

MJF

Episode 101

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COLD OPEN

MIKE TALKING HEAD (LIVING ROOM)

CLOSE ON MIKE BURNABY as he talks directly to camera.

MIKE

My name is Mike Burnaby. I was lead anchor of the WNBC 5 O'Clock News until I stepped away five years ago. The great thing is, now I get to spend more time with my fam--

EVE (O.S.)

Dad, you're moving too much. I've got to zoom out and start again.

MIKE

You could shoot me from across the street and it still wouldn't matter.

EVE (O.S.)

Maybe if you had gotten me a phone with an image stabilizer...

MIKE

Yeah, that would cure it.

EVE (O.S.)

Can you sit on your hands or something?

MIKE

Then my legs just go. Are you new?

IAN TALKING HEAD (GRAHAM'S OLD ROOM)

An annoyed IAN BURNABY (19, smart, driven, overly confident) addresses the camera in a tiny Lego-themed kid's room.

IAN

Why do I have to state my name?

EVE (O.S.)

Ian!

IAN

There. It's on the record now.

(off Eve's look, then)

Fine. How would I describe Dad?

He's from Pennsylvania, not as funny as he thinks he is, he's read every book ever, wears hats like they just fell off a shelf in a store and whatever way it landed on his head he just keeps it like that--

(off Eve's "Come on!")

What? Oh yeah, he's got Parkinson's.

LEIGH TALKING HEAD (LEIGH'S APARTMENT)

LEIGH BURNABY (39ish, narcissist, always single and jobless) sits on a couch in her perfectly nice one bedroom apartment.

LEIGH

Do you have a soft filter on that?
 (looks off camera, sighs, then)
 Mike's a generous big brother. To a point. Like he helps me pay rent on an apartment in the building, but it's in the basement.

(points to half-windows behind her)
 They don't let any light in, but pervs can watch me walk around nak--
 Why haven't I seen anyone lately?

As Leigh reacts, disappointed...

ANNIE TALKING HEAD (CRAFTING ROOM)

ANNIE BURNABY (40s, tough, loyal, goofy side) grades papers on a crafting table as GRAHAM (8, old soul, self-possessed, not precocious) uses dowels to make walrus tusks nearby.

ANNIE

What about Dad?
 (smiles, with clear affection)
 He's been my husband of... Shit, has it been twenty years?

(JUMP CUT TO ANOTHER TAKE)

Mike has always been about family. So much so that he kept lobbying me to have a third. Of course, he was working sixteen hours a day, so most of the parenting fell to me. But I went back to work last fall,

(re: Graham knocking over papers)
 so now this is all him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mike makes dinner in a lived-in, comfortable Upper West Side apartment. Annie hurries in from the foyer.

ANNIE

Sorry, there was a never-ending staff meeting after school.

MIKE

(gives Annie a sweet kiss)
 And now you're all better.

ANNIE

Not really. But thanks.

EVE (15, whip-smart, unconventional, games the system) enters.

MIKE

Great, we're all home at the same time. We can have an actual sit-down meal--

Eve takes a bite of pasta right out of a serving bowl.

MIKE (CONT'D)

No. No more standing meals! For one second we're going to unplug and--

Ian hustles in, interrupting Mike.

IAN

Garlic bread. Good. Mom, hit me.

Annie tosses Ian a piece of garlic bread and he takes a bite.

MIKE

I know I'm saying words... Am I a ghost? Someone take a swing at me.

Graham enters and uses the door of the dishwasher as a seat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Really? There's a dining room just steps away. I'm looking at it now.

It's useless; Mike joins in as they pass food back and forth.

ANNIE

How's your English project coming, Eve?

EVE

Why do you have to teach at my school?

ANNIE

The question is why do you go to my school? On paper you should be at military school by now.

EVE

(not taking bait, to Ian)
What'd you do for the *King Lear* project when you had Mr. Diaz?

IAN

Huh. I'm not sure I can remember--
(whimsical laugh)
It was actually pretty clever. You're familiar with venn diagrams, right?

EVE

Stop. Can I copy it or not?

MIKE/ANNIE

No./No!

IAN

No one will believe you did it.

Leigh enters, dressed in a trendy, sexy outfit.

LEIGH

Let's go, Evie. The concert's in an hour and this lady needs to pre-game.

We can't see Leigh's chest, but everyone REACTS to it.

MIKE

Whoa, there are young children here.

IAN

(smiling)

Hey, Aunt Leigh.

LEIGH

(hands over her chest)

You catch more flies with honey.

MIKE

Are you trying to give the flies diabetes?

EVE

I'll let you borrow a bra, Aunt Leigh.

LEIGH

You're cute. That'd be like trying to catch a missile with a butterfly net. I'll grab one on the way out.

(starting off)

And stop calling me "Aunt Leigh."
Tonight we're sisters.

MIKE

You girls better be home by 10:30.

Both Eve and Leigh GROAN like teens as they exit. Mike turns back to eat, but Annie and Ian are already walking off.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Seriously?! It's been three minutes.

ANNIE

This skirt is cutting
me in half.

IAN

They're trading in Tokyo.

As everyone disappears, a frustrated Mike sits on the dishwasher door next to Graham.

MIKE

At least we can enjoy a meal together.

GRAHAM

I already ate.

Then the dishwasher door collapses.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEINT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Annie stalks down the hall, on a mission.

ANNIE

LET'S GO! Why do I have to do this every morning? Why are you making me be this woman?

Annie throws Eve's door open but Eve just MOANS and burrows deeper into her bed. Then Annie stalks into Ian's old room, where Graham lazes about on a comfortable queen-sized bed.

GRAHAM

Sorry, there's just so much bed.

ANNIE

LET'S GO LET'S GO LET'S GO!!!

IAN (O.S.)

STOP YELLING!

INT. GRAHAM'S OLD ROOM - SAME TIME

Ian sits on a race car bed as he tries to work on a laptop.

IAN (O.S.)

THIS IS A WORKPLACE!

Ian sees Mike pass by the doorway.

IAN (CONT'D)

You never had to drag me out of bed, Dad. These kids have no work ethic.

MIKE

Said the college drop-out.

IAN TALKING HEAD (GRAHAM'S OLD ROOM)

A cramped Ian struggles to set up a printer/fax, to camera:

IAN

I didn't "drop out." Drop-outs don't have business plans. I opted out of college so I could revolutionize the search engine.

EVE (O.S.)

What's wrong with Google?

IAN

What's wrong with asbestos? Wait and see. Just wait.

Ian knocks over a Lego robot. As he tries to rebuild it:

IAN (CONT'D)

After freshman year, I interned at Bing -- to learn what not to do. I got back two weeks ago to find out my parents let Graham take over my room. It's big, it's got an actual desk, and it's at the end of the hall where a man can self-incubate a start-up in peace.

*(getting into playing Legos)
Where's a three-by-two? I need an orange three-by-two.*

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Annie drags Graham out of his room as he clings to his brother's sheets. Mike approaches, proud.

MIKE

He's badger-strong, right?

ANNIE

I need you to take the kids to school. I've got thirty poems to grade before Senior English.

MIKE

How do you grade poems?

ANNIE

Harshly. The world doesn't need more terrible poetry. I'm the firewall.

MIKE

To give wings to dreams.

ANNIE

See, that sucks. I'd give you a D.

Annie gives Mike a quick kiss and rushes off. Eve approaches, still groggy, in Carhartt coveralls and bright red lipstick.

MIKE

Are you going to get dressed for school, or...

(Eve punches him, playful)

How could you hit a man in my condition?

MIKE TALKING HEAD (LIVING ROOM)

MIKE

I'm actually doing much better now. Medication has improved dramatically, or at least I've found a cocktail that seems to work for me. Of course, if there's a long line at Starbucks, I might amplify things a little.

Mike picks up a Starbucks coffee cup and takes a sip.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS WITH BEFORE

As they get ready to go, Mike puts on a baseball cap, paying no attention to the awkward way it sits on his head.

MIKE

Okay, let's boogie.

EVE

So you're gonna just let it...

MIKE

What?

EVE

Nothing.

EXT. VARIOUS UPPER WEST SIDE LOCATIONS - LATER

On AMSTERDAM, random passersby recognize Mike as he walks with Eve and Graham. A CONSTRUCTION WORKER shouts out:

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

Mike Burnaby! 5 O'Clock news! Love you, bro!

Mike flashes his affable smile, then tries to connect with Eve (typing on her phone) and Graham (playing a video game).

MIKE

What do you have first period, Eve?
French, right? *Oui? Non?*

Eve ignores Mike, taking a photo of the street with her phone.

EVE

I've got to Instagram this.

MIKE

Of course. What would the world do without an old-timey photo of a dirty hot dog bun?

EVE

It's a metaphor.

MIKE

For why we should've never given you a phone?

GRAHAM

(amazed, re: video game)
My guy just can't be killed. And his head is like, off.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Mike Burnaby! World's greatest man.

Mike turns, assuming it's another fan, to see HARRIS GREEN (47, his friend and former boss) exiting BARNEY GREENGRASS.

MIKE

Hey, Harris.

HARRIS

(re: kids on their phones)
Aren't you worried they're going to
fall into a couple open manholes?

MIKE

Then I don't have to pay for college.

HARRIS

(mussing Graham's hair)
You're getting tall, Graham. Like
not-Mike's-son tall... I'm worried.

EVE

(off Mike's elbow prompt)
Hi, Harris.

HARRIS

Evie.
(re: her coveralls)
I see you're trying to bring all the
boys to the yard.

EVE

Come on, this is cool. And I can
also drive an ice road truck.

HARRIS

I'll walk with you guys. I've got to
get downtown. There's a press
conference at ten. The city's trying
to ban foot-long sandwiches now.

MIKE

I saw that. Do me a favor and don't
just show a bunch of obese pedestrians
with their faces blurred out. It's
creepy. Pull tape on the special we
did in '05. That was journalism.

THROUGH LINCOLN CENTER, Mike's still energized by work talk:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Know what else you've got to change?
Susan's new sign-off. "Find Your
Happy?" Is she selling yoga retreats?
We used to cover wars.

A passing MUSICIAN carrying a violin case calls out:

MUSICIAN

Mike Burnaby! Miss you! Keep fighting!

Mike smiles and puts up his dukes. Eve rolls her eyes; this
happens all the time when she's out with her dad.

HARRIS

He's not the only one who misses you, Mike. We all do. You should come back to work.

MIKE

Are you forgetting why I left? Remember the rolling chair thing?

HARRIS

You're way better now. Plus, I sprung for wheel locks.

MIKE

I don't want a pity job. We both know if I come back, NBC's going to milk it for ratings by showing me in slow motion with lame uplifting music.

HARRIS

As long as I'm news director, that will not happen. Just think about it. We need you, Mike. No one watches the news anymore. We got beaten by *Craft Wars* last night. That's literally watching paint dry.

Before Mike can respond, he's hugged by a FEMALE MTA WORKER.

MTA WORKER

Mike Burnaby! You're a brave man.

EVE

Would a "brave man" set his grown daughter's curfew for 10:30?

MTA WORKER

(glares at Eve, hands Mike paper)
Could you sign this? My grandma has Parkinson's.

EVE TALKING HEAD (EVE'S ROOM)

Eve films herself in a messy, impulsively decorated room.

EVE

Yes, my dad is a celebrity and people love him, blah, blah, but why does everyone have to stop and tell him about another person who also has Parkinson's? Alcoholism is a disease. Do people go up to Joe Namath and tell him about their crazy uncles?

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

MR. DIAZ (late 30s, handsome, good teacher) settles down his 10th grade English class. Eve goofs-off in the back.

MR. DIAZ

Time for *King Lear* updates. Eve,
where are you?

EVE

(caught off guard)
Sophomore English?

A few kids LAUGH. Eve doesn't mind; it's the role she plays.

MR. DIAZ

Please tell me you started your project.

EVE

(a beat, stalling)
Of course I have. I am doing a video...

Eve sees Annie pass by in the hall and gets an idea.

EVE (CONT'D)

On another tragic family: The Burnabys.
(off Diaz' look, pouring it on)
I just think if I could compare my
Dad's struggles to King Lear's, it
could be a way to start the healing.

Students comfort Eve; she looks to see if Diaz is buying it.

MR. DIAZ

Sounds good. It's due Thursday.

As Mr. Diaz calls on another student, Eve cracks a smile.

EVE TALKING HEAD (EVE'S ROOM)

Eve props her iPhone on her desk, then sits down to address the camera. NOTE: This is how Eve recorded the talking heads we've seen so far, which were all filmed after this point.

EVE

King Lear is driven to madness. And his children suffer as a result. As we all know, my father has a "brain sickness," too. One that has torn my family apart-- nah, not buying it.

(JUMP CUT, another take)

It's ironic that this project is on Shakespeare, because "shaking" is a daily reality in my house-- hacky.

We hear BANGING:

INT. GRAHAM'S OLD ROOM - SAME TIME (LATE NIGHT)

Ian pounds on the wall he shares with Eve as he tries to sleep in the race car bed. His legs dangle over the edge.

IAN

Some people have to work in the morning!

INT. IAN'S OLD ROOM - SAME TIME

Graham pauses his X-Box game and crosses to a mini-fridge, where he gets a Gatorade and takes a long, satisfied sip.

INT. MIKE AND ANNIE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Mike sits in bed with an iPad, watching a YOUTUBE CLIP of his last broadcast as anchor of the 5 O'Clock News:

MIKE (ON VIDEO CLIP)

If Parkinson's has taught me anything, it's that you can't control everything. So for all of you: try to face each challenge with optimism, because if you spend time worrying about the worst case scenario and it happens, you've lived it twice. And with that, I leave you the same way I have every night for the last eleven years: Stay informed, New York.

MIKE (CONT'D)

That so kills "Find your happy."

ON THE VIDEO, Mike rolls completely off camera in his chair. Annie heads out of the bathroom to see what Mike's watching.

ANNIE

If you're "definitely not going back," why do you have that thing on repeat?

MIKE

I'm just driving up the number of hits. Did you know a Levitra ad plays in front of it now?

ANNIE

What's Levitra?

MIKE

I love that you don't know.

ANNIE

So you said no? Just like that?

MIKE

I'd just be a feel-good story to them. Do I really want to be the guy who gets standing ovations at work everyday?

ANNIE

Uch, standing ovations. The only thing I hate more than standing ovations are hot stone massages.

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

(before Mike protests)

It just seems like you've been going a bit stir crazy lately.

MIKE

That's because no one's ever around! When I left, the silver lining was spending more time with the family. But then you started teaching again and the kids got their own things. Now I'm just alone up here, waiting on deliveries.

ANNIE

I hear your complaint, and I honor it. New paragraph: you have to be home from eleven to six to sign for a new dishwasher. Someone tried to use the old one as a chair.

MIKE

See? All I do is sign for stuff.

ANNIE

It's not just signing. You've got to make sure they connect the water line to the main furnace line, not the sink filter, but they're housed in identical PVC tubing, so--
(off Mike's panicked look)
I'll leave you a note.

MIKE

Why do you make me do these things?

ANNIE

(flirty)
I can make it up to you.
(kisses him, then pulls back)
When was the last time you took your medication?

MIKE

Not since this morning.

ANNIE

Great, I don't have to do all the work.

Annie kisses Mike as they get under the covers.

INT. KITCHEN - NEXT AFTERNOON

Annie and Leigh try out different looks with Leigh's hair.

LEIGH

I don't know, it feels like bangs are for heavy people.

ANNIE

I have bangs.

LEIGH

You're the exception that proves the rule. Although this is always your biggest season, if I'm just being real.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Mike observing this. Eve's there, too, filming everything with her iPhone camera.

MIKE

This is why I have to stay home? So you can babysit a haircut?

ANNIE

I'm going for moral support.

ANNIE TALKING HEAD (MIKE AND ANNIE'S ROOM)

ANNIE

Some people escape by watching trashy reality shows. I watch Leigh. Same train wreck, but she's on every day of the week.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS WITH BEFORE

LEIGH

This isn't just some haircut. It's a symbol of my mortality. At the concert last night, some idiot asked if I was Eve's mom.

MIKE

Did this idiot have eyes, ears, and the ability to process information?

As Leigh rambles, Mike struggles to open a jar of pickles.

LEIGH

I know it's hard for you to step outside your charmed life and see other people's challenges, but I'm about to turn thirty-nine. I mean, five-- whatever I've established...

When Graham crosses in, Mike pulls him over with his leg and hands him the pickle jar. Without saying a word, Graham opens it and Mike sends him off with a pat on the butt.

LEIGH (CONT'D)

...I have less eggs inside me than a Bennigan's. Because they don't serve breakfast, Mike! Are you even listening to me?

MIKE

No.

Before Mike can get it, Leigh grabs the only pickle in the jar and takes a bite. As she heads out with Annie, Leigh tosses the rest of the pickle in the trash. Then, judgmental:

LEIGH

You guys should really compost.

MIKE

(sighs, then re: Eve filming)
What're you doing this for again?

EVE

School. But I'll totally stop if you don't want me to apply myself.

INT. LIVING ROOM/FOYER - LATER

Mike reads the paper and drinks a soda. The DOORBELL RINGS.

MIKE

Hello? Is anybody going to get that?
(a beat, another DOORBELL RING)
Why, yes, that would be you, Mike.
And now you're talking to yourself.

Annoyed, Mike sets his soda down and goes to open the door. It's two RUSSIAN DELIVERY GUYS, with a new dishwasher.

RUSSIAN DELIVERY GUY

Mike Burnabies! "Stay Informs!"

Mike leads the guys inside, leaving the front door ajar.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mike searches for something as the delivery guys follow him.

MIKE

Where's that note? She left a note.

Mike passes by where he was sitting and we see he set his soda on Annie's note -- the whole thing is wet and smudged.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(as he strains to read note)
Does that say "gravy?" Why would it say "gravy?"

MIKE TALKING HEAD (MIKE AND ANNIE'S ROOM)

MIKE

I have advanced degrees, I've won awards, I've been to Tikrit. But this stuff makes my head explode.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS WITH BEFORE

Mike picks up a landline and starts to dial.

MIKE

I'll try her cell. That's my Peabody.
(points to award, then into phone)
911? What? No, there's no emergency.
I was trying to dial 917 but I'm
waiting for my drugs to kick in, so--
No! I'm fine! Never mind.

INT. FOYER/KITCHEN - LATER

TWO COPS enter through the open front door. They head into the kitchen to see Mike squirming under the sink. The Russian delivery guys stand over him.

MIKE

I give up! I GIVE UP!

Chaos breaks out as the cops draw their guns and advance on the delivery guys. As they AD LIB confrontation in English and Russian, Mike hops up and brokers a peace:

MIKE (CONT'D)

Stop! Nyet! I'm fine! I said I
was fine on the phone!

COP

Doesn't matter. We gotta respond.
Better safe than sorry.

MIKE

I called forty five minutes ago. If
there was an actual emergency, we're
squarely in the "sorry" category.

COP

It's not us, it's the new call system.
This is what a two billion dollar
upgrade gets you. Thank you, Mr.
Mayor. But since we're already here,
you mind signing an autograph? My
uncle's got Alzheimer's.

MIKE

I actually have Parkinson's.

COP

Either way.

INT. LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Mike makes another call, carefully dialing with a pencil this time. Then, into phone:

MIKE

Harris. It's Mike. Talk to me about
these wheel locks.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leigh and Annie drink wine as Mike makes dinner. Graham drinks a Gatorade as he helps his dad. Eve is filming again.

LEIGH

(playing with her hair)
I just feel lighter, you know?
Emotionally and physically.

MIKE

You got your hair cut? It's exactly
the same.

LEIGH

(hurt, to Annie, re: Mike)
How did you marry him? Does he ever
tell you you're pretty?

MIKE

(ignoring this, calls off)
Ian, come in here!

EVE

Ooh, do that again, but say "Ian, I
need help!" And shake it up a little.

As Mike reacts to this, Ian enters and sees Graham's Gatorade.

IAN

Is that from my mini-fridge?

GRAHAM

I thought it came with the room.

MIKE

Okay, I've got to tell you all
something, but I don't want you to
get angry, or scared, or confused.
(then, delicately)
I'm thinking about going back to work.

EVE

Awesome. When do you start?

MIKE

I said I'm thinking about it.

IAN

With two salaries coming in, you
could probably help me rent an office.

GRAHAM

(as he eats from a serving bowl)
Is Mom gonna start making dinners?
(MORE)

GRAHAM (CONT'D)

Dinners that aren't pasta? It's
always pasta.

MIKE

No one's even a little upset? I get
hugs on the street from strangers.

ANNIE

Sorry, but we're kind of happy you're
getting out of the house.

LEIGH

(also eating)
Kind of?

ANNIE

You've been driving us all a little
crazy lately.

MIKE

What?! That's nuts.

As Mike takes a bite of food, he looks around and realizes
they're having another standing meal.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Damn it! We're doing it again!
Eve, spit that out.

EXT. NEWS STATION - NEXT MORNING

Mike takes in the old building, unsure of what he's about to
do, until Harris hurries out.

HARRIS

There he is!
(giving Mike a big, dramatic hug)
Welcome home, my friend.

MIKE

This is an exploratory meeting.

HARRIS

Of course. No one knows you're here.

INT. NEWS STATION - CONTINUOUS

As they head inside, STAFF MEMBERS give Mike a STANDING
OVATION. Mike waves to everyone, then shoots Harris a look.

HARRIS

I lied. They love you man. The
world just loves you.

Mike AD LIBS greetings to a few COLLEAGUES until he's
approached by KAY (24, sweet, hardworking, emotional).

KAY

Welcome back, Mr. Burnaby. I'm Kay,
your new segment producer.

MIKE

Potential new segment producer.

KAY

Right. I've got to earn it. And I
will. Because being a part of this,
to call it inspirational is just--

Kay breaks off as she gets emotional.

MIKE

Are you crying? Is she crying?

As they start down a hallway, they pass MATT LAUER.

MATT LAUER

There's the man of the hour.

MIKE

Matty. Why are you slumming it down
here at the affiliate? On your way
to a teeth whitening?

MIKE TALKING HEAD (LIVING ROOM)

MIKE

*Matt Lauer and I have always had a
rivalry. We were both young, talented
mavericks who came up around the
same time. Some of us still have
our hair. Either guy could've gotten
the gig at The Today Show, but to
me, doing hard news was always more
important to me than talking about
guilt-free smoothies.*

EVE (O.S.)

Matt Lauer has a private jet, Dad.

MIKE

I have integrity.

EVE (O.S.)

*Can your integrity fly us to Sao
Paulo for dinner?*

INT. NEWS STATION - CONTINUOUS WITH BEFORE

MATT

I actually just recorded something
for your welcome back promo.

MIKE

Potential welcome back promo, but
that is thoughtful.

MATT

Of course. Great to have you back.

Matt Lauer walks off, nice as can be. Harris and Kay start off down the hallway again. Mike follows.

MIKE

There's a promo?!

HARRIS

Alright, fine: I was straight-up assuming you'd come back. I saw you out on the street, basically manning your kids. It was sad.

MIKE

"Manning?" It's called fatherhood. And most men don't spend their lives trying to avoid it.

HARRIS

Over thirty years of lovemaking and not one slip-up. Not even a scare.

MIKE

Pride comes before the fall.

HARRIS

Things happen for a reason, Mike. Us running into each other at Barney Greengrass? And then you talking my face off about work? It was fate. News is in your blood, man. You need us just as much as we need you.

MIKE

That's not true.

They've arrived at the 5 O'Clock News set.

HARRIS

Hey, it's your old anchor chair. Go ahead, give it a spin.

Mike gives Harris a look -- he knows what he's up to.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Fine.

(sitting in the chair)

Look at this. Am I moving? Not an inch. Reaching for a pen, unnecessarily shuffling papers, throwing it to weather -- locked in...

EXT. 86TH STREET - SAME TIME

Annie and the kids enjoy donuts at a classic NYC coffee stand. They can't eat fast enough; it's like they've been in prison.

GRAHAM

Can we always eat breakfast here?

ANNIE

If Dad starts going in early like this, probably.

EVE

(sarcastic)

I'm really going to miss his "healthy scrambles."

IAN

They're always over-salted.

(mimes shaking salt)

He just shakes, and shakes.

EVE

You're better than that.

IAN

But he sure can scramble those eggs.

EVE

There you go.

ANNIE

(re: Ian drinking)

How can you chug hot coffee?

IAN

How can I not? I sleep in a baby's bed! I'm done, Mom. I can't rethink technology in a closet. It's right off the kitchen, the Legos are distracting, and Eve's next door, blasting her garbage music.

EVE

(pointed)

You like Maroon 5.

IAN

I like Adam Levine! He's just got it. He does. End of story.

(then, back on Annie)

Either make Graham give me my old room back or let me take over your crafting room.

ANNIE

But where would I craft?

ANNIE TALKING HEAD (CRAFTING ROOM)

Annie talks to camera in the well-stocked, medium-sized room.

ANNIE

Every woman loves to craft. In the nine years I've had this room, I've never actually made anything, but just the idea of having it mellows me out.

(looks around)

Look at all this stuff. If I actually liked to craft, I could make anything.

EXT. 86TH STREET - CONTINUOUS WITH BEFORE

IAN

When was the last time you crafted?

ANNIE

My hobbies are not on trial here. You decided to drop out. When you left for college, which we paid for, you renounced all habitation rights. As a child who actually belongs in the apartment, Graham has dibs.

IAN

(a beat, to Graham)

I'll make you a 10% shareholder.

GRAHAM

In what?

IAN

My company. YouSearch. "Searching at the Speed of You."

GRAHAM

(sweetly)

No thanks.

IAN

Fine. I'm off to work at the public library, like a drifter.

EVE

(as Ian stalks off, to Annie)

It's always something with him, right?

ANNIE

What about you? I heard you signed-out a TV for your presentation today. What sort of bullshit project did you talk Mr. Diaz into letting you do?

EVE

Whatever happened to teacher/student confidentiality?

ANNIE

That's not a thing. It'll never be a thing.

INT. NEWS STATION - LATER

Mike meets with Harris and Kay in a room off the main studio.

KAY

...your first segment should be a return to the kind of investigative reporting you were famous for: out on the street, hustling -- *the guy who always finds the story.*

(catching herself, sweet)

That's if you're up for being on location. Maybe you can do your stand-up sitting down.

MIKE

Or you could just carry me.

KAY

I'll wear sneakers.

HARRIS

You can do anything you want, Mike. Like politics, or Panda at the Zoo, or overcoming personal obstacles. Hey, overcoming personal obstacles. I'd do that one.

MIKE

Harris, if I come back, it's for the news. Not to exploit this.

HARRIS

I wouldn't have it any other way.

In the b.g. a MONITOR begins to play Mike's WELCOME BACK PROMO. We see footage of his final broadcast, only now it's in SLOW MOTION, accompanied by "Hero" by Enrique Iglesias.

MIKE

That's it. I'm out.

HARRIS

What?! I brought in Lauer!

As Mike stalks off, Kay bursts into tears.

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME TIME

Eve screens the end of her video project for her class. On a TV MONITOR we see a talking head she recorded in her room:

EVE (ON TV)

Although my dad has experienced enormous tragedy in his life -- just getting out of bed each day is a living miracle -- he bravely soldiers on, and that makes him a hero.

ON THE TV, Eve picks up a KEYTAR and starts performing "Hero" by Enrique Iglesias. Then we see a SLOW MOTION SHOT of Mike trying to open the jar of pickles. The BELL RINGS and students APPLAUD. Eve starts off with the others.

MR. DIAZ

Eve, hang back a sec.

(as a satisfied Eve sits on a desk)

Great job editing that together.

Those wipe transitions-- first you're looking at one thing and it just peels away and then you're looking at something else. Wow.

EVE

Well, thanks for giving me the opportunity to tell a story--

MR. DIAZ

I'm failing you.

EVE

What?

MR. DIAZ

F. That was a puff piece. And it had no connection to *King Lear*.

EVE

I called myself a modern day Cordelia.

MR. DIAZ

Stop. You had a chance to really reflect on your family -- what your dad's been through, what you've been through -- but you just held up a phone.

(grabbing his bag)

Maybe I was wrong about the whole smart-girl-who-could-be-amazing-if-she-applied-herself thing. Because if you were really bright, you'd know now's the time to apply yourself.

As Mr. Diaz exits, Eve notices that her video is still playing. ON THE TV: Over POORLY TYPED CREDITS, Eve performs "One" by U2, with new lyrics:

EVE (ON TV)

One dad. One diagnosis. One disease
and guess what, destiny chose us!
One dad, but he's still the same...

Eve heads over and turns off the TV, ashamed.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. CRAFTING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Annie works on a fall-themed centerpiece. Mike enters.

MIKE

Hey, a gargoyle.

ANNIE

It's not a gargoyle, it's a centerpiece.

MIKE

For a table in a home?
(looking closer at centerpiece)
I'm seeing a lot of rape imagery here. I know people call you "my rock," but you're clearly working out some issues.

ANNIE

You're crazy...
(looks at it, chilled, then)
How was your meeting?

MIKE

Awful. They already cut a promo showing me in slow-motion. When they run footage of you in slow-motion, it means you're either dead or under indictment.

ANNIE

Or you just lost *American Idol*.

MIKE

They're only interested in "Mike the poor son-of-a-bitch," not "Mike the newsman." I should've never gone down there.

(off Annie not responding)

Right? You're not saying anything.

ANNIE

What do you want me to say? Of course they're going to pity you. You've got an incurable brain disease! People care about what's happened to you, Mike. Those hugs on the street are real. And if you think you can manage how everyone expresses that, you're going to have two diseases.

MIKE

You're supposed to say, "They suck, honey, I love you."

ANNIE

Do what you want, but it's not a promo that's scaring you off. You're just not sure if you can do it anymore. And I get that. But aren't you always talking about giving up control?

As Mike considers this, Annie reexamines her centerpiece:

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Okay, maybe the bauble looks like a head. And these dowels could represent hands... Choking hands... Is that my face? What's wrong with me?

INT. GRAHAM'S OLD ROOM/INT. EVE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Ian hears Eve next door, angrily playing her KEYTAR. He slides open the pocket door separating their two rooms.

IAN

Roof?

EXT. ROOF - A LITTLE LATER

Eve and Ian drop water-filled condoms off their building.

EVE

Why do we have to use these?

IAN

I couldn't find any regular balloons. And they give these out like candy in college. Getting 500 free condoms isn't preventative, it's pressure.

EVE

(drops condom)

Woman wearing a newsie hat.

(watches it fall, then)

It sucks they don't break.

IAN

They did once. When we were away at camp... Graham?

EVE

Ew! Can you imagine their skin? Are they just dressed in their clothes and then they like, start?

As they keep dropping water condoms, Eve lets down her guard:

EVE (CONT'D)

Diaz failed me. For that video.

IAN

Really?

EVE

It's not my first F, but this one kind of hurt. He basically called me a phony.

IAN

A "phony?" Who are you, Holden Caulfield?

EVE

I know that's a *Catcher in the Rye* reference, but I only read the wiki summary.

IAN

Ask Diaz for an incomplete. Tell him you want to prove him wrong -- he loves that crap -- then keep working on it until you're proud of what you've got.

EVE

Okay, but then I'd have to film you a lot more...

IAN

Take the F.
(re: another condom drop)
Right on a guy's soft pretzel. You could tell he was going to enjoy that.

EVE

(regards Ian for a beat)
Why am I talking to you about this?
You're Mr. Perfect.

IAN

That's where you're wrong. Rebooting the search engine isn't the only reason why I'm back here.

EVE

I've got to start using that. How do I find YouSearch again?

IAN

(a beat, small)
Google it.

EVE

Wait. To get to your search engine you have to use another search engine--

IAN

I failed an Econ class last semester. It was graded on a curve and apparently everyone at college is smarter than me.

EVE

But that's just one class--

IAN

A curve is a mathematic formula designed to separate the very best from the people who used to be the best. That's me now.

EVE

Okay, but coming home? Isn't that a little drastic?

IAN

I'm a drastic person.
(dropping condom)
Nailed an old lady.

EVE

No, that's Aunt Leigh.

Eve and Ian share a look, then race back inside.

EXT. BURNABY APARTMENT BUILDING - NEXT DAY

A driven Mike hurries past an unexploded water-filled condom, a little unnerved, as he talks on his cell phone.

MIKE

Kay, it's Mike. I'm back in.

KAY (ON PHONE)

What?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SUBWAY - SAME TIME

Kay rides a crowded above-ground train from deep in Brooklyn.

MIKE

I'm "the guy who always finds the story," right? Meet me at City Hall.

KAY

I'm in *Far* Rockaway.

MIKE

I got us a meeting in an hour.

KAY

But I didn't reserve a news van. Or a crew! Maybe if you hadn't spent the whole night hemming and hawing, but now we're boned! Hard!

A FAMILY looks over at Kay. She quickly sobers:

KAY (CONT'D)

I apologize for that, Mr. Burnaby.
I just want to do a perfect job for
a man who's given this world so much.

MIKE

Are you starting to cry again? I
can hear that.

The MOTHER from the family hands Kay a tissue.

KAY

No. It's allergies.

MIKE

Listen, Kay: it's going to be okay.
If a lady can have a baby in a tree,
we can handle this.

KAY

(blowing her nose)
What?

VARIOUS TALKING HEADS (BURNABY APARTMENT)

*In their respective rooms, each family member retells a story
Mike has told them a hundred times:*

GRAHAM

*There was a pregnant woman in
Mozambique...*

IAN

*...The day she went into labor, her
village flooded. As she was literally
being taken away in the rolling
currents...*

ANNIE

*...she climbed up into a tree and
gave birth. And she stayed in that
tree, with her newborn baby, until
she could be rescued. So remember:*

EVE

*However bad you think you've got it,
a lady had a baby in a tree.*

"I'm Shakin'" by Jack White RAMPS UP:

RAPID FIRE MONTAGE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

- Mike and Kay race up the steps of City Hall.
- Mike and Kay argue with a YOUNG INTERN at City Hall.

MIKE

Either the Councilman explains how two billion dollars fails to upgrade a call system or we put in a few calls to the sandwich lobby...

YOUNG INTERN

I'll try his office once more.

- Mike and Kay study a map on the hood of a 5 O'CLOCK NEWS VAN as they listen to a POLICE SCANNER.

DISPATCHER (ON SCANNER)

911 on 64th and West End.

MIKE

Let's boogie.

As Mike puts an NBC news cap on, Kay holds back commenting.

- Mike and Kay race uptown in the news van. DV disks fall on them as they're jostled around. Kay looks nauseous.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Car sick, huh? For me, this is perfectly still.

- ON CAMERA, Mike does his stand-up next to a FAMILY. In the background, NYC FIREMEN put out a fire in a BROWNSTONE.

MIKE (CONT'D)

After waiting thirty-nine minutes for emergency services to arrive, one has to wonder what memories have been lost inside.

The TEEN DAUGHTER uses her phone to sneak a photo of herself with a hot fireman right behind her.

FATHER

Jenny, quit messing with your phone.

MIKE

It's fine. I'm used to it.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - A LITTLE LATER

The fire is finally out. Firemen clean up and help the family sort through belongings. Mike is on his cell phone:

MIKE

We just wrapped. Got some killer B roll of the family looking through burnt photo albums, too. And the Dad's got their kitten on his shoulder, so look out *Craft Wars*.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MARTINI BAR - SAME TIME

Harris holds up a "one sec" finger to his much YOUNGER DATE.

HARRIS

That's awesome, man.

(hand over phone, to date)

Mike Burnaby. Close friend.

Parkinson's. So sad. But he's a fighter.

As Harris pounds his chest respectfully, his date melts.

MIKE

I gotta admit, it's pretty energizing being back out here, in the city again.

Off to one side, we see Kay VOMITING into a trash can.

HARRIS

Well, you're going to love this, then: guess who's introducing his segment on *The Today Show* tomorrow? Live! In front of millions!

MIKE

(a beat, small)

Me?

HARRIS

Matt Lauer cherry picked the story. Looks like you've been hating on the wrong guy. So much for easing back in, huh? This is big boy stuff.

Mike doesn't respond as this sinks in.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

Mike? You alright?

MIKE

Yeah, I'm just going through a tunnel.

HARRIS

Aren't you on West End?

MIKE

They just built it. It's a flash tunnel. I'm losing you.

He hangs up. STAY ON MIKE as he...

INT. GUEST BATHROOM - EARLY MORNING

...stands in front of a mirror, dressed in a sharp suit, trying to adjust his tie. Mike's hands are shaking more than usual. Annie enters, clocking this.

MIKE

I'm just timing my meds so they kick
in right before I go on.

Annie heads over to Mike and helps him with his tie. Then she turns him towards her to get a look. After a sweet kiss:

ANNIE

Hey: a lady had a baby in a tree.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Annie heads to the kitchen. She passes by Graham's old room to see Ian and Graham struggling to squeeze Ian's queen-sized bed into the tiny space; it fills up most of the room.

GRAHAM

I felt bad so I let him have his bed
back.

ANNIE

(sits down on mattress)
I went to a club like this in the
80s. Do not wear heels in here.

IAN

The dresser can double as a standing
desk. I'll make it work.

ANNIE

(smiles, proud)
You always do.

IAN

Let me get some sheets.

Ian musses Graham's hair as he heads off. After a beat, Annie feels the mattress beneath her.

ANNIE

You wet your bed, didn't you?

GRAHAM

That fridge is full of Gatorade!

INT. TODAY SHOW SET - LATER

ACTUAL TODAY SHOW FOOTAGE, as Matt Lauer and SAVANNAH GUTHRIE sit with Mike in front of the street-level windows. Behind them, fans CHANT Mike's name. CLOSE ON MIKE as he closes his eyes and his body becomes still; he's ready.

MATT LAUER

We have a very special guest this
morning. Mike Burnaby is here to
introduce a segment he recently did
for WNBC.

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE
(grabbing Mike's hands, pitying)
It is so inspiring that you're here.

MIKE
(slowly taking his hands back)
Always good to be with old friends.

OFF TO THE SIDE: Annie and Harris watch Mike as he continues to banter. Eve's next to them, filming with her iPhone.

HARRIS
Good to see him back, right?

ANNIE
Yeah, it only took six months of us figuring out how to get him to "run into you" at Barney Greengrass.

HARRIS
I mean, I like whitefish as much as the next black man, but it got a little *facacta*. I still don't know why you didn't just have me call him.

ANNIE
You know Mike. This had to be his idea.

HARRIS
So he has no clue?
(off her "no" nod)
So much for "always finding the story."

A CAMERA MAN spots Eve filming her dad.

CAMERA MAN
What's that for? Do I need to call my union?

EVE
No. It's just a... project.

BACK ON SET: Matt Lauer continues the broadcast.

MATT LAUER
...Before we hear from Mike, Al:
what's the reaction like out there?
Does anyone like this guy?

OUTSIDE: AL ROKER stands with NEW YORKERS holding "WELCOME BACK MIKE" signs. INSIDE, Matt leans over to Mike:

AL ROKER
It's crazy out here.
Seems like the whole
city came out to welcome
back their anchor.

MATT LAUER
(whispering trash talk)
See if you can handle the
pressure now, Mikey.

As Mike reacts, Matt Lauer turns back to camera, all charm:

MATT LAUER (CONT'D)

In his first segment back, Mike took on the city's costly overhaul of the emergency call system.

MIKE

That's right, Matt.

Mike runs his fingers through his hair for Matt's benefit.

INT. IAN'S OLD ROOM - SAME TIME

Ian and Graham watch Mike on *The Today Show* on Ian's old TV.

GRAHAM

He's still got it.

IAN

Yeah... I thought we made him get rid of that jacket. He looks like a ship's captain.

INT. TODAY SHOW - SAME TIME

MIKE

Two days ago, I accidentally made a 911 call--

Just as Mike begins, we hear a NEWS ALERT and we cut from his ONE SHOT back to a WIDE SHOT. On a SCREEN behind them, touching footage of the family looking at photos FREEZES.

MATT LAUER

(checking ear piece)

Unfortunately, we have to cut this short. We have some breaking news. The Supreme Court is about to announce its decision on early voting.

The CAMERAS TURN OFF and Matt Lauer slaps Mike on the back.

MATT LAUER (CONT'D)

That's the breaks.

Matt Lauer goes to get a coffee. After a beat, a disappointed Mike crosses to Annie, Harris and Eve (putting iPhone away).

HARRIS

Should've done the overcoming personal obstacles thing. You don't cut away from that gold.

ANNIE

You okay, Mike?

After a long beat, Mike puts on his trademark smile:

MIKE

Hey, you can't control everything.

EVE TALKING HEAD (EVE'S ROOM)

Eve sits down in front of her iPhone and takes a deep breath.

EVE

*What do I really think about Mike
Burnaby?*

(long pause, tearing up)

*He was an award-winning news anchor,
and an awesome dad, and then he got
a stupid disease.*

EXT. STREET - A LITTLE LATER

MUSIC BEGINS and Eve's talking head BRIDGES THE CUT as Mike walks with Annie and Eve.

MIKE

Why don't we grab breakfast?

EVE

Nah, I've got to shower before school.

ANNIE

And I have papers to grade.

As Annie and Eve lead Mike back home:

MIKE

Huh. I guess you really can't control everything.

EVE (V.O.)

*Of course he's not the same person
he used to be. With everything that's
happened, how could he be?*

EXT./INT. BURNABY APARTMENT - LATER

Mike, Annie and Eve arrive back home. As Mike opens the front door, Eve jumps in front of him and rushes inside.

EVE

Wait! Stay here.

Eve slams the door closed and we hear sounds of PLATES CLANGING and ARGUING inside. Mike looks at Annie; she shrugs.

EVE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Okay!

Mike and Annie enter and walk through the foyer to find Eve, Ian and Graham sitting around the dining room table. In front of them is a huge homemade breakfast. Leigh rushes in with a platter of sausages and sits, too. Then:

KIDS AND LEIGH

Surprise!

A beat as Mike processes what they're doing.

GRAHAM

Sit down meal.
(then, smiling)
Sit down, Dad.

Mike smiles, touched. He looks to Annie--

ANNIE

Their idea.

EVE (V.O.)

The truth is, none of us are the same. And we're still changing.

IAN

These are the idea of waffles more than actual waffles. Sorry.

Mike and Annie sit down, joining the others.

EVE (V.O.)

But through it all, my dad has never stopped trying, never stopped being here -- a part of this family. And that's what makes him amazing.

MIKE

This is great, guys. Thanks. Who wants some eggs?

As Mike reaches for a spoon and struggles to spoon eggs onto his children's plates, the MUSIC CUTS OUT.

ANNIE

Can you not have a personal victory right now? We're starving.

Annie grabs the spoon from Mike and takes over.

LEIGH

Yeah, and I'm having coffee with a skateboarder in a few, so... chop chop.

Graham notices Annie's centerpiece on the table.

GRAHAM

Somebody move that. It's scaring me.

As everyone enjoys sit-down breakfast, we PULL BACK AND OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

TAGEXT. AMSTERDAM AVENUE - MORNING

Mike, Eve and Graham walk past BARNEY GREENGRASS. Harris sits at a table in the window. CHYRON: "Six Months Earlier".

EVE

Let's grab some bagels.

MIKE

Why? You just had a healthy scramble.

Mike continues on. Eve and Harris share a frustrated look.

- ANOTHER DAY, same walk. CHYRON: "Four Months Earlier". They pass right by Harris, but Mike is too busy texting.

EVE

Can you put that down for one second?

MIKE

(as he texts, continuing on)

Nope. Graham taught me emoticons.

"Crying face, winking face, pineapple, saxophone." Just sent you that.

- ANOTHER DAY, same walk. CHYRON: "Two Months Earlier".

EVE

Fresh Nova? For just \$7.99 a pound?

As Eve physically moves Mike to look at Harris, a BIKE MESSENGER screeches to a halt right in front of them.

BIKE MESSENGER

Mike Burnaby! The man, the myth!

- ANOTHER DAY, same walk, only Annie's there, too. CHYRON: "Last Week". Annie pulls Mike toward Barney Greengrass.

ANNIE

Hey, look, it's Harris Green. Let's go say hello to him right now.

MIKE

You're hurting my arm. Slow down.

They head inside to find Harris sitting at his usual table, only he's busy talking to a HOT WOMAN sitting next to him.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Hey, Harris.

HARRIS

Not now. I'll get with you later.

Harris turns back to the woman and keeps hitting on her. As the family glares at Harris, Mike shrugs and heads out.

END OF EPISODE