

The Middle
The Hostages

FADE IN:

COLD OPEN

EXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - ORSON, INDIANA - LATE EVENING

A rather empty parking lot except for a few scattered vehicles, one of which belongs to the Heck family. Inside the car, we can see BRICK flat out on the back seat.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - LATE EVENING

Inside the elderly manager's office, sitting behind his desk is a stressed looking MR. MILLER, who is popping pills. In the same corner of the room, looking both tired and boiling hot are MIKE, AXL and SUE. Mike has dried milk stains on his shirt, Axl has no top on, and Sue's hair is insanely frizzy.

Standing up in the middle of the room, sweat dripping off her forehead, looking flustered and bedraggled is FRANKIE, who is trying to talk sense into someone.

FRANKIE.

Come on now, this is ridiculous.

Just give me the gun.

(no response)

Okay, it was worth a shot.

Frankie shrugs her shoulders and goes to join her family on the floor. As she sits, they all shake their heads at her in a very disapproving way. She starts wiping the beads of sweat out of her eyes.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Being held hostage in a run down store on one of the hottest days of the year for hours on end isn't my idea of fun, but when the person holding the gun is your neighbour then it's even worse....

We then see who is holding the shotgun - RITA GLOSSNER. She has a crazed look in her eyes.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

So how did we all end up in this situation? Well, it's a long story so take a seat and enjoy the ride...

MAIN
TITLES

ACT ONEINT. HECK FAMILY CAR - EARLIER THAT DAY

Mike is driving, while Frankie sits in the passenger seat trying to fan herself. The kids are in the back. Axl is texting on his phone, Sue is using her laptop, and Brick is reading a book. All the windows are open on an unusually hot day.

MIKE.

Right, we're nearly there so time to stop doing whatever it is you're all doing.

Not a single one of them stops what they're doing.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

No matter how old they get, it don't get any easier to make them listen. It gets harder, if anything.

Frankie starts searching through her handbag for something. She clearly can't find what she's looking for and starts to panic. She frantically starts pulling all sorts of things out of her bag such as chewing gum, socks, an odd glove, tissues, knitting material, etc... As she pulls out each item, Mike reacts.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Yeah, I'd forgotten my purse.

Mike sighs, and turns the car around to start driving back up the road they just came.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Not the greatest start to the day, but things only got worse from there...

A large bird flies in through one of the open windows and attacks Brick before taking off with his book. No one reacts, everyone is too stunned to do anything.

EXT. MIDWESTERN ROAD - SHORT TIME LATER

Frankie is running down the road trying to get the book back from the bird, but her handbag is weighing her down. The rest of the family look on from the comfort of their car.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Brick insisted we go after the bird to bring his book back. Only no one else was volunteering so it was left to me, as always.

QUICK CUTS: Frankie keeps getting close to the bird, but each time it pulls away; She empties her handbag and picks

out some bird seed which she uses to lure the bird, who drops the book on the floor; Frankie picks up the book and holds it up in victory, but a flock of pretty angry birds suddenly arrive on the scene and swarm all over her.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Yeah, I'm not too keen on birds anymore. I won't be carrying any food for them again, that's for sure. But I did manage to keep hold of Brick's book, which was the main thing I guess. The things us mothers do for our kids...

EXT. HECK HOUSE - LATER

The car pulls up in the driveway. Mike, Axl, Sue and Brick exit the vehicle. A few moments later, Frankie gets out completely covered in feathers and not looking too happy.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

I had to hear so many jokes about big birds on the way home. Longest ride of my life.

INT. HECK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mike opens the door, the kids push past him to get into the front room. Lots of unopened mail lay scattered on the floor, he picks them up. He takes a quick look at each one before tearing them in half and throwing them in the trash. Frankie notices this.

MIKE.

(re: Frankie)

All bills.

Frankie nods, then starts coughing. She pulls a feather out of her mouth. Mike grins.

Axl lounges on the sofa, texting away on his phone. Brick reads his book, and Sue is using her laptop.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

I think they'd forgotten we'd only come back to get my purse....

Mike switches on the TV and takes a seat.

FRANKIE.

Right, well, if you're all comfy I may as well go and take a shower. Try and get some of this bird smell off of me.

AXL.

Yeah, otherwise one of the customers at the store might buy you for Thanksgiving.

Everyone chuckles at his joke, except for Frankie. She just turns and waddles off towards the bathroom, slamming the door behind her.

AXL.
What's her problem?

They all shrug.

MIKE.
We got any pretzels?

AXL.
I don't know. You're the parent,
you're supposed to be on top of all
the important stuff.

MIKE.
A simple "I don't know" would've
done it.

Mike heads out to the kitchen, presumably to look for some pretzels.

AXL.
(calling)
Dad! If we do have them, bring some
in for me too.

A few moments later, Mike returns with nothing in his hands.

MIKE.
We're all out. In fact, the
cupboards are bare. I guess that's
why we're going shopping.

He takes a seat.

AXL.
Dad, what time do deliveries come?

MIKE.
It varies, why?

AXL.
I'm expecting the football tickets
today, remember?

MIKE.
Ah, yeah. The ones you won for
doing absolutely nothing, and the
ones you sold to your friends
instead of giving one to me.

AXL.
Hey, I'm a businessman. It's my job
to make money. And besides, you
could've bid on the tickets too.

MIKE.

Axl, the point is if I had won those tickets I would've taken you.

AXL.

Well, thanks dad, but I'm already going. I only sold one of the tickets. I weren't gonna miss this game for the world. But don't worry, it's on TV tonight so you'll get to watch it too. Plus, if you're lucky, you may get to see me on the big screen. Be sure to record it, I wanna see what my hair looks like on a screen that big.

MIKE.

I can't believe you sometimes, Axl. You've done some pretty stupid things in your time, but this really tops it.

AXL.

Jeez, chill out, dad. You're turning into mom.

Mike looks at him, shakes his head.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

They'd been like this with each other ever since Axl won the tickets. Mike wrongly assumed that Axl would simply just take him, so he bought them matching jerseys, foam fingers, the lot. Then a couple of weeks later, he found out that Axl was trying to earn money from them instead. I had to give it to Axl, he was showing really good business acumen. He even set up one of those social media pages to promote the sale and everything. Mike didn't see it that way, though.

AXL.

(checking his phone)

According to this app, the tickets are on their way. In fact, they're coming down our very road as we speak.

MIKE.

It should be me and you going to this game, Axl.

AXL.

Hey, it's you that always keeps on at me to be a good businessman and earn as much money as possible.

MIKE.

There's a time and a place for it, Axl.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Axl leaps up, answers it. We stay on Mike, who has a face like thunder. He's still hurt that his son chose money over his company. A few seconds later, Axl closes the door and holds an envelope in his hands.

AXL.

Here they are. Front row tickets to one of the biggest games of the year. But more importantly, my ticket to five hundred big ones.

He rips open the envelope and pulls out the two tickets - looks at them, suddenly his face drops.

AXL.

No, no, no, this can't be happening to me. Only ugly people with bad hair are supposed to have bad luck.
(looks at the tickets again)

This can't be right!

Mike pretends to ignore Axl and keeps watching TV.

AXL.

Dad, look at these.
(shows Mike the tickets)
They must've sent me the wrong ones. These seats are so high up we'll be able to talk to mom's new friends in the sky.

MIKE.

They've given you luxury box seats, Axl. That means you got the best seat in the house, fancy chairs, unlimited amount of food, the lot. You got your own luxury box... For two.

AXL.

What, really? Man, I could've charged way more for these if I knew.

Mike reacts.

Suddenly, Sue leaps up off the sofa and lets out a high-pitched scream of joy.

Brick also screams, but out of fear, and throws his book in the air.

SUE.

Sorry, Brick.

(then)

Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

MIKE.

Sue, what you so happy about? It's not normal in this family.

Sue shows Mike her laptop.

SUE.

Here, take a look.

MIKE.

Can't anyone just talk these days? Stop showing me stuff.

SUE.

It's Lexie.

(off Mike's blank look)

The rich girl I live with at college. Anyway, she just let me know the producers of that gameshow got back to her and they liked our audition. We're gonna be on TV!

She screams with joy again.

MIKE.

Enough of that.

(then)

So you're gonna be on TV? You really think that's a good idea, Sue?

AXL.

Yeah, dad's right. You gotta be attractive for TV.

BRICK.

.... And smart.

(whispers to himself)

Smart.

She looks at both of her brothers in an indignant way.

SUE.

I'll be fine. I can't wait!

MIKE.

Well, if you're happy, then good. When are the tapings?

SUE.

Oh, there's no tapings. It's a live show.

Mike reveals an expression of worry and fear.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Sue on live TV? Yeah, that had recipe for disaster written all over it.

SUE.

Dad, don't worry. I'll be fine. Me and Lexie have been practising for months.

Mike rubs his head.

MIKE.

Sounds like you got everything sorted then. Good luck.

SUE.

I don't need luck, dad. We're gonna do great.

Frankie enters, all clean and feather free.

FRANKIE.

What was all the shouting about?

SUE.

I'm gonna be on TV!

AXL.

Oh, but not just any old TV. She's gonna be on live TV.

FRANKIE.

What?! Sue, have you witnessed a crime or something?

SUE.

Huh? No, I'm gonna be on a gameshow this Saturday.

FRANKIE.

(tries to hide her fear)

Ah.... Oh, well.... That's.... Great. Well done.

She hugs Sue.

SUE.

I gotta go call Lexie.

She rushes off to her room, all excited.

FRANKIE.

Sue, don't be too long. We're behind as it is.

AXL.

I think I left half a sandwich in my room from my last visit...

Axl heads to his room.

FRANKIE.

I've really gotta start cleaning his room more often.

(to Mike)

Did I hear someone on the door while I was in the shower?

MIKE.

Yeah, Axl's tickets came back. They're not front row.

FRANKIE.

No?

MIKE.

They're luxury box seats. I'm telling you, he's the luckiest guy I know. I'd have loved to have been in a luxury box with my favourite son.

BRICK.

I'm right here, dad.

MIKE.

I love you, Brick, but we just don't click. No point in pretending otherwise.

FRANKIE.

(calling)

Axl! Sue! Come on, we're leaving.

Moments later, Sue enters closely followed by Axl, who is eating an old looking sandwich. They all exit the house. Seconds later, Frankie reemerges and meekly grabs her purse off the table and leaves the house.

END OF ACT
ONE.

ACT TWOEXT. MIDWESTERN ROAD - SHORT TIME LATER

They are stuck in the middle of a massive traffic jam. The heat is pretty unbearable.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

That's right, we hit the midday traffic. Mike wasn't best pleased. Neither was Axl or Sue for that matter. Brick was happy though, he had his book to read.

INT. HECK FAMILY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mike sits in the driver's seat, angrily tapping his hand on the steering wheel. Axl is staring daggers at Frankie, who keeps trying to blow air on herself. Sue's hair is getting wetter and wilder from the heat. Brick is oblivious to all, he's too focused on his book. All the windows are closed.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

The atmosphere in the car wasn't great. The heat didn't help matters either. And once again I was to blame... Of course.

AXL.

Come on, come on, come on! Aaaagrah! This is so annoying. I gotta be at the stadium in like five hours. Why have I gotta come shopping with you anyway? I'm supposed to be my own man now.

FRANKIE.

You become your own man when you stop coming home for food, showers and for me to do your laundry.

SUE.

I don't mean to cause any more stress to you mom, but I'm meant to be meeting up with Lexie soon to rehearse for Saturday.

FRANKIE.

Alright, Sue. There's not a lot I can do about this traffic jam.

AXL.

If it wasn't for you and your stupid grandma brain forgetting your purse we'd already be finished at the store by now.

FRANKIE.

Yes, well, it's not like I did it on purpose. Now calm down, we'll be there soon and then you two can get on with your day.

INT. HECK FAMILY CAR - SOME TIME LATER

They are still in the car, stuck in the same traffic jam. They may even be stuck in the same spot. They're all boiling hot and getting irritated too. The windows are still closed. They keep fanning themselves, all except Brick, who has his head in his book. Sue's hair is now super frizzy.

AXL.

For the love of God, can we open a window?! Sue's turning into Ronald McDonald back here.

SUE.

I can't help it. It's the heat.

FRANKIE.

No, I'm not opening a window. I'm not being attacked by a flock of birds again. Once is enough thank you very much.

AXL.

We could walk to the store quicker.

FRANKIE.

Look, this isn't my idea of fun either, you know. If there was something I could do to magically make all the other cars disappear, I would. But in case you hadn't noticed, I'm not Wonderwoman!

SUE.

Maybe we should play a game? Might help pass the time.

AXL.

Oh, God! Don't you think we're suffering enough?

MIKE.

(sternly)

Axl.

FRANKIE.

Of course we can play a game, Sue. What do you have in mind?

SUE.

Okay, name something that has a line?

FRANKIE.

.... An actor?

SUE.

Good, but it's not what I was looking for.

AXL.

This is so stupid. I'm seriously thinking about taking my own life here.

SUE.

Come on, something that has a line.

FRANKIE.

Oooh, a supermarket?

MIKE.

A supermarket?

FRANKIE.

What? They have lines at the checkout.

SUE.

You're correct, mom. Top answer. Okay, next question. Name something you can write in?

AXL.

Your blood.

MIKE.

(sternly)

Axl.

FRANKIE.

Ink?

SUE.

No, something you actually write on, like paper.

AXL.

So it's paper?

SUE.

Yes, but that's not what I'm looking for.

FRANKIE.

A notebook?

SUE.

Close, mom. Come on, dad, you wanna guess?

MIKE.

I don't know, Sue. Your diary?

SUE.

Yes! Well done, dad.

AXL.

This game is so lame.

FRANKIE.

Just because you're losing.

AXL.

I think we're all losers here, mom.

SUE.

Okay, next question. Name something that needs to be built?

FRANKIE.

Oooh, a house?

SUE.

Very good, but no.

MIKE.

A car?

SUE.

Good too dad, but no.

AXL.

A building?

SUE.

You're correct!

FRANKIE.

A building? What kind of stupid answer is that?

AXL.

Now, now, mom. No one likes a sore loser.

SUE.

Okay, next round. Whoever gets this wins double points.

AXL.

(sarcastic)

I can hardly contain my excitement.

SUE.

Name something you play on?

AXL.

Video games console?

SUE.

No.

AXL.

Well, you do.

SUE.

I know, but it's not what I'm looking for.

FRANKIE.

The bed?

AXL.

Too much information, mom!

FRANKIE.

That's not what I meant, Axl.

SUE.

Do you know what it is, dad?

MIKE.

I don't know, Sue. What is it?

SUE.

A football field...

That kind of kills the mood as it reminds Mike all about the tickets.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Yeah, not the smartest choice by Sue. But anyway, Mike got over that one and we continued to play the game for the entire duration of the traffic jam, which lasted for two and a half hours! We finally got to the supermarket though, but that's when our troubles really began....

EXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - LATER

Mike finds a space in the crowded parking lot.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

After nearly thirty minutes, we found a parking space...

They all pile out of the car, thankful for some fresh air.

FRANKIE.

Okay, we're really running short on time now so we need a system. Sue, you're in charge of the shopping cart. Axl, you take care of the snacks. And your dad and I will do the rest.

AXL.
Will this misery ever end?

FRANKIE.
Quit whining and get to it.

Axl trudges off along with Sue, who keeps trying to flatten her increasingly expanding hair.

BRICK.
Mom, what do you want me to do?

FRANKIE. (V.O.)
If I'm honest with you, I'd totally forgotten Brick was even with us. Well, he'd been so quiet in the car reading his book. But now he'd finished it. I had to think of something for him to do....

FRANKIE.
You... You have a very important job to do. You have to stand here and guard our car.

BRICK.
Guard the car? From who?

FRANKIE.
I don't know, car-jackers, drug addicts, that sort of thing.

BRICK.
(shrugs)
Okay.

FRANKIE.
Good boy. We won't be long.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)
Or so I thought....

MIKE.
Frankie, is it okay if I trade places with Brick?

FRANKIE.
No. I need you in there for the hard to reach stuff.

Mike sighs, walks towards the store with Frankie as Brick stands by the car nervously watching the passerbys.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE. DAIRY SECTION - SHORT TIME LATER

Mike and Frankie have their arms full with all sorts of groceries.

MIKE.

Yeah, you really didn't think the system through.

EXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - SAME TIME

Brick sits on the floor by himself outside the car, checking his watch waiting for his family to exit the store.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE. DAIRY SECTION - SAME TIME

Frankie drops a carton of milk on the floor and it squirts everywhere. It goes all over Mike and Frankie, and on the floor. Mike isn't amused.

FRANKIE.

Dammit!

She bends down to try and clean it up with some loo roll, but ends up dropping some of the tins of food she's holding. Several of the tins roll down the aisle at some speed and knock an unsuspecting old lady off her feet.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE. SNACK SECTION - SAME TIME

Sue and Axl are shopping. The shopping cart is already filled with as many snacks as you can think of.

SUE.

I really think we should go find mom and dad now.

AXL.

And I really think you should shave your head.

(then)

Look, it was mom who made up this stupid system. I'm just doing what she asked.

EXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - SHORT TIME LATER

Brick is still sitting by the car, but something has caught his eye and he has a queried look on his face.

BRICK'S POV: An ambulance is parked outside the store and the EMTS are helping the old lady, who was taken out by Frankie's tins of beans, into the vehicle.

Brick shrugs his shoulders.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - SOME TIME LATER

An embarrassed looking Mike and Frankie are stood before Mr. Miller, milk dripping off the pair of them.

FRANKIE.

Come on, this is ridiculous. You can't hold us in here like some criminals.

MR. MILLER.

That woman you carelessly took out is being taken to hospital as we speak.

FRANKIE.

It was an accident. I didn't suddenly think about getting a bowling strike with old ladies.

MR. MILLER.

(completely serious)

I don't do a sense of humour.

(then)

Now, you're going to pay for the damage you caused, and you're going to pay now.

FRANKIE.

Yeah, of course. Absolutely.

Frankie just stands there.

MIKE.

Frankie, he's waiting.

FRANKIE.

I know.

MIKE.

You've forgot your purse again haven't you?

FRANKIE.

No.... It's in my handbag.

MIKE.

Right...

FRANKIE.

.... Which is in the car.

MR. MILLER.

Is there a problem?

FRANKIE.

Funny story, I've left my purse in the car.

MR. MILLER.

Like I said, I don't do a sense of humour.

FRANKIE.

It's fine. I'll just go and get it.

MR. MILLER.

Neither of you are leaving my premises.

MIKE.

Oh, come on. This is stupid. Don't you have anything better to do?

MR. MILLER.

I consider criminal damage on my property very serious.

FRANKIE.

Fine. We're just gonna have to call Brick.

MIKE.

How are we supposed to get hold of Brick? He hasn't taken his cellphone out of the house since we got it for him.

FRANKIE.

Axl and Sue. They're here.

MR. MILLER.

(sarcastic)

Oh, good. There's more of you.

FRANKIE.

I can just go down and get them, ask one of them to go get my purse and sort this entire thing out.

MR. MILLER.

Neither of you are leaving my office.

FRANKIE.

Then how are we supposed to get Axl and Sue?

Mr. Miller picks up a little microphone and smiles.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE. SNACK SECTION - SAME TIME

Axl and Sue are still shopping.

AXL.

(checking his watch)

Hey, we're nearly done. And we finished in way quicker time than mom ever does. She just slows us down.

SUE.

Axl, we haven't got half of the shopping yet.

AXL.

Hey, mom just told us to get the snacks. Let her get the rest.

SUE.

Can we really trust her to get everything else, what with her memory lately?

AXL.

Good point, but I've pretty much got everything I need right here.

SUE.

Oh really? What you gonna do when you've been to the toilet?

AXL.

Easy. I'll use old magazines.

SUE.

How are you gonna wash the dishes?

AXL.

Hello? That's why God gave us tongues.

SUE.

Gross.

(then)

What you gonna wash your hair with?

AXL.

(touching his hair)

You got me. Where's the shampoo?

Sue points at an aisle in front of them. They're about to head off in that direction when Mr. Miller's voice comes over the PA system.

MR. MILLER. (O.S.)

Can a Axl and Sue Hack pl--

FRANKIE. (O.S.)

It's actually Heck.

MR. MILLER. (O.S.)

Okay... Can a Axl and Sue HECK please come to my office as I have your parents here. Thank you.

Sue and Axl look at each other, not really sure what to do.

SUE.

Oh my God.

AXL.

I know, isn't it supposed to be the other way round? You know, the parents busting us out?

SUE.

Axl, this is serious. Do you think they've shoplifted?

AXL.

Well, if they have, they're not very good at it.

They head off towards the manager's office. On the way, Axl grabs a bottle of shampoo off the shelf and tosses it into the shopping cart.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - SOME TIME LATER

Frankie and Mike are sitting on the floor, sweating and completely agitated. Mr. Miller has a top quality fan, but he's only using it on himself. He takes a pill with a glass of water.

FRANKIE.

(to Mike)

That's the third pill he's taken since we've been here.

MIKE.

So?

FRANKIE.

Well, what do you think they're for?

MIKE.

I don't know and I don't care. All I care about is getting out of here. Where the hell are they?

FRANKIE.

I don't know.

MIKE.

I bet Axl's left to go to that game.

FRANKIE.

You're probably right, but Sue wouldn't leave us.

MIKE.

Well, she's not here.

Suddenly, there's a KNOCK on the door. Mr. Miller gets up to open it and Axl and Sue amble in.

Mike and Frankie stand up.

MIKE.

Hey, what took you two so long?
We've been in here for ages.

AXL.

Whoa, you two stink.

FRANKIE.

It's the milk, and we're not in the
mood, Axl.

AXL.

Well, next time don't shoplift. If
you can't do the time, don't do the
crime.

FRANKIE.

We haven't shoplifted, Axl. It's
just been one big accident. Pretty
much like our entire lives.

SUE.

What's happened?

MIKE.

Your mother nearly decapitated an
old woman.

SUE.

What?!

FRANKIE.

(to Mike)

Don't exaggerate.

(then)

It was nothing, but it did cause a
lot of mess and now we gotta pay
for the damage. But I've left my
purse in the car so I need one of
you to go out and get it.

AXL.

What's in it for me?

FRANKIE.

What? Nothing.

AXL.

You know, I could just get in the
car and drive to the game. I am
meant to be there soon.

MIKE.

Axl, that's enough. Just do as your
mother says.

AXL.

Hey, you're the criminals. Maybe I should stop listening to you two. You're not exactly setting a very good example.

MIKE.

Right, that's it. Axl, you're staying here. Sue, you go to the car and get your mother's purse.

SUE.

Right.

He hands her the car keys. She exits.

AXL.

That's not fair, why have I gotta stay here?

MIKE.

Because you opened your mouth.

EXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Brick is reading some car magazine when Sue approaches.

BRICK.

Hey, Sue. Can you believe someone left this magazine in their cart?

SUE.

Those things are free, Brick.

BRICK.

Really? Then how do the writers earn any money?

SUE.

Advertisements.

BRICK.

Hmmm, interesting.
(then)
Where's everyone else?

SUE.

Long story, but we won't be much longer.

She opens the car door, grabs her mother's handbag.

BRICK.

Sue, is it okay if I stay in the car? This sun is giving me a bit of a headache.

SUE.

Yeah, sure.

Brick hops in the car.

SUE.

See you soon, Brick.

She rushes back into the store.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Mike and Frankie are sat on the floor, trying to fan themselves. Axl is lounging on the floor, now wearing no top because of the heat. All the while, Mr. Miller is being fanned extremely well by his expensive machine.

FRANKIE.

Well, as shopping trips go I think this ranks right up there as the worst.

MIKE.

I don't know, what about that time when we lost Brick in the mall?

FRANKIE.

Oh, yeah. I can't believe we didn't even notice until the next day. Does that make us bad parents, Mike?

MIKE.

(shrugs)

A little late to be worrying about that now.

AXL.

This heat is killing me!

FRANKIE.

(to Mr. Miller, re: the fan)

Would it be too much bother to share that thing around?

MR. MILLER.

I need it.

He takes another pill.

FRANKIE.

Seriously, how many pills are you gonna take?

MR. MILLER.

I have angina.

FRANKIE.

Oh....

MIKE.
 (to Frankie)
 You had to ask.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Sue enters, carrying Frankie's handbag.

SUE.
 Mom, I got it.

FRANKIE.
 Great.

AXL.
 Thank God!

They all get up.

Frankie takes the bag off Sue and starts searching through it. Sweat begins to pile up on her forehead as she struggles to find what she's looking for.

MIKE.
 What is it, Frankie?

FRANKIE.
 (lying)
 Nothing.

AXL.
 Oh, God. She's lost her purse again.

FRANKIE.
 I didn't lose it the first time, I just forgot it.
 (then)
 I could've sworn I put it in my handbag.

MIKE.
 You did bring it with you this time, right?

FRANKIE.
 (not certain)
 Of course.... It must be in the car.

She looks at Sue.

SUE.
 I'm on it.

She heads out.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - MOMENTS LATER

Sue is rushing through the store when she bumps into Rita Glossner, who is wearing a big coat, perhaps to conceal a weapon?

SUE.

Oh, sorry.
(recognising her)
Oh, hey. You okay?

RITA.

Do I know you?

SUE.

It's Sue. Sue Heck. We live in the same street. I dated your son.

RITA.

Which one?
(then)
It don't matter. I ain't got time for this. I'm in a hurry.

SUE.

Me too actually. See you around.

RITA.

Yeah, whatever.

Sue rushes out of the store.

EXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - CONTINUOUS

Sue runs up to the car, gasping for breath. She opens the door.

BRICK.

Hey, Sue. What's going on in there?

SUE.

Can't talk now, Brick. I need mom's purse.

BRICK.

It's on the back seat.

SUE.

How'd it end up there?

Brick shrugs, hands Sue the purse.

SUE.

Thanks, Brick.

She rushes back off into the store.

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The Hecks are still feeling the heat. Mr. Miller pops another pill.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Sue enters, carrying the purse.

FRANKIE.

Thank you, Sue.

She grabs the purse, turns to Mr. Miller.

FRANKIE.

Right, how much do we owe you?

Suddenly, they hear a voice behind them.

FEMALE VOICE.

Everyone freeze.

They all turn around to see Rita Glossner standing in the doorway.

FRANKIE.

Rita? What you doing here?

Rita doesn't respond. Instead, she locks the door behind her and pulls out a shotgun. Everyone SHRIEKS and puts their arms in the air.

RITA.

(to Mr. Miller)

Now open the safe!

FRANKIE.

Rita, what on earth do you think you're doing?!

RITA.

Shut it, Frankie. What you doing in here anyway?

FRANKIE.

Don't ask, I'd rather not talk about it.

RITA.

(to Mr. Miller)

Open the safe, I ain't gonna ask you again.

MR. MILLER.

Yes, of course.

He heads to the safe.

Rita notices everyone has their arms in the air.

RITA.

What's with all that?

FRANKIE.

You're aiming a gun at us.

RITA.

Well, there's no need for all that. As long as none of you do anything stupid, we'll be out of here in no time.

AXL.

(sarcastic)

Good luck.

MR. MILLER.

I'm terribly sorry, but I can't seem to remember the code to open the safe.

MIKE.

Now, come on. Don't play the hero here. We all just wanna go home.

MR. MILLER.

I honestly can't remember it. This medication plays havoc with my memory.

AXL.

You don't take the same stuff do you, mom?

FRANKIE.

Shut it.

MR. MILLER.

I'm sure there's a four in there somewhere...

RITA.

Well, I ain't leaving here until I get that money. My kids future relies on it.

FRANKIE.

Well, what are we supposed to do, just wait here until he gets his memory back?

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Yeah, I really shouldn't have opened my mouth.

END OF ACT
TWO.

ACT THREEEXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - BACK TO WHERE WE STARTED

Brick is fast asleep in the car, stretched out on the back seat. He suddenly wakes up. He glances out at the deserted parking lot, still no sign of his family. He shrugs, then gets out his phone...

INT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The family are on the floor, with Rita pointing the gun at them. Mr. Miller keeps popping pills, and holding his chest.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Yep, we'd been here all night. Rita confiscated our phones and everything. Sue kept us occupied with gameshow questions, though. Axl weren't best pleased about missing the game, but at least our situation gave him and Mike the chance to talk...

AXL.

Dad, you were right. I should've taken you to the game. I'm sorry.

MIKE.

You really mean that?

AXL.

I really do. I don't know what I was thinking. We've always enjoyed the football and this was our chance to go together and I ruined it.

MIKE.

What's done is done. What's important is you've realised you were wrong and you've apologised. Of course, you needed a shotgun aimed at your head to do so, but that's besides the point.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

There's nothing like a father and son bond....

Mr. Miller faints and drops his head on the desk.

FRANKIE.

(re: Mr. Miller)

Is he alright?

AXL.

Probably just worn out by Sue's incessant questioning.

SUE.
Hey, my questions were fun.

AXL.
Sue, we were all hoping to get shot
so we didn't have to listen to you
any more.

SUE.
Is that true dad?

MIKE.
A shot to the shoulder would've
done.

RITA.
(to Mr. Miller)
Hey, wake up.
(no response)
Someone go wake him up.

Frankie gets up and nudges Mr. Miller. Still nothing.

RITA.
What is it?

FRANKIE.
I don't think he's breathing.

AXL.
Well done, Sue. You've killed him.
Please do us all a favour and don't
go on that gameshow, you'll wipe
out the nation.

SUE.
Dad, will you tell him?

MIKE.
You did go on a bit, Sue.

SUE.
Dad!

FRANKIE.
Can you lot stop arguing and get
over here and help me?

MIKE.
What do you expect me to do? I'm
not a doctor.

AXL.
And the only mouth-to-mouth I do is
with girls.

RITA.

I know first aid. Taking care of as many boys as I do, CPR's become a daily routine in my house.

FRANKIE.

Great. Then get over here.

Rita rushes over, puts the shotgun on the floor. She eyes everyone in the room.

RITA.

Anyone touches that and you're dead.

AXL.

I weren't even thinking it.

Rita starts giving Mr. Miller CPR, and eventually he comes around.

FRANKIE.

Oh, thank God. It's a miracle!

Rita picks up her gun.

MR. MILLER.

What happened? What's going on?

FRANKIE.

It's okay. You must've just passed out. Take another one of your pills.

He does just that.

RITA.

Do you remember the code yet?

MR. MILLER.

The code?

RITA.

For the safe.

MR. MILLER.

Oh... If my memory serves me correctly, I think it's my birthday.

AXL.

Happy birthday.

MIKE.

He means the code is his birth date.

AXL.

Oh, right.

RITA.
Well, what is it?

MR. MILLER.
It's one ni--

FRANKIE.
--Wait! Rita, you don't wanna do this. Look, no real harm has been done. No money has been taken, and no one has been hurt. In fact, you saved his life so I doubt he's gonna press charges,
(to Mr. Miller)
right?

MR. MILLER.
I guess not.

FRANKIE.
Come on, Rita. We've all got it tough. Do you know how many times I've thought about turning over one of these places for some easy cash?
(off Mr. Miller's look)
I never did, of course because it's wrong. And that's why I never did it. Do the right thing, Rita. Give me the gun.

Rita looks at Frankie, then at the gun. After a few moments of deliberation, she hands the weapon to Frankie. Mike, Axl and Sue breathe a sigh of relief.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)
And then, that's when it happened...

Armed police burst through the door screaming at everyone to get down.

Frankie panics and accidentally pulls the trigger, sending a bullet smashing through the ceiling.

EXT. LOCAL SUPERSTORE - SHORT TIME LATER

Frankie, Mike, Axl, Sue and Rita are carted out by the police.

Brick walks over to Frankie.

BRICK.
We ready to go home now, mom?

FRANKIE. (V.O.)
Turns out he did have his phone on him after all. If only he'd called for help sooner...

INT. HECK HOUSE - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

The whole family are sitting down watching the TV.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

What a wild few days it had been. After learning the facts about the whole situation, the police kindly let us go without charge.... After keeping us in a jail cell for 24 hours. Rita saving the life of Mr. Miller didn't pull much swing for her, and she got sent down but she made a run for it and we haven't seen her since.

(then)

As for Sue... Once the gameshow producers found out about the incident, they pulled the plug on her participation. Turns out, they don't want people who spend time in jail cells on their show. But Sue did get her five minutes of fame. She was interviewed by the local paper...

On the wall now sits a framed picture with a newspaper front page inside. It features a shot of Sue, her hair extremely fizzy, standing outside the superstore with the headline: "Brave Girl Fights Off Crazy Shooter In Superstore Showdown".

FRANKIE. (V.O.)

Yeah, so the journalists told a few lies to sell some papers, what else is new? Sue was pleased with it though, she's even been asked for her autograph once or twice. And as for Mike and Axl... Well, Axl made it up to him by buying a couple of football tickets online...

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Mike and Axl are so high up, they can touch the clouds. They are dressed in matching jerseys and hats. Mike is carrying popcorn and sodas while he and Axl take their seats. The pitch below them looks like a dot.

MIKE.

Thanks for this, Axl. I think we've walked off the popcorn getting up here too.

AXL.

I think I got a nosebleed coming on.

MIKE.
At least the view is great.

AXL.
(holding up a pair of
binoculars)
Yeah, if we use these.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)
Well, you can't have everything...

RESUME SCENE.

Mike gets up off the sofa.

MIKE.
Hey, Axl. You want some pretzels?

AXL.
Yeah, sure. Thanks.

FRANKIE. (V.O.)
.... But we did have pretzels. We
just didn't realise how hard it
would be to get them.

END OF
EPISODE.