE, DALLAS, and LIONEL exit SR. JO remains on stage. She looks offstage trying to figure out what just happened. Lights out.

END SCENE.

SCENE 2

*SETTING: The dark room again, center stage right.
AT RISE: The lights come up. DALLAS is sitting wide awake next to LIONEL in back in the dog cage. Lionel groggily wakes up. DALLAS grabs LIONEL and slaps him across the face through an opening in the wall.*

DALLAS

Wake up sunshine.

LIONEL

--I'm awake. Ugh. I'm still here.

DALLAS

Yes you are but I have some exciting news. You momma is still asleep. We get some alone time...together.

LIONEL

I'm sensing that's not a good thing.

DALLAS

It's a beautiful thing.

DALLAS grins. He kicks LIONEL and attempts to poke him and hit him through the cage.

Where is the money?

LIONEL

You've already taken all my money.

DALLAS

The inheritance. It still hasn't transferred.

LIONEL

I had nothing to do with--

CHLOE enters while DALLAS is in the middle of beating up LIONEL. CHLOE prevents DALLAS from hurting LIONEL any further.

CHLOE

What is happening?

DALLAS

I was beating his ass for tampering with the money.

CHLOE

What did he do to it?

DALLAS

Something.

CHLOE

Oh that's solid evidence. Something!

DALLAS

The money didn't transfer.

CHLOE

The bank said 2-5 business days you impatient brute. It's only been 2 days.

LIONEL

Would you let it go.

DALLAS

I'm still suspicious he screwed something up.

LIONEL

I didn't take the money. Even if I had every right to.

DALLAS

Who says shit like that unless they have the money.

CHLOE

He's just screwing with you and you are taking it too seriously.

DALLAS angrily goes to shove LIONEL back into the cage.

CHLOE (cont'd)

Leave him out of the cage. It's stupid. It's dehumanizing.

LIONEL looks to his mom thankfully but remains silent.

DALLAS

Taking him out of the cage is a horrible idea.

CHLOE

This cage is idiotic. It had the dramatic effect you wanted but it's over.

DALLAS

Did you have some sort of change of heart over night. You sleep off all the crazy?

CHLOE

Let him have his space.

LIONEL

Let it go.

A knock on a door or ringing doorbell is heard.

DALLAS

Who the fuck is that?

CHLOE

It has gotta be that woman from last night.

DALLAS

Oh. We step outside for two minutes and we happen to run into the only goddamn person who knows you downtown. Whats your plan?

LIONEL

I didn't know she was here.

CHLOE

Did you tell her anything.

LIONEL

There's nothing to tell her. I barely even remember last night let alone a conversation with someone under a coat.

The doorbell rings again or another knock is heard.

DALLAS

Did you call her?

LIONEL

I don't even know her number.

DALLAS

Bullshit.

LIONEL

I couldn't anyway. You took my phone.

CHLOE

I'll deal with it. Just calm down. If I come downstairs, we'll all just relax and we'll be fine.

CHLOE exits the dark room and enters the living room, which contains the main entry. The lights get brighter in the living room while the dark room gets dimmer. CHLOE opens the door/JO comes barely onstage.

JO

Afternoon.

CHLOE

Hey.

Pause while they exchange looks. CHLOE's face is stern. Jo's face is confused.

JO

I'm Joanne Keemer. We met last night.

CHLOE

I remember.

JO

I've never seen your son like that and I-

CHLOE

My son?

JO

I assumed he was your son.

CHLOE

He is.

JO

I've never seen Lionel that out of it. I just couldn't help but check on him.

This is CHLOE trying to convince this women to leave and JO trying to convince CHLOE to let her see LIONEL.

CHLOE

Ya know what? He is probably up by now. Let's go check on him. He's certainly gonna be a little off after last night but that happens.

JO finally comes all the way into the house and CHLOE closes the door behind her. CHLOE puts her hand comfortingly on JO's back to guide her into the other room. Lights Out.

END SCENE.

SCENE 3

SETTING: A desk in an office, downstage, similar to the bank desk.

AT RISE: JO is working at the desk. LIONEL enters, bandaged. There is a tense moment between the two of them. LIONEL and JO shake hands.

JO

Take a seat.

LIONEL sits down followed by JO.

LIONEL

It's over.

JO

It sure is. It hit the fan fast. I didn't think it could spiral out of control like that.

LIONEL

If you weren't there I don't know if I would've walked out of there.

JO
We did what we had to do.

LIONEL
And that's how I'll remember it.

JO
What made you come here? The money is not still in limbo, is it?

LIONEL
No. No. I came here to talk about it though. It was in limbo because they had already initiated the transfer but I got it back in a few days. I was told to wait for it to clear before I tried to do anything with it.

JO
Was there an age limit on it when you can access the money?

LIONEL
It was 18 but I've surpassed that. My mom was just holding on to it. Never planned on telling me I guess.

JO
That's a nice chunk o' change. What are you going to do with all of it.

LIONEL
That's the thing. I already used most of it.

JO
Did you buy something useless?

LIONEL
The opposite. Super practical. It's gonna sound lame.

JO
Just tell me.

LIONEL
I put it toward my loans.

JO
Whoa! That's probably a relief.

LIONEL
It's a huge weight off my shoulders.

JO
I can imagine. Sheesh. You're one hell of a responsible kid.

LIONEL

Thanks

JO

I can't say even I would have don that.

LIONEL

You wanna hear the crazy part though?

JO

Sure.

LIONEL

After I told the loan specialist the amount of money I had to pay off all my loans, and she typed it all into her calculator, she looked up and said, "Now your monthly payment will be \$200 per month.

JO

Ouch.

LIONEL

It makes me feel like I never had the extra money to begin with.

JO

For the best. People get jaded when they have too much.

LIONEL

That's what poor people say.

JO

You had a rough ordeal. A lot of kids around here have no idea what that kind of home life is like and how intense those situations can be. I see it all the time.

LIONEL

I just never thought it would happen with my family.

JO

I'm glad you walked away from this with your head above water.

LIONEL

I guess that can't really be said for my mom and Dallas.

Pause.

JO

Everybody hits a low point. Some are lower than others and some people don't bounce back or don't get the chance to. It's a sad reality.

Lights out.

END SCENE.

SCENE 4

SETTING: The dark room again, center stage right.

AT RISE: Continuation of Act II, Scene 2. DALLAS and LIONEL are in the dark room. DALLAS turns to LIONEL and demonstrates what he will do with his fist?

DALLAS

If you say something prick, I'll rip your dick off with my bare hands.

CHLOE and JO enter from living room.

CHLOE

Dallas. You remember Joanne from last night?

DALLAS

Vaguely.

CHLOE

She's so kind she wanted to check up on Lionel.

JO

How are you feeling?

LIONEL

Like I was hit by a bus.

JO

You look like it. Did you fall a lot last night?

LIONEL

Multiple times. Yea.

JO

You know, I've just only ever seen you sober so forgive me if I was a little bit concerned.

LIONEL

I appreciate the drop in. I'm feeling much better today.

JO

That's what I like to har.

JO spots the dog cage.

Ooo! Do you have a little pup running around somewhere?

DALLAS

No. Why?

CHLOE

Uh. It's actually at a vet appointment this weekend.

JO

That's a shame. I really love dogs.

CHLOE

Wish that could have worked out. Sorry.

JO

When are you headed back up to school?

LIONEL

Once classes start back up next week, I should be up there. I don't see why not.

DALLAS

Yea he might be late if our little transfer takes longer than expected.

JO

Are you transferring to a different school?

LIONEL

No

CHLOE

Yes. He's considering a few options. Not certain yet on which path he is going to take.

JO

I have seen your son many times but I haven't seen much of you too. What do you do?

CHLOE

I'm a nurses aid here in town.

JO

That's wonderful.

DALLAS

This just ain't for me, Joanne. I not a fan of lying.

CHLOE

We're not lying about anything, Dallas.

DALLAS

I run drugs for a living. An unreal living. More in a day than most make in a year. I'm the fucking caesar of this shit! I've got herione, coke, and meth on lockdown!! I am the fucking king pin drug dealer in all of central California!!!

They all pause for a moment. Then they all chuckle except DALLAS who is stone faced as ever. LIONEL instinctively lurches at DALLAS and ends up on his back for a moment. In the chaos, CHLOE gets knocked back onto the ground. JO manages to dodge everyone and at just the right time JO grabs the dangling microphone and hits DALLAS directly in the head with it. DALLAS collapses. JO casually grabs the microphone and its cord and ties DALLAS' hands behind his back.

JO

I didn't like him very much.

CHLOE

What are you doing?

JO

Improvising.

CHLOE

Are you a cop?

JO

No, I'm an ordinary bank teller and most definitely not a DEA agent from Sacramento.

JO winks.

LIONEL

I wouldn't have believed you if you told me before this.

JO

As far as I can tell you two just got roped into this mess. I don't think I need to call on RICO, do I?

CHLOE & LIONEL

No. Of course not.

JO

That's what I like to hear. Once I get him in custody, I'll need to do a report. It will have you two on it. I'll get a hold of you soon about a follow-up.

CHLOE

What do we do about the money transfer?

JO

It's within the family right now, right? I can write it up and file a claim and turn it into something bigger than that or you can just resolve it on your own.

JO gives CHLOE and LIONEL both a stern look.
Sounds like you two might have some other stuff to work out before you head out of here. I'll see myself out.

JO rustles up DALLAS with LIONEL's help and then LIONEL and DALLAS heads out to the living room then offstage.

LIONEL

You've always kept me on my toes, but this takes the cake.

CHLOE

I really didn't want this to happen this way. I went off the rails.

LIONEL

No kidding. Cliche undercover cops aside, why in the world would you ever think that stealing my inheritance would be a good idea.

CHLOE

I really didn't want to steal it.

LIONEL

And drugging me. Who drugs their son?

CHLOE

That was a twisted little test of mine. I though I could use you as a case study or something.

LIONEL

You usually go out of your way to help me. But you've never dragged me through the mud like this.

CHLOE

I cannot say sorry enough.

LIONEL

I saw a letter by your desk that was from U.C. Davis.

CHLOE

And what did it say?

LIONEL

It was only the envelope. What was it about?

CHLOE

I know what you think it was.

LIONEL

Indulge me.

CHLOE

I don't feel comfortable talking about it if you can't talk about it.

LIONEL

Where do I begin if that's how closed off you are going to be.

CHLOE

Earlier, when you thought we won the lottery game show, You forgave me. Can that happen again?

LIONEL

I don't know if I could walk away and forgive this.

CHLOE

Just say it then.

LIONEL

I still don't trust you.

CHLOE

I do not know how I am going to handle a future where I keep losing control.

LIONEL

Whatever this was... this is...could it get worse?

CHLOE

I have spent my life taking care of you. It kills me to see myself going off the rails.

LIONEL

God, mom! What... what pushed you to this point!?

CHLOE

I can't hurt you. I can't do this anymore. I am going to get away from you.

LIONEL

Why? What's with all this madness. It's not you. It hasn't been you since those charges started showing up. What the hell is going on? Please just tell me.

CHLOE

Fine. I'll give it to you straight. This is not an excuse you'll probably accept but I want you to know the truth.

LIONEL

Finally. Please.

CHLOE

You remember what grandma had before she died?

LIONEL

Gets choked up trying to speak.
Huntington's?

CHLOE

I had an inkling that I should get check out

Pause.

I went to a genetic counselor and the results were clear as day. I have Huntington's disease.

Beat.

LIONEL and CHLOE go in for a hug. They start crying. They have a moment together.

Lights out.

END SCENE.