

But you taught us to be tough.

So. There it is. Toughen up.

Pause.

BEN. Mom?

Is that true?

NANCY. In a way.

BEN. Oh my god—

JESS. Ben.

BILL. It's fine, I know all about it.

BRIAN. What?

BILL. That thing with Hal Barrow.

Yeah, I always knew about that.

Pause.

NANCY. You did?

BRIAN. You did?

JESS. Okay,

Okay.

BEN. This is so crazy.

BRIAN. You knew?

BILL. Of course I knew.

It was obvious.

Every time she saw him she lit up like a Christmas tree.

NANCY. Why didn't you...

Say something.

BILL. I guess

liked seeing you happy.

Everyone takes that in.

BEN. Great, so great, so now it's official,

The whole thing was a joke.

No, great, no, that feels good.

To finally get that out in the open.

Nobody was happy, nobody was

Honest, everyone was suffering and compromising.

BEN

BIN 792

Hallelujah.

What a relief to know that nothing was anything other than
Pure, unmitigated, bullshit.

I mean, every Christmas.

Every birthday.

Every baseball game.

Bullshit bullshit bullshit.

Every family photo, every family trip, every hug, every lesson
learned, take your pep talks, your

Matching plaid pajamas—

Just erase it all and replace it with bullshit.

Our whole childhood.

Just blown sky-high into bullshit.

(To Nancy.) And here I am, like an idiot, finding an Airbnb for you.

Because I want you to be happy

And comfortable

And making sure it has AC and wifi and is pet-friendly in case you
want to get a cat—

Because Dad was always "allergic," but hey, it's a new day—

And I'm putting it all on my credit card and handling things, like
an idiot—

(To Jess.) And then you're pissed at me,

For calling you "babe,"

When, like, you used to love that,

You used to talk in baby talk, literal sexy baby talk—

When we were fooling around—

JESS. Are you serious, are you—

BEN. Oh sorry everyone, is this too personal now—

Sorry Mom, Dad, Bri, fuck you all.

(Back to Jess.) You did, you talked in that high little baby talk—

JESS. I was playing around—

BEN. You wanted to be all sexy baby and now I'm the jerk,

'Cause I don't see you—

When the truth is,

You never told me, you changed your mind and you never told me.

We do not communicate!

Bill

NANCY. What impact did I have?

BILL. You were my whole life, Nancy. You've been my whole entire life.

A pause.

Nancy takes that in.

NANCY. How?

BILL. It's just science, plain science—

Every meal you've ever cooked

Is now what makes up the cells in my body.

This stuff you picked out at the grocery store.

The pot roast you made over and over and over, the eternal pot roast,

I am literally made up of that now.

My cholesterol, well...

That's your fondness for eggs in the morning.

NANCY. You liked eggs,

That was you—

BILL. I prefer toast.

I have more wrinkles on the left side of my face, ever notice that?

How it's sort of smushed up?

That's from years and years of sleeping on my left side

Because I know you like to sleep on your left and I used to like to hold on to you that way.

So my face, my whole face is a result of how you sleep.

NANCY. You can't hold me responsible for your crooked face—

BILL. And while we're on the subject of romance.

Let me tell you something, Nancy.

You were no acrobat.

NANCY. Oh fuck you, Bill.

BILL. You just lay there expecting me to figure it out,

Well, I'm not a mind reader.

How the hell was I supposed to know what you wanted.

NANCY. You could have asked.

BILL. I didn't know the questions.

I would have done anything, anything to please you.

NANCY. You didn't even try.

BILL. I was trying the whole time.

That was me trying.

NANCY. Well, you don't have to try anymore.

Doesn't that feel fantastic?!

BILL. It does.

// It feels fucking great.

I'm a new man.

NANCY. I'm twenty years old again.

I can't wait to get the hell out of here.

BILL. Then go.

Get the hell out!!

BILL. You quiet down.

Quiet down your goddamn self.

NANCY. We will NOT BE QUIET DOWN.

WE WILL NOT BE QUIET.

BILL. We spent enough time being quiet.

NANCY. We're going to be loud.

And if you don't like it, you can come at us.

BILL. Okay, that's okay, Nancy—

NANCY. We will fuck you up, lady.

We will fuck you up.

A moment of release

A shared silence.

I want to go to DC with John Warburger.

I want to be touched.

Softly,

I do.

I want my own bank account.

I want to get one of those eggs from the internet.

I might go to Lebanon.

And I...

I don't want to be Nancy French anymore.

BILL. I don't want to be Bill French.

NANCY. (Sings) I want to be Nancy French.

BRIAN
TOMMY

Will you just.
Could you maybe just give me a minute?

Brian tries to cover.

It's totally not you.

BRIAN. Just—did I mention my parents—

TOMMY. You said a lot, I don't know.

BRIAN. My parents are getting divorced.

TOMMY. Okay.

BRIAN. Okay?!?

TOMMY. Lots of parents get divorced—

It sucks when you're like, *eight*,

But you seem pretty middle-aged.

BRIAN. Thanks.

TOMMY. So, like, whatever,

Let them do what they want.

BRIAN. Let them do what they want?

TOMMY. They're adults.

They can do whatever the fuck they want.

BRIAN. Are you kidding me? Are you kidding?

Adults cannot do what they want.

That's like—

The defining feature of adulthood is that you never get to do what you want.

Children do what they want.

Adults struggle to meet the needs of other people,

Make a living,

Satisfy a thousand obligations

And still fall short and wind up disappointing everyone.

TOMMY. Are you sure you're not married?

BRIAN. No, I'm not married.

This is my family.

As disappointing as they are, as disrespectful as they are
About like pretty much everything I do...

BRIAN TOMMY 2

As unwilling as they are to, like, see me...

I don't have another family,

I don't have "my family."

I have fish.

TOMMY. Look, all I'm trying to say is, having gone through this myself—

It's not the same because I was a child—

But I did feel like the world was ending.

I thought it was my fault, all the typical stuff,

But I can also tell you, you realize that you can survive this.

And it's sad, it's really sad—

But also, maybe not everything is meant to last forever.

And, well, how amazing that your parents are still reaching for happiness,

Even at their age,

I mean how brave, and kind of inspiring actually.

BRIAN. That's not what's happening here.

My parents are just being shortsighted, and honestly a little bit selfish.

TOMMY. I kind of think you're the one being selfish.

That's what I think.

BRIAN. How am I being selfish?

I've put my whole life on hold just to be here for them.

Just at the moment, just at the worst possible moment—

TOMMY. Right.

BRIAN. And it's not just my show, I also, just got out of a

Kind of a, like an almost relationship thing for the first time in a very long time—

TOMMY. Got it.

BRIAN. And, so I mean, to have this all happen right now—

And to be, like the only one here with any emotional intelligence—

No, seriously my brother has, like, all the emotions of a rock—

TOMMY. You know what?

I actually can't do this.

~~BRIAN. Don't.~~

TOMMY. I

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// And, like

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~~_____~~
BILL. (From off.) Just a lamp. I'm FINE.

NANCY. Well, hurry up, Bill, your girlfriend's waiting.

BILL. (From off.) I'm fine.

Nancy and Carla look at each other.

CARLA. Do you got to...

NANCY. Probably best to let him have his independence, if he can.
Tea?

CARLA. Sure.

~~Nancy busies herself making tea.~~

So you said you got over thirty boxes!

~~Nancy has been extraordinary.~~

CARLA. Must feel good to be making a contribution, yeah?

NANCY. I mean, it's just some old clothing, really.

But, you know, it is sort of wild

To think about some complete and total stranger halfway across the world

Wearing the same coat I wore just last year.

It makes me feel a little bit more like I exist.

CARLA. I get that.

NANCY. You do?

CARLA. I do this thing where—

I mean it's not exotic like your clothing drive—

But you know, sometimes I go over to Rose Court and I just hold people's hands.

The sick people, the hospice people?

'Cause some of them don't have anybody, you know?

And so I just go over and hold their hands.

NANCY. And it's not awkward? Holding a stranger's hand?

CARLA. I think they like it.

I mean I can't tell honestly, most of 'em are pretty out of it.

But nobody's ever socked me in the face.

Of course most of 'em are probably too far gone for that.

CARLA

CARLA
2

This one lady there, this lady, Irma, she's got Alzheimer's pretty bad actually.

And one day the nurses notice, she's saving her cookie.

NANCY. Her cookie?

CARLA. The cookie she got from lunch every day.

She leaves it right on top of her chest of drawers,

Right in front of this little mirror she's got there.

NANCY. Why would she do that?

CARLA. Nobody knows.

And then she starts leaving little pictures there too, stuff she drew at the craft table.

And then she leaves little cards, notes that say things like, "Hello," and "Nice to meet you."

And the nurses can't figure it out.

They don't know why she's doing this,

Leaving all these little treats and presents and everything in front of the mirror on her dresser.

Until one day, they realize:

Irma thinks the woman in the mirror is somebody else.

She thinks it's some other woman, trapped in there.

And she's trying to make a friend.

NANCY. You mean she's so far gone...

CARLA. That's right.

She doesn't even recognize herself anymore.

They both sit with that for a moment.

NANCY. I don't think I've...

Ever really recognized what I saw in the mirror.

CARLA. Oh yeah?

NANCY. I think I can count on one hand the number of times I've looked in the mirror

And the thing I saw matched anything I felt inside.

CARLA. I look in the mirror these days I'm like...

AAAAAAH!

I'm not leaving treats, I'm running for cover.

JESS

~~Ben~~

BRIAN. She is literally heartless,

Do you know how it feels—

To realize your own mother // is heartless?

JESS. Oh, come on, Brian,

She's not literally—

BEN. Babe, come on—

JESS. And stop fucking calling me babe.

BEN. Shit.

JESS. All I was trying to say is—

She's not literally heartless, Brian,

She's not literally heartless because if she were?

If she literally had no heart?

She would literally not be alive, that's all I'm trying to say.

BRIAN. Okay, fine, everyone knows what I meant.

JESS. Which is—actually—

That actually makes sense.

Something finally makes sense.

Because, like, maybe that's how you all feel about her.

Like she's not alive.

~~I hate you, Jess, you~~

JESS. Like she's not an actual person, with real actual needs

She's just, Mom.

Mom, fix my boo-boo.

Mom, make it better.

Mom, you missed my baseball game!

Mom Mom Mom Mom Mom.

BRIAN. Thank you, this doesn't involve you.

JESS. It does involve me,

Because I am standing here,

I have somehow found

Myself here, with all of you assholes and, it's like,

I've been here for over a week and I can't even sleep—

And I am so not doing this,
I'm not doing this.

BEN. Not doing what?

JESS. Like, first I was "babe" and now I'm going to be "Mom" and
it's like,

You're not even taking that in

I am so not waiting fifty more years

Only to find myself, only to find myself in this

Kind of a shit situation.

Or I guess it would be forty-three.

Because, we've been together seven, so.

BEN. Wow.

You've done the math.

JESS. I subtracted seven,

That's not doing the math.

Ben might put his head in his hands.

BRIAN. So... Just to clarify...

Mom's not going to Ben's AirbnB.

JESS. She's going to do

Whatever she wants.

NANCY. Jess—

BRIAN. I am not okay with that.

JESS. You're not in charge of her life.

She's not, like, some stupid kid in one of your stupid plays—

NANCY. Jess, it's okay—

JESS. No, Nancy, I got this.

She has articulated something she wants

For maybe the first time in her entire life,

BRIAN. Oh, come on.

JESS. And it's something that doesn't make the rest of you com-

fortable.

But you are going to suck it up

BRIAN. Suck it up? // Seriously?

NANCY

m. [REDACTED]
and we just sat down, out there, by the water,
the wind blowing up on my legs, and
the cold ground underneath me.
around—it was the middle of the night.
track of time.
I'm lucky Ben and I didn't die.
now, I know.
was old enough to look after you // at this point.
is Ben were talking about, Mom.
I were fine.

NANCY. [REDACTED]

And the truth is?

In my entire life with your father, he never said anything like that to me.
He never said anything like that.

In our entire married life he never once even mentioned my pussy.

I mean we never discussed it.

God knows, I praised his penis to the high heavens—

I went on and on about how wonderful it was—

BRIAN. (Trying not to hear this.) Aaaaaaaaaaah.

NANCY. (Sudden, forceful.) No.

You have to hear this.

Nancy turns to him with ferocity.

I will be a whole person to you.

NANCY Pg 2

I will.

Brian looks at her, stunned into silence.

The point is, your father never praised me that way.

And then this man... Hal...

Well, it was very powerful.

And then afterwards, he didn't ask me for anything.

We just lay together, in the dark, side by side.

Staring into each other's eyes.

And you know, I didn't feel guilty at all?

Not for a second.

Because—I felt like something this beautiful—

A moment this perfect—that's why we were put on the earth.

He was looking at me and he was

Tracing his finger along my shoulder.

Just gently tracing my shoulder.

And then he noticed—I never even noticed this before—

But, he noticed this group of five freckles.

I have five freckles on my shoulder that—if you connected the dots—

Would make a perfect line.

It's sort of back here, so, you know, I had never even noticed it myself.

But he traced it over and over again, this perfect line.

Nobody had ever seen that about me before.

But once he pointed them out, I would look for them every time I got undressed.

That little line of five.

Brian is suddenly full of grief.

BRIAN. You should have run off with him.

NANCY. You're angry that I left you and Ben alone for one night—

A night you don't even remember.

BRIAN. Still, I would have wanted you to be happy.

NANCY. Children don't care if their parents are happy.

You just want us to be there.

~~BRIAN. Well, I didn't want this.~~

~~I would have wanted this.~~

~~Knowing you would be~~

~~You were to talk about why I had~~