

EPISODES

Episode One

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EPISODES

Episode One

FADE IN:

INT. SEAN AND BEVERLY'S BEVERLY HILLS BEDROOM - DAY

Sunlight pours in. Outside it's a beautiful California day. Inside it's not so nice. Clothes are being furiously stuffed into a suitcase. BEVERLY is doing the stuffing. She's English, in her 30's, and under most circumstances a strong, self-possessed woman who suffers no fools. Today she's a mess. Her husband SEAN -- also English -- looks on. Sean is bright, both in his intelligence and his sunny outlook. He genuinely believes that everything will turn out well. Today he's wrong.

SEAN

Beverly. Stop.

BEVERLY

No.

SEAN

Please.

BEVERLY

No. I've had it. I'm going home. You stay. Clearly, you're flourishing here.

SEAN

I'm hardly flourishing.

BEVERLY

Oh? What did you do this morning?

SEAN

(sheepish)
Surf lessons.

BEVERLY

Brilliant.

She snaps the suitcase shut and is out the bedroom door.

SEAN

(following)
If it helps, I fell off a lot.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

The house is a massive McMansion decorated with questionable taste. Beverly is heading for the front door. Sean follows.

SEAN
Look. I realize LA isn't your --

BEVERLY
This isn't about LA.

She opens the door.

SECURITY SYSTEM VOICE
Front door ajar.

SEAN
Wait!
(closing the door)
Is it about the show? It's one more week.

BEVERLY
Move.

He steps aside. Beverly opens the door again.

SECURITY SYSTEM VOICE
Front door ajar.

SEAN
One more week, the work'll be done and we can leave together with our heads held high.

BEVERLY
Heads held high?? Have you not seen our heads? It's all we can do to not kick them when we walk!

SEAN
(closing the door)
Granted, we've made some compromises --

BEVERLY
This isn't about the show.

She opens the door.

SECURITY SYSTEM VOICE
Front door ajar.

SEAN
Well, then what --

He closes the door. Beverly opens it.

SECURITY SYSTEM VOICE
Front door ajar.

BEVERLY
(to Sean and the door)
Will the two of you please shut up!
(then, level)
I know about you and the girl with the
gravity-defying breasts.

SEAN
(flustered, sputtering)
What? All right, that -- I realize --
You have to -- Look --

BEVERLY
You'll notice that absent from that
pile-up of words were the ones "It's
not true."

She goes.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Beverly is getting into the car. Sean is at the door.

SEAN
Bev, I'm sorry!

BEVERLY
(caustic)
Don't be. It's Hollywood. You're
just trying to fit in.

She pulls out into the street and starts to drive off. In her
fury, she's unaware that she's in the left hand lane.

SEAN
Stop! You're on the wrong side!

BEVERLY
No, Sean, you're on the wrong side!

SEAN
That's not what --

But Beverly never hears the end of that sentence. She peels
off, oblivious.

EXT. DIFFERENT STREET - SAME TIME

MATT LEBLANC is driving in his car. He touches a button on the wheel.

COMPUTER VOICE
Automated Dialing. Command.

MATT
Call Bob.

COMPUTER VOICE
Repeat.

MATT
Call Bob!

COMPUTER VOICE
Dialing Mom.

MATT
No! Not Mom! Bob!

There is sound of dialing and then a phone ringing.

MATT
Cancel. Cancel! Stop!!

Instead, Matt's mother answers.

MOTHER'S VOICE
Hello?

Matt picks up the phone.

MATT
("shit!")
Hey, Mom. ... No reason, just wanted
to say hi.

He turns a corner and sees Beverly bearing down on him.

MATT
What the fu--

Beverly sees him and her eyes go wide. She hits the brakes, but to no avail. It's a head-on collision. Air bags deploy in both cars. Beat. FADE TO WHITE.

TITLE CARD: "SEVEN WEEKS AGO"

EXT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a giant replica of the BAFTA mask. PULL BACK and we are at the gala following the TV Awards. Lots of folks in black tie celebrating; tears and alcohol flow. Sean and Beverly sit at a table, each with an award in front of them. They look smashing. A MAN approaches them. He's a fellow writer/producer, about their age.

MAN

You bloody bastards. You've done it again.

(re: second award)

And again.

(mimes strangling them)

Stop doing it!

They all laugh.

SEAN

We're so sorry.

BEVERLY

We promise, never again.

MAN

That's what you said last year. But I'm really pleased for you.

BEVERLY/SEAN

That's sweet. Thank you.

As the man moves off:

BEVERLY

He's not pleased.

SEAN

Not at all.

BEVERLY

Well, I'm happy for us.

SEAN

I'm just happy.

They kiss. It's maybe a touch too passionate for a public place, but they're both rather tipsy and no one's looking.

BEVERLY

How soon can we leave?

SEAN

I don't know. Have we made enough people feel bad about themselves?

They spot a man heading toward them.

SEAN

My god.

BEVERLY

What? Who's that?

SEAN

It's Merc Lapidus.

BEVERLY

Who?

SEAN

(she should know)
Merc Lapidus.

BEVERLY

Repeating it doesn't help me.

SEAN

From America. He's president of --

MERC reaches them. He's in his 40's, very attractive. He has an expansive personality. Charismatic. Lots of energy. You'd think it's fueled by cocaine, but it's just him. Really.

MERC

Winners! Forgive me, don't wanna interrupt. Merc Lapidus. I'm the --

BEVERLY

Please, we know who you are.

SEAN

Sean and Beverly --

He goes to shake Merc's hand, but Merc throws his arms around him. Sean gives Beverly a startled look over his shoulder.

MERC

(to Beverly)
And you! With the funny speech!

BEVERLY

Oh, that's not necess--

But he's already enveloped her in a massive hug.

BEVERLY

All right.

MERC

You know what my fantasy is?

BEVERLY

I'm going to guess either shoes or nuns.

Merc laughs. Maybe too hard.

MERC

My fantasy is I wake up tomorrow and I've got your show on my network.

BEVERLY

Well, that's very flatter--

MERC

No no, I'm not just blowing smoke here. I love your show. Love it. Seriously. I want to have sex with your show. I'm telling you, an American version? Would be huge. It could be like "The Office" meets...

He searches.

SEAN

...our show?

MERC

Yes! But we'd have to do it right. No farming this one out. I want what's in these amazing, British-y heads.

BEVERLY

What, us come to LA?

SEAN

That's interesting.

BEVERLY

(an intent look)
Is it?

MERC

Uh oh, she's giving you the wife look.
(off Beverly's reaction)
Whoa, now she's giving me the wife look.

A waiter passes with a tray of desserts. Merc stops him.

MERC

Hello!

(takes a tart)

Have you guys tried these? What are these little berries? They're genius. They're like magic berries.

BEVERLY

They're actually loganberries.

MERC

loganberries! Now I want to have sex with your show and these berries.

BEVERLY

When I was a little girl, my grandmother lived in Yorkshire and she had loganberries in her garden. Every summer we'd pick the berries and she'd make us jam.

MERC

Fuck. My grandmother lives in Morristown, New Jersey, and hates black people.

(then)

So what do you say? Come play with us! I need "Lyman's Boys"! I've got four places on my schedule I could put it right now.

BEVERLY

This is very flattering. And we've all had a lot to drink...

MERC

Not me. Not in seven years. I'm an alcoholic.

BEVERLY

But evidently not anonymous.

MERC

C'mon! We'll get you a house, a car, name it. How hard would it be? You've already written the scripts. You'll work twenty minutes a day, the rest of the time, you can screw in the pool.

BEVERLY

Actually, my brother drowned in a pool.

MERC

Oh.

SEAN

She's joking. She's joking.
(to Beverly, tight smile)
What are you doing?

MERC

See? Funny!
(then)
Look, if you don't want to do it, fine. Hey, maybe you don't like money. But I had to ask. When I had cancer -- that's right -- I realized two things. If you want something, go for it, God doesn't wait for you. And also, you do not want cancer.

INT. TAXI - LATER

Rain is pouring down. Sean and Beverly are lost in thought.

BEVERLY

You're already there, aren't you?

SEAN

No.

BEVERLY

Yes, you are. You're having brunch with Angelina Jolie. My god, you've already got a tan.

EXT. SEAN AND BEVERLY'S TOWNHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

It's a wonderful, old house that exudes character more than affluence. Sean and Beverly get out of the cab huddled under one umbrella. They discover an enormous, lavishly-wrapped basket of loganberries in front of their door.

BEVERLY

Jesus.

SEAN

(reading card)
"Come taste our berries. Your biggest fan, Merc Lapidus."

BEVERLY

How did he do this?? We left him less than an hour ago.

SEAN

I can't believe he even remembered that stupid loganberry story.

BEVERLY

(unsettled)

I can't believe he knows where we live.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Sean and Beverly are getting undressed.

BEVERLY

You really want to move to LA? You're always taking the piss out of it.

SEAN

Only because it's never wanted me. I'm very petty that way.

BEVERLY

But why do it? Our lives are here, our friends are here.

SEAN

Who would you miss?

BEVERLY

(considers this)

We need better friends.

She presents Sean with her back.

SEAN

I'm just saying, if we do this and we're a hit --

(unhooking her necklace)

A hit show in the States, a big stonking hit -- it's like winning the lottery. We'd never have to work again.

BEVERLY

What would we do instead?

SEAN

(considers this)

All right, we need friends and we need hobbies.

BEVERLY

I don't know. LA? It's so... LA.

SEAN

Come on. It's an adventure!

BEVERLY

(a whimper)

I'd have to drive everywhere.

SEAN

Ah, there's that pioneer spirit.

She presents him with her back again. He unzips her dress. It slips to the floor. She turns to face him.

BEVERLY

You really want this?

SEAN

I think I do.

She shrugs her acquiescence. He beams.

SEAN

Hurray.

He kisses her. She starts to step away. He stops her.

SEAN

Wait. I get to do the bra too.

BEVERLY

(amused)

You're still fifteen, aren't you?

SEAN

Mmm hmm.

(trying to unfasten it)

What, did you weld this?

As he continues to struggle with it, we PAN over to rain hitting the window. Then CUT TO...

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS STREET - A WEEK LATER

Brilliant blue sky. PAN DOWN past palm trees to find Sean and Beverly driving in a snazzy convertible.

SEAN

Now you have to admit.

BEVERLY

It is fairly glorious.

SEAN
Feel that sunshine!

BEVERLY
Of course --

SEAN
(before she can say it)
Don't say skin cancer.

BEVERLY
(smaller)
Just glorious.

EXT. GATED COMMUNITY - A LITTLE LATER

Beverly and Sean pull up to the grand entrance and guard gate.

BEVERLY
(impressed)
Oh, my.

SEAN
Welcome home, darling.

They drive up to the SECURITY GUARD in the booth.

SEAN
Hello. We're the new people moving
into...

BEVERLY
(refers to paperwork)
1675 Bel Vista Drive.

SEAN
Sean and Beverly Lincoln.

GATE GUARD
(checking list)
No...

SEAN
No? Well, we should be there.

GATE GUARD
Are they expecting you?

SEAN
No, there's no one expecting us. It's
a house we're renting -- well, that's
been rented for us --

BEVERLY

Wait, there's the housekeeper. She might be there.

SEAN

Yes.
(consults paperwork)
Florinda.

GATE GUARD

One moment.

The guard dials the house. Pause.

BEVERLY

(dry)
This is fun.

GATE GUARD

(into phone)
I have...

SEAN

Sean and Beverly Lincoln.

GATE GUARD

Sean and Beverly Lincoln here.
(beat; hangs up)
She says they're not home right now.

BEVERLY

(getting frustrated)
Well, of course they're not home,
because they're us and we're stuck here
with you!

GATE GUARD

Ma'am, there's no need to raise your
voice.

BEVERLY

Oh, really? Get in the car, I'll be
you, and you'll see if that's true.

SEAN

(reasonable; reads name tag)
Look -- Wallace -- I know once we've
moved in the three of us will all have
a good laugh about this. But we've
been traveling for fourteen hours and
we'd just love to get into the house.
Isn't there some way you can let us do
that?

GATE GUARD

Not if you're not on the list. How do I know who you are?

BEVERLY

Oh, has it not come up? We're Sean and Beverly Lincoln!

SEAN

Really not helping.

BEVERLY

Really don't care.

SEAN

I'm sure we're on the list. May I see it?

GATE GUARD

No one sees the list.

SEAN

No one sees the list?

GATE GUARD

We got high caliber celebrities living here. We have to protect their privacy.

SEAN

Oh, for god's sake. Wallace. I appreciate the seriousness with which you approach your job. I do. But I just want to find our names. I promise you, I won't reveal any information about your precious gated community or the secret identities of its gated citizens. Now give me the list.

The guard reluctantly hands Sean the list.

SEAN

Ooo, Renee Zellweger lives here.

Beverly is equally intrigued.

EXT. SEAN AND BEVERLY'S BEVERLY HILLS HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Sean and Beverly stand looking up at the house. It's the one from the opening. An enormous Mediterranean.

BEVERLY

All this just for the two of us?

SEAN

Apparently so.

Beverly giggles. Sean is dazzled as well.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Sean and Beverly enter.

SECURITY SYSTEM VOICE

Front door ajar.

Beverly shuts the door, then opens it again.

SECURITY SYSTEM VOICE

Front door ajar.

BEVERLY

(impressed)

She's fun.

Beverly spots the living room and heads toward it.

BEVERLY

Oh my god...

The room is grand and column-lined. Like the rest of the house, it has been decorated with a very heavy hand. Everything's oversized. Too much draped fabric, too many pillows, too many urns. But Beverly's delighted.

BEVERLY

This is mad.

She eyes a Roman-ish statue of a woman holding grapes.

BEVERLY

I love her! Is it me, or do her nipples follow you around the room?

SEAN

Bev, look at this.

He has discovered that one of the large columns is made of painted polystyrene and not connected at all to the house. He rocks it back and forth.

BEVERLY

Very Hollywood.

FLORINDA, a middle-aged Hispanic housekeeper enters. Her accent is dense.

SEAN
Florinda? Hello. We're Sean and
Beverly Lincoln.

FLORINDA
The gate call. Guests come. I say
you no here.

SEAN
(beat, then)
Brilliant.

INT. MASTER BATH - A LITTLE LATER

The bathroom is vast. Beverly's in heaven.

BEVERLY
I'm never leaving this room.

They take in the oversized bathtub.

SEAN
I like a bath you can dock a barge in.

BEVERLY
(with a suggestive smile)
Big enough for two.

He knows that look.

SEAN
What, now?

BEVERLY
I'm feeling a bit dirty. You?

SEAN
Filthy.

They kiss.

BEVERLY
So you want to dock that barge?

SEAN
Always a lady.

They kiss again.

SEAN
Let's do this.

He quickly starts to undress. Beverly turns on the water.
The bath begins to fill.

INT. MASTER BATH - A LITTLE LATER

Sean and Beverly, both in robes, stare at the bath. The enormous basin is still not even half full of water.

INT. MASTER BATH - A LITTLE LATER

They continue to stare at the bath. It's still not full. The moment has passed.

SEAN

Or maybe some other time.

BEVERLY

Yes.

They start to put their clothes back on.

INT. CAROL'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

CAROL RANSOM is ushering Sean and Beverly into her office. Carol's the head of Primetime Programming. In her 40's. Smart. A real person. Or an incredible facsimile. Another woman, MYRA, and a man, ANDY, are already in her office.

CAROL

Merc really wanted to be here, but he had to be in New York. This is Andy Button, our head of Casting.

ANDY

Huge fan. Ohmygod. I've been watching tapes of your show. Beyond hysterical. Beyond.

CAROL

And Myra Licht, head of Comedy.

Myra wears a perpetually pained expression.

MYRA

(with a grimace)
It's really funny.

CAROL

Sit, sit, sit. So are you settling in? Some house, huh?

BEVERLY

We love it. The only thing it's missing is a moat.

CAROL

Get a big rating, Merc'll dig you a moat.

They all chuckle.

ANDY

She's not kidding.

SEAN

It is somewhat strangely built. Several of the columns are made of polystyrene.

CAROL

Oh my god, they're probably left over from some set. A lot of producers use that house for reality shows. They shot a season of "The Bachelor" there. And I think "The Apprentice: LA". We just had twelve girls living there competing to become a supermodel.

BEVERLY

Right. The bathroom did have a vague vomity smell.

CAROL

That would be why.

Beat.

CAROL

So. "Lyman's Boys". Let's talk about casting.

SEAN

Well, we've got Julian committed to recreate the role of Lyman. So that's half the battle right there.

CAROL

We love Julian. He's hilarious. We just need to find a time when he can fly over and audition for Merc.

SEAN

Audition?

CAROL

No one gets cast in anything without Merc seeing them first.

BEVERLY

That's mad. Merc loves the show.
Julian is the show. Why should he
have to audition?

Andy looks to Carol. Awkward glances are exchanged.

CAROL

Yeah. Um. Here's the thing. There's
a chance Merc may not have actually
seen your show.

SEAN

What?

CAROL

I'm not saying he hasn't seen it.

BEVERLY

Has he seen it?

CAROL

No.

SEAN

Hang on. He told us he loved it. He
said he wanted to have sex with it.

CAROL

Well, if I had a nickel for everything
Merc would have sex with sight-
unseen...

ANDY

She'd have a lot of nickels.

BEVERLY

Then what about it did he love?

CAROL

Uh, it's a hit? It wins awards? It
ran for four years?

BEVERLY

Unbelievable...

CAROL

We've all seen it. And we do love it.
Which is why Merc really needs to see
Julian read.

BEVERLY

But we've already offered him the part. He gave up a play in the West End to do this.

CAROL

I hear you. I do. And I'm sure Merc'll flip for him. I mean, my god, he's Julian...

ANDY

Bullard.

CAROL

Bullard.

SEAN

Can't Merc just watch some tapes of the show?

CAROL

It's better if we do it in person. He's not a big TV watcher.

BEVERLY

And if we say no?

Andy and Myra look sharply at Carol. You can feel the fear.

CAROL

You don't want to say no to Merc. You really want him on your team.

SEAN

I thought he was on our team.

CAROL

Totally. But if he likes Julian -- and he will -- you're pretty much guaranteed you're on the air.

BEVERLY

He already guaranteed we're on the air.

CAROL

Absolutely. But you know, nothing's in stone.

SEAN

Actually, Merc said this was in stone.

CAROL

And it is. But, you know.

BEVERLY
Clearly we don't know.

CAROL
It's in stone. But... stone. There's
things stronger than stone.

SEAN
Like what?

CAROL
Like Merc. Merc is stronger than
stone.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Sean is driving. Beverly is venting, as she tears open a bag
of nuts.

BEVERLY
It's outrageous!

SEAN
Yes.

BEVERLY
He has to audition?! The man has
played the part for four years!

SEAN
I agree. What are you eating?

BEVERLY
Nuts from the plane. They're awful.
Want some?

SEAN
Sure.

They pull up to the guard gate.

SEAN
Hello, Wallace.

GATE GUARD
And you're here to see...?

They just stare at him.

INT. CASTING ANTEROOM - DAYS LATER

Sean and Beverly are with JULIAN BULLARD, veteran actor of
stage and screen.

Julian is charming, with a twinkle in his eye. He glances at some script pages, calm and relaxed. Sean and Beverly are far more anxious.

JULIAN

I remember this scene. It's rather good.

SEAN

Julian, thank you again for doing this.

BEVERLY

We're horrified that you even need to go through this.

JULIAN

Peaches, don't give it a second thought. I understand. I'm not new. The king won't let us play till he shows us all how big his dick is. You'd think they'd have wives and boyfriends for that...

Andy sticks his head in the door.

ANDY

Merc's here. We can start.

INT. CASTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Merc, Carol, Myra and Andy are there, as well as a smattering of MINOR EXECUTIVES. Sean and Beverly enter.

MERC

(bad Cockney)
'Ello, gov'nah!

He jumps up and gives them both big Merc hugs.

BEVERLY

(re: the hug)
So it's every time.

SEAN

Hello, all. I'd like to introduce Julian Bullard.

Julian enters.

MERC

Welcome. Thanks for coming in.

JULIAN

(cheeky, not hostile)
Not at all. The last time I had to audition was in '87 to do "Private Lives" with Dame Judi at the National. So this is a treat.

MERC

Well, we all appreciate it.

JULIAN

And with whom will I be reading?

ANDY

Me. Career highlight.

SEAN

For those who haven't seen this episode, in this scene Lyman has to tell one of the boys he's been asked to leave St. Abban's.

MERC

(to the others)
Oh, this is a good one.

Sean and Beverly stare at him.

BEVERLY

Wow.

SEAN

Whenever you're ready.

Julian, in character, turns to Andy.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)

Robbie. I'm afraid your time at St. Abban's has come to an end.

ANDY (AS BOY)

Why?

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)

(choosing his words)
Well. The teachers and I think you'll do better at a school with a less academically demanding curriculum.

ANDY (AS BOY)

Why?

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
We believe you need a more...
intellectually diminished environment.

ANDY (AS BOY)
Why?

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
Mmm. How to put this... You're not
bright.

This gets a genuine laugh from Merc and the others. Sean and Beverly are cautiously relieved.

ANDY (AS BOY)
I'm bright.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
No.

ANDY (AS BOY)
I'm not stupid.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
You're not not stupid.
(waits as the boy tries to
figure this out)
Too many "nots"?

ANDY (AS BOY)
Maybe I'm just not working up to my
potential.

JULIAN
No. This is you on all cylinders.
There are just no wheels.

Big laugh from the room. Even Myra chuckles cringingly.

JULIAN
But all is not bleak. For, young man,
you have something far more important
than intelligence. You're attractive.
And in the real world, that will get
you much, much further. There isn't a
Nobel laureate who wouldn't happily
give up twenty IQ points for chiseled
cheekbones and a full head of hair.
Plus you're pleasant and your family
is rich. My god, you could be running
this country some day! And I assure
you, intelligence would only get in
your way.

And... scene. The room applauds. Huge reaction. Beverly and Sean are enormously relieved. They mouth "thank you" and offer a little bow to Julian who smiles, pleased.

CAROL

Julian, could you give us a minute?

JULIAN

Certainly.

He leaves. Everyone looks to Merc.

MERC

Wow. He's the real deal, huh?

SEAN

Yes, he is.

MERC

That was a treat, I've gotta tell you.

BEVERLY

So we're all set?

MERC

Mmmm...

BEVERLY

Yes?

MERC

(big sigh)

Is it me, or does anyone else feel he comes off a bit too... English?

CAROL AND THE OTHERS

I know what you mean. A little. English. I heard it.

BEVERLY

Hmm. Too English. Possibly it's because he's English?

MERC

Yeah, no, I dunno. He just sounds a little... butler-y. I mean, if we're doing an American version of the show...

SEAN

Right. But he's playing the headmaster of an elite boarding school. The boys will be American. The other teachers. Why can't he be British?

MERC

I hear you. But... we need the audience to like him.

INT. CASTING ROOM ANTEROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beverly and Sean are with Julian. They're beyond mortified.

BEVERLY

I can't believe we're even asking you to do this. Truly, I'm having an out-of-body experience. I may be sick.

SEAN

Julian. We'd understand completely if you say no. We do. But... could you possibly do the scene again with an American accent?

JULIAN

(unfazed)
No problem.

SEAN

Really?

JULIAN

Dear ones, I was doing Tennessee Williams and Eugene O'Neill before you were born.

BEVERLY

How old are you?

JULIAN

(good natured)
Piss off.

INT. CASTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beverly and Sean return with Julian.

SEAN

(wry)
You all remember Julian Bullard.

MERC AND OTHERS

Hi. Welcome back.

SEAN

Shall we do this?

Julian and Andy begin the scene again. Julian speaks with an impeccable American accent. He's flawless.

Only this time, he's absolutely not funny. Perhaps because the pace is different, or his affect is flatter. But the magic is gone.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
Robbie. I'm afraid your time at St.
Abban's has come to an end.

ANDY (AS BOY)
Why?

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
Well. The teachers and I think you'll
do better at a school with a less
academically demanding curriculum.

ANDY (AS BOY)
Why?

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
We believe you need a more...
intellectually diminished environment.

ANDY (AS BOY)
Why?

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
Mmm. How to put this... You're not
bright.

No response from the audience. Silence. Crickets. Sean and Beverly glance anxiously at each other. Julian feels it, too.

ANDY (AS BOY)
I'm bright.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
No.

ANDY (AS BOY)
I'm not stupid.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
You're not not stupid.
(then)
Too many "nots"?

Again, silence. Julian starts to sweat.

JULIAN
Sorry. May I try that last bit again?

MERC
Please.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
We believe you need a more...
intellectually diminished environment.

ANDY (AS BOY)
Why?

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
Mmm. How to put this... You're not
bright.

Again, it's just not funny. The silence is punishing.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
(tries different inflections)
You're not bright. You're not bright.
You're stupid.

Nothing. Merc is stony. Myra looks constipated. The flop
sweat is pouring off Julian. Sean and Beverly are dying.

JULIAN
Maybe Southern.

SEAN/BEVERLY
Southern. Yes. Brilliant.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
(with Southern accent)
You're not bright.

ANDY (AS BOY)
I'm bright.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
No.

ANDY (AS BOY)
I'm not stupid.

JULIAN (AS LYMAN)
You're not not stupid. Too many
"nots"... there... pardner?
(as himself)
I suppose that would be if I were the
headmaster of a cowboy school.
(then)
Allrightee, I believe we've seen
enough. I know my way out. Thank me
very much for coming. And let's hope
to Christ there's a bar at my hotel.

He briskly exits, a broken man. After a long silence:

MYRA
(grimacing as always)
He just didn't make me laugh.

INT. SEAN AND BEVERLY'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sean is pouring a truly enormous glass of Scotch. Beverly sits nearby. They both look stunned. Shell-shocked.

SEAN
What just happened?

BEVERLY
I don't know.
(re: the Scotch)
In case you're wondering, I'll be wanting at least that much.

SEAN
Shit!

He slams his fist into a nearby column. As it is polystyrene, it goes right over. Sean regains his composure.

SEAN
All right. All right. Let's look on the positive side --

BEVERLY
Positive side??

SEAN
Well --

BEVERLY
No! Just once, please, do not try and find a positive side. Because even if you can, which I very much doubt, my Negative is so much, much bigger than your Positive. In fact, my Negative openly mocks your Positive. My Negative slaps your Positive around. My Negative grabs your Positive, bends it over the couch and buggers it from behind.

SEAN
(tiny throat clear)
My Positive did not enjoy that.

The phone rings. Beverly answers.

BEVERLY
Hello. Hi, Carol.
(to Sean)
It's Carol.

SEAN
Put her on that speaker thing.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CAROL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Carol is also talking on speaker. Myra and Andy are with her.

CAROL
Hi, kids. Tough day.

Beverly rolls her eyes.

SEAN
Yes. Yes, it was.

CAROL
We all feel terrible. Merc is sending
you a basket of loganberries.

BEVERLY
Lovely.

She gives the phone the finger.

CAROL
So how are you two doing?

SEAN
(off Beverly's threatening
look)
Well, we're not feeling positive, I
can tell you that.

CAROL
I'm sure. Anyway. We should all try
and look forward. We still love the
show.

ANDY
We do.

MYRA
(removes something from her
hair)
What is this?

BEVERLY

Well, it's hard for us to imagine doing it without Julian.

CAROL

I understand. But before we go there, we wanted to share an idea with you. It's a different way to go, so keep your minds open. We just found out that there's an actor available. Huge star, hysterically funny, the audience loves him, and he's ready to come back to TV. Merc thinks he'd be perfect for this.

SEAN

(always hopeful)
Really? Who?

CAROL

Matt Leblanc.

Long pause. Carol and the others lean toward the phone waiting for a response. On the other end, Beverly and Sean are beyond words.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW