

"RUT"

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FADE IN:

EXT. ELVAS AVENUE FINANCIAL SERVICES, SACRAMENTO, CA - DAY

This is a medium-rise office building in the city's East Sacramento area.

INT. SUSANNAH'S OFFICE - DAY

An efficient-looking, orderly space...where a wall features Air Force and Iraq War photos and certificates (in addition to finance-industry licenses).

SUSANNAH MACAULAY (49, competitive, romantic) sits across from NORM and SHEILA BANKSTON (both 67) at a small round table on the far side of the office.

SUSANNAH

Norm...Sheila...we're honored that you've chosen Elvas Avenue Financial Services.

Norm looks up from the brochure(s) in his hands.

SHEILA

We've heard from our neighbors that you're the best in town.

SUSANNAH

Thank you. We appreciate that.

He gazes at a picture of a younger Susannah (in her Air Force uniform) standing next to an F-16 plane.

Norm turns his gaze to Susannah.

NORM

Did you really fly one of those?

SUSANNAH

Yes, I did.

Sheila shoots Norm an I-told-you-so look.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

This visit is about you two...not about me.

Susannah eyes Sheila's megawatt smile.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Tell me about yourselves...and your retirement plans.

SHEILA  
Glad to, Susannah.

Norm goes back to his brochure(s).

Susannah yanks out her cell phone to record the conversation.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
Norm and I have worked in the same  
snack-food factory for the last  
twenty years.

SUSANNAH  
I understand.

SHEILA  
Before that, Norm and I worked in a  
container factory.

A nodding Norm looks up at Susannah.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
We did that for sixteen years.

NORM  
I quit because I got tired of  
coworkers trying to stuff me into  
one of those big old Gaylords.

SHEILA  
(pointing to Norm)  
And I got tired of pulling you out  
every time.

Norm catches another look at Susannah's war photos, then  
eyeballs Susannah herself.

NORM  
You didn't really fly one of those,  
did you?

SHEILA  
Norm...if you ask her that one more  
time, I'm gonna find one of those  
Gaylords and stuff you in it.

Susannah's mouth flies open.

EXT. AMERICAN AVENUE - DAY

A couple of cars rest on the street in front of a two-story  
house in Sacramento's Gardenland area.

On the front lawn: A sign that reads "FOR SALE."

INT. HOUSE FOR SALE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

VALENTINA DOBRYNIN (39, adventurous; Russia-born, America-raised) takes MALIK CRAWFORD (35, Black) and wife ANJANETTE ROSARIO-CRAWFORD (34, Brown) on a tour of the space.

All three wear light clothing to beat the April heat.

VALENTINA

You both picked a great time to look for a home.

Anjanette shakes her head "yes."

MALIK

Anjanette and I just got through doing our tax returns.

VALENTINA

To tell the truth, any time would've been a great time to look for a home.

Valentina, Malik, and Anjanette stroll on.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

I couldn't make that kind of statement back home in Moscow.

Anjanette and Malik stare Valentina down.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

And I don't mean Moscow, Idaho.

ANJANETTE

Uh...oh...kay.

VALENTINA

Harsh, harsh winters...and springs.

ANJANETTE

Anyway...Malik and I don't care if this is a two-family house.

MALIK

We can use the upstairs for our office.

Valentina's is a slow nod.

She stops in her tracks.

ANJANETTE

Actually...offices. He's an online reviewer and I do the same thing for "Sactown" magazine.

VALENTINA

Got it. Conflict of interest.

Malik's and Anjanette's eyes sparkle as the twosome look around the room.

MALIK

On the other hand, think of all the parties we could throw down here.

VALENTINA

Speaking of parties...let's tour the kitchen.

MALIK

Thought you'd never ask!

As the threesome head for the kitchen:

ANJANETTE

Valentina, did you ever do any spying when you were in Russia?

VALENTINA

Have you two ever heard of an eight-year-old KGB agent?

EXT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Here's an interesting-looking house not far from Sutter's Landing Regional Park in the city's East Sac neighborhood.

MAIN TITLES APPEAR OVER ACTION.

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A BASKETBALL GAME plays on the big-screen TV in this efficient, almost-Spartan space...but the sound's DOWN.

Susannah and husband CRAIG ALLRED (49, sentimental, fun-loving) sit at a sofa, where they eat a variety of entrees/salads/desserts on this Potluck Friday Night.

CRAIG

Valentina...did you tell 'em about your Uncle Vladimir?

Valentina (in a recliner) chows down when hubby BRAD DRAZENOVICH (39, bold, irreverent) jumps up from his seat...and moves it next to Valentina.

BRAD  
(sits down)  
This I've gotta hear.

Six eyes stare Valentina down.

VALENTINA  
Damn right I did.  
(takes a bite)  
Uncle Vladdy was the last of the  
spies in our family.

SUSANNAH "SUSY" MACAULAY-ALLRED JR. (15, wisecracking) and her brother ELI MACAULAY-ALLRED (13, searching) come out of the kitchen and into the living room.

Both carry plates of chicken wings.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
He tried to get Mama and Papa to  
join the KGB. But they wouldn't.

Eli and Susy settle into the last two available seats.

SUSY  
Wait for it, Eli.

A nodding Eli wolfs down a chicken wing.

VALENTINA  
Mama and Papa can't steal secrets  
to save their souls.  
(between bites)  
That's why I'm the same way.

BRAD  
(to Valentina)  
That's why you're no fun.

Craig and Valentina laugh.

Brad rises and goes to the kitchen.

SUSANNAH  
Brad, you've got the right idea.

While Brad raises his hand on his way out, Susannah turns to the four other eaters.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Please...eat up. We've got a whole  
lot more left.

Two or three folks AD LIB their agreement.

Brad returns to the living room with a plate of cheesecake.

CRAIG  
(looks up at Brad)  
That's your second one, ain't it?

BRAD  
Yeah, Craig.  
(to Susannah)  
And I'm gonna find out your secret.

Susannah watches Brad sit down and dig his fork into the  
cheesecake.

SUSANNAH  
What's it worth to you?

Laughs break out all over the room.

When it all dies down:

ELI  
Mom...Dad...Susy...Brad...Val...I  
hope you don't mind my asking...

CRAIG  
Eli...son...you just ask away.

Eli's all smiles.

ELI  
What's your fantasy job?

Several mouths fly open.

ELI (CONT'D)  
I'm doing a term paper for school  
about people's fantasy jobs.

Susy's eyes light up.

SUSY  
You know me.

Susannah shakes her head "yes."

SUSY (CONT'D)  
 I wanna play guitar in Joan Jett or  
 Taylor Swift's band.

Susy bolts out of her seat, sets her plate down, and plays  
 air guitar.

Valentina and Susannah look proud.

Brad stares at Craig.

ELI  
 (sets his plate down)  
 That's so Susy.

Eli rests his chin on his fists.

SUSY  
 All right, Eli Macaulay-Allred,  
 what's your fantasy job?

ELI  
 I wanna be an NFL quarterback!

Susy sits right back down.

Susannah's proud look continues...Craig and Brad clap.

ELI (CONT'D)  
 Well, I was named after Eli  
 Manning!  
 (wags finger at Susy)  
 Two-time Super Bowl champion Eli  
 Manning.

SUSANNAH  
 That's right.

VALENTINA  
 I hope you two kids get your wish.

SUSY  
 Thank you!

ELI  
 Dad...how about you?

CRAIG  
 Son, I'm in it.

Susannah's is an all-knowing nod.



CRAIG (CONT'D)  
I get to set up my laptop right  
here...work from home.

VALENTINA  
Makes sense.

CRAIG  
No fighting traffic...don't have to  
worry about the men's room running  
out of toilet paper...don't have to  
worry about bullies...

Brad looks bewildered.

BRAD  
What about online bullies?

CRAIG  
(snapping his fingers)  
Ah, shoot.

ELI  
Okay, Brad. Your turn.

Brad bolts up and heads for the kitchen. On the way there:

BRAD  
Anybody want something to drink?

The other eaters AD LIB (or gesture) their answers.

ELI  
Valentina, what's your fantasy job?

VALENTINA  
(takes a swig)  
Eli, my fantasy job is a joint  
effort with your mom.

Eli stares Valentina down...then stares Susannah down.

SUSANNAH  
Valentina's right.

VALENTINA  
In fact, all six of us have been  
eating some of the evidence.

SUSANNAH  
And it's not the first time all six  
of us have gotten together like  
this...for these potlucks.

Susy's and Eli's heads nod.

Brad returns to the living room with a bottle (maybe more) of pop/water/wine/juice...and catches Craig's dumbfounded look.

BRAD

Craig...what'd I miss?

CRAIG

My wife just confessed that flying over the Persian Gulf to defend our country wasn't her fantasy job.

SUSANNAH

(wags finger at Craig)  
I didn't put it like that!

Craig's stunned look becomes a smile.

CRAIG

Well...uh...that red-white-and-blue pizza you cooked up for our last joint potluck was...uh...patriotic.

Brad almost fumbles the bottle(s)...

SUSY

Yeah, Mom! I like how you used pepper jack cheese to represent the "white." And blue cheese to represent the "blue."

BRAD

The blue cheese kinda cut it close.

...before he sits back down.

He rises, sets any other bottles on the coffee table, and...

VALENTINA

Anyway, Susannah and I want to start our own pizza parlor.

...sits down again to open his own bottle.

Craig's face freezes.

ELI

Mom...

SUSANNAH

That's the truth.

ELI  
 Mom...don't you like helping people  
 retire?

BRAD  
 (to Valentina)  
 I thought you liked selling houses.

VALENTINA  
 I do.

SUSANNAH  
 And I like being a retirement  
 consultant, too.

VALENTINA  
 But we love cooking, too. And  
 cooking's our fun.  
 (to Susannah)  
 Right?

SUSANNAH  
 Did Arnold Schwarzenegger live here  
 in Sacramento?

Susy and Eli finish eating.

CRAIG  
 Susannah, honey...Sacramento's got  
 a lot of pizza restaurants.

BRAD  
 Great ones.

SUSANNAH  
 Valentina and I know that.

VALENTINA  
 And that's why our own pizza  
 restaurant will be in the tradition  
 of a local legend...

Susannah and Valentina smile at each other before they turn  
 to their fellow eaters.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 Shakey's.

Brad's, Craig's, Eli's, and Susy's mouths fly open.

EXT. DOBRYNIN-DRAZENOVICHES' HOUSE - DAY

It's a modern, two-story abode next door to the Macaulay-Allreds' house.

EXT. DOBRYNIN-DRAZENOVICHES' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brad's and Valentina's living room is furnished to the hilt.

Valentina, Susy, Susannah, Eli, Craig, and Brad sit around a dining-room table that teems with computer printouts.

SUSANNAH

First thing we do is draft a business plan.

VALENTINA

And the more inputs that go into the business plan, the better.

Eli and Susy point to themselves in disbelief.

CRAIG

(to Valentina)

Last night, you said this new restaurant was gonna be in the tradition of Shakey's.

Brad locates a computer printout from Shakey's own Website. He hands the sheet to his wife.

VALENTINA

(accepts printout)

Yes. I said that.

SUSANNAH

That doesn't mean Val and I can't put our own spin on it.

ELI

Mom...if this new restaurant was in the tradition of Chuck E. Cheese, then it'd really rock.

Susy and Brad applaud.

SUSANNAH

That depends on the size of the building we get.

Eli shrugs.

VALENTINA

Eli, at least at our place, you get  
to build your own pizza.

Valentina hands that printout back to her husband...who sets  
it back on the table.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Just like at Shakey's.

SUSY

(eyeballing Eli)

I've seen the pizzas you like to  
build.

Eli's all teeth.

SUSY (CONT'D)

I don't wanna be in the same  
restaurant with you.

ELI

Wait a minute, Susy!

SUSY

Who puts spaghetti on a pizza?

Brad trades high fives with Eli.

EXT. GOLDEN STATE REALTY COMPANY - DAY

A modern three-story building in the city's Midtown section.

INT. GOLDEN STATE REALTY COMPANY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Balloons and other decorations add color to an otherwise-drab  
space as Valentina, HER EIGHT COWORKERS, and Brad dine on a  
sizable spread that includes a large sheet cake.

At a midroom table, Valentina sits not only next to  
Brad...but across from coworker ROGER LITTLEJOHN (50s).

ROGER

You know...we coulda had this feast  
outside. It's mid-July.

VALENTINA

Yeah, Roger, but don't you like  
being under this great A/C?

Roger takes a bite...

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
It's hot outside...hotter than a  
space shuttle.

...and follows that up with a swig of  
pop/water/juice/coffee/tea.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
On takeoff.

KATRINA KENNAN (30s) refills her plate at the food table  
before she strolls next to Brad.

KATRINA  
I remember you from someplace.

Brad looks up from his plate to eye Katrina.

BRAD  
Huh?

KATRINA  
Don't you work at the Best Buy  
store on Arden Way?

Brad's nod is slow.

BRAD  
I'm the assistant manager.

KATRINA  
Eight months ago, I bought a new  
hard drive for a computer I wanted  
to refurbish. One of your coworkers  
charged me for a copy of Windows  
11, but never gave me the copy--

VALENTINA  
Katrina...don't you want a piece of  
that sheet cake over there?

KATRINA  
I'm not ready yet.

Katrina gravitates to an empty seat.

KATRINA (CONT'D)  
(pointing to Valentina)  
And you never told us why you're  
throwing this party today.

VALENTINA  
I'm getting ready to tell you.

All eyes turn to Valentina.

BRAD  
(to Katrina)  
I'm on PTO right now. I'm  
celebrating with my wife.

A nodding Katrina grits her teeth.

VALENTINA  
Speaking of celebrating...ladies  
and gentlemen...the reason for this  
fancy feast this afternoon is...

Company president MARIO GONZALEZ (50s) perks up.

MARIO  
It's really nice of you to do this  
for us.

VALENTINA  
Thanks, Mario.

Mario beams.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
The reason for this feast is...I'm  
getting out of the real-estate  
business...and I'm going into  
something more exciting.

The smile falls off Mario's face.

Katrina wags her finger at Valentina.

Valentina and Brad look excited.

Roger shows a deer-in-the-headlights look.

MARIO  
Valentina Dobrynin...what's more  
exciting than selling a real-estate  
property?

VALENTINA  
Oh, you'd be surprised.

EXT. ELVAS AVENUE FINANCIAL SERVICES, SACRAMENTO, CA - DAY

SOME PEOPLE jog by the building.

INT. ELVAS AVENUE FINANCIAL SERVICES CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Susannah, HER COWORKERS, Susy, Eli, and Craig sit and feast in a slightly larger, equally-drab version of the Golden State Realty conference room.

A separate table features a spread about as big as the one at Valentina's in-office party.

Not one single decoration adorns this space.

DAN HECHT (60s) rises from his seat to eyeball fellow employee Susannah.

DAN

Did you really make all the food we're eating this afternoon?

SUSANNAH

No, Dan. I didn't. Only most.

Craig, through his bites, shakes his head up and down.

ELI

Mom catered the chicken.

SUSY

And the cake came from a bakery.

Dan grabs his plate and heads for the food table.

ELI

(to Dan)

Try the pizza. Mom made the pizza.

CRAIG

Yeah, Dan. It's a Mexican pizza.

BARBI HOWELL (40s; a coworker of Susannah's) jumps up from her seat, grabs her plate, and turns to Susannah.

BARBI

Really cool of you to do this.

SUSANNAH

Thanks, Barbi.

BARBI

Are you looking for a raise?

SUSANNAH

Not at all.



Barbi goes to the food table to fill her plate as Dan finishes fixing his own plate.

Dan returns to his own seat. He sets his plate on the table.

DAN  
(sits down)  
C'mon, Susannah. You can tell us.

Eli and Susy cast impish looks...

SUSANNAH  
(pointing at Susy and Eli)  
No!

...that become frowns.

Craig smiles...only to see Susannah point at him.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
I've got this.

Susannah stands up and raises her beverage glass.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Everybody...raise your glasses...or  
mugs...or Thermoses.

All eaters lift their glasses...or mugs...or Thermoses.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Ladies and gentlemen...boy and  
girl...thank you for attending this  
feast this afternoon.

Susannah's fellow eaters cheer.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Time to cut to the chase.

DAN  
You got that right.

SUSANNAH  
If you like what you're eating  
right now, there's more to  
come...at the restaurant a friend  
and I are starting.

Craig, Eli, and Susy applaud.

Susannah's coworkers look dumbfounded.

ONE COWORKER drops his or her glass.

DAN

When?

BARBI

Isn't that more dangerous than all  
the missions you flew over the  
Persian Gulf?

Susannah answers with a smirk.

EXT. CORNER OF 57TH AND J STREETS - DAY

A 2015 Ford Explorer makes a right turn from J to 57th...

EXT. FAMILY RESTAURANT - DAY

...then pulls into the smallish parking lot of a two-story  
building that looks more like a house.

This place sports outdoor seating, too.

Susannah (the driver) and Craig file out of the SUV's front  
seats, Eli and Susy climb out of the middle seats, and Brad  
and Valentina jump out of the back seats.

All six saunter toward the front entrance when:

SUSANNAH

Before we go inside, let's get a  
good look at this building.

The two teens and four adults stop in their tracks.

SUSY

Mom...it's just a building.

VALENTINA

It's just a building like Rolex is  
just a watch.

Brad and Susannah chuckle.

SUSANNAH

Lady and gentlemen...boy and  
girl...this is the corner where the  
very first Shakey's Pizza Parlor  
and Ye Public House opened.

ELI

In Sacramento?

VALENTINA  
In the world.

Brad eyes the restaurant's facade...and looks baffled.

BRAD  
This world?

VALENTINA  
That's right, Brad. This world.

SUSANNAH  
And the date was Friday, April  
thirtieth, 1954.

Susy and Eli shrug at each other.

Craig eyeballs Susannah and Valentina.

CRAIG  
Is that right?

VALENTINA  
Susannah and I looked it up on the  
good ol' Internet.

SUSANNAH  
And we fact-checked it.

BRAD  
Both of you oughta be working for  
the networks...as debate  
moderators.

Susannah leads her entourage inside.

INT. FAMILY RESTAURANT DINING ROOM - DAY

Brad, Craig, Eli, Susannah, Susy, and Valentina settle into  
what had been the last six empty seats in A CROWDED PLACE.

CRAIG  
We're very lucky these seats belong  
to the same table.

Eli notices the fireplace in this large, inviting room.

ELI  
Mom, I thought you said the world's  
first Shakey's was in here.

SUSANNAH  
I said it was on this block.

ELI  
I thought Shakey's Pizza Parlors  
didn't have fireplaces.

SUSANNAH  
What actually happened is...the  
Shakey's building that was on this  
block burned down in 1996.

Susannah catches Eli's puzzled look.

ELI  
Did it have a fireplace?

VALENTINA  
No...before the old building was a  
Shakey's, it was a grocery store.

Food server YESENIA MORENO (20s) totes six large menus on her  
way to Susannah's entourage's table.

YESENIA  
Hi! You must be Valentina and  
Susannah's group!

VALENTINA  
That's us.

Valentina's cohorts nod or AD LIB their agreement.

YESENIA  
Welcome to our restaurant. I'm  
Yesenia...and I'm your server.

Yesenia hands the oversized menus to Susannah, who passes  
them around the table until everybody's got a menu.

SUSY  
(unfolding her menu)  
Check this out! I can hide behind  
one of these!

Susy's colleagues unfold their menus, too.

YESENIA  
Can I get you six anything to  
drink?

SUSANNAH  
Yes...

Yesenia whips out a notepad and a pen or pencil.

VALENTINA

But first...Susannah and I found out this was where the very first Shakey's Pizza Parlor opened up.

YESENIA

Uh...that's right. But in a different building than this.

Eli shakes his head up and down.

SUSANNAH

And Valentina and I want to start our own restaurant. In the tradition of Shakey's.

Brad nods at Susannah, then at Yesenia.

BRAD

But not in this building.

CRAIG

You know...I wanna try every mimosa in the place.

(to Eli)

Wanna share one?

Eli looks lost.

ELI

Dad...what's a mimosa?

CRAIG

Uh...it's half orange juice and the other half wine or champagne.

SUSY

That's right, Dad. Start 'em out early.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Craig, Susannah, Eli, Susy, Valentina, and Brad enjoy a variety of brunch items.

To wash everything down, Craig drinks a mimosa...the remaining quintet sip nonalcoholic beverages.

Between bites, Susannah eyes her husband.

SUSANNAH

You're lucky I'm driving.

A big smile invades Susy's face.

BRAD  
 (to Susannah)  
 You're not the only one.

Craig downs his mimosa while Yesenia strolls over to the entourage's table.

YESENIA  
 Can I get any of you a refill?

Five of the eaters AD LIB their answers.

And then there's Craig.

CRAIG  
 Can I get one of those Jolly  
 Rancher mimosas this time?

YESENIA  
 You bet.

VALENTINA  
 Yesenia, is it okay to get seconds  
 on that brunch burger?

Twelve eyes stare Valentina down.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 I just wanted to get a feel for the  
 restaurant.

YESENIA  
 No problem.

Yesenia pulls out her notepad and pen or pencil.

YESENIA (CONT'D)  
 (writes orders down)  
 But remember: We close at three!

SUSANNAH  
 No problem.

And Yesenia strolls toward the kitchen.

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Susannah (laptop on her lap) and Craig sit on the sofa.

CRAIG  
 Let's see what you've got.

SUSANNAH  
Consider it done.

Susannah shows her husband AN IMAGE on the laptop's screen.

CRAIG  
Ho...ly...cow. That's your business  
plan.

SUSANNAH  
Our business plan.

Craig nods as his wife scrolls through the business plan.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Valentina and I have been sending  
each other emails and swapping  
notes...and using your and Brad's  
ideas, too.

SUSY'S O.S. GUITAR SHREDDING fills the house.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
And the kids' ideas, too.

CRAIG  
Four cooks?

SUSANNAH  
That's right. Valentina couldn't  
get that picture she found online  
of four cooks from Shakey's back in  
the day out of her mind.

CRAIG  
Not the one where they all wore  
straw hats.

SUSANNAH  
That one.

Craig watches Susannah go to her "My Pictures" file.

She clicks on the photo in question.

His eyes go wild.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
They wore string ties, too.

Craig grits his teeth...

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Don't worry...our cooks are gonna  
look cool.

...then breathes relief.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Craig, check this picture out.

Susannah pulls up another picture...one about Shakey's back-in-the-day decor.

CRAIG  
Long tables.

SUSANNAH  
You bet.

That guitar shredding CONTINUES...Eli emerges from his bedroom to the living room.

CRAIG  
Susannah, how're you and Val gonna  
pay for this?

Eli finds a seat on the sofa.

SUSANNAH  
Here's how...

Susannah clicks the business plan's page back on.

Mother, father, and son study the page.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
GoFundMe...Kickstarter...

ELI  
What if Susy stood on a corner  
downtown and played her guitar?

CRAIG  
That depends on the corner.

Susy's jam session ENDS...she (electric guitar and all) reaches the living room.

Craig and Susannah applaud.

ELI  
(eyes on Susy)  
We were just talking about you.



Susy's all teeth...Eli looks impish.

INT. DOBRYNIN-DRAZENOVICHES' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Laptop in her hands, Valentina meditates on a sofa when Brad strolls into the room...and stands in front of her.

He waves at her for a few moments.

It doesn't arouse her.

He reaches for her legs to tickle them...only to bolt straight up again.

Brad grabs the clicker to the living-room TV.

Valentina's husband aims the clicker at the TV...but puts the clicker on the sofa without turning the tube on.

Brad leans toward his wife.

BRAD

BOO!

Valentina shakes her head "no."

She sets the laptop on the sofa to check her watch.

VALENTINA

I had fifty-five seconds left in my meditation session.

BRAD

Hey, now, wait a minute.

VALENTINA

(eyes on Brad)

What would you like to know?

Valentina grabs the laptop...Brad settles into a seat next to her on the sofa.

BRAD

Just wanted to find out if you'd found a building for you and Susannah's new restaurant.

VALENTINA

Well, Bradley Richard Drazenovich, it so happens that I've found a spot for our new eatery.

She opens her laptop; a few mouse clicks take her to a photo.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
This oughta make you kick up your  
heels.

The photo depicts a three-story building in Old Sactown.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
Better yet...a breakdance.

Brad's mouth hangs open.

Valentina's eyes light up.

BRAD  
Valentina Natasha Dobrynin...I  
think you've stubbed your toes.

Valentina wags a finger at Brad.

EXT. BEST BUY STORE ON ARDEN WAY - DAY

CUSTOMERS file into a modern blue-and-gray building in the  
Arden Park area.

INT. BEST BUY/ARDEN WAY SALESFLOOR - DAY

Brad assists A YOUNG COUPLE who look at the TVs on display.

A DIFFERENT SHOW plays on each TV set...and one of the series  
is a "Flip This House" kind of program.

YOUNG HUSBAND  
Well, anyway...our present TV's too  
old and too dumb to be a smart TV.

Brad sneaks a peek at the DIY show...

YOUNG WIFE  
And that's why we're looking for a  
new TV.

...before he refocuses on the young couple.

YOUNG WIFE (CONT'D)  
We wanna be able to see the  
Sacramento Kings in all their glory  
when the NBA season starts up.

BRAD  
Uh...huh.

YOUNG HUSBAND

Right down to the tattoos on the  
players' arms.

BRAD

Tell you what: Take a look  
around...and when you find  
something you like, hunt me down.

The young couple nod as Brad heads off to:

INT. BEST BUY/ARDEN WAY EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY

Brad rushes inside a good-sized room where magazines,  
newspapers, and fast-food bags clutter up the tables.

The big-screen TV's ON.

Brad pulls out his cell phone and punches Craig's cell  
number.

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' KITCHEN - DAY

Craig sits at the table in this state-of-the-art space.

He pushes his laptop aside when A RINGTONE emanates from his  
shirt pocket.

Susannah's hubby pulls out his cell phone.

CRAIG

(into his phone)

Hello?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

Brad holds his phone while he changes the TV fare to that  
house-flipping show.

BRAD

(into phone)

Hey, Craig, you got a minute?

CRAIG

Uh...what can I do for you?

BRAD

How'd you like to help me flip a  
house?

Craig shows a deer-in-the-headlights look.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Craig?

Craig's look continues...Brad stares at the TV while he converses with him.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You still there?

CRAIG

We've never flipped a house before.

BRAD

But it looks so great on TV...and besides, if Val and Susannah can flip a commercial space...

CRAIG

Brad, we don't have a real-estate license!

A big grin invades Brad's face.

BRAD

No...but Mario does.

CRAIG

Mario who?

BRAD

Valentina's old boss at Golden State Realty.

CRAIG

Have you told him about this?

BRAD

No...but it's a matter of time.

CRAIG

Whose time?

Brad's grin grows into a smile.

EXT. PIONEER SQUARE - DAY

Susannah and Valentina descend the stairs of a two-story stucco building in Old Sacramento.

SUSANNAH

Valentina, this is more than we can handle. Much more.

The two women reach street level, where they eyeball...

EXT. A SLICE OF OLD SACRAMENTO - DAY

...a one-story brick building attached to Pioneer Square.

Valentina and Susannah break out their cell phones to snap photos of the exterior.

SUSANNAH

These two buildings together cost a couple million dollars.

The photo shoot ends...Valentina turns to Susannah.

VALENTINA

It looked so great in the online photos...

SUSANNAH

This is all the building we need. Just this portion.

Valentina's is a slow nod.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Let's go on in.

Susannah heads for the front door...only it's locked.

VALENTINA

Susannah...shouldn't we wait on the agent first?

Valentina catches Susannah's look of embarrassment.

INT. A SLICE OF OLD SACRAMENTO'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Susannah, Valentina, and realtor GARRETT MARKLEY (40s) inspect a long, not-so-wide, earth-toned space with tables for twosomes (and some for foursomes).

The two women look disappointed.

SUSANNAH

Garrett, this is too small to be another Shakey's.

VALENTINA

It looked so great in the photos we saw online...

Garrett shakes his head "yes."

SUSANNAH

Valentina and I have some more sites we'd like to look at.

VALENTINA

Even if they're listed with another company.

Valentina, Susannah, and Garrett gravitate to a counter at the front of the place.

GARRETT

I don't get it...why do you two want to go into the restaurant business?

Garrett points to Valentina.

GARRETT (CONT'D)

Especially you...one of the best realtors in town.

VALENTINA

I just got sick and tired of contributing to the housing crisis.

GARRETT

You don't really mean that--

VALENTINA

And I just wanted to put an end to the fun crisis.

GARRETT

Huh?

SUSANNAH

The fun crisis in our lives.

Garrett grits his teeth.

EXT. SACRAMENTO SAVINGS BANK, J STREET BRANCH - DAY

This is a red-brick building not far from the site of the first Shakey's.

INT. SACRAMENTO SAVINGS BANK CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Susannah, Brad, Valentina, Craig, and branch manager DIANNE WHITEHEAD (50s) sit at a medium-size table in this smallish space.

Some folders and Dianne's laptop decorate the table.

Dianne stares Susannah down.

DIANNE

Let me get this straight: First you serve our country by being an Air Force pilot in the second Iraq War.

SUSANNAH

That's correct.

DIANNE

Then you retire from the service and become a retirement consultant.

SUSANNAH

I did.

DIANNE

And now, you team up with Mrs. Draze--

Valentina cringes.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

Ms. Dobry--

VALENTINA

It's okay, Dianne. You can call me by my first name. Valentina.

DIANNE

You two women want to start your own pizza parlor.

SUSANNAH

Yes...that's correct.

DIANNE

And you want to pattern your restaurant after Shakey's.

VALENTINA

We sure do.

CRAIG

Susannah and Valentina have been thinking about this for a year now.

SUSANNAH

It's a matter of civic pride...Shakey's got started here in Sacramento.

DIANNE

You realize that Shakey's is down to fifty-eight locations here in the United States?

VALENTINA

Yes, we do.

DIANNE

And not a single one of them is here in Sacramento.

Susannah blows an imaginary bubble.

Brad threatens to stick his tongue out at Dianne...Valentina stares him down.

With a few mouse clicks, Dianne pulls up an online version of Susannah's and Valentina's business plan.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

Your business plan says that you want to capture the fun of the Shakey's Pizza Parlors of the 1950s-to-1970s period.

VALENTINA

That's absolutely right.

DIANNE

We live in a different time.

SUSANNAH

Yes, Dianne. Understood.

DIANNE

Down the line, Shakey's got rid of its piano players and banjo players.

BRAD

(to Dianne)

You should hear Val play the piano.

Valentina blushes...Dianne looks unimpressed.

DIANNE

I read where one piano player quit because he got tired of kids pelting him with pizza toppings while he was trying to play.



CRAIG

Maybe the pizza wasn't good.

Brad cracks up.

BRAD

Maybe the piano player wasn't good.

DIANNE

You two women would've been better off putting in a video arcade.

SUSANNAH

We thought about that...and in the end, Valentina and I decided this arcade would ride on the kind of building we'd be able to occupy.

Dianne's is a slow nod.

VALENTINA

(eyeballing Susannah)

Don't you remember that Shakey's over in Auburn, Alabama?

SUSANNAH

They still had an old piano there.

DIANNE

But that one closed down not too long ago.

Brad tries to stick his tongue at Dianne...but Valentina gestures him out of it.

Dianne turns her laptop off, then stares Susannah and Valentina down.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

The bottom line is...we won't be able to help you.

Valentina grits her teeth.

Susannah looks stoic.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

If you'd had today's kids in mind...and patterned your place after Chuck E. Cheese's...then we would've had a deal.

Craig shrugs.

BRAD

Val...while we're here, why don't  
we pull our money outa here and  
close out all our accounts?

And Valentina sticks her tongue out at Brad.

EXT. 37TH AVENUE - DAY

A late-model BMW tools along a residential street in  
Sacramento's Sandra Heights area.

The Beemer stops in front of a smallish white, fenced-off  
house from the early Eisenhower years.

Mario (the driver), Craig, and Brad jump out of the car and  
head for the house...

EXT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - DAY

...one that could sure use a paint job.

Two large plastic trash containers rest on the front lawn.

Mario unlocks the gate; Brad and Craig follow him to the  
front door.

MARIO

So...are you two ready for House  
Flipping 101?

Craig and Brad stare at each other.

CRAIG

Brad, you used up a week's PTO for  
this.

The two novices watch Mario unlock the front door.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

White walls stare the three men down in this empty room.

Craig looks down on the floor...Brad follows suit.

CRAIG

Where's the carpet?

MARIO

Wear and tear...dog hairs...dog  
poop...rat droppings...

Brad looks sick.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
You name it.

Mario watches Brad run to the bathroom...but:

MARIO (CONT'D)  
You won't like what you see.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Brad turns the sink's faucet handle...but no water comes out.

Mario sticks his head in the door.

MARIO  
There's always the two trash  
containers outside.

BRAD  
(shuts faucet off)  
You're...kidding.

A shrugging Brad leaves the can...Mario jumps out of the way.

INT. DOBRYNIN-DRAZENOVICHES' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Valentina and Brad sit on the sofa and study from their  
respective laptops.

The place sounds like a tomb...for a few moments.

Then she looks over at him.

VALENTINA  
How's Mario doing?

BRAD  
Well...uh...I think he's trying to  
teach us a lesson.

Valentina nods.

BRAD (CONT'D)  
This flipping thing ain't easy.

VALENTINA  
You can say that again.

BRAD  
This flipping thing...we're lucky  
this place of ours is paid for.

Brad catches Valentina's grin.

VALENTINA

Speaking of things not being easy...Susannah and I are gonna have to find another building for our pizza parlor.

BRAD

I hope the plumbing's good.

Valentina's grin becomes a smile.

VALENTINA

Speaking of plumbing...California really throws the kitchen sink at you if you wanna sell alcohol.

BRAD

Makes sense.

He shuts his laptop off and sets it aside.

VALENTINA

If we're gonna be like Shakey's used to be and sell beer, first of all, we need to get seller's permits. Me and Susannah.

BRAD

That makes sense.

VALENTINA

And then, once she and I get our seller's permits, only then can we apply for our ABC licenses.

Brad's mouth flies open.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

And I don't mean ABC like the "Abbott Elementary" network.

BRAD

Huh...

VALENTINA

And the license requirements aren't the same in every city.

BRAD

Huh...

Valentina studies Brad.

VALENTINA

It's time for a meditation session.

She turns her laptop off, then closes her eyes.

Brad remains by her side.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

No funny stuff.

He flashes an impish look.

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Craig and Susy (they're erect) look floored while they watch Susannah and Eli (both on the sofa) play a two-person video game on the big-screen TV.

Susannah raises her fist in triumph...game over.

Eli exhales.

SUSY

Mom, you win again.

CRAIG

(to Susy)

Yep...the old gunfighter.

ELI

You mean the old laserfighter.

Susannah catches Eli's longing gaze...Susy laughs.

ELI (CONT'D)

How about a best of five? I'm no good with these best of threes.

SUSANNAH

Maybe next time.

Eli's and Susy's mom jumps from the sofa to unhook the Xbox (or similar device) from the TV set.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Time to get down to business.

Susannah heads for a closet to put the Xbox away.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
(opening closet door)  
For me and Valentina, our dream of  
setting up in Old Sactown turned  
out to be one Hell of a snafu.

Craig's wife stuffs the device into the closet, shuts the  
closet door, and...

CRAIG  
Snafu...haven't heard that in a  
long, long time.

...sits back down on the sofa.

SUSANNAH  
That was the last thing my father  
ever said...on his dying day.

Susannah's husband joins her and Eli on the sofa.

ELI  
What's "snafu" mean?

SUSANNAH  
Eli, it's a military term. It means  
"situation normal, all fouled up."

Susy nods while she moves to the recliner.

SUSY  
(sitting down)  
I thought the "f" stood for  
something else.

Grins form on all four faces.

SUSY (CONT'D)  
Something that rhymes with "duck."

Craig breaks out in big laughter.

SUSANNAH  
Now that you've mentioned "duck," I  
need to text Valentina about a  
vacant building two miles from the  
Golden 1 Center.

Eli's eyes light up.

CRAIG  
Honey, I like how you think.

Susannah's peepers do, too.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

You'll get a lot of traffic from  
folks coming back from Kings games.

ELI

Games...

(eyeballing Susannah)

If you and Val put that restaurant  
in there, will there be room for a  
video arcade?

Eli catches Susannah's megawatt smile.

EXT. ADVANTAGE WAY - DAY

Susannah's Ford Explorer tools along a small street in the  
city's Natomas area.

INT. SUSANNAH'S EXPLORER - DAY

Valentina rides shotgun...Susannah drives.

VALENTINA

This building we're about to look  
at is two miles north of the Golden  
1 Center?

SUSANNAH

That's right. I timed it.

VALENTINA

Those are the longest two miles  
I've ever traveled in my life.

EXT. SUMADOVA - DAY

The 2015 SUV pulls into the parking lot of a modern building  
that boasts signs that say "CHICKEN 'N' WAFFLES," "TASTEE  
FREEZ," "JUICE IT UP," and "WIENERSCHNITZEL."

A "FOR SALE" sign adorns the south lawn.

So does an electric sign that features the names of the four  
eateries.

A canopy between the south lawn and the building showcases  
outdoor seating.

Susannah and Valentina jump out of the Explorer and head for  
the building...

SUSANNAH  
That drive-thru's gotta go.

VALENTINA  
You don't know that.

...when MEI-LING WANG (30s) climbs out of her own parked SUV...a late-model Subaru Outback.

MEI-LING  
(hurries toward building)  
Wait up!

The two pals stop in their tracks to wait for Mei-Ling.

SUSANNAH  
You must be Mei-Ling.

VALENTINA  
The agent putting this building up  
for sale.

Mei-Ling shakes her head "yes."

MEI-LING  
Tell me: Why would a former Air  
Force pilot and a former realtor  
want to team up to go into the  
restaurant business?

VALENTINA  
Have you got about three hours?

Mei-Ling checks her watch.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

Valentina, Susannah, and Mei-Ling saunter into a narrow space that features tables for foursomes near the front windows on the building's east (Chicken 'n' Waffles) side.

On the other side of the aisle: Booth seating along the wall.

VALENTINA  
One thing's for sure: This wall's  
gonna have to come down.

Valentina points to the booth-laden wall.

MEI-LING  
Good luck.



SUSANNAH  
We'll find a way.

VALENTINA  
Anything to expand this dining  
room...anything to make it look  
more like a Shakey's.

MEI-LING  
Before or after they got rid of  
live music?

VALENTINA  
Both!

Mei-Ling looks confused.

Susannah looks gleeful.

INT. SUMADOVA WEST WING - DAY

Mei-Ling and her two clients stroll into the  
Wienerschnitzel/Tastee Freez/Juice It Up side of the site.

This space boasts a different seating arrangement than the  
east wing.

SUSANNAH  
What Valentina and I want to do,  
Mei-Ling, is expand the old Chicken  
'n' Waffles dining room into this  
dining room. And whatever's left,  
we'll put in a video arcade.

Mei-Ling's is a slow nod.

VALENTINA  
We'd put in a bounce house...but we  
don't have enough space in here.

The three women sit down at an empty table.

MEI-LING  
Let's go over how you're going to  
finance this venture...in light of  
your bank rejecting you over your  
business plan.

SUSANNAH  
We're going with GoFundMe and  
Kickstarter...and the SBA.

MEI-LING

That helps.

VALENTINA

We're using our houses as collateral, too.

MEI-LING

Remember: Two-point-eight million gets you this building.

SUSANNAH

Understood.

VALENTINA

Just in case...Susannah and I will be talking to one of the Sacramento Kings to flesh out the financing.

Mei-Ling cracks up.

SUSANNAH

We're not kidding.

MEI-LING

Now...have you two decided on a name for your pizza parlor?

Valentina and Susannah eye each other, then turn to Mei-Ling.

VALENTINA

We're going to call our eatery...

Valentina drums on the table top.

SUSANNAH, VALENTINA

Sumadova!

Mei-Ling's mouth flies open.

SUSANNAH

Valentina and I took the first two letters of our first names and the first two letters of our last names and put them together.

MEI-LING

Wouldn't that be Sumavado?

VALENTINA

We thought about that...but Sumavado doesn't sound musical.

The two BFFs catch Mei-Ling's continuing look of confusion.

SUSANNAH  
You should hear Valentina play the  
piano.

Valentina blushes.

MEI-LING  
Sumadova...Sumadova.

Susannah and Valentina nod in approval.

MEI-LING (CONT'D)  
You sure I should eat here...with a  
name like that?

VALENTINA  
Well, Shakey's and Chuck E. Cheese  
have already been taken.

Mei-Ling shrugs.

EXT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - DAY

A FEW CHILDREN ride their bikes down the street.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

This space looks stuck in the Bill Clinton era.

Craig walks toward the sink...only to frown.

Mario and Brad follow him.

CRAIG  
How long's this floor been buckled?

MARIO  
I guess since the family that used  
to live here got ready to leave.

Craig inspects underneath the sink as Brad pulls out his cell  
phone to do some texting.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Brad, are you calling your wife?

BRAD  
Nope...just taking notes.

Mario peeks at Brad's texts.

BRAD (CONT'D)  
I've got the place where we can get  
some new appliances for this place.

MARIO  
Don't go overboard. We don't wanna  
blow our budget.

Brad saunters out of the kitchen.

BRAD  
(along the way)  
I see why Valentina left the real-  
estate business.

MARIO  
And I thought it was because she  
wanted to help start a restaurant.

Mario watches Craig move out from under the sink.

CRAIG  
It was.

Craig sees Mario's skeptical look.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Well...it was the biggest reason.

Now Craig turns the water on at the sink.

The water's brown.

Mario and Craig cringe not only at the water's  
appearance...but its smell, too.

Craig turns the water off with one hand...and holds his nose  
with his other hand.

MARIO  
I wonder how Susannah and Valentina  
are doing flipping that restaurant  
building on Advantage Way.

CRAIG  
I just hope the only brown water  
they're seeing is root beer.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

Valentina and Susannah eyeball the freestanding tables meant for foursomes.

The two women stare at each other...then attempt to rearrange the tables into back-to-back setups, a la early Shakey's.

It's rough going.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Craig and Brad tear out the buckled floor.

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Under Susannah's watchful eyes, Craig learns how to cook...or tries to.

INT. SUMADOVA WEST WING - DAY

Susannah and Valentina work with A SMALL CREW to transform this spot into a video arcade.

INT. DOBRYNIN-DRAZENOVICHES' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Valentina and Brad eat fast food in this adequately-sized, modern space.

One bite later...and Valentina whips out her cell phone to take notes.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

The two women (at a back-to-back table) interview JOB APPLICANTS of just about all ages.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

New tile graces the kitchen floor.

Mario and Brad watch Craig try the water again.

Success!

EXT. SUMADOVA - DAY

A CRANE OPERATOR removes the existing signs from the building's exterior.

ANOTHER WORKER yanks the four logos from the electric sign on the front lawn.

INT. SUMADOVA KITCHEN - DAY

Valentina and Susannah watch as a pizza oven goes in.

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Susy, Susannah, Eli, and Craig eat Craig's debut dinner...but after a few bites, Eli and Susy sprint from the table!

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

Brad, Craig, Eli, Susannah, Susy, and Valentina team up to haul a 1900-1909 upright piano into this newly-enlarged area.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

New appliances go into the kitchen...Mario, Craig, and Brad look on in pride.

EXT. SUMADOVA - DAY

Susannah and Valentina high-five each other as the same crane operator lifts a new sign (it says "SUMADOVA") into place.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SUMADOVA - DAY

The parking lot teems with vehicles on this first Monday of the new year.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

The space now looks like a Shakey's from the 1954-79 period.

At a back-to-back table setup in midroom, a tuxedo-and-derby-hat-clad Valentina sits alongside EIGHT COWORKERS (four in black T-shirts and black slacks, the others in white shirts).

They all watch casually-dressed Susannah pace the floor.

All employees wear name tags.

VALENTINA

Come on...chill. Have a seat.

SUSANNAH

Chill? That damn supply truck should've been here an hour ago! It's ten forty-five AM! We're gonna be open in fifteen minutes!

Black-shirted employees GINGER BRICKELL (45, White) and ALISA PINSON (20, Black) eyeball each other.

GINGER  
Maybe the driver musta thought PM.

ALISA  
I'll bet you the driver went to the wrong restaurant.

Susannah stops to pull out her cell phone.

SUSANNAH  
(to Valentina)  
I'm gonna call that warehouse and give 'em a piece of my mind!

VALENTINA  
Peace...why don't you sit down with us and meditate?

But Susannah stalks off to make that call O.S.

White-shirted coworkers COLIN GEAN (22, White), FAWN JACKSON (35, Black), and NICOLLETTE ALVARADO (40, Brown) stare at Susannah, then at each other.

FAWN  
Some start this is gonna be.

COLIN  
This is my first job since I graduated from college.

NICOLLETTE  
And this is my first job since I divorced that no-good man of mine.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

The clock reads 10:59 AM...Valentina looks joyful...Susannah (now with a cordless mike in hands) still looks stricken.

The two bosses and their eight coworkers occupy seats.

VALENTINA  
All right...cooks, stand up!

Colin, Fawn, Nicollette, and white-shirted JACK LI (60, Asian) rise up.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 Food servers doubling as  
 cashiers...stand up!

Alisa and Ginger jump out of their seats...as do PAUL  
 ANDERSEN (25) and REGINA LOMBARDOZZI (32).

Regina and Paul also wear black.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 (rising from her seat)  
 You ready to do this?

Sumadova's food servers-cashiers and cooks AD LIB their  
 answer(s).

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 Let's do it!

Cheering erupts while Susannah goes to a window where an  
 electric "OPEN" sign hangs.

Susannah frees a hand to turn the sign on.

Valentina goes to the front entrance to unlock the door.

At last...Sacramento's newest restaurant is open!

Roger and Katrina stroll inside...Dan and Barbi saunter in.

All four look dumbstruck as Valentina and Susannah stroll to  
 a makeshift stage...where the two founders stand next to the  
 old piano.

SUSANNAH  
 (into mike)  
 Ladies and gentlemen...welcome to  
 Sumadova!

MORE PEOPLE file into the place while Susannah passes the  
 mike to Valentina.

VALENTINA  
 (into mike)  
 You're our very first customers, so  
 go ahead and take seats.

Sumadova's first customers take seats at the tables.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 We've got good news...and we've got  
 bad news.



Valentina and her partner take seats at the piano bench.

Susannah receives the mike from her buddy.

SUSANNAH  
 (into mike)  
 First the bad news.

Regina, Paul, Ginger, and Alisa amble to one corner of the dining room.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
 There's no food in the place at the present time...all because the delivery truck didn't arrive in time for the grand opening.

Katrina and a few other customers walk out...

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
 But we've got beer.

...only to hurry back to their seats.

VALENTINA  
 And soft drinks...and milk...and water...and coffee...and tea...and juice...and Powerade...

Nicollette, Jack, Fawn, and Colin walk toward the kitchen.

FAWN  
 You guys realize there's no food in the place.

JACK  
 At least we can watch for the truck to come by.

Jack's fellow cooks shrug.

INT. DOBRYNIN-DRAZENOVICHES' MAIN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brad sits up in bed while he watches Valentina (in a chair by the dresser) meditate.

Both wear matching pajamas.

His eyes drift over to the dresser, where a timer ticks the seconds away.

He rises out of bed and tiptoes toward the dresser...only to slink back to bed.

She smiles big.

Brad jumps out of bed one more time when...the timer GOES OFF at last.

BRAD

Okay, Val...spill it all out.

Valentina bats at the timer to turn it OFF, then turns her gaze to Brad.

VALENTINA

Brad, guess what time the delivery truck finally got to Sumadova?

Brad shakes his head sideways.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Two o'clock...PM...Pacific time.

BRAD

Oh, boy.

VALENTINA

They thought they were on Hawaii time. And forgot to set their clocks back.

Valentina saunters to the bed...Brad gets back in it.

BRAD

At least Opening Day was a success...wasn't it?

VALENTINA

Barely.

BRAD

Oh, boy.

VALENTINA

If it hadn't been for the beer, we would've lost our first customers.

BRAD

I see...

VALENTINA

We would've lost one half to the IHOP next door...and the other half to the In-and-Out Burger across the street.

The twosome embrace.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
Now...you need to tell me how that  
house flip's going.

BRAD  
Do I have to?

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Craig, Eli, and Susy (all in their PJs) watch A LATE-NIGHT TV TALK SHOW from the sofa when Susannah strolls in through the front door.

Six eyeballs turn to the former Air Force pilot.

SUSANNAH  
Susy...Eli...shouldn't you be in  
bed right now?

ELI  
Mom, we couldn't sleep.

CRAIG  
They tried...but they couldn't...we  
all tried.

SUSY  
Yeah. We wanted to find out how you  
and Val's first day in the  
restaurant business went.

SUSANNAH  
(heads for a chair)  
Is that right?

Susannah sits down.

SUSY  
A lot more exciting than Dad's  
house-flipping stories.

Craig looks crestfallen.

CRAIG  
Susy's right.

Susy's is a gleeful look.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Instead of hearing about that house Brad and I are working on, they wanted to watch a talk show.

SUSY

Well, Dad, Olivia Rodrigo was on!

Susannah nods in understanding.

ELI

I guess flipping a restaurant beats flipping a house any day, any time.

CRAIG

Yeah, honey...just how did it go?

SUSANNAH

Just like it did when Shakey's opened its first pizza parlor over on J Street on Friday, April thirtieth, 1954.

Craig's is a slow nod.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

One major difference: Shakey's two founders couldn't serve food because the pizza ovens weren't ready. So they just served beer.

CRAIG

Don't tell me you and Val just served beer today.

SUSANNAH

We did.

Eli and Susy stare at each other.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Until three o'clock. Then we were finally able to serve food, too.

Susy, Eli, and Craig cheer.

CRAIG

Did Valentina get to play that old piano we hauled into there?

SUSANNAH

She did.

Craig breathes relief.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Now if Dianne from the bank and Mei-Ling from the commercial realty company had shown up...

CRAIG

They would've shut the place down...even with the beer flowing.

A nodding Susannah points to Craig.

EXT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - DAY

A new coat of paint makes the facade shine.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mario, Craig, and Brad check out the new appliances.

CRAIG

Mario, the fridge works fine.

BRAD

Stove does, too.

Brad and Craig watch Mario nod.

Valentina's old boss goes to a counter by the window.

He plugs a microwave oven into an outlet.

No juice.

Mario gives Brad a wrathful look.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Well...don't look at me!

MARIO

It came from your store!

BRAD

Yeah, but--

Craig takes his cell phone and a USB charger out of his overalls pocket.

CRAIG

Guys...let me try this.

Susannah's husband plugs the charger into his phone and the charger into the same outlet.

Nothing at all.

Now Craig plugs the charger into another kitchen outlet...and finds no electricity.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Maybe we should've tried to flip a restaurant, too.

EXT. SUMADOVA - NIGHT

The parking lot teems with vehicles!

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CUSTOMERS fill three out of every four seats...the eaters enjoy Valentina's ragtime piano playing (and the food, too).

The old upright's hammers stand exposed.

Anjanette and Malik eat at a middle table; between bites, the couple take photos with their cell phones.

Norm and Sheila chow down at a window table...where they dig the music, too.

NORM  
 Sheila, this place takes me back.

Sheila looks lost.

NORM (CONT'D)  
 I mean...the pizza...the music...everything.

A grin forms on Sheila's face.

NORM (CONT'D)  
 Thanks for taking me here.

SHEILA  
 You're welcome, Norm.  
 (takes a few bites)  
 You remember we're on Advantage Way...not J Street.

Norm grits his teeth.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
And this building used to have four  
different restaurants in it.

NORM  
Yeah.

SHEILA  
At the same time.

NORM  
(taking a bite)  
Got it.

SHEILA  
And none of 'em served pizza.

TARYN HOLLISTER (57) approaches the front counter...Paul and  
Regina stand on the other side.

REGINA  
Hi! Welcome to Sumadova!

Taryn's mouth flies open.

REGINA (CONT'D)  
How may we help you?

TARYN  
I'd like to see Susannah Macaulay  
and Valentina Dobrynin.

PAUL  
Uh...Valentina's playing the piano  
and Susannah's at a table.

Taryn gazes at Susannah, who chats with Malik and Anjanette.

SUSANNAH  
What do you two think of our red-  
white-and-blue pizza?

MALIK  
Very interesting.

Anjanette finishes her bite.

ANJANETTE  
Especially the blue cheese.

Taryn's attention shifts to Susannah's ivory-tickling partner  
(who wraps up her tune to good applause), then to Regina and  
her fellow cashier.

TARYN  
I'm Taryn Hollister, food critic  
with "The Sacramento Bee."

Regina looks flattered.

Paul looks flabbergasted.

PAUL  
What...would...you...like to eat?

INT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' KITCHEN - NIGHT

Susy and Eli sit at the dinner table as Craig brings a plate of fried chicken to the table.

CRAIG  
Go ahead. Dig right in.

The two teens stare at each other, then at their dad.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Nothing's moving.

Susy stares at the chicken pieces.

Eli shrugs.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Don't worry. They won't bite back.

Craig forks a couple of chicken pieces onto his plate.

He bites into a piece...and looks satisfied.

Eli and Susy watch Craig pretend that piece is an airplane.

SUSY  
Dad, we're too old for that.

So Craig eats the rest of the piece the conventional way.

He nods while Eli and a still-hesitant Susy fork chicken pieces onto their own plates.

Susy takes tiny bites...Eli eats his chicken oh-so-slowly.

ELI  
(to Craig)  
Can I have a mimosa with this?

Craig shakes his head "no."



ELI (CONT'D)  
Well...where do you and Mom keep  
the whiskey?

Craig's mouth flies open.

Susy wags a finger at her brother.

CRAIG  
Tell you what: I've got an idea.

SUSY  
Cooking school?

A grin forms on Craig's face.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

No music in the air at the moment...Valentina, Taryn, and  
Susannah sit at a back table.

A large supreme pizza dominates the table.

Taryn sizes Susannah up before taking notes.

SUSANNAH  
You bet your life I was an Air  
Force pilot.

Valentina's nod is enthusiastic.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
I had to obtain a waiver to fly  
because I was under the regulation  
height of five feet, four inches.

VALENTINA  
Taryn, Susannah rose all the way to  
the rank of captain.

TARYN  
(pointing to Susannah)  
So how does your experience in the  
Armed Forces translate to running a  
pizza parlor?

SUSANNAH  
Organizational skills. And a love  
of cooking.

VALENTINA  
That's all there is to it.

Taryn takes a bite of pizza...only to wince.

SUSANNAH

My father was in the Army, and my father-in-law was in the Air Force. He was stationed in Belgium at the time my husband was born there.

EXT. SUMADOVA - NIGHT

A 2015 Nissan Versa Note pulls into an empty parking space.

Craig climbs out from the driver's side while Susy and Eli jump out from the back seat.

Eli and his sister look ecstatic.

Their dad looks defeated.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Taryn's interview with Valentina and Susannah rolls on.

SUSANNAH

When I was little, I watched "Top Gun" on TV...and I told myself: "This is what I want to do."

VALENTINA

Except your folks told you: "Girls don't do that kind of thing."

Susannah nods at Valentina, then turns to Taryn.

SUSANNAH

My parents must've forgotten about Sally Ride and Christa McAuliffe.

TARYN

But they flew space shuttles. Not Air Force bombers.

VALENTINA

Speaking of space...did you know that Valentina Tereshkova was the first woman in space?

Taryn groans...Susannah smiles.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

My parents named me after her.

SUSANNAH

Valentina Tereshkova flew in  
1963...twenty years before the  
Americans responded by putting  
Sally Ride into space.

The food critic takes another bite of pizza...and follows  
that with a long swig of water/pop/tea/juice/Powerade.

VALENTINA

That's a fact of history.

TARYN

Twenty years.

VALENTINA

All because NASA kept taking all  
those jokes standup comics told  
about women drivers seriously.

TARYN

Valentina, why don't you tell me  
about the KGB spies in your family?  
Is it true that your parents were  
in the KGB?

Valentina looks impish.

VALENTINA

Hell, no!

Taryn's is a comic-strip gulp.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

My parents were game wardens and  
taxidermists.

TARYN

You're joking.

SUSANNAH

She's not joking.

Valentina gives Taryn a told-you-so look.

VALENTINA

They were game wardens and  
taxidermists in Russia...and they  
got the same jobs when they moved  
here to the United States in 1994.

Taryn takes some more notes...

SUSANNAH  
Valentina's paternal grandparents  
worked for the KGB. They spied.

VALENTINA  
So did my Uncle Vladimir.

...then takes another bite of pizza.

Craig, Susy, and Eli arrive inside. They reach the counter.

PAUL  
Hi! Welcome to Sumadova! What can  
we do for you?

CRAIG  
We'd like to build our own pizza.

ELI  
Large.

Eli receives a nod from Craig.

SUSY  
How about extra large instead?

Craig stares Susy down...for a few seconds.

CRAIG  
Okay...extra large.

PAUL  
What would you like on it?

Susy and Craig eyeball Eli in suspicion.

SUSY  
No spaghetti on top!

Valentina peeks toward the counter...

TARYN  
What brought you two into the  
restaurant business?

...then eyes Susannah.

SUSANNAH  
Valentina and I wanted to do  
something fun in our lives.

Taryn shakes her head "yes" before she scribbles more notes.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

So we patterned our restaurant after Shakey's. After all, Shakey's started out here in town.

VALENTINA

(to Taryn)

We wanted to get into a...a fun kind of rut.

(to Susannah)

You'll never guess who's here.

SUSANNAH

De'Aaron Fox? Keegan Murray? Malik Monk? Molly Ringwald?

VALENTINA

Look toward the counter, Susannah.

Susannah does just that.

Her eyes go wide.

EXT. MACAULAY-ALLREDS' HOUSE - DAY

A beater of a car passes by on this early Sunday morning.

INT. CRAIG'S AND SUSANNAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Susannah and Craig finish dressing themselves when the former's cell phone RINGS.

She grabs her phone off the dresser.

SUSANNAH

(into phone)

Hello?

INT. DOBRYNIN-DRAZENOVICHES' MAIN BEDROOM - DAY

Brad and Valentina (both in casual clothes) sit on the bed. She talks on her smartphone while a copy of today's "Sacramento Bee" rests on her lap.

They look fit to be tied.

VALENTINA

Hi, Susannah. I just thought I'd better tell you.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

Susannah nods.

SUSANNAH  
Tell me what?

VALENTINA  
Taryn Hollister's Sumadova review  
made it into today's paper.

SUSANNAH  
What'd she say?

VALENTINA  
Are you sitting down?

SUSANNAH  
No.

VALENTINA  
You'd better.

Susannah gravitates to Craig's and her bed.

SUSANNAH  
(sits on bed)  
Okay, Valentina. Shoot.

VALENTINA  
Taryn wrote that we would've been  
better off in our old jobs.

SUSANNAH  
Well, I'll be a...

VALENTINA  
Not only that...she wrote that  
those four fast-food places that  
were in our building should never  
have left.

The two husbands study their wives.

SUSANNAH  
God! We opened up just six days  
ago! It takes time for a new  
business to catch on! A  
restaurant's no exception!

Susannah seethes.

VALENTINA  
Damn right! Look how long it took  
Shakey's to catch on!

Craig strolls to Susannah's and his bed...

SUSANNAH

Took the founders two years before they opened a second restaurant...and it wasn't even here in Sacramento! Or anywhere else in California!

VALENTINA

If you still take the paper copy of "The Sacramento Bee," burn it.

...and drapes his arm around her shoulder.

Susannah tries to chuckle.

SUSANNAH

If I still took "The Bee," I would've used today's copy for toilet paper.

Craig and Valentina burst into laughter.

Brad looks lost.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

I'm into ecology.

A nodding Craig smiles big.

EXT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - DAY

Brad, Mario, and Craig arrive...only to find graffiti on the front side.

Result: Three long faces.

Mario reaches the front door. He finds the door handle's broken so that it can't lock.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The three men saunter inside...and find graffiti on a wall.

Craig, Brad, and Mario stop short of the closet.

MARIO

You guys...whoever did this read the paper yesterday.

BRAD

The online version or the paper version?

MARIO  
Doesn't matter.

CRAIG  
They probably went to the Kings'  
game last night.

Mario shakes his head "no."

MARIO  
They know about Valentina and  
Susannah. Your wives.

CRAIG  
Hey, now, wait a minute, Mario--

MARIO  
This wouldn't have happened if your  
wives hadn't started that pizza  
place and got a bad review.

Craig moves toward the front window.

MARIO (CONT'D)  
Susannah was better off helping  
people retire...and Valentina was  
one of the best agents we had...

CRAIG  
They just wanted to do something  
different in their lives.

BRAD  
(wags finger at Mario)  
And besides...you ate Valentina's  
food! Remember?

Mario plays dumb.

BRAD (CONT'D)  
And you liked it!

Brad watches Mario's slow nod.

BRAD (CONT'D)  
Remember?

Mario stares the two novices down.

BRAD (CONT'D)  
Take it up with whoever painted  
that garbage!



CRAIG

I'm gonna go get another lock for  
the front door.

Craig runs for the front door.

BRAD

Me, too, Craig!

Mario watches Brad and Craig leave.

EXT. SUMADOVA - NIGHT

About one out of every three parking spaces boasts a vehicle  
on this Saturday night.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Alisa and Ginger work the front counter when JENNILEE CLEAVER  
(26) arrives inside a space about a third full of CUSTOMERS.

Jennilee stops at said counter.

ALISA

Hi! Welcome to Sumadova! What can  
we do for you tonight?

JENNILEE

This is the place I've heard so  
much about.

GINGER

Uh...oh...

JENNILEE

No, it's all good!

Ginger's all smiles.

JENNILEE (CONT'D)

My grandpa played piano at the  
Shakey's at 57th and J way back in  
the day...and this place reminds me  
of it.

ALISA

We've even got mojo potatoes here,  
just like at the old Shakey's.

GINGER

'Cept we don't call 'em mojo  
potatoes. Copyright issues.

JENNILEE  
 You two just sold me.

The two cashiers nod.

JENNILEE (CONT'D)  
 Think I'll have an order of King  
 Kong potatoes and a small pepperoni  
 pizza...and...

INT. SUMADOVA WEST WING - NIGHT

Eli and Susy play pinball alongside A FEW OTHER CUSTOMERS  
 when Valentina, Susannah, Craig, and Brad stroll inside.

Brad and Valentina lug a large, giftwrapped rectangular  
 package...which the twosome lower to the floor.

Susy and Eli turn around and stare at the package...then at  
 their parents and next-door neighbors.

ELI  
 I was beating her!

SUSY  
 Not by much!

SUSANNAH  
 Susy...our next-door neighbors  
 chipped in and got you a present.

Eli's mouth flies open.

Susy's does, too.

CRAIG  
 Open it up!

A shrugging Susy bends down to open the package while Eli  
 looks jealous.

BRAD  
 Eli...don't you remember that  
 autographed Eli Manning jersey we  
 got you?

VALENTINA  
 And that autographed Brock Purdy  
 one we got you?

ELI  
 Uh...yeah...

Everyone else in the room watches Susy pull out...a banjo!  
She looks at the instrument in her hands as if it's a dead animal.

Susy eyes Valentina and Brad.

SUSY  
Wait a minute...

BRAD  
Well...me and Valentina figured:  
"Since you like Taylor Swift..."

SUSY  
Yeah, but...

VALENTINA  
Don't you remember watching that  
video where Taylor Swift was  
onstage playing a banjo?

Valentina catches Susy's stunned look.

SUSY  
Uh...you're right.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jennilee chows down at a table close to the stage...where  
Valentina (on piano) and Susy (holding her own on banjo) put  
over a singalong kind of tune from the 1900-29 period.

Nobody sings along...not even Susy or Valentina.

Eli, Craig, and Brad eat at a midroom table.

The song ends...and mild applause results. (Brad's and  
Craig's applause is strong.)

SUSY  
(to Valentina)  
Thanks...I needed that half-hour  
before I could figure out how to  
play this thing without looking  
like a dork.

Valentina nods.

Susannah enters the room from the office. She hovers over to  
the Brad-Craig-Eli table while Valentina grabs the handheld  
mike from atop the piano.

SUSANNAH  
 You guys...how's the food?

The two men and lone boy gesture or AD LIB their approval before Susannah goes to another group of eaters.

VALENTINA  
 (into mike)  
 Hey, customers...if that song  
 didn't get you to sing  
 along...maybe this one will.

Valentina puts the mike down and turns to Susy.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 Do you know "Sweet Caroline?"

SUSY  
 Caroline who?

VALENTINA  
 Okay. You pick the song.

SUSY  
 How about "We Are Never Ever  
 Getting Back Together?"

A stunned Valentina wags her finger at Susy.

VALENTINA  
 How about "Let It Go?"

SUSY  
 Deal!

Before the duo can hit a note, A RINGTONE comes from Valentina's pants pocket.

She grabs her phone, checks the caller's number, and turns to the customers.

VALENTINA  
 Can anybody--

Susannah's biz partner grabs the mike with her free hand.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 (into mike)  
 Can anybody in here play the piano?

Nobody responds...for a few seconds.

Then:

JENNILEE  
 (standing up)  
 Valentina, I'll be glad to take  
 over 'til you get back!

VALENTINA  
 Come on up!

The ringtone CONTINUES...Valentina sets the mike back on the piano and jogs to the office while Jennilee strolls to the old upright.

Susy's eyes go wide.

SUSY  
 My gym teacher from grade school?

Once onstage, Jennilee raises her hands for a high five...but Susy stays in Club Stunned.

INT. SUMADOVA MANAGERS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Valentina plops into one of two chairs in this smallish area that barely has room for a desk.

VALENTINA  
 (into phone)  
 Hello?

INT. BASEMENT AT DOBRYNINS' HOUSE, PROVO, UT - NIGHT

BORIS and OKSANA DOBRYNIN (both 60s; Valentina's folks) take a break from taxidermy to gab with their daughter.

BORIS  
 (into his cell phone)  
 Too busy to call Mama and Papa?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

VALENTINA  
 Yes. I'm busted.

Boris looks alarmed.

BORIS  
 Are you in jail?

THE O.S. SOUND of Jennilee's and Susy's version of "Let It Go" (or a similar movie theme) filters into the office.

VALENTINA

No, Papa. You'd never hear this kind of music in a jail.

BORIS

Are you having an open house?

VALENTINA

No. I'm in a restaurant.

Oksana catches Boris' smile.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

My friend next door and I started our own pizza parlor. It's been in business thirteen days now.

BORIS

Valentina...what was wrong with selling houses?

VALENTINA

Susannah and I wanted to inject some excitement into our lives.

OKSANA

Boris, she should've been a spy.

Boris nods at Oksana before he resumes the call.

BORIS

I thought you said Susannah was a retirement consultant.

VALENTINA

She was...until it stopped being fun.

Oksana grumbles.

Susy's and Jennilee's number HEATS UP O.S.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

She and I just wanted to follow our real passion...food.

OKSANA

Boris, give me the phone.

Boris holds up his free index finger.

BORIS

Your mama wants a word with you.

VALENTINA

All right.

Boris hands the cell phone to Oksana.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Hi, Mama.

OKSANA

(into phone)

So...are you making money?

VALENTINA

Not...yet.

Valentina's dad grunts.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Just give us time. It takes time to develop a following.

OKSANA

How much time do you need?

VALENTINA

However long it takes.

OKSANA

Does the world have that long?

BORIS

Good question, Oksana.

Valentina's mom shakes her head "yes."

VALENTINA

I'm betting on it.

OKSANA

What do you and your friend call your new restaurant?

VALENTINA

Sumadova.

OKSANA

Su...ma...do...va.

Boris' mouth flies open.

OKSANA (CONT'D)

If we stop at your restaurant next time we visit Sacramento, will we get sick from the cuisine?

Valentina chuckles...Susannah stops inside the office.

VALENTINA

No, Mama! Susannah and I just took the first two letters of our first and last names and gave our pizza parlor its name.

Susannah goes to the office laptop to check stats.

If necessary, Valentina moves out of Susannah's way.

OKSANA

Different.

VALENTINA

To quote the old fast-food restaurant commercial: "Different is good."

OKSANA

I have a way for your restaurant to draw more customers.

VALENTINA

Fire when ready.

Susannah eyeballs Valentina.

OKSANA

Perhaps you rename your restaurant Kamala's.

Valentina shows a slight grin.

VALENTINA

Well...we also do serve burgers.

And Susannah shrugs.

EXT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - DAY

Under Mario's supervision, Craig and Brad strip the graffiti from the front of the house.

It's a struggle.



BRAD  
Mario...what if we had this house  
painted another color?

MARIO  
We don't have time. Or a budget.

Craig sneaks a peek toward a house next door...

EXT. KENNANS' HOUSE - DAY

...where KEITH and ANNETTE KENNAN (both 60s) take a break  
from yardwork to catch Brad's and Craig's efforts.

Annette breaks out a cell phone to shoot footage.

EXT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - DAY

Brad, Mario, and Craig beam with pride...no more graffiti.

The three men trade high fives, then head inside.

Annette and Keith follow them.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Craig, Mario, and Brad stroll toward the space...only to find  
those new appliances missing!

The house flippers find A KNOCK on the front door, too.

CRAIG  
I've got it!

Craig runs off...

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

...and opens the door to reveal Keith and Annette.

CRAIG  
Hi! What can we do for you?

KEITH  
We've noticed you working on this  
house, and...

CRAIG  
Yes. We're working on this house.

Brad and Mario jog into the room.

KEITH  
Well...we're contractors.

Brad shakes his head sideways.

ANNETTE  
We are. And we came to give you an  
initial renovation estimate.

MARIO  
Prove it.

The elderly couple eyeball each other.

BRAD  
Yeah! Prove it!

ANNETTE  
If we're lying, we're flying.

Keith wags a finger at Brad.

KEITH  
You look familiar.

Brad shows that deer-in-the-headlights look.

ANNETTE  
Don't you work at the Best Buy  
store over on Arden Way?

BRAD  
Uh...Best Buy store...Arden Way...

KEITH  
Our daughter told us about you...

Now Brad blows an imaginary bubble.

EXT. SUMADOVA - NIGHT

A car graces about one out of every four parking spaces on  
this January Monday night.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul and Regina stand behind the front counter; they watch  
Barbi, Dan, and Jennilee chow down while Valentina (back in  
her tux) plays a rag on that ancient upright piano.

PAUL  
You wanna help me clean the other  
tables, Regina?

REGINA

We did that an hour ago.

A concerned Susannah approaches Jennilee's, Dan's, and Barbi's table.

SUSANNAH

How do you like the food?

Jennilee beams...Dan just nods.

Barbi looks around the room before she eyes Susannah.

BARBI

You sure you don't have any regrets about starting a restaurant?

SUSANNAH

Did Jennifer Hudson regret becoming a TV talk-show host?

Jennilee laughs.

DAN

Susannah, you do look like you misplaced your clicker.

SUSANNAH

It's about something else, Dan.

Dan and Barbi lean closer to Susannah.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

I've got too many fond memories of eating at the Shakey's at 57th and J when I was going to Sacramento State...and that's my inspiration for wanting to go into the pizza business my own self.

DAN

C'mon. You can tell us.

Valentina ends her rag...but only Jennilee applauds.

BARBI

Hey, Valentina...don't you know a song we can relate to?

Susannah's buddy turns away from the keys to Barbi.

VALENTINA

What would you like to hear?

Barbi takes a bite...then shrugs.

JENNILEE  
(raising her fork)  
Val, I've got an idea!

VALENTINA  
Okay, Jennilee.

JENNILEE  
(sets fork down)  
I remember Susy from the grade  
school I teach at.

DAN  
Who's Susy?

Susannah looks fit to be tied.

SUSANNAH  
Don't tell me you don't remember my  
daughter. She was at the in-office  
party last July.

VALENTINA  
(wags finger at Dan)  
She plays guitar...and banjo.

Dan's next nod is oh-so-slow.

JENNILEE  
I'd like to play alongside her here  
at the restaurant.

BARBI  
(to Susannah)  
Where's she at?

SUSANNAH  
She's at home with her brother and  
their dad. It's a school night.

DAN  
Uh...huh.

Regina and Paul leave the counter to clean empty tables.

JENNILEE  
Anyway...I can play on weeknights,  
too. And if I took over on piano,  
it'd free you to give Susannah some  
extra help.

Valentina and Susannah stare Jennilee down.

VALENTINA

Uh...okay.

Jennilee rises from the table...but:

SUSANNAH

Jennilee, finish eating first.

JENNILEE

Okay.

While Jennilee resumes eating, Dan turns to Susannah.

DAN

Now...what's taking the batteries  
out of your clicker?

Susannah tries to hide a grin.

EXT. PHOEBE A. HEARST SCHOOL - DAY

A modern, one-story building in the East Sacramento area.

INT. PHOEBE A. HEARST SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY

Windows and white walls cheer the place up.

In this lively afterschool session, Susy strums away on her  
banjo as Jennilee pounds the keys of a studio piano.

It's a closed-door rehearsal...until the door opens to reveal  
ROSA HIDALGO (40s), one of Jennilee's fellow teachers.

Rosa looks floored while Jennilee and Susy continue to play.

She closes the door and slinks into a seat.

Susy's and Jennilee's tune ends.

Rosa's confused look continues.

ROSA

Susannah...Macaulay-Allred Jr.

SUSY

That's me.

ROSA

I thought you were in high school.

SUSY  
Well, Ms. Hidalgo, I am.

ROSA  
But...but...what are you doing back  
here...with a banjo?

SUSY  
Me and Ms. Cleaver have an act.

Susy covers her mouth for a few seconds.

SUSY (CONT'D)  
I mean Ms. Cleaver and I have an  
act.

Rosa catches Jennilee's nod.

JENNILEE  
Susy and I play weekends at  
Sumadova.

ROSA  
Suma...what?

JENNILEE  
It's a new pizza parlor over on  
Advantage Way.

ROSA  
You two get paid for this?

SUSY  
Yep.

JENNILEE  
In fact, Rosa, I've just started  
playing weeknights, too.

ROSA  
Like...one of those side hustles I  
keep hearing about?

JENNILEE  
That's right.

Susy sets her banjo aside.

SUSY  
Speaking of side hustles...maybe  
Dad needs a new one.

Rosa and a now-confused Jennilee stare at Susy.

SUSY (CONT'D)

He's all uptight 'cause that house  
he's helping flip's taking a lot  
longer than normal.

JENNILEE

Uh...huh.  
(with a big grin)  
I've got just the song that'll  
cheer him up.

Jennilee turns around to face the keys when Rosa stands up.

ROSA

You know what would cheer me up?

SUSY

A classroom full of brainiacs?

ROSA

Nope...change the name of that  
restaurant you play at.

Susy and Jennilee eye each other.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

Early Saturday morning...a few hours before opening time.

Susannah (cordless mike in hand) and Valentina sit at the old  
piano and face their staff.

Alisa, Colin, Fawn, Ginger, Jack, Jennilee, Nicollette, Paul,  
Regina, and Susy sit at various tables.

All staffers but Susy and Jennilee look dumbfounded.

FAWN

(to those around her)  
I was watching the Cartoon Network.

JACK

Fawn, you've gotta be kidding.

FAWN

Well, Jack, they don't have  
Saturday morning cartoons on the  
broadcast networks anymore. So I've  
gotta get my fix on the Cartoon--

NICOLLETTE

(nodding)

You're sure taking me back...way  
back...back into time...

Susannah checks her watch, then addresses Sumadova's cooks,  
servers-cashiers, and entertainers.

SUSANNAH

(into mike)

Staffers...Valentina and I would  
like your full attention.

Twenty-two eyes gaze at Susannah.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Welcome to our first staff meeting.  
And it couldn't have come at a  
better time.

Fawn cringes...

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Sumadova's been looked at as a  
cartoon ever since Taryn  
Hollister's review in "The  
Sacramento Bee."

...then throws her hands up.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

We had great crowds our first week  
in business...but ever since the  
review, we've had one-fourth to one-  
third as much business per week.

Colin and Paul raise their hands.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Yes, Colin?

COLIN

Are we gonna lose our jobs?

Some employees gasp.

SUSANNAH

It's not that bad. Yet.

(points to Paul)

Paul...you had a question?

PAUL

Uh...are we gonna take a pay cut?



Several colleagues stare Paul down.

SUSANNAH  
I hope it doesn't come to that.

AD LIBBED reactions take over...Valentina gestures Susannah into giving up the mike.

Valentina accepts the mike and speaks into it.

VALENTINA  
Coworkers, I've got an idea.

GINGER  
As long as it's good.

VALENTINA  
You'd be surprised at how good it is, Ginger.

Ginger beams.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
Here it is: Each one of us will infiltrate other local pizza restaurants to find out what makes them tick.

Puzzlement grips the dining room.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
And we'll take the best of all our findings and apply them here.

JACK  
And we'll make Taryn eat her words!

REGINA  
Better yet...we'll make Taryn eat our new, improved menu items!

Some employees applaud.

Alisa sends her hand upward.

VALENTINA  
Alisa, what would you like to know?

ALISA  
Will this interfere with our work schedules, Valentina?

VALENTINA  
Absolutely not.

Valentina catches Alisa's nod.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
Just pick a day off and go to the  
pizza parlor you've been assigned.

Regina rubs her hands in glee.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
And don't forget to take plenty of  
notes while you're there.

REGINA  
Are you and Susannah gonna do this?

VALENTINA  
Damn right we are, Regina!

Cheers erupt all over the place.

Susy lifts her hand.

SUSY  
Mom...can I go with you?

SUSANNAH  
Uh...we'll see.

Susy's is a slow, slow nod.

JENNILEE  
Susannah...if that doesn't work  
out, she can go with me.

Now Susannah comes up with a slow nod.

VALENTINA  
That's it, everybody! Happy spying!

Applause...cheers...high fives!

SUSANNAH  
(wags finger at Valentina)  
I thought you couldn't steal  
secrets to save your soul.

VALENTINA  
I'm a late learner.

Valentina sets the mike on the piano before she and Susannah trade high fives.

EXT. 21ST STREET PIZZA - DAY

This is a striking, modern two-story building in Sacramento's Midtown area.

INT. 21ST STREET PIZZA DINING ROOM - DAY

Jack and wife FRANCE LI (60s) accompany Ginger into a narrow shotgun-style dining room-cocktail lounge.

JACK  
France, honey...you remember this place?

FRANCE  
(wags finger at Jack)  
I picked the place out.

JACK  
Uh...yeah.

FRANCE  
It was the first place you and I ate out together at in Sacramento.

Ginger's all smiles.

FRANCE (CONT'D)  
After our honeymoon.

GINGER  
I used to be a food server here.

France and Jack stare Ginger down.

JACK  
And you didn't even tell me!

GINGER  
Didn't wanna spoil the surprise.

The two women and lone man head for the bar.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Jack, Ginger, and France enjoy Chicago-style deep-dish pizza while seated at the bar across from owner SHELDON SPELLINGS (40s), who washes some glasses.

SHELDON  
How do you guys like it here?

FRANCE  
Just like I remember it.

France eyes her husband, then Sheldon.

FRANCE (CONT'D)  
Just like we remember it.

GINGER  
(through bites)  
Me, too.

Sheldon gazes at Ginger.

SHELDON  
You do look awful familiar.

GINGER  
I worked here when your folks ran  
the place.

SHELDON  
Ginger?

GINGER  
Yep.  
(takes a swig)  
And you're Sheldon.

Jack and his wife wipe their mouths...

GINGER (CONT'D)  
You used to like to call this  
"pizza for adults."

...then kiss.

GINGER (CONT'D)  
Not like Shakey's or Chuck E.  
Cheese's or anyplace like that.

Ginger catches Sheldon's embarrassed look.

GINGER (CONT'D)  
(takes another bite)  
Before we're through, you gotta  
tell me what makes your deep-dish  
pizza so special.

SHELDON

All...right...but you oughta tell me who wants to know.

Sheldon observes Ginger's impish smile.

GINGER

Well, it's...somebody who works at a Shakey's or Chuck E. Cheese's or anyplace like that.

Jack and France break off their kiss.

EXT. FOLSOM BOULEVARD PIZZERIA - NIGHT

It's a smallish, bicycle-themed space in the middle of an East Sactown shopping center.

A FEW EATERS sit at outdoor tables.

INT. FOLSOM BOULEVARD PIZZERIA MAIN DINING ROOM - NIGHT

This room lets Alisa, Colin, Fawn, Paul, and OTHER CUSTOMERS watch FOUR COOKS (two men, two women) prepare the food.

Between bites, Fawn uses her cell phone to snap pictures of the cooks.

Paul looks at Fawn as if she's a zombie.

FAWN

Well, look: I don't wanna take any chances.

COLIN

(to Fawn)

Good point.

Alisa takes a bite of her thin-crust pizza, then turns to her fellow Sumadova employees.

ALISA

This pizza really packs a punch.

PAUL

Alisa...you're talking about a thin-crust pizza.

ALISA

Go ahead, Paul. You try a slice of my pizza...and I'll try a slice of yours.

Paul shows a "huh?" look.

ALISA (CONT'D)  
It's all good.

So...Alisa and Paul swap pizza slices.

The twosome take a few bites each...but after his, Paul puckers up before he takes a long swig of pop.

He follows that with a long swig of water.

Six eyes stare Paul down.

COLIN  
You okay?

PAUL  
Mama mia...that's some spicy pizza!

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Almost closing time...Paul, Fawn, Colin, and Alisa lean across the counter from this eatery's four cooks.

FEMALE COOK #1  
You guys must really like our pizza.

COLIN  
We sure do!

ALISA  
Especially that spicy Southwestern thin-crust pizza I ordered.

Paul fans his mouth.

FAWN  
What's you guys's secret? How do you do it?

ALISA  
Especially that thin-crust pizza.

The Folsom Foursome eye each other.

MALE COOK #1  
(to Alisa)  
Well, uh, we start with our dough.

Alisa nods.

MALE COOK #2

Yeah. When it comes to our dough,  
we start with four ingredients.

FEMALE COOK #2

(clears throat first)

Water, salt, flour, and yeast.

Fawn breaks out her cell phone again...for a video.

FAWN

Would you like to say that again  
for the camera?

Female Cook #2 clears her throat again...then:

FEMALE COOK #2

We make our pizza dough with just  
four ingredients: Water, salt,  
flour, and yeast.

The Sumadova Foursome AD LIB or gesture their agreement.

MALE COOK #1

I'm just curious...are you four  
interested in going into the  
restaurant business?

Paul, Colin, Fawn, and Alisa eyeball each other in  
silence...for a few seconds.

PAUL

We're already in it.

Two Folsom cooks stare into space.

Another Folsom employee gazes daggers at Paul.

The fourth Folsom cook shrugs.

And Fawn catches it all on video.

COLIN

We just wanna do it better.

EXT. 37TH AVENUE - DAY

A 2020 Ram four-door pickup tools along.

INT. RAM TRUCK - DAY

Mario drives...Craig and Brad ride in the back.

The three men's eyes go wide when they find...

EXT. KENNANS' HOUSE - DAY

...the new appliances from the fixer-upper next door...near Annette's and Keith's front door!

EXT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - DAY

The truck stops in front of the house.

Craig, Brad, and Mario jump out of the Ram and steam toward:

EXT. KENNANS' HOUSE - DAY

Brad bangs on the front door as if he's got no tomorrow.

CRAIG

Brad...try the doorbell.

Craig receives Brad's icy stare.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

It's on the right.

Before Brad can punch the doorbell, the door opens...and reveals Keith and Annette.

KEITH

Yes?

BRAD

CONTRACTORS MY ASS!

Annette's mouth flies open...Keith chuckles.

MARIO

(pointing at the Kennans)

We've got work to do.

Brad continues to seethe.

MARIO (CONT'D)

All five of us.

Keith smirks.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Right now.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

All the new appliances have been put back in place.



Annette, Brad, Craig, Keith, and Mario check to make sure everything works.

Everything's all right.

CRAIG

Let's sit down and clear the air.

BRAD

I know a good place.

INT. EISENHOWER-ERA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The four men and the sole woman sit on the floor.

ANNETTE

Well...anyway...when Keith and I saw the "For Sale" sign on the front lawn here...and on the bottom, it said "Golden State Realty Company," well...

KEITH

Me and Annette put two and two together.

ANNETTE

We read that article in the paper about the realtor who decide to go into business with her next-door neighbor to start a pizza place.

Craig and Brad nod at each other.

KEITH

(to Annette)

What's that place called?

ANNETTE

Sukiyaki, I think.

BRAD

You mean Sumadova.

KEITH

With a name like that, I wouldn't eat there.

CRAIG

I think it's a cool name.

ANNETTE

Anyway, the article said Valentina shoulda stayed in real estate.

Mario's is an enthusiastic nod.

KEITH

And Susannah was a better retirement consultant than a restaurant owner.

ANNETTE

Keith, that ain't saying much.

CRAIG

Now just a minute--

ANNETTE

She was a better Air Force pilot than a retirement consultant.

KEITH

Me and Annette are the proof.

Craig puts his chin on his fists.

ANNETTE

(wags finger at Brad)

And our daughter went to your store to buy a hard drive for a computer she wanted to fix up...and you charged her for a copy of Windows 11 she didn't get.

Brad's is a slow nod.

KEITH

So...we decided to get back at you.

Annette and Keith stare daggers at Brad, who continues to shake his head up and down.

BRAD

Would it make you feel good to know I turned in my resignation from there...and decided to go into house-flipping full time?

Now Keith and Annette turn to each other.

CRAIG

Sure beats facing irate customers every hour on the hour.

Brad looks lost...

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Brad, that's what you told me!

...only to change to That Busted Look.

EXT. J STREET PIZZA PLACE - NIGHT

A modern, glassy, low-lying building three miles west of the family restaurant on Shakey's old block.

INT. J STREET PIZZA PLACE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

THE PLACE IS ALMOST PACKED!

At a table for four, Jennilee, Nicollette, and Regina chow down in an upscale-looking space that sports a casual, Chicago-themed vibe.

Two big-screen TVs that show SPORTS EVENTS keep eaters busy.

Regina takes a break from eating chicken wings to eyeball her Sumadova buddies.

REGINA  
You guys, this is what we need.

NICOLLETTE  
What do we need, Regina?

Regina points to her chicken wings.

REGINA  
Go ahead, Nicollette. Try one.

Nicollette shows a "huh" look.

REGINA (CONT'D)  
It's all right. Try one.

JENNILEE  
(to Regina)  
Don't mind if I do.

A nodding Regina watches Jennilee fork one of Regina's chicken wings.

Nicollette follows suit at last.

Regina's colleagues eat their wings. Jennilee looks satisfied...but Nicollette makes a face.

JENNILEE (CONT'D)

Good call!

Nicollette grabs her water glass and takes a long swig.

Jennilee and Regina watch her exhale...for a few seconds.

NICOLLETTE

The spicier...the better.

The three women high-five it.

JENNILEE

When it comes to needing things...we need one more thing to put Sumadova over the top.

NICOLLETTE

Okay, Jennilee. Tell us what'll put Sumadova over the top.

JENNILEE

Just look on the wall.

Regina and Nicollette stare at the walls...but look confused.

The twosome stare Jennilee down.

JENNILEE (CONT'D)

We need a TV...or two.

Nicollette and Regina watch TV for a few moments before they eye Jennilee.

REGINA

Jennilee Cleaver...don't you know those TVs will cost you your job?

Jennilee grabs a piece of her Chicago-style deep-dish pizza. She savors a few bites while her pals stare.

JENNILEE

Depends on what's on TV.

EXT. RIVERSIDE BOULEVARD PIZZA PLACE - NIGHT

This is a 1950s brick building across the street from a cemetery in the city's Land Park area.

Valentina (in a suit, fedora, and fake beard) sits at one of the outdoor seats.

Sheila and Norm reach for the front door when...a drone lands between them!

Norm watches his wife pick up the fallen drone.

NORM

They warned us, Sheila. World War 3's just around the corner.

Sheila grimaces at her husband as Valentina hurries toward the couple.

SHEILA

(shows drone to Valentina)  
You know anything about this?

VALENTINA

(deep, mannish voice)  
I'll take that.

And Sheila hands Valentina the drone.

INT. RIVERSIDE BOULEVARD PIZZA PLACE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Brick walls, wood-and-chrome tables for four, and dome lighting mark this airy-looking space.

Norm, Sheila, and Valentina sit together at one such table when food server KATIE DAUGHERTY (20s) greets them with menus in tow.

The drone rests in a seat.

KATIE

Hi. I'm Katie. I'm your server tonight. What can I get you two gentlemen and one lady?

Valentina looks amused...for a while.

She retains that deep, mannish voice.

VALENTINA

I was all set to come in last night...but I found out you're closed on Mondays.

KATIE

Yes, we are.

Katie hands the three customers a menu each.

Valentina, Sheila, and Norm browse their menus for a few seconds...then:

SHEILA  
Think we're ready to order.

Katie nods.

NORM  
(to Valentina)  
Sir...why don't you go first?

VALENTINA  
Okay, Norm.  
(to Katie)  
I'd like to start out with your  
shisisto...shisito...

The Two Bankstons open their mouths to correct their guest.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
Never mind, I'll start out with  
your pork-and-beef meatball.

KATIE  
Good choice.

SHEILA  
You can say that again.

SAME SCENE - MINUTES LATER

Katie comes back to the table with that pork-and-beef meatball...as well as an extra-large pizza. (By now, drinks rest on the table, too.)

She sets the items on the threesome's table when Valentina takes off her beard and places it by the seated drone.

Result: Three stunned faces.

NORM  
You're...from...Sukiyaki?

VALENTINA  
(in her real voice)  
Sumadova.

SHEILA  
Don't you remember her, Norm?

Norm's is a slow, slow nod.

SHEILA (CONT'D)  
 (to Valentina)  
 You played the piano the night Norm  
 and I were there.

KATIE  
 (pointing to Valentina)  
 You're one of the two co-owners  
 over there. I read about you two in  
 "The Bee."

Valentina sinks in her seat.

VALENTINA  
 I just came here because I wanted  
 to see what made this place so  
 freakin' special.

KATIE  
 We're glad you came.

Susannah's biz partner sits back up...

VALENTINA  
 I was so looking forward to trying  
 your All-American pizza.

...then grabs a piece of pizza.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)  
 (through bites)  
 Never tell anybody I'm not  
 patriotic.

Katie watches Norm and a nodding Sheila dig in.

EXT. K STREET PIZZA - NIGHT

Here's a small granite building in the downtown area.

Tucked underneath the overhead sign: Outdoor seating.

INT. K STREET PIZZA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Craig, Susy, Eli, and Susannah stroll into a spacious area  
 that features not only a bar along the wall...but also tables  
 for foursomes.

Eli's and Susy's dad looks stunned.

CRAIG  
 Susannah...you sure this is the  
 place we ate at on our first date?

SUSANNAH

It's the same place. Just under new management, that's all.

All four Macaulay-Allreds gaze at the bottom half of a Peterbilt truck tractor...hanging over the bar.

SUSY

Mom, I was looking forward to hearing some metal in here.

The only sound in the place: GABBING CUSTOMERS.

ELI

And I wanted to get inside the bounce house.

Susannah shrugs.

SUSANNAH

The new management didn't think they'd have room for the bounce house and the other things they wanted...and they don't like metal.

Susy sighs.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Wait 'til you taste the American-Italian-Korean cuisine.

(to Eli)

And you'll like the wood-fired pizza topped with pears, blue cheese, and honey.

Eli makes a face...and draws Susy's attention.

SUSY

I thought you were into all those weird pizza toppings.

ELI

Mom...can we get one of those old trucks and hang it on the wall over at Sumadova?

Now Susannah makes a face!

SUSY

Mom flew a bomber...remember, Eli?

MONTAGE SEQUENCE



INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

Valentina and Susannah give directions as Jack and Jennilee (both on ladders) hang a big-screen TV in one corner.

INT. SUMADOVA KITCHEN - DAY

Colin uses flour, water, salt, and yeast to come up with thin-crust pizza dough...

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

...but his try falls apart.

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

Fawn attempts to make the same thin-crust dough with the same four ingredients...

SAME SCENE - EVEN LATER

...and breathes relief when she finds success.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ginger watches Anjanette and Malik try Sumadova's new-and-hopefully-improved Chicago-style deep-dish pizza.

Wifey looks skeptical...Hubby looks delighted.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Paul comes over to Katrina's, Mario's, and Roger's table to check how the three customers like the food.

Mario smiles...Roger gives a "thumbs down."

Katrina downs her mug of beer...and slams it to the table.

INT. SUMADOVA MANAGERS' OFFICE - DAY

A tense Nicollette watches Valentina try the eatery's new chicken wings.

Valentina chews oh-so-slowly.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

On this Saturday afternoon, Mei-Ling frets when she observes A SPARSE CROWD.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Susy (on banjo) and Jennilee (on piano) get A HALF-CAPACITY CROWD to sing along.

Rosa's one of the eaters...and she tries to sing.

Susannah and Valentina trade high fives.

INT. SUMADOVA MANAGERS' OFFICE - DAY

Regina joins Nicollette; the twosome watch Susannah eat Sumadova's new chicken wings.

After a bite or two, Susannah sits there stonefaced.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - DAY

Just before opening time, Regina and Alisa (both on ladders) attach a scale-model F-16 bomber to the ceiling.

INT. SUMADOVA KITCHEN - DAY

With Valentina's, Jack's, and Fawn's coaching, Colin's thin crust turns out better.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Nicollette waits all alone for a verdict on those chicken wings...and cheers when Susannah and Valentina emerge with "thumbs up."

Next: A group hug!

END MONTAGE

EXT. SUMADOVA - NIGHT

A 2017 Ford Fusion pulls into a half-full parking lot on this April Saturday.

Malik jumps out of the driver's seat...Anjanette leads a blindfolded Taryn out through one of the car's rear doors.

TARYN

You still haven't told me where we're going.

ANJANETTE

It's a surprise.

Anjanette and Malik escort Taryn toward the eatery.

MALIK

It's also the last stop on our  
restaurant crawl.

Malik opens Sumadova's front door, then gestures the two  
women inside.

TARYN

How about a clue?

ANJANETTE

Well, Taryn, it's one of our new  
favorite places to eat out.

INT. SUMADOVA DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Anjanette leads Taryn inside a place HALF FULL OF CUSTOMERS;  
Malik follows.

The food critic from "The Sacramento Bee" tries to sniff her  
way to a clue.

The smell test doesn't help Taryn.

Barbi, Dan, Katrina, Mario, and Roger sit at back-to-back  
tables...where they chow down and watch A BASKETBALL GAME on  
the big-screen TV.

At the front counter, Paul and Alisa watch Malik and  
Anjanette guide their still-blindfolded fellow food critic to  
the front.

ALISA

Hi! Welcome to Sumadova! What can  
we do for you?

Taryn tries to wrestle out of Anjanette's and Malik's grip.

MALIK

Wait a minute. If I can give this  
restaurant another chance, you can  
give it another chance, too.

ANJANETTE

(eyeballing Taryn)  
Just like you gave that Greek  
restaurant downtown another chance.

Malik lets go of a nodding Taryn, who rips her blindfold off  
with her newly-freed hand.

Paul's mouth flies open.

SAME SCENE - A BIT LATER

Basketball on TV gives way to Jennilee's piano playing and Susy's banjo strumming.

Susannah (she's erect) looks after Dan, Barbi, Mario, Katrina, and Roger.

SUSANNAH  
How's everything?

MARIO  
Just like uptown!

Roger, Barbi, and Dan gesture or AD LIB their gratitude.

Katrina glares at Susannah.

SUSANNAH  
Katrina, if there's something here  
you don't like, we'll gladly give  
you your money back.

Valentina's biz partner watches Katrina shake her head "no."

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)  
Does this have anything to do with  
your parents?

Katrina seethes with a nod.

ROGER  
(to Susannah)  
She's still upset about her folks'  
retirement plan.

BARBI  
She's still pissed off about the  
advice they got from us.

Susannah takes an empty seat at the quintet's tables.

SUSANNAH  
Katrina...all they had to do was  
make a will.

DAN  
Keith and Annette called us...and  
they're making out that will.

BARBI  
As we speak.

Katrina takes deep breaths...then:

KATRINA  
(standing up)  
I'll drink to that!

Barbi, Dan, Mario, and Roger rise up; they and Katrina raise their glasses or mugs before drinking away...and triggering applause in Susannah.

At a nearby table, Valentina checks up on Anjanette, Malik, and Taryn...who sample that red-white-and-blue pizza.

VALENTINA  
How's everybody doing?

Malik and Anjanette raise their thumbs.

Taryn continues to eat.

Valentina's is a slow, slow nod.

SAME SCENE - STILL LATER

Susy's and Jennilee's lively music continues strong.

Eli, Craig, Brad, and SOME NEW CUSTOMERS make their way to the front counter, where Alisa and Paul still take orders.

Brad and Craig beam at each other.

CRAIG  
Susy's never sounded better.

Eli cringes...but changes his expression to a nod when Brad gives him the evil eye.

The two musicians' number ends...applause kicks in.

ELI  
Well...that's my sister up there.

Valentina rushes to the stage, where Jennilee hands her the cordless mike from atop the piano.

VALENTINA  
(into mike)  
Let's hear it for Jennilee Cleaver  
and Susy Macaulay-Allred Jr.!

The eaters' applause grows stronger...Susy and Jennilee trade high fives.

Susannah (now behind the front counter) smiles big.

Malik and Anjanette rise from their seats to head for the stage...a surprise to Valentina.

MALIK  
Is it all right?

ANJANETTE  
To talk to the other customers?

VALENTINA  
Uh...why not?

Onstage, Valentina passes the mike to Malik...who relays the mike to his wife.

ANJANETTE  
(into mike)  
Valentina...Susannah...the rest of  
the Sumadova  
staff...customers...thanks.

Valentina leaves the stage to join Susannah, Paul, and Alisa at the counter.

A few customers applaud; others look surprised.

ANJANETTE (CONT'D)  
Anyway...I'm Anjanette Rosario-  
Crawford, and I'm a food critic  
with "Sactown" magazine.

Taryn's is a slow nod.

ANJANETTE (CONT'D)  
And I've got a question for you at  
the tables...how do you like the  
food here?

The customers around a still-eating Taryn applaud.

ANJANETTE (CONT'D)  
I feel the same way, too!

The applause grows louder as Anjanette passes the microphone to her husband.

MALIK  
(into mike)  
I'm a food reviewer, too...but I'm  
online. It's safer for me that way.

Alisa and a few customers chuckle.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
I'm Malik Crawford...you guessed  
it...we're husband and wife.

The new customers join Brad, Craig, and Eli in taking seats.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
Anjanette and I heard all the talk  
about Sumadova ever since that  
article in "The Bee."

Taryn points to herself.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
Anjanette and I started coming here  
to eat the night before the article  
got in the paper...and we found out  
Sumadova gets better each time we  
come here.

Katrina, Dan, and Mario shake their heads "yes."

MALIK (CONT'D)  
On top of that...it's a fun place!

Susannah and Valentina point to each other.

MALIK (CONT'D)  
That's why I'm ready to give this  
fun place five stars out of five!

ANJANETTE  
Me, too!

Sumadova breaks out in pandemonium!

Valentina, Susannah, Paul, and Alisa high-five each other.

When the cheering subsides, Malik hands the mike back to Anjanette.

ANJANETTE (CONT'D)  
(into mike)  
So...Malik and I hope you'll tell  
all your friends about Sumadova!

The clapping resumes...and Taryn jumps from her seat to gesture her agreement with Anjanette and Malik.

EXT. SUMADOVA - DAY

A mid-July afternoon...CUSTOMERS fill the outdoor seating!

Boris, Brad, Craig, Eli, Mei-Ling, Oksana, Susy, and Taryn eat and gab outdoors. Valentina and Susannah look after the eight of 'em.

On Eli's plate: One of his crazy pizzas.

BRAD  
 (raising his glass)  
 Here's to the two Queens of  
 Flipping.

Susannah and Valentina eyeball each other in shock.

Craig catches their expression.

CRAIG  
 Brad's telling the truth. Flipping  
 a commercial building always beats  
 flipping a house.

BRAD  
 Even if the family that moved in is  
 happy with the house we flipped.  
 (to his fellow eaters)  
 C'mon! Let's raise those mugs!

Brad's seated colleagues raise their glasses, too.

A mass clicking of glasses ensues.

SUSANNAH  
 Uh...thanks, everybody.

VALENTINA  
 You should check out the insides.

SUSY  
 We did! That's why we're out here!

ELI  
 (through his bites)  
 It's wall-to-wall people!

The eight eaters applaud.

MEI-LING  
 Susannah...Valentina...we're very  
 proud of you.



Oksana and Boris hold hands.

BORIS

We are, too. Proud of you two and your restaurant.

OKSANA

And you've made it succeed without changing its name.

Mei-Ling chuckles.

VALENTINA

After that review hit the paper, Susannah and I and the rest of the staff had to roll up our sleeves and do something.

Taryn takes a bite, then smiles.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

Especially with our houses on the line.

Susannah nods at Valentina.

SUSANNAH

So...how's it feel to be a spy?

VALENTINA

Well...I'm not in Uncle Vladdy's league...but that's all right.

Some of the eaters laugh.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

I'm more into fine arts than the art of spying.

The customer laughs kick back in.

BORIS

Valentina...when your mama and I get back to Provo, we make sure the whole city knows.

Valentina gives Susannah an impish grin.

VALENTINA

Remember how, when Shakey's opened a second pizza parlor, it was in another state?

SUSANNAH

Tell you what: Let's grow this one first before we talk about starting a Sumadova Number Two.

While Valentina nods, Taryn rises...and salutes Sumadova's two founders!

Susannah's mouth flies open.

TARYN

You both deserve it.

Oksana and Boris applaud.

TARYN (CONT'D)

Sumadova has made a lot of strides these last six months.

Craig and Brad nod.

TARYN (CONT'D)

You've got the most improved restaurant in the Sacramento area.

Now all eight clap away...and turn the whole thing into a standing ovation.

When the ovation dies down:

SUSANNAH

Think how much more we could do when we figure out what to do with the drive-thru window.

VALENTINA

Don't sweat it, Susannah. We'll figure it out in time.

SUSANNAH

We will.

TARYN

I can't help but say it...

Eighteen eyes gaze at Taryn in earnest.

TARYN (CONT'D)

Susannah...Valentina...thank you for your service.

Customer applause rings out again.

SUSANNAH

You're welcome, Taryn...but which kind of service?

TARYN

Not just the military kind, but the restaurant kind, too!

CRAIG

YEAH!

Craig jogs over to Susannah. Both kiss.

Valentina gives Taryn a perplexed look.

VALENTINA

That's funny...I never, ever served in the military.

Boris and Oksana nod at each other.

VALENTINA (CONT'D)

No good at stealing secrets.

FREEZE FRAME as the gang busts out in laughter.

FADE OUT.

THE END