



Scripts.com

A Home of Our Own

By Patrick Sheane Duncan

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(nostalgic orchestral music)

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- [Shayne] This is the

only photograph I own

from my childhood.

It was taken in 1955

when I was 8 years old

by my father, with a borrowed camera,

and it's the only thing I

have left from those days,

except for my memories.

This is a true story.

This really happened to me.

By 1962, I was 15 years old.

I had two brothers and three sisters,

no father, no money.

I was the man of the house,

and my mother, well...

She was one of a kind.

(machines whirring)

- Christ! You out of your mind?

What's the matter with you, asshole?

- All right, all right.

(thud, clattering)

What's the matter with you?

- What's the matter with you?

- Mr. Owens, to the office immediately.

Mist, ahhh!

- Fucking asshole, you

clean it up yourself.

He's the one that started it.

- So did you.

Come on.

- Back off, back off.

- He grabbed my ass.

- Okay. Come on!

(Owens' talk drowned
out by machine's noise)

- Oh, come on, Mr. Nardin,

this wasn't my fault.

Owens scared me.

Look, I really need this job, Mr. Nardin.

You can't do this. I got kids, come on!

- You're fired.
- I'm begging you, pl--
- You're fired!
(creaking)
(bottle clinks)
(men talking)
- [Man 1] Lay off me on this,
or you will get nothing.
- [Man 2] Can you get off my back?
I will give the money to you. (thud)
You'll get the money, man!
- Hi, kids.
- [Kids] Hi, mama.
- Hi, mom.
- Faye, how about letting
your old ma sit in the chair?
- I don't feel so good, mama.
- Hmm? How was the movie?
- Well, it was scary.
Flying saucers and monsters.
Annie cried.
- Did not!
- [Craig] Did too!
- Did not!
- [Craig] Did too!
- [Annie] Did not!
- Did too!
- [Annie] Did not!
- [Craig] Did too!
- [Annie] Did not!
- You two, pipe down.
- [Annie] Did not, did not!
- [Craig] Did too.
- Look, mama.
- Oh, isn't that pretty?
Isn't that mine?
- I don't know.
- Where'd you guys get all this candy?
I just gave you enough
money to go to the movies.
You took your own popcorn.
Lynn?
- I don't know.
- Faye?

- It wasn't me.
- Murray.
(knocking)
Pipe down, you two.
You're giving me an ulcer.
- Mrs. Lacey?
- Yup.
- Is your husband home?
- No, he's not.
What's the beef this time?
- Mama, I was just--
- You shut up.
- We got a complaint
from the phone company.
Your kid had a string of
their coin returns plugged.
- That's what you collared him for?
Penny ante crap like that?
There's real crime in the streets
and you guys are busting
kids for boosting nickels
from the goddamn phone company?
- Tell 'em, ma.
- You, pipe down.
I've had a rotten day,
a really rotten day,
and I wouldn't be in the mood for this
if it came with flowers.
So you're gonna keep
him or throw him back?
- He ain't worth the paperwork, ma'am.
Just take this as a little warning
and try to keep your
Dillinger off the street.
- You watch the name-calling and get out.
I take care of my own.
- You do that, lady, 'cause next time
we might not be in such a good mood.
- So the shoeshine business
has been real good lately, huh?
Been doing real good on tips, you told me.
- Well, I did get--
- Who did you lie to?
Your mother.

Go get your father's belt.

- [Shayne] That night, my mother made a decision.

She didn't bother asking us what we wanted to do.

She never did.

And once mama made up her mind, there was no stopping her.

Thirsty.

- Tomorrow morning we're moving out of this toilet of a city.

- Huh?

- Don't "huh" me.

We're gonna find us a decent town to live in, and a proper home, a house of our own.

That's that.

(bangs)

- I ain't leaving, I ain't leaving the neighborhood.

- One more "ain't" and I soap out that mouth.

You're going. We're all going.

(banging)

- I ain't. I'm not going.

- We're leaving this city.

I don't have the chance of an ice cube in a frying pan of making things better as long as we stay.

- I'm sick of moving around.

- That's too bad.

You're the man of the house.

Have you forgotten the promise you made me?

You swore you'd help me with your brothers and sisters, that I could always count on you.

You gave me your word.

- Yeah.

- And that won't be easy, but I can't do it without you, Shayne.

You get some sleep.

I'll make you a promise.

You do this for me, and
we'll never move again.

Promise.

- [Shayne] So we left L.A.
We sold everything we could.
What we couldn't sell or
fit into our '48 Plymouth,
we gave away.

When most families take a trip,
they know where they're going.

Not us.

Mama just pointed the car,
sort of north, sort of east,
and away we went.

- [Lynn] Ma, would you tell
Murray and Annie to quit it?

- [Frances] Would you two stop?
(Murray laughs teasingly)

- Mama.

- [Frances] Nobody gets the bunny.

- [Annie] I did not, Craig!

- [Craig] Yes, you did!

- [Annie] Did not.

- [Craig] Did too.

- [Annie] Mama, I have to pee-pee.

- [Craig] You just did.

- Did not.

- [Frances] If you kids don't stop this,
I'm gonna leave you by
the side of the road.

Annie, you just went. Pipe down.

- [Annie] Did not!

- [Craig] Did too.

- [Annie] Did not.

- Pipe down, you two.

- [Annie] Did not.

- [Craig] Did too.

- [Annie] Did not.

- I'm gonna come back there.

You don't want me to come back there.

- [Voiceover] Jimmy Johnson, K.i.F.l.

- Shayne, leave it for
just a second, will you?

I'd like to hear just one

song all the way through.

- Sorry.

- [Murray] It's my turn up front.

- [Faye] It is not!

- [Murray] Is too!

- Now, now, don't you two start.

- [Murray] It is too.

- [Frances] Murray, sit down.

- [Faye] You stink bug.

- Is too.

- Is not.

- [Frances] Pipe down!

Shayne, how'd you like to take the wheel?

- Sure.

- Scoot over here.

Thanks.

- Hey! How about that place?

It looks like a nice place.

- Nope.

- Why not?

- It ain't the right place.

- [Shayne] Well then,

what is the right place?

- [Frances] I'll know it when I see it.

See...

We'll be driving down this road,
and there's gonna be trees on either side.

And we'll go around the curve,
and there it'll be,
a perfect little town.

Then a little further
on will be our house.

Everything will be
buttoned up and beautiful.

(Lynn coughing)

Lynn? Oh, honey.

Are you all right?

Give her some kool-aid.

- Murray did it, Murray did it.

Don't spit in it.

- Shut up, you little fink.

Cut it out. You cut it out!

(children giggling, teasing)

- [Annie] See it?

Look at that house.

- [Craig] Yeah.

- [Shayne] Mama said we were gonna find us a house this time, not an apartment, but a real house, all our own.

We saw lots of possibilities.

- [Faye] Out there. See?

- [Annie] Yeah.

- [Lynn] See that deer?

- Look at that. Oh, look at all that space right there. Perfect for our house.

- [Annie] I want a pony. Look!

- [Shayne] But since we were dead broke, one question kept nagging at me.

Even if we did find our dream house, what could we buy it with?

- [Faye] I wish we lived there.

Hurry up, Murray.

(children playing)

- I can patch your radiator here, but your water pump's gone, it's shut. These belts look like they're about ready to give way.

There's maybe one tire in the whole bunch that'll see you more than 100 yards down the road.

- Will this cover it?

- Oh, ma'am, your wedding ring?

I don't want to take your wedding ring.

- Don't worry about it.

Goddamn vagabond, Irish Catholic son of a bitch.

Never gave me anything but grief and kids. I'm not sentimental about it.

So is it worth enough to keep my car going?

- Lady, this car's worth more dead than alive.

But I'll do the best I can.

- [Shayne] Everyday, for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, we ate egg salad sandwiches.

I haven't eaten one since, ever.

(soft, brooding piano music)
We drove through three
states, one after another.
By the time we reached Idaho,
we'd reached our limits,
physically, mentally, and mechanically.
(kids arguing)
(tires screech)
(Annie and Craig arguing)
- [Murray] Shut up!
- [Shayne] Shut up!
- [Faye] There, I broke one of--
- Can it?
- What is it?
At first, I thought we
were out of gas again.
But there it was.
I'm not sure what it was,
but mama had that look in her eye.
Wherever we were going, we'd just arrived.
(soft piano music)
(kids clamoring)
(tapping)
(wood creaking)
(thud, fowl quacking)
- Mama, you scared me.
- [Murray] Hey, ma, come up there.
You could see everything.
- Hey, mama.
- Hey, mama.
(giggling)
(fowl quacking)
- [Murray] Mom, come up here.
- [Shayne] Lynn, no, no, no, no, wait.
- Lacey tribe.
Come on.
(scraping)
(knocking)
- Hello?
Hello?
- The berries are all done.
No more till next year.
All done.
All done.

- We don't want any berries.
- I want some berries.
- Do you know who owns
that piece of property
across the road from you,
the one with the tumble-down house on it?
- Well, I'm the owner.
- I wanna buy it.
My name's Frances Lacey.
That's my tribe.
I'd introduce you to them one at a time,
but life is short and time is precious.
- I don't know if it's for sale.
- I wanna buy it.
I want it so bad that I'm
in no position to negotiate.
You can take full advantage,
I mean, name your price.
- You're rich?
- Mister, I don't have a pot to piss in
nor a window to throw it out of.
(metal clanks)
- [Annie] We have to pee-pee.
- If that's the case,
how do you expect to pay for the land?
- Well, Mr. Moon, I've learned
that the greenback dollar
isn't the only way to get things
done in this great country.
Let's talk.
You live alone, Mr. Moon?
- Yes, if it's any of your business.
- Well, here's what we'll do.
We'll wash your dishes,
do your laundry.
Dishes daily, laundry once a week.
Clean your house once a week.
My oldest son will give you
eight hours of chores each week,
plus any other work you may need, on call,
at minimum wage plus 10%.
- You pay me interest?
- Mr. Moon, this is slave labor.
Take advantage of it.

- You know something?

I'm not so sure if I want
a smart lady like you
with a bunch of kids for my neighbor.

- Yeah, but...

Look at this place.

It takes a lot of work.

- How do I know you won't just
up and run off someday?

- Well, if I did that, then
you'd have all that free labor
plus your land back.

But I'm telling you some, Mr. Moon,
if you sell me that land,
I'm building me and my kids a
house we ain't ever leaving,
at least not while I'm still breathing.

- [Shayne] So mama talked
herself into three acres of land
with a half-finished shack on it,
and we kind of took over Mr. Moon's life.
Mama negotiated two days of free repairs
that ended up lasting two weeks.

He never knew what hit him.

We had a lot of work to do.

It was already getting cold and
we had to get a roof on and walls up,
if you can call canvas tarps
a roof and old boards walls.

- [Annie] Bye, bye tumbleweed.

(sawing)

(hammering)

- Turn which way?

- [Kids] This way.

- Okay.

Okay.

- Here it comes.

(squeals, yelping)

- Yay! ! (clapping)

- [Shayne] Mama traded our
tires for some furniture.

Mr. Moon wanted the name
of the guy who bought them.
He said he wanted proof

that he wasn't the only fool in town.

(thud, clattering)

- So what do you know how to do?

- I work.

I've done it all my life.

I work.

I learn fast and I do my share and more.

- Yeah, well, I do need another waitress.

- Then you got one.

- Minimum wage.

Tips are your own and they
ain't much in a town like this.

- I'll manage. I always do.

- I bet you do.

- This here's Norman, my manager.

- You'll be working under me.

- I'll be working for you.

Frances.

- Frances.

- [Shayne] I tried to get any job I could.

I wasn't particular, as

long as I could make money.

I finally got work at a dairy.

I don't know who hated it more,
me or the cows.

(hammering)

(sawing)

- [Mr. Moon] Give me a hand, Lynn.

- [Annie] Hey, hey, Mr. Moon's here.

- [Mr. Moon] Thanks.

- What are you up to, Mr. Moon?

- You see...

I had all these spare window glass.

A man with a greenhouse

keeps plenty on hand.

I used some of your wood.

Glazed windows.

And now I'm ready to put them in.

- I don't have the money to

pay you for this, Mr. Moon.

- Well...

I'm not doing this for

the money, Mrs. Lacey.

I do well enough

with the nursery.

- Well, I want an accounting of your time
and the cost of your materials
so I can give you an I.O.U.

I don't like owing anybody,
but you backed me into a corner.

And I'd appreciate it
a whole hell of a lot
if you let me know next
time you decide to help out.

(fowl clucking)

(fowl clucking)

- [Shayne] Mama had promised
I'd do all Mr. Moon's chores,
so I didn't have much choice.
But running his tractor was fun,
and that's how I learned to drive.

- Hi.

Hello.

- How does that look, Craig?

- Pretty good.

- [Shayne] You want to sleep on the roof?

- [Murray] I want that room.

Mom, can I have my own bathroom?

- [Faye] Can I have a pink princess phone?

- [Murray] Mom, can I
have my own bathroom?

- [Frances] Yes.

- [Shayne] School was coming up
so when the hand-me-downs were out,
the church basement was
our department store.

This wasn't so bad.

It was all we knew.

- Lynn, what do you think?

- It's beautiful.

You should get it.

- [Annie] Mama.

- Oh, no, honey.

- [Lynn] Annie.

- Lacey tribe.

We need galoshes for winter.

You've never seen winter, have you, Annie?

- Nope.

- Help her pick out a pair, Lynn.

Craig.

Here, try this on.

- Good day, ma'am.

I'm Father Tomlin.

I think you may be new to our little town.

- Mom, look what I found.

- Hope that we'll see you at
Sunday mass real soon. Unless--

- Try again, Liberace.

- Unless, of course, your convictions
take you to another church.

- Actually, we Laceys
are non-denominational.

- Well, that's neither here
nor there at the moment,
but perhaps I could tell
you about our program
to help the needy.

We can provide without charge
an allotment of clothing for
each member of the family.

- Murray, we didn't come
here looking for toys.

Come back here and try on this sweater.

- In addition to the clothing
items, the basic food items--

- Mama, look.

- Lynn, no.

- The basic food items and so on, too,
all without obligation,
religious or otherwise.

- Thanks very much, mister, uh, Father,
but we Laceys don't accept charity.

We pay our own way.

- Well, uh, if you change your mind...

- Lynn.

Do me a favor, take this back, will you?

- But it'll look so nice on you.

- Take it back.

- [Shayne] The really bad part
was when mama decided to
make our clothes herself.

- Hey, Lacey, where'd you

get the howdy-doody dresses?

- They're not howdy-doody.

My mama made them.

- Where'd she get the material?

Did somebody shoot a sofa and skin it?

(squeals, chattering)

- [Shayne] Murray still didn't

seem to fit into our world,

but then one day, he found one of his own.

- Stop the bus!

Stop the bus, stop the bus.

Stop the bus.

- [Driver] Get back to your seat, kid.

- Stop the bus or I'll barf in your hat.

- [Children] Eew!

- I'll walk home.

(festive orchestral music)

(thumping)

(shifts to waltzy music)

- You lost, boy?

- No.

No.

I want some of this stuff.

- You got money?

- Hmm, no.

- How do you expect to pay
for the stuff you want?

- Well, mister, I've learned that...

I've learned that the greenback
dollar isn't the only way
to get things done in
this here great country.

Let's talk.

(chuckling)

- All right, son.

Let's find this stuff you want.

And I need help around here.

(rattling)

- Murray.

What's with the wagon and
what's with the toilet?

- I got a job, I earned it.

Come on, give me a hand.

- You got a job, and you earned a toilet?

- Yeah. So we don't have to use the dumb old outhouse.

I hate the outhouse.

- [Shayne] So for three days every week, Murray came home hauling some new treasures from Mr. King. We never knew what to expect, French doors, a gas stove, a set of cracked China dishes. In smelly old Mr. King, Murray found a kindred soul, a fellow connoisseur of junk.

- Come on.

Come on, hurry. (grunts)

- What did you get this time, Murray?

- Little couches and everything.

- Wow.

- I'm tired.

(50s music plays softly)

- Mr. Moon?

- Yes, Miss Faye.

- Where's Mrs. Moon?

- Well...

She went on a long journey ahead of me.

- Why didn't you go with her?

- I had to wait here for the Laceys.

(mooing)

- [Shayne] Every morning,

I went to work in the dark,

then I had to walk four

more miles to school.

Sometimes I'd get a ride,

but more often, I'd walk all the way.

It gave me plenty of time to think,

and mostly what I thought about

was how much I hated Hankston, Idaho.

(pounding)

Hey, Murray, come on up here.

- [Murray] You ready?

(hammering)

(clattering)

- Murray, that's disgusting.

- Murray, just get to work.

- I am.

(hammering)
(yelps, thud)
- Murray!
(coughing)
Murray!
Murray!
Murray, are you all right? Huh?
Murray, come on.
- Look, Shayne!
Shayne, look!
Look, Shayne!
- Shayne, look!
- What?
Hold on. This is gonna hurt, okay?
It's gonna hurt, all right?
(yelps, cries)
It should be all right.
You'll be all right.
(Murray crying)
- I'm getting Mr. Moon.
(Murray crying)
- Don't die, Murray.
- [Shayne] Stay here.
(Murray crying)
But Mr. Moon wasn't home to help us.
He had driven mama into town.
So I had to carry Murray to the hospital,
and he was crying all the way.
(forlorn orchestral music)
- What the hell happened?
- Get him in the truck.
- It's not my fault, mama.
- He fell on a nail and he's bleeding.
(engine starts, speeds away)
- [Doctor] Mrs. Lacey.
- Yes.
- You have a very lucky little boy.
Another two centimeters or so
and that nail would
have punctured his lung.
- [Shayne] So is he okay?
- He's fine.
- [Frances] Can I see him?
- You can take him home.

- Oh!

- Just try to keep him in bed for a couple of days and keep that wound clean. You give that to them upstairs.

- [Frances] Thank you.

- Interesting kid.

- You're okay?

- [Shayne] I had made mama a promise. I told her I'd keep it. But I wasn't dad, and I was sick of pretending I was. I knew that when the house was done, I was going back to L.A. There was more to do, I had friends there, and it was a lot warmer.

- I'll warm it up for you?

- Yes.

- [Man] You're not here for the hunt, are you?
(men laughing)

- Can I get you guys anything else?

- No, we're out of here, Franny.

- How about you and your tribe be here to help us out over on that new remodeling job?

- Well, I tell you what, Dave, we'd be on the job site, not loafing around over here.

- You're not loafing.

- I'm short of cash this week. This will have to do for a tip.

- You're kidding.
Dave, this means more to me than money.

- [Dave] Let's go, gringo.

- [Shayne] In Los Angeles, mama had worked her butt off just to get us from day to day. Now we all had to earn enough to live on and put something away for our house. We all worked on that house every chance we got, but there were some things we couldn't do, so mama hired contractors for those jobs.

God help 'em.

- [Frances] Over here.

- Yeah, sure, we can take care of it.

- I know you guys.

You buy your goddamn
wiring and your fixtures,
and you mark it up 20, 50%
and you soak me for it.

I want an estimate for manpower only
and a list of what material you'll need.
I'll haggle for the materials myself.

Any questions?

I ain't got much time.

I gotta get to my job.

I know you think I'm a
hard-nosed bitch, Mr. Whitman.

Don't deny it.

I am when it comes to this house.
But I also know I'm at your mercy.

You treat me honestly
like I'm gonna treat you.

Now I'll deal in cash so we
may have to do this piecemeal,
but there won't be any corner-cutting.
I want the best for this house, the best.
Lacey tribe.

Show Mr. Whitman your hands.

Every penny you spend is a penny
me and these little hands earned.

Don't make those blisters
count for nothing.

There. I've tried it all,
guilt, fear, and pity.

You understand me now, Mr. Whitman?

- Shirt. You're skin.

Shirt. You're skin.

Laughlin, come on, get a
haircut or a dog license.

You look like an animal.

You're shirt, you're skin.

Come on, Frank, you stand
up straight like a man,
would you, not like some old woman?
There you go.

Lacey.

- Yeah?

- Just what the hell is that?

- Well, my sister's red socks got in with the whites, and it turned the sheets and pillowcases and the t-shirt kind of pink.

- Go get another one.

- Well, sir, this is the only one I got.

- What, are you kidding?

Lacey, I told you at the beginning of the term that you would require a white t-shirt, did I not?

- Yes, you did.

- White. Is that white?

- No, sir, it's a little off.

- A little off?

I'd call that titty pink, huh, guys? (laughing)

Come on, you're a shirt, you're a skin. Let's go.

Shirts over there, skins over there.

Let's move it, guys, (whistles) go!

Lacey. Lacey.

Listen, why don't you just go play with the girls?

Better yet, sit on the girls' bench.

Your titty pink shirt will fit in a lot better over there.

Right over there between the two girls.

All right, guys, come on!

Everybody over here, let's go!

Shirts, you're going that way, skins, you're going that way.

You guys got any question?

Your grade depends on this.

- [Shayne] Her name was Raymi, and I couldn't have met her under more embarrassing circumstances, but at last I had one good reason to stay in Hankston.

(clattering, kids chattering)

- Mom, Murray needs a compass

and protractor for school.

- Can't he borrow one?

- Mrs. Tipton said he has to have a set of his own or she'll flunk him.

- I'll give you money for the first time you go back to school.

- Mama, I still feel sick.

- Just stay in bed, honey, and keep warm. We'll save you something.

Wait, Shayne.

- Mom, I need a new white t-shirt for gym class.

- Damn, Shayne, another one?

- Yes.

- Take the potatoes and the gravy.

Everybody sit down.

- You see, it's gotten kind of green.

- Murray's green pants got in with the whites.

- Green, white, red, blue, what's the difference?

You want gold lami?

- [Lynn] Everybody else's is white.

- I got to have a white t-shirt.

- (bangs) Don't you tell me what you got to have, Shayne Patrick Lacey.

You got to have a roof over your head and food on the table, and you got that.

You're not getting a new t-shirt.

End of discussion.

(knocking)

- [Girls] Hi, Mr. Moon.

- Hi, Mr. Moon.

- Pumpkin. Made them myself.

Still warm.

- Mr. Moon, please come in.

Sit down. Let me take your jacket.

- Thank you.

Happy Thanksgiving, Laceys.

- Happy Thanksgiving, Mr. Moon.

- Faye is not feeling well.

Sit. Sit.

Are you a praying man, Mr. Moon?

- (chuckles) I'm a failed Catholic,
but, yes.

- We're not religious either but
a taste of it couldn't hurt.

And who knows, it might take
on one of these heathens.

- Lord, we have much to give thanks for.

But this year, I have a special thanks.

Thank you for the Lacey family

which came into my life

and turned it upside-down and made...

Made it much more interesting.

And my house is very clean.

Amen.

- Amen.

- [Kids] Amen.

- Give it back.

- Busy.

Can you hold it?

- I don't know.

It's freezing.

- Hey.

I wiped that butt a long time
before you did, you know.

- Next thing we're working
on is indoor plumbing.

- Hey there.

- Hi, Norm.

- Dave Pollock left this for you.

- Beautiful! A 4-d fuse
box in perfect condition.

- Get all hot and bother over a tin box.

- Well, we make do with what we got.

It's the best thing that's
happened to me all day.

- How about I take you down to Crossroads
after we close tonight?

They got a band.

- No, I don't think so.

I got to get home to my kids.

- Just a few minutes

kicking up your heels,

one night in how long?

- I don't even remember.

- See?

One drink, one dance, straight home.

I got some old electrical conduit

I'll throw into the bargain.

- How much conduit we talking about?

- How much can you handle?

- Norman, if it ain't connected
to this, I ain't interested.

But I will go dancing with you.

One beer, one dance, then home.

That'll be all for you?

- Hi, mom.

- Hi, mom.

- [Frances] Hi.

- [Girls] Hi mom.

- Tips were good tonight.

Murray, get the jar.

- What's that?

- I saved you some supper.

- Oh, well, I already ate.

Here's some ham sandwiches for tomorrow.

I've been thinking,

this Christmas, we don't need

to get each other presents.

We'll get our house something.

We'll get presents for our house.

- Like a television?

- Well, maybe not like a
great big old television.

- [Murray] What about Santa?

- Well, he'll get presents
for our house, too.

We'll write him a letter.

- [Craig] Can Santa being a TV?

- It's too big, dummy.

- [Craig] Shut up, Annie, I want a TV.

- What do you think?

- [Lynn] It's okay with me.

- I like the idea.

- Fine with me.

- What do you think?

- [Shayne] Sure

- Huh?
- Sure.
You were late.
- What?
- I said you were late, where were you?
- I went for a beer.
- Really?
- [Lynn] With Norm?
- Yes, with Norm.
You listen to me.
You leave my private life
to me, Shayne Patrick,
what little I have of it.
This weekend we get the tree!
- [Kids] Yay!
- [Shayne] When you're
really, really poor,
everything you see is
something you can't have.
- Shayne?
- Yeah?
- What you gonna mama for Christmas?
- I don't know.
Maybe some stockings.
I saw her crying last night
when she ruined the last pair.
- I thought we were supposed
to get presents for our house.
- That's just talk, that's all.
- You sure? We wrote that letter to Santa.
- Yeah. You know how mom always talks.
- Does that mean I get a Bowie knife?
- No.
- Argh!
(hammering)
- [Mr. Moon] Coming
through, coming through.
Step aside.
Wait, wait.
- When I was a kid, we had an old bathtub.
It was so big I could
lay down up to my chin,
my knees would still be underwater.
I'd soak and read for hours.

The books would get all fat
and crinkly from the dampness.

- Did you live in a house of your own?

- Yep. I lived there until I left.

- How's Santa going to come
if we don't have a chimney?

- It's chimney.

- Well, he'll have to
come through the keyhole,
like he did in Los Angeles.

- [Craig] Dummy!

- [Annie] You're the dummy!

- [Craig] Dummy!

- [Annie] No, you are.

- The water's getting all gunky.

- Look who's in it.

- Why am I always last to take a bath?

- Because nobody wants to wash
after you've been in there.

- Well, I'm done.

- Not so fast, young man.

Let me see those ears.

- I cleaned them.

- Oh, Murray. Let's
plant potatoes in there.

- Ouch!

- Oh, I'm sorry.

Did I hurt you?

I'm sorry, baby.

You're getting to be an independent
little snout, aren't you?

(knocking)

- Hello again, Mrs. Lacey.

Every year at Christmas time,
we pass out these presents
to the needy children
of our community--

- Needy children?

Good for you, Father.

I suggest you go find some.

There's none here.

- I'm sure that your children
would appreciate some gesture--

- My children's gifts are

already under the tree.

Merry Christmas.

Good night, Father.

(door slams)

Come on. Ready for bed.

Santa's almost here.

- [Kids] Yeah!

(alarm ringing)

- Murray, look! Santa came.

Santa drank the milk.

Look! Look!

- Santa came.

Come on.

Presents!

(kids clamoring)

- Wake up mama first.

- [All] Mom! Mom! Wake up, come on!

- [Frances] Okay. Okay.

(kids clamoring)

- [Craig] Where's mine?

- [Annie] Yeah, where's mine?

- [Frances] Oh, Santa came.

- [Murray] Here, I found mine.

- Oh, Lynn.

Thanks.

- [Annie] I wonder why this is so heavy.

- [Lynn] Ready?

- One.

- Two.

- Three!

- [Frances] Save the paper.

Save the paper.

- Why?

- [Shayne] I bet I know what this is.

- Oh, Lynn!

Did you make these yourself?

What's wrong?

They're presents for our house.

Remember? We talked about it.

- This is not a house.

This is not Christmas.

We live in a shack.

A shack!

We have nothing of our own.

Everything we did have,
we either sold it or left it behind.
We have nothing!
It's supposed to be Christmas, goddamn it!
It's Christmas!

- You watch your mouth,
Shayne Patrick Lacey.

- Well, I like what I got.
- All that money we earned, and nothing.
- You're just mad 'cause you didn't get
the stupid t-shirt you wanted.
- Shut up, Murray!

All they wanted was some toys or a radio,
or you know what?

You care more about this stupid shack
or this stupid house idea
than you do about any of us!
(heaving)

- Go get your father's belt.
Go get it.

(sobbing)
(knocking)

- [Lynn] I'll get it.
- Oh, merry Christmas.

I was going...

- Merry Christmas, Mr. Moon.

- I know you had told me
not to bring any presents,
but this is for the house.

- Lynn, get Mr. Moon his present.
- It's a mailbox.

We got the spelling off the contract,
and Shayne made it in shop class.

- Yes, thank you.
- What is this?
- Plans.

The blueprints for the rest of this house.
It's not like your picture.
It's one-story ranch with two bedrooms,
but that can be changed.
It's a good, solid plan.

- I really appreciate it, Mr. Moon,
but we're set on building our own house.
Merry Christmas.

- You
are a stubborn woman, Mrs. Lacey.
What's wrong in here?
- Santa Claus hates me.
(sobbing)
- Mr. Moon,
could you give me a ride into town?
- Yes, ma'am.
- I'll be ready in a minute.
- I'll be warming up the truck.
- [Man] Merry Christmas.
Happy New Year.
- [Man] Merry Christmas.
- Excuse me, Father.
- Oh, Mrs. Lacey.
I certainly didn't expect to see you here.
- Well, actually, Father,
I was hoping to take you up on your offer.
Would you have any of those presents left?
- I took your advice.
I gave them to a truly needy family.
- So you have no gifts?
- You know, I think the best gift
that you could give your family
would be to bring them all here to church.
- [Woman] Father Tomlin,
that was so wonderful.
Thank you. I greatly enjoyed that sermon.
- I have money. I can pay.
- I'm, I'm sorry, Mrs. Lacey.
We have none. I'm sorry.
- Is it warm enough in there?
- Warm enough.
Why didn't you finish
this place, Mr. Munimura?
- I started it for my boy.
He went into the Navy.
He was a pilot, flew a jet.
Married a nice Japanese girl from Hawaii.
They were going to move here
after their tour in Korea.
Munimura and son.
Korea...
He wanted to fight.

Michael wanted to prove he was as American as anyone else.

Chaiko and I started this place.

It was going to be a surprise.

He didn't come back.

His wife went on with her life.

Chaiko died the next year.

- I'm sorry about the blueprints.

I shouldn't have said that.

I didn't even look at them.

- No, no, you have a right to your kind of house.

Chaiko and I started this place so there'd be a family someday here.

You and your tribe are

more than Chaiko hoped for

as far as the number is concerned,

but you saw something

here the day you drove up

in that rattletrap Plymouth.

Don't forget what you saw.

- Merry Christmas, Mr. Munimura.

- Merry Christmas, Mrs. Lacey.

- [Lynn] Mama, you didn't open the rest of your presents.

- Tomorrow.

- Mama, come over here.

- Oh, Lynn, I got to finish the dishes.

- Come on.

- No, I mean it. I got to.

- [Lynn] Oh, good, they fit. Oh, good.

- (sighs) Oh, God, I'm so tired.

(sighs) I'm just so damn tired.

- Well, maybe you should go to bed.

- It's not that kind of tired.

Sometimes I don't think I can...

I feel like I'm...

Pushing a car uphill, like a big car

like our Plymouth up a steep hill, and I'm pushing and pushing and

and I push and I look down,

and I can see the ground under my feet,

and then I look up, and I can see all you

kids in the backseat and looking at me and

and I'm pushing...

- But mama, we're not in the car.

We're helping you push.

- Yeah.

Yeah, you are.

- Of course, mama.

We're the Lacey tribe.

It just feels like you're pushing alone sometimes.

Here, you open this one.

(soft sentimental music)

That's from Annie and Craig.

We helped, but just a little.

(sniffling)

- [Faye] Look at that.

- [Shayne] It was a long, long winter.

Mama and I were still fighting,

and being cooped up in

that shack didn't help.

There wasn't anything to do

or anywhere to go.

- Hello.

Hi, kids.

- Hi, mom.

- [Craig] Hi, mom.

- Oh, what a pretty picture.

Did you paint that?

- [Annie] Uh-hmm.

- Who is that?

- [Annie] That's you,

that's Craig, that's Shayne,

and that's me, and that's Murray.

- Hey, what is this?

What the hell are you

doing, you little snot, huh?

- [Frances] Shayne, watch it.

- This is my history book.

Look at what you've done.

You've ruined my book.

- [Annie] Who cares?

- It's pretty.

- [Lynn] You draw in it every day.

- [Murray] Yeah. Naked women.

- Shut up! I'm gonna smack you both!

- Shayne Patrick, watch your mouth.
- Wait a minute.

Where's my homework?

Huh? Where is it, huh?

- Shayne, I'm warning you.
- I don't know.
- You do know.

Tell me!

- I don't know.
- Tell me!
- I don't' know.
- Get your father's belt.
- Get it yourself.
- [Girls] No, mama, please, mama.
- Listen to me.

When are you gonna listen?

(lashing, wailing)

- [Lynn] Stop it!

(kids wailing)

Mama, stop!

(lashing, wailing)

- Stop it, mama! Stop!
- Mama, please!

(Annie crying)

- [Shayne] I didn't speak to my mother
or look her in the eye for five days
after she took my dad's belt to me.
I didn't think she even cared.

(sniffling)

(sighs)

(knocking)

(sighs)

- You and I remember him best.
Craig and Annie were too young.
- Do you ever get mad at him?
- What?

For leaving us like this?

Sometimes.

I get mad at him for a whole
bushel basket of things,
but you can't really blame
that goddamn vagabond
Irish Catholic son of a
bitch for dying, can you?

(sniffing)

- Just, sometimes I wish things were a little different.
- You don't wanna be the man in the house. I know what you have to give up, the things you can't do at school. You don't have any friends. You have responsibilities. I was a kid myself once, too, you know. Want to go to parties, have fun, dance my life away, dance with all the boys, neck until the sun came up, but this is what I got. This is what happens sometimes. You work with what you get, and you try to make it better.

- [Woman] I'll pick you up around 3:00.

- [Frances] Thanks. See ya.

- Mom, it's cold. Are you okay?

- Yeah.

It's gonna be beautiful. We'll finish the first floor this summer. We'll do some exterior work, then next year we'll start on the second floor. You'll have your own room. It's gonna be all buttoned up and beautiful.

- Yeah.

Mom,
can I ask you a question?

- Hmm?

- Can I go on a date?

- Sure.

- I can?

- I've been known to go on a date once or twice myself, you know.

- Really?

Mom...

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry about being mad at you. You know, for going to dinner, going on a date.

Mama went all-out for the occasion.
We went back to the thrift shop
and picked out a jacket, slacks, shoes.
They were used, but they
were the best I ever had.

- You look nice, Shayne.
- Oh, thanks, Faye.
- Going to squeeze her boobies?
- All right. I'm gonna get you.
I'm gonna get daddy's belt on you.
- You, boys.
- Oh, mom, you look great.
- [Faye] You look great, mama.
- Really?
- [Shayne] Yeah.
- [Lynn] Mom, you look really nice.
- Look at you, Shayne.

Ain't he a handsome devil?
Looks just like his father,
that goddamn vagabond

- Irish Catholic son of a bitch.
- Are you going to the
dance with Shayne, mama?
- I got a date of my own.

(car honks)

- That's them.
- [Annie] You'll never get a
date, Murray, you stink bug.
- Are you excited?
- Yeah.

I'm nervous.

- Are you?
- Here. Don't tell the others.

- [Shayne] I knew what
that money meant to mama
and to our house.
- Bye, Shayne.
- Bye, Shayne.
- Bye, mama.
- Bye.
- Good luck on your date.
- Okay.
- [Shayne] That dollar meant more to me
than anything she ever gave me.

(romantic orchestral music)
You never forget your first real date.
I didn't know how to dance,
much less how to ask a
girl to dance with me.
It sure was different
than practicing with mama,
but I had the first, best time of my life.
Oh, don't you know
Don't you know you'll be my fool
You got me crying
Crying again
When will you let
This heartache end
Emotion
You gave me up then
Why make me remember
What I wanna forget
(clanking)

- May I have the pleasure?
- Well, Norman.
- Dance with me, Frances.
- Well, but let's go on inside.
It's cold out here.
- Well, I'm a good keeper-warmer. Yeah!
- Norman...
- What?
- Come on, let's go dancing--
- We're definitely kicking
up our heels tonight, but...

After.
- After?
- Uh-hmmm.
- What is this?
- This is the key to paradise.
- You're presuming a bit, aren't you?
- I don't think so.

You're free, white, and
more than a nod past 21.

- Thanks a lot.
- Yeah, we both are.
I think we'd get it out
of the way, you know.
- Out of the way?

- Yes.

Save some awkwardness and then
we don't smell like cigarette smoke.
Besides, to tell the truth,
I drink too much when I dance,
and I ain't worth a shit in the sack then.

- Well, that's romantic as all hell.

- Look, it's paid for.

Why waste it? Come on.

Hey, what are you doing?

- Norman, either we go
dancing or you take me home.

- Oh, don't act like no virgin.

- What?

- I mean a woman with six kids
has been around the block more than once.

- Yeah, but I don't roll on my back
for every asshole who scratches my belly.

- Maybe you ought to, lady.

Not many guys are gonna make
this kind of offer everyday.

- Oh, boy, I should be so lucky.

- Come on, honey, all right--

- Don't call me honey.

Let go of me, take your hand off me.

Take your hand off me.

- Settle down!

- Look, Norman, this isn't gonna happen.

What are we gonna do?

Stand here all night until
the snow comes again?

Let go of me!

- Don't tell me what to do!

You know I could make you.

- You could try.

- [Boy] Come on, guys, let's go.

Come on. Will you get
out of there? (knocks)

You're steaming up the windows.

Guys, let's go.

(radio music plays softly)

See you, lover boy.

- Bye, Raymi.

(car door slams)

Hey, mom, what you doing?

- Sitting.

Go on in, I'll be in in a minute.

- Are you okay?

- Yeah.

I'm fine.

How as your date?

- It was all right.

How was yours?

Mom?

Mom?

What happened?

I just made a mistake, that's all.

I don't know what it is, but

if there's a son of a bitch

within 70 Miles, he'll find me.

It's been that way since your daddy died.

Any horse's ass.

I just walk right up to him and say,

"Here I am, you asshole.

"Why don't you chew me

up and spit me out?"

- Mom, I'm sorry.

It's gonna be okay, okay?

I promise.

- Honey, it's not your fault, it's his.

Now go on, will you?

- [Shayne] It's gonna be okay.

Come on.

Was dad ever mean to you?

- No.

He was the finest man I ever met.

He treated me like a queen.

Promise me something, Shayne.

Promise me you'll never beat on a woman.

- Yeah, I promise.

- Never beat on anybody.

It hurts, inside and out.

- Yeah.

I know it does.

- Go to bed.

Please.

Go to bed.

(hammering)

- What is it?
Annie, Annie, wake up.
(hammering)
(whacking, thud)
(smack, grunt)
- You hit my mother!
(grunting)
- [Norman] Crazy little bastard.
- [Woman] Call the sheriff. Somebody.
(slams, grunts)
- Say you did it! Come on!
(slams)
You did it!
Say you did it!
Say you, say you did it!
Say it.
Say it now! Now!
- I never touched her.
- Where'd she get the scratch?
- 'Cause she fights just like you do.
(punch, grunt)
(groaning)
- Mr. Hilliard.
- Yeah.
- Can I talk to you for a minute, please?
- Sure.
- I can't work here anymore.
- [Mr. Hilliard] Why?
- I quit. I can't work here with Norman,
not after what he did to my boy.
- Uh, Norman doesn't work here anymore.
I let him go.
- Really?
- [Mr. Hilliard] Yeah, really.
So if Norman's the problem,
you really don't have a problem.
Listen, Frances,
why don't you take the day off?
And I'll see you in the morning.
Okay?
Things will get better.
You'll see.
(sighing)
- Lacey tribe, may I have

your attention, please?

- [Annie] What do you want, Murray?

- Just come here, it's a surprise.

- [Frances] Too busy.

- [Murray] You're never too busy for this.

- [Shayne] Come on, hurry up.

- [Faye] Yeah, hurry up.

- One...

Two...

Three! (flushing)

(cheers, applause)

- [Frances] Lacey tribe,
we're coming up in the world.

Indoor plumbing.

Who gets the first turn?

- [Kids] Oh, I do. I do. Me.

(splashing)

(hammering)

(chafes)

- Craig! Shayne!

Come down here.

- Murray.

- Come on.

Bye, outhouse. Yeah!

- Murray, what are you doing?

- Dirty.

Okay, this is dirty.

- [Annie] Clean.

- Annie, look at this spot.

It's dirty.

- [Annie] Whoopee-doo, a little spot.

(fire crackling)

- [Murray] Look at that, it's burned.

- [Craig] Yeah.

- All right!

- Yeah!

- Yay!

- I don't have to go to that
stinking outhouse anymore.

I hate that outhouse.

- [Murray] What?

- [Annie] It's burning!

- Craig, Annie, go over to Mr. Moon's!

Get him to call the fire department! Go!

Hurry!

Murray, come on!

Come on, Murray! Come on.

(fire crackling)

(flailing)

- [Mr. Moon] It's frozen.

(exploding, yelping)

- [Woman] The red dress.

- [Frances] With the white bows.

Good for you.

- Matching lipstick, too. (laughing)

Look at that smoke.

- Where?

- [Woman] Right there, isn't that close to your house?

- Oh, my God.

- I'm gonna get the money jar.

- [Mr. Moon] Boys, get down from the roof.

- [Shayne] Murray, get out of there, it's too hot!

(fire crackling)

- Are you okay?

What happened?

- I'm sorry, mama.

- Are you okay?

Where's Lynn?

- Lynn went back in the house.

- Where?

- She's in the house.

- Lynn?

Lynn!

Lynn!

Lynn.

Lynn!

Lynn!

(coughing)

- Mama, I couldn't find the money jar.

- Are you okay?

- Gotta find it.

(fire roaring)

(sirens blaring)

- [Shayne] By the time they got there, there was nothing the firemen could do. I even remember the way they'd put it:

"the structure was fully consumed."

I think the less you have,
the more it hurts when you lose it,
and that fire hurt a lot.

(slow, forlorn music)

- Murray.

- Sorry, mama.

I'm so sorry.

- Oh, honey.

It's not your fault.

- I just burned down our house.

- Oh, listen.

It was an accident.

It was an accident, honey,
it's nobody's fault.

Oh, baby.

It's nobody's fault.

Come on.

- Save the nails.

- (laughing) Oh, Lynn,
everything's gonna be all right.

We can start over. (laughs)

Everything's gonna be all
buttoned up and beautiful.

- [Shayne] Bullshit!

Nothing's gonna be all right.

You're always saying that,
"buttoned up and beautiful."

Don't tell them that if they're good,
everything will work out.

It doesn't work that way.

"Buttoned up and beautiful"?

You're always saying that!

And we believe it, and it hurts us
every time we have to hear it from you.

Don't lie to them.

- I don't know what to say to you, Shayne.

I don't know what you wanna hear.

I guess you want a different
family, a different life.

Well, it ain't gonna happen.

This is what you got.

You think I don't want something more?

Life isn't fair, buddy.

Sometimes it's just goddamn lousy.
You wanna go back to Los Angeles?
Go on.
We'll manage without you.
You don't have to be the
man of the house anymore.
We'll manage just fine.
I managed without your dad.
I don't know how the hell
I did that, but I did it.
We'll manage without a lot of things.
Go on, get the hell out of here.
- Mama.
- [Faye] Mr. Moon! Mr. Moon!
- [Mr. Moon] Come on, pull up over here.
Mrs. Lacey, I know you don't take charity.
You'll be getting a bill.
Let's go, let's go, everybody.
- Mr. Munimura, I can't accept this.
I can't owe people. I can't.
- We're gonna do it no
matter what you say, Frances.
It's gonna be okay.
Let's go to work!
- Thank you so much.
- [Faye] Mama. Mama.
- [Annie] Mama.
- Look at all the pretty
toys you got, my goodness.
(hammering, tapping)
I don't know, do you think
it should it go over there a little bit?
(hammering)
- [Mr. King] Watch the fingers.
(hammering, pounding)
- [Shayne] So mama let them build it,
but just to where it was before the fire.
After that, it took us six
months to finish our house
and four years to pay everyone back.
Okay, Mr. Moon, come on, Ma.
Get everybody, all right guys, I'm coming.
I took a picture the day we moved back in.
This camera was borrowed, too.

Now I'll tell you something
else that's really true,
but you probably won't believe it.
I've never been back to L.A.
And I still live in Hankston, Idaho.
Whatever tore us apart,
building that house brought us together
forever.
We...
We're the Lacey tribe.
(mellow orchestral music)