

Shoot This Picture

By Jeff Carlson

A Tales of the Cul de Sac Play

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CAST

Steve Whitehurst - down on his luck husband. Loses his job and to make ends meet, rents out home to studio to film a major motion picture that is supposed to be the comeback for a one time action star. Middle age.

Carol Ann Whitehurst- Devoted housewife that is hiding the facts of her secret past as an actress from her family until her ex pops up out of the blue to film a movie. Middle age.

Shiloh Conners- Has-been action movie star. Was engaged to Carol Ann when her name was Cheyenne. She left him at the altar when his movie flopped and he always thought that was why. Thought if he could just have another hit film that she would return.

Silvia Sloan- Shiloh's producer/manipulator. Notices Shiloh does better acting when Carol is around. Is desperately in love with Shiloh but unable to say it.

Jan - Director. European and mean. Only goes by Jan.

Freedom Jones - Shiloh's co star. She is an attractive diva. Actress/singer/dancer.

Robert - The life director. Robert is a strange personification of a guardian angel. He comes to Carol as a director guiding her life with a script. He is a casual laid back fella who is not afraid to receive some outside input.

SYNOPSIS

After being downsized at his cushy computer job, Steve is in a bad way financially. On the verge of losing it all, by chance, he is approached by a movie producer outside of his home. They want to use his home as a major emotional scene in an upcoming action movie starring super star Shiloh Conners. Steve jumps at the chance before even talking to his wife, Carol, about it. Carol has a past that Steve doesn't know about. Carol used to be a Hollywood actress but found very little fame. Her biggest success was that she was dating Shiloh Conner at the pinnacle of his career and left him at the altar just after his movie tanked at the box office. Now he has come roaring back into her life wanting to rekindle what they lost with help from his producer Silvia and Director Jan. Carol has had enough when she goes against character and gives everyone a piece of her mind. That is when "Cut" is called from some mysterious place only to realize that Carol's life is being directed like a movie. Her guiding angel Robert is directing and Carol has gone off script but he isn't upset. Instead he gives her an opportunity. She gets to make the next three takes of the scene herself to see if she could do a better job.

Act 1 Scene 1

(Curtain opens to a modest home scene. Left center stage is the front door with a window on either side of it. Right Center stage is a door to the kitchen. Center stage are two chairs and a small table. Upstage there is off shoot of the wall that works as an upstairs and downstairs access. Upstairs is stage left by the front door and downstairs is stage right.)

Steve: (Comes through the front door ushering in Silvia) Come right in Ms. Sloan. Make yourself at home!

Silvia:

Oh please, call me Silvia. (Crosses to far arm chair while Steve closes the front door.)

Steve:

Of course, Silvia. Well this is it! (He motions to the room around him as he walks to the other armchair) The little slice of American Suburban life that you have been looking for I believe.

Silvia:

It is just darling Mr. Whitehurst. I mean, we'll have to bring in some things to fill it out a bit...

Steve:

I've got tons more junk lying around if you need it! I'm talking old highschool participation trophies, knick knacks, and picture frames with the stock photos still in them. Just let me know!

Silvia:

Thank you but that won't be necessary. That's what the prop department is for. Wouldn't want to put them out of a job.

Steve:

Look, I'm just trying to be accomodating. I see this as a real win-win scenario for both of us. I could really use the money from this arrangement. (Begins to pace) See, I lost my job six months ago at this small tech company... well they called it downsizing but I call it the boot. I've been looking for work but all the young guys have snatched up everything. I was hoping the compensation from this would buy me a couple more months on the hunt.

Silvia:

As I told you, our star really likes to shoot in real environments instead of some thrown together set. I think what we would offer... if I decide that this is the right location (trying to act like this isn't exactly what she wants. She walks around examining things) we would be more than generous with some funds.

Steve:

Great! Maybe I would finally be able to break the news I was fired to my wife! (Said as if it were a joke)

Silvia:

Mr. Whitehurst...

Steve:

Call me Steve please.

Silvia:

Steve, I can't tell if you are joking.

Steve:

About telling my wife? Well I didn't want to worry her prematurely.

Silvia:

At the six month mark, I don't think premature is the right word anymore.

Steve:

How about post-punctual?

Silvia:

That's not bad actually.

Steve:

I'll tell her at some point.

Silvia:

We'll see! (She says seeming intrigued yet mysterious)

Steve:

So is that a yes that you want to film here?

Silvia:

Mr. Whitehurst, you have yourself a movie set. (Extends a hand to shake)

Steve:

(Celebrates) Yes! (Shakes her hand a little too vigorously)

Silvia:

I'll send around the crew in a while to set up the lighting and sound. The director is the handheld shaky cam type so you won't have a huge crowd in here. This is kind of an intimate scene...

Steve:

In a movie called "The Revenge of the Decapitator"?

Silvia:

It's all about balance Steve. Character comes first. Well, awesome effects come first and then maybe star power, but character is definitely in the top five. Can't have a franchise without character!

Steve:

I'm just glad it's action and not some weird science fiction time travel nonsense. (Laughs)
That's my neighbor Frank's department down the street. (Realizes she doesn't care) Which doesn't matter and I should stop jabbering.

Silvia:

Right. (Uneasy) Look, we don't want this broadcast all over the neighborhood ok. This will be a closed set.

Steve:

Except my Wife and I. Correct?

Silvia:

Yes, your immediate family can stay on set and watch the magic.

Steve:

I always thought that happened in the bedroom (awkward laugh before coming to his senses)...
And I don't know why I said that to you.

Silvia:

I make movies. I've heard worse.

Steve:

Well the kids are at camp so hopefully the magic there will suffice!

Silvia:

On that note, I'll send up the crews to set up and the cast, director, and myself will be here later this evening to shoot this picture. (Heads to the door to leave)

Steve:

Thank you so much Silvia! This means a lot!

Silvia:

It means the most to the star Shiloh Conners. He selected your house PERSONALLY! He just can't wait to sweep your wife... and you off your feet... um.. With his acting.

Steve:

Wow! What an honor!

Silvia:

Tata (leaves)

(Curtain)

Act 1 Scene 2

(Curtain opens. Carol enters from the front door and starts making her way up the stairs when she halts and backs up and turns her head toward the audience. Clearly confused she starts walking slowly downstage)

Carol:

Steve!?

Steve:

(from off set "downstairs") Carol?

Carol:

Honey? Am I in the Twilight Zone? (She is now basically down center stage staring out into the audience)

Steve:

Huh? Hold on! I'll be up in a second my love!

Carol:

Am I in some alternate reality where big light stands and recording equipment are regular furniture pieces? I'm not complaining, just concerned that I missed a very important memo. This isn't an attempt to spice up our romance, is it?

Steve:

(Coming from downstairs. Walks to Carol to console her) Sorry, I was in the man cave. Look, I know all of this looks strange...

Carol:

You think? I go over to Susan's house because she needed to borrow some nuts and I come back a few hours later to the set of the Dick Van Dyke show?

Steve:

I prefer "Father Knows Best." Look, I can explain everything. Just sit down. (He guides her back to the chairs and they sit. She looks worried. He is so excited he sits on the arm of the chair) So I was presented with a very interesting offer...

Carol:

I already don't like the sound of that

Steve:

What?

Carol:

The phrase "interesting offer." Just sounds like a pyramid scheme already.

Steve:

I was approached by a woman today

Carol:

That sounds worse than the pyramid scheme

Steve:

Carol, this is exciting. Please stop interrupting. The woman saw me outside the house. She asked if anyone in the house had ever been to a movie set before!

Carol:

(Extremely worried) Oh dear, no!

Steve:

(Oblivious) That's what I said. So she tells me that she is scouting for locations to shoot a movie and that our house was perfect!

Carol:

Is it too late to move?

Steve:

Settle down. I was suspicious too at first, but I swear she is legit. I gave them permission to film right here in our very house today. Our beautiful home is now a closed set!

Carol:

Wait! (Suddenly more relieved) Closed set? So we can't be here? Let's go!

Steve:
No,no,no

Carol:
Yes! Yes, let's just leave! An impromptu vacation would be good for us. We can just leave the key under the mat out front.

Steve:
No!

Carol:
The kids are gone, we can be alone.... Far away from here. I'll go pack quickly! (She tries to get up but Steve pulls her back)

Steve:
No! I got the ok for us to hang out and watch the movie magic!

Carol:
(Let down) Of course you did.

Steve:
Besides I'm not going to leave a bunch of strangers alone in my house to rummage through my stuff.

Carol:
You have something to hide, Mr?

Steve:
Umm... no.

Carol:
What if the neighbors bug the film crew? They would leave, right? I can call them if you would like.

Steve:
Way ahead of you. I didn't want the neighbors bugging us or spreading Hollywood gossip all over town so I told them that a crew was coming to our house to spray for bugs and rodents!

Carol:
Why that! Why was that the story!

Steve:

Just the first thing that popped in my head. Nobody wants to come near a house being bug bombed.

Carol:

Sadly, you're right.

Steve:

Don't worry so much. You're going to love it!

Jan:

(Enters through the door flamboyantly. Steve and Carol are startled and jump up before retreating to down stage right) I hate it! (Walks in like he owns the place followed by Silvia) What is with this color? It will be murder on the camera. The light is just going to bounce bounce bounce all over the room. And the size is all wrong. This is unacceptable.

Silvia:

It's this or the leading man lives in a trailer...

Jan:

(Instantly better) I love it. It's cozy yet functional. Are we confined to this room?

Silvia:

I've been promised a run of the house.

Jan:

Thrilling. How open are we to blowing out a few of these walls?

Silvia:

(Guides Jan around to downstage right to introduce him to Steve and Carol) Come along and play nice for a minute. Jan, these are the Whitehurst's.

Steve:

I'm Steve and my wife Carol Ann.

Jan:

Charmed. (Looks at Carol) You look familiar.

Carol:

I just have one of those faces. You sure you wouldn't rather film somewhere else? Really, anywhere else?

Steve:

(Laughs causing everyone else to laugh except Carol) What a kiddo?!

Silvia:

Steve, could Jan and I have a word with you in private?

Steve:

Sure! Sure! (Silvia, Jan, and Steve head to the kitchen) I'll be right back honey. (Exit)

Carol:

(She starts pacing almost immediately) Maybe it's not him. Right. There are so many in Hollywood. This could all just be some sort of a coincidence. Yeah. I mean, why am I worried? Right? Maybe I'll be spending the evening watching some hunk perform some scenes in my living room. That would be nice. Or it could be a nightmare that has been brewing for 15 years waiting to pounce and ruin the good life I have going. Or not. It could just be a coincidence all along!

Shiloh:

(Flings open the front door) The leading man is here!

Carol:

(Has the look on her face that she could cry even though she hasn't looked yet) I don't want to look. If I don't look it's not real! (She slowly looks behind her and is immediately enraged and gets up storming at him) I can't believe you tracked me here and pulled this... this... (begins hitting him)

Shiloh:

Whoa! Whoa! (confused)

Carol:

I don't even know what this is but it's crazy Shiloh!

Shiloh:

Hold it. Stop.

Carol:

Why couldn't you have just forgotten about me? I'm not your property...

Shiloh:

What?! Who are.... (Stops her) CAROL?!

Carol:
YEAH!... Wait! You didn't know??

Shiloh:
Know what?

Carol:
So, this isn't some kind of mean trick to get back at me and ruin my life?

Shiloh:
Not that I know of (Suddenly a change of heart from surprised to resentful) although who would blame me?

Carol:
You were better off without me holding you back?

Shiloh:
Holding me back? You were my inspiration! My career has plummeted since you left.

Carol:
That is your life! Don't you put that on me!

Shiloh:
I'm not.

Carol:
I didn't want that life anymore! I'm happy now. I've got a family. I live in the suburbs and I drive a damn minivan! I'm a regular soccer mom!

Shiloh:
That's great! I'm... you know... workin'

Carol:
So I've heard. (Pause) You really didn't know?

Shiloh:
I had no clue.

Carol:
Well, neither does my family. Let's keep it that way Shiloh..

Shiloh:

It's just amazing seeing you. I never thought I'd see you again.

Carol:

I mean it Shiloh. This can't come out. Ever. My life is important to me.

Shiloh:

You don't even look a day older... I mean the clothing has changed...

Carol:

I'm a housewife now, not a Hollywood actress. Standards had to be lowered.

Shiloh:

Tell that to the housewives I see on tv single handedly keeping the nail salon business afloat.

Carol:

(giggles) Stop that. (Cuts to a very stern demeanor) Stop it, now!

Shiloh: What? Stop what?

Carol:

Being adorable. I can't deal with that right now. Just take everything that you're doing down by like 4.... To 20 notches. (Trying to walk away) And don't flex. Heaven help us if you flex.

Shiloh:

Wow (smitten)

Carol:

I mean it. Not a word. (Goes back to sitting)

Freedom:

(The door opens again and Freedom Jones enters. She is your typical diva. She is prissy and girly) OMG I hate when I have to show up on set in "street" clothes. These tiny budget features are not getting me anywhere Shiloh. Any picture under a \$200 Million budget just isn't worth my time anymore unless it's for Oscar bait. (Sees Carol) Oh great! There are assistants on this location. (Walks to Carol) Ok, so I need a cool towel between takes, preferably some watermelon that is fresh and mostly cut off the rind. I like a little of the white still there. I need to have one bottle of water frozen for my neck, one bottle heated for my lower back and one poured into another larger bottle with cucumber slices and a touch of lemon for a pick me up after the first, seventh, and 18th takes if necessary. I need a tagless dry towel and some tylenol crushed up and mixed into some applesauce, mixed counter clockwise because we are on the northern hemisphere, cause I have a teensy weensy headache. I don't do pills. Ok Dear. Thanks a billion...(Carol looks at her clueless) Go. (Carol walks off into the kitchen)

Carol:
Why am I doing this.... (exits)

Freedom:
(Walks to Shiloh) Hello lover. Did you miss little old me?

Shiloh:
Hello Freedom, and for the last time. We are not lovers. It was one time and a mistake. And I'm too old for you.

Freedom:
The movie script and the casting director seem to think otherwise.

Shiloh:
I believe the term is fiction.... Maybe even horror.

Freedom:
You're cute. Hopefully we can get this scene finished quickly so we can leave. Being in suburbia just makes me feel trapped.

Shiloh:
Wait...what did you just say?

Freedom:
I said hopefully we can get this scene finished quickly so we can leave.

Shiloh:
Because if not... we are trapped here.

Freedom:
Yeah, the thought of being stuck here makes me want to barf. (Fake gags)

Shiloh:
Right, cause if we mess up we would have to stay... (Thinking and smiling really big) that would just be a tragedy. Just perfectly awful.

Freedom:
You're silly. Luckily this is a short scene. Want to run our lines?

Shiloh:
Why not?

Freedom:

(Gets close to Shiloh. Super overdramatic) Oh Johnny. I can't stand to see you leave like this. I never know if you'll be back.

Shiloh:

I have to go Serena. The city and the known free world is counting on me to decapitate these terrorists.

Freedom:

But Johnny, you've decapitated so many already. When will the bloodshed stop?!

Shiloh:

These bad guys have taken everything away from me but you... now I'm taking them out.

Freedom:

I'm going with you!

Shiloh:

No Serena! I have to do this alone. You need to leave town!

Freedom:

But where will I go? What will I do?!

Shiloh:

Go to the little town in Mexico where we met. You remember it? I'll meet you there once I've finished my business here.... Decapitating.

Freedom:

You're a wild man Johnny! A loose cannon!

Shiloh:

No Serena... I'm worse! (They break character) That wasn't too bad.

Freedom:

I'm telling you Shiloh. This is the one that is going to put you back in the spotlight and solidify me as a leading lady.

Shiloh:

A job is a job Freedom. At least, it is now.

Jan:

(Comes through the door) Oh how wonderful. Our stars have arrived on set! (Jan is followed closely by Steve and Silvia and half heartedly by Carol. Steve cuts back around and grabs Carol)

Steve:

Isn't this exciting honey? Real movie stars in our house and filming a big action movie.

Carol:

You know, lots of movies never make it out of the filming state and are shelved immediately. I've got that kind of vibe from this one.

Silvia:

(Walks directly to Shiloh) You ready to knock this one out Shiloh?

Shiloh:

(Pulls Silvia downstage left to be alone) Did you know?

Silvia:

I don't know what you're talking about!

Shiloh:

You DID know!

Silvia:

Oh come on. You needed closure on that part of your life. You know how many movies I've produced with you? You know how many times I had to hear you moan on set about her. This was the excuse to get you to get her out of your mind for good or at least make the move you've been fantasizing about since she left. You know. I only want what is best for you.

Shiloh:

I thought that is what you were thinking when you hired Freedom.

Silvia:

She's just the eye candy. We are making an action movie you know. The fact is that I know you're deeper than that. There is no way that you would ever go for that cookie cutter actress, right?

Shiloh:

Of course. Never.

Silvia:

If this does work for you... If it brings you closure, you know, there are so many women out there who would love to be given the chance with you. Maybe even one that is closer to you than you realize....

Jan:
Come on, Come on... We're burning daylight here.

Carol:
We're indoors! There is no sun!

Steve:
Should I open a curtain?

Silvia:
Closed set!

Steve:
Right. I could grab some lamps or maybe rig up some of my flood lights...

Carol:
He is just saying it's getting late Macgyver. No need to bring out the utility belt. Let's just stand back and maybe this will be over with quickly.

Jan:
Come on everyone! Places! Places! (Jan pulls up camera that is hung around his neck. Shiloh and Freedom separate onto opposite sides of the camera and start lightly stretching and doing signals like they are trying to get in character. Gargling maybe. One can do the scales while saying "My mummy makes me mash my m&ms". Once they have gotten all that out Jan continues) Remember Serena, Johnny is leaving on a death wish. He will not come back from this alive. You love him but you also just saw him viciously beat and kill 20 gang members in an alley fight. And Johnny.... You're a psychopath. Aaaaaaaaaaaaaand roll sound Aaaaaaaaaand ACTION! (Freedom and Shiloh rush to each other and embrace in front of the camera and begin their scene)

Freedom:
(Gets close to Shiloh. Super overdramatic) Oh Johnny. I can't stand to see you leave like this. I never know if you'll be back.

Shiloh:
I have to go Serena. The city and the known free world is counting on me to decapitate these terrorists.

Freedom:

But Johnny, you've decapitated so many already. When will the bloodshed stop?!

Shiloh:

These bad guys have taken everything away from me but you... now I'm taking them out.
(Suddenly remembers that he wants to sabotage the shoot so that he can stay around Carol)

Freedom:

I'm going with you!

Shiloh:

No! You should go alone. I'll go to Mexico!

Freedom:

But where will I.... wait... Jan that's not the line right?

Jan:

Cut! UGH... Shiloh? You never make a mistake? What happened?

Shiloh:

Sorry. (Shoots a look at Carol) I got distracted by the ...suburbs.

Carol:

PFFFFT!!!

Steve:

Carol!

Carol:

What! The suburbs are, like, the least distracting thing in the world. That's the whole point. The whole schtick!

Steve:

Stop interrupting Carol. It's all part of the process.

Silvia:

Shiloh, do you need a minute to go over your lines?

Shiloh:

Yeah, if you don't mind. That sounds great.

Jan:

Stupendous! I'm going to stay all day in this hell!

Silvia:

Shiloh, can we confer for a sec?

Shiloh:

Sure, sure (As Silvia guides him to downstage left) What's on your mind?

Silvia:

What's on my mind? (Slight giggle before straightening out) What the hell was that? I've seen you do full page monologues drunk with only a five minute study! Distracted by the suburbs?

None of us are that stupid. What are you playing at?

Shiloh:

I don't know what you are talking about. Mistakes happen all the time. I hear they can happen to anyone.

Silvia:

You snake. You're blowing the shot!

Shiloh:

I'm buying myself a little time, that's all. I just need to talk to her. If I finish the scene then I'll be forced out of the house. If I never finish the scene I get a few chances to win her back.

Silvia:

So you do want her back after all?

Shiloh:

I think I'm still trying to figure that out, but now you know the plan. Roll with it.

Silvia:

Yeah, and that is the worst good plan I've ever heard of. Just stop it.

Shiloh:

Stop what?

Silvia:

You know. Being adorable or something.

Shiloh:

When did that become my big problem? It just happens naturally.

Silvia:

(To Jan) He's ready Jan. He said he is ready to nail this scene like his last 8 female co stars!

Shiloh:

Shut up Silvia

Silvia:

You know why I like this scene Jan.... It shows the love between the characters

Jan:

Well duh...

Silvia:

With you standing there behind them and the two characters embracing.... Why it's almost like some sort of beautiful ceremony!

Jan:

Right... that's what I was going for. (Uncertain)

Carol:

I need some air. (Carol storms off into the kitchen followed by Steve)

Steve:

Don't go outside! The neighbors will see!

Jan:

Places! Places! (Freedom is doing her warm up bit but Shiloh is just staring angry at Silvia)
Remember Serena, Johnny is leaving on a death wish. He will not come back from this alive.
You love him but you also just saw him viciously beat and kill 20 gang members in an alley fight.
And Johnny.... You're a psychopath.

Shiloh:

You hear that Silvia. He's talking about me. I'm crazy when somebody pushes me.

Silvia:

He's talking about Johnny... Not Shiloh

Jan:

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaand roll sound Aaaaaaaaand ACTION! (Freedom and Shiloh rush to each other and embrace in front of the camera and begin their scene)

Freedom:

(Gets close to Shiloh. Super overdramatic) Oh Johnny. I can't stand to see you leave like this. I never know if you'll be back.

Shiloh:

I WON'T!

Jan:

CUT!

Freedom:

Shiloh! Get a grip! Is this dementia?!

Shiloh:

I'm not THAT old! (Gets up and guides Silvia back to down stage left) Conference.

Silvia:

I wonder whatever this could be about.

Shiloh:

What the hell Silvia?

Silvia:

What the hell Shiloh! (All buddy with him) Looks like you're about ready to break up a marriage. Are you really ready to do that to her and her husband? I just figured that two could play little games like this so I want her to think long and hard about what she put you through! You think that she is in that kitchen telling her husband about her past?

Shiloh:

I don't know. Maybe.

Silvia:

Don't be naive. She is just mad that her past popped into her perfect little life. Why don't you tell him?

Shiloh:

I promised I wouldn't.

Silvia:

I for one know that she has broken a promise to you before. Paybacks are a killer.

Shiloh:

I won't do it. Let's just get this scene over with before I wreck everyone's life. My mind is all foggy. I don't know what to do. (Is suddenly in a very depressed state) I blame you for this.

Silvia:

I just wanted you to get closure. I didn't think you would really relapse like this!

Jan:

Are we ready yet?!

Freedom:

I'm always ready for Shiloh, Jan! (Faking enthusiasm and sending winks his way)

Shiloh:

Didn't you just think I was struck with dementia? (gloomily)

Freedom:

I'm sorry shnookums. Lets just do this scene!

Jan

Come on everyone! Places! Places! (Jan pulls up camera that is hung around his neck. Shiloh and Freedom begin their stretch routine only this time Shiloh is definitely in the dumps)
Remember Serena, Johnny is leaving on a death wish. He will not come back from this alive. You love him but you also just saw him viciously beat and kill 20 gang members in an alley fight. And Johnny.... You're a psychopath. WITH FEELING THIS TIME GUYS! Aaaaaaaaaaaaaand roll sound Aaaaaaaaaand ACTION! (Freedom and Shiloh rush to each other and embrace in front of the camera and begin their scene)

Freedom:

(Gets close to Shiloh. Super overdramatic) Oh Johnny. I can't stand to see you leave like this. I never know if you'll be back.

Shiloh:

(Depressed and monotone) I have to go Serena. The city and the known free world is counting on me to decapitate these terrorists.

Freedom:

But Johnny, you've decapitated so many already. When will the bloodshed stop?!

Shiloh:

These bad guys have taken everything away from me but you... now I'm taking them out.

Freedom:

I'm going with you!

Shiloh:

No Serena! I have to do this alone. (Starts sniffing) You need to leave town!

Freedom:

But where will I go. What will I do?!

Shiloh:

Go to the little town in Mexico where we met. You remember it? I'll meet you there once I've finished my business here (Small sobs).... Decapitating.

Freedom:

(She is starting to notice him cry and looks at him strangely) You're a wild man Johnny! A loose cannon!

Shiloh:

No Serena... I'm worse! (Starts bawling)

Jan:

Cut. (dejected)

Freedom:

What is happening?

Jan:

Well, it's not what I was going for but at least we made it through the scene. Maybe I should have stayed making dog food commercials?...

Freedom:

(To Silvia who is sort of smiling and concerned) Can I have a word with you over here?

Silvia:

Sure! (Walks over calmly and the walk down stage left as well. Shiloh continues to weep while Jan sort of attempts to comfort him) What's on your mind?

Freedom:

Silvia, what is going on with Shiloh? I know you know.

Silvia:

He is trying a new approach. You see, he is getting up in his years and it won't be long before Shiloh can't do action movies anymore. He is trying to showcase his range as an actor. Very popular technique right now.

Freedom:

Wow, he is really going for it. Very method.

Silvia:

Oh yes. He is really putting himself out there like a real actor.

Freedom:

What do you mean real actor?

Silvia:

Nothing at all Freedom. Nothing at all.

Freedom:

What are you saying that I can't be method? That I can't show emotion too. Cause I can totally do that.

Silvia:

Sure you can, but let's just keep that to ourselves today!

Freedom:

There is no way I'm letting him steal the scene with his "range" as you call it. (Freedom storms off back toward Jan)

Silvia:

Well, I'm sure this isn't going to come back and bite me. Can't wait. (Sarcastically) Let's roll!

Jan:

About time. I don't know if I can work under these conditions!

Steve:

(Re-enters and is basically dragging Carol through the door) I don't know what has gotten in to you. Are you star struck or something?

Carol:

Steve, I can't be here for this. I can't.

Steve:

I thought this was a nice opportunity for our family. Something to one up... I mean... tell the neighbors.

Carol:

Sometimes, I don't want everybody to know everything. Sometimes the mystery is the best part.

Jan:

Quiet on the set!

Steve:

We'll table this for now. We will talk about it later!

Jan:

Quiet! Come on everyone! Places! Places! (Jan pulls up camera that is hung around his neck. Shiloh and Freedom begin their stretch routine only this time Shiloh is definitely in the dumps) Remember Serena, Johnny is leaving on a death wish. He will not come back from this alive. You love him but you also just saw him viciously beat and kill 20 gang members in an alley fight. And Johnny.... You're a psychopath. WITH FEELING BUT NOT SAD FEELING! Aaaaaaaaaaaaaand roll sound Aaaaaaaaaand ACTION! (Freedom and Shiloh rush to each other and embrace in front of the camera and begin their scene)

Freedom:

(Gets close to Shiloh. Super overdramatic only this time she is also somber and crying) Oh Johnny. I can't stand to see you leave like this. I never know if you'll be back.

Shiloh:

(Depressed and monotone) I have to go Serena. The city and the known free world is counting on me to decapitate these terrorists.

Freedom:

But Johnny, you've decapitated so many already. When will the bloodshed stop?!

Shiloh:

These bad guys have taken everything away from me but you... now I'm taking them out.

Freedom:

I'm going with you!

Shiloh:

No Serena! I have to do this alone. You need to leave town!

Freedom:

But where will I go. What will I do?!

Shiloh:

Go to the little town in Mexico where we met. You remember it? I'll meet you there once I've finished my business here... but if you don't meet me there I won't be mad.

Freedom:

Jan, he's going off script again...

Jan:

Go with it! Adlib! Adlib!

Shiloh:

I mean I'll keep waiting for you up there.

Freedom:

I'll be there baby! I promise!

Shiloh:

I was ready to promise myself to you before, but I clearly wasn't what you wanted.

Freedom:

Um.... I always wanted you Johnny.

Shiloh:

I never knew why you left. I was left with only assumptions. I thought maybe it was because I was a failure. But I look around and think, I could have given you this. I could have given you the suburban house and picket fence... (sighs) What did I do?

Freedom:

I don't know... um... I forgive you.... I'm not good at adlibbing.

Carol:

OH FOR THE LOVE!!! CUUUUT!!!

Jan:

You can't say cut! I'm the director!

Carol:

Give it a rest Spielberg!

Steve:

Carol what are you doing?

Carol:

(Stomps over to where the 'scene' is taking place and pushes Freedom out of the way) How hard is it to do this damn scene?

Steve:

That's enough Carol. Just let them do their thing. (To everyone else) She is never like this. I don't know what's gotten over her!

Jan:

Miss please! Remove yourself from the shot!

Carol:

Come on everyone! Places! Places! Remember Serena, Johnny is leaving on a death wish. He will not come back from this alive. You love him but you also just saw him viciously beat and kill 20 gang members in an alley fight. And Johnny.... You're a psychopath. WITH FEELING THIS TIME GUYS! Aaaaaaaaaaaaaand roll sound Aaaaaaaaaand ACTION!

Jan:

Hey!

Carol:

(Gets close to Shiloh. Perfectly acted) Oh Johnny. I can't stand to see you leave like this. I never know if you'll be back.

Shiloh:

(Feeding off her good acting and going along with it) I have to go Serena. The city and the known free world is counting on me to decapitate these terrorists.

Carol:

But Johnny, you've decapitated so many already. When will the bloodshed stop?!

Shiloh:

These bad guys have taken everything away from me but you... now I'm taking them out.

Carol:

I'm going with you!

Shiloh:

No Serena! I have to do this alone. You need to leave town!

Carol:

But where will I go? What will I do?!

Shiloh:

Go to the little town in Mexico where we met. You remember it? I'll meet you there once I've finished my business here Decapitating.

Carol:

You're a wild man Johnny! A loose cannon!

Shiloh:

No Serena... I'm worse! (He tries to kiss Carol. Carol slaps him)

Carol:

No! That is NOT ok!

Steve:

(Quickly jumping into action) I don't care if you are a movie star, there is more where that came from buddy.

Shiloh:

I called dibs, suburbanite! You couldn't give her half of what I could!

Carol:

You had your chance Shiloh. It's over between us.

Steve:

Carol, what is he talking about? What are you talking about?!

Shiloh:

She was supposed to be my wife, but she left me at the altar when my movie bombed at the box office!

Carol:

That is not fair Shiloh! I had my reasons!

Freedom:

Well, I quit. Maybe I can still get a part in that superhero show. (Exits)

Jan:

Wait for me. This is all terribly unprofessional!

Carol:

I can't believe you thought I left you because your movie was bad! All your movies were bad! I didn't care!

Silvia:

You were right about not telling her Steve! She might have abandoned you too!

Steve:

Get out of my house! All of you!

Carol:

What didn't you tell me Steve?

Steve:

You are going to question me??

Carol:

I'm not the bad guy here!

Silvia:

Fine. Let's see what happens!

Steve:

Please don't!

Silvia:

Steve lost his job six months ago. The only reason he agreed to let us film here was so he could afford to keep lying to you!

Carol:

Steve?

Steve:

I can't handle this anymore. This clearly isn't working. I'm leaving. (Exits through the kitchen)

Shiloh:

Smart guy. Maybe I should follow his lead.

Silvia:

Come on Shiloh. She doesn't deserve you. (Silvia takes Shiloh by the arm and leads him out the front door smiling ear to ear.)

(Carol is alone and broken on stage. There is a long pause of silence)

Robert:

(From in the crowd a voice booms) CUT!!! (Carol is quite alarmed when she looks up and sees a casually dressed man holding a large script in his hands walk up to the stage and into her living room) Cut, cut, cut. You know Carol, I'm usually all for adlibbing but this scene went off the rails a bit. We may need to take it from the top. (Yells and moves his hand around)
Everybody! From the top!

Carol:

Who are you? Where is the rest of the living room? What is happening?

Robert:

Ah, yeah. Don't worry about that. We are taking a cool five to set back up to reshoot this thing?

Carol:

Reshoot what thing? Who are you?

Robert:

I'm your guardian director Carol. The name is Robert and I'm glad you are starting to take an interest in your character. I was beginning to think I was the only one! I'm directing your life but somebody that happens to be named Carol is botching this scene. Here, take a look! (He tosses her the script he is holding)

Carol:

(Examines the front) The Life of Carol Whitehurst. (Turn a couple pages) "Carol feeds on her mother for 21 minutes before her immensely full diaper is changed" You've got to be kidding me...

Robert:

I let the second unit director have that scene, but I do the really emotional stuff myself. I have an eye for the heartfelt stuff.

Carol:

This thing has everything (frantically flipping pages)

Robert:

I gotta tell you though, in this scene you seemed to have lost your character which is a shame because she is sooooo much fun...

Carol:

(To herself but out loud) What's on the last page?

Robert:

(Runs and grabs the script) Ah ah ah... no spoilers Carol. Besides with your rewrites, we could end up with a whole different movie.

Carol:

I'm dreaming right? Did I fall down and hit my head or something?

Robert:

Focus Carol, we don't have all day. I want to get the scene in the can but you missed so many lines and the whole thing fell apart. Now, like I said. I am a fan of improv so I'm gonna let you get 3 takes on your own and you can play with the storyline however you want but then I am taking my position back over. Capish? No more directors chair for you. This will give you a chance to get all this nervous energy out. How does that sound?

Carol:

It sounds like a cat scan first thing in the morning Robert.

Robert:

Alright then. Well I'm going to take lunch. If you want to start the take over just yell Cut. OK?

Carol:

Sure, whatever you say imaginary crazy guy.

Robert:

You're gonna be ok.

Carol:

Sure I am. Everyone hates me and I am a huge liar. Things are great.

Robert:

Well try it differently this time. Now I'm gonna grab a sandwich from craft services. (Starts off to kitchen) Alright, places everyone! Places! With feeling this time! Aaaaaaaaaaaaaand roll sound Aaaaaaaaaand ACTION!

Curtain

Act II

(The set is reset as it was at the beginning of Act i Scene 2. Carol enters through the front door)

Carol:

How did I get to the front door? What is going on?

Steve:
Honey, is that you? (From offstage)

Carol:
Steve? You're still here?! Yes, it's me!

Steve:
(Coming from downstairs) Sorry, I was in the man cave. Look, I know all of this looks strange...

Carol:
What do you mean?

Steve:
I know the place looks like the set of the Dick Van Dyke show. I prefer "Father Knows Best."
Look, I can explain everything. Just sit down. (They sit. Carol is still very confused about what is
happening) So I was presented a very interesting offer...

Carol:
Is this about your job?

Steve:
What? No.. Not at all!

Carol:
Something strange is going on...

Steve:
Carol, this is exciting. Please stop interrupting. I was approached by a woman that saw me
outside the house. She asked if anyone in the house had ever been to a movie set before!

Carol:
(Extremely worried) Oh dear, no!

Steve:
(Oblivious) That's what I said. So she tells me that she is scouting for locations to shoot a movie
and that our house was perfect!

Carol:
Oh my gosh... No, it can't be!

Steve:

Settle down. I was suspicious too at first, but I swear she is legit. I gave them permission to film right here in our very house today. Our beautiful home is now a closed set!

Carol:
It's actually happening! (In a trance) Just like Robert said.

Steve:
Robert who?

Carol:
My guardian director...I get to do it over again but I can do it better! (Grabs Steve by the shirt with a crazy look) I can make it all better and we can go on with our lives.

Steve:
What is happening?

Carol:
We have to go! (She runs to the stairs)

Steve:
Where are you going Carol?

Carol:
To pack quickly! We don't have much time!! (She exits)

Steve:
No! I got the ok for us to hang out and watch the movie magic! Honey? Are you ok?

Carol:
I'm packing! (This is screamed like a maniac)

Steve:
We can't leave strange people alone in our house to rummage through our stuff Carol?

Jan:
(Enters through the door flamboyantly) I hate it! (Walks in like he owns the place followed by Silvia) What is with this color? It will be murder on the camera. The light is just going to bounce bounce bounce all over the room. And the size is all wrong. This is unacceptable.

Silvia:
It's this or the leading man lives in a trailer...

Jan:

(Instantly better) I love it. It's cozy yet functional. Are we confined to this room?

Silvia:

I've been promised a run of the house.

Jan:

Thrilling. How open are we to blowing out a few of these walls?

Silvia:

(Guides Jan around to downstage right to introduce him to Steve and Carol) Come along and play nice for a minute. Jan, this is Steve Whitehurst the homeowner.

Steve:

Pleasure to meet you.

Jan:

I'm sure it is most definitely. I bet it just makes your day.

Silvia:

Steve, could Jan and I have a word with you?

Steve:

Sure! Sure! Let's just step into the kitchen (Silvia, Jan, and Steve head to the kitchen. Just as they leave Carol comes down the stairs with a suitcase and sets it by the door)

Carol:

(Looks around) Good they haven't shown up yet. (Locks the front door and looks at it happily then heads back up the stairs)

Shiloh:

(From out the door) Your leading man has... uph... (Jiggles the handle. Knocks) Hello. This door is locked. I'm making a scene out here. Hello. Fine. I'll go around the back.

Carol:

(Comes back down the stairs with another suitcase. Checks out the window/door to see if anyone is there. Unlocks the door and carries the luggage out.)

Freedom:

(After a few beats the door opens again and Freedom Jones enters.) OMG I hate when I have to show up on set in "street" clothes. These tiny budget features are not getting me anywhere Shiloh. Any picture under a \$200 Million budget just isn't worth my time anymore unless it's for

Oscar bait. (Looks around and notices that she is alone) Great... and now I'm talking to myself.
(Shiloh enters from kitchen)

Freedom:
(Walks to Shiloh) Hello lover. Did you miss little old me?

Shiloh:
Hello Freedom, and for the last time. We are not lovers. It was one time and a mistake. And I'm too old for you.

Freedom:
The movie script and the casting director seem to think otherwise.

Shiloh:
I believe the term is fiction.... Maybe even horror.

Freedom:
You're cute. Hopefully we can get this scene finished quickly so we can leave. Being in suburbia just makes me feel trapped.

Carol:
(Enters hurried from the front door but stops as she sees them both in her living room) Crap.

Shiloh:
Carol?!

Carol:
No?

Freedom:
You two know each other?

Shiloh:
Carol! What are you doing here?

Carol:
Trying to get away Shiloh.

Shiloh:
Of course, you are. That's what you are best at after all.

Carol:
I can't believe I have to go through this again!

Shiloh:
You go through it? You left me!

Freedom:
Oooh, I thought this was going to be boring but this is awesome.

Carol:
Not go through that! I meant go through this (pointing back and forth between them)

Shiloh:
Well that definitely cleared it up.

Carol:
We gotta get past this Shiloh. This is my new life and I won't let you drop a nuclear bomb on it!

Shiloh:
What are you talking about?

Freedom:
Yeah, can you like elaborate a little. I'm totally feeding off this vibe for my character.

Carol:
Shiloh, I'm not who I.... wait... what... You are feeding off my vibe?

Freedom:
You've got this crazed way about you that you are like, pushing him away but at the same time you are magnetic and you keep getting closer.

Carol:
Will you go do your nails or something?!

Shiloh:
Well, which is it? Are you pushing me away after all these years?

Carol:
I'm not the same person that I was then. I started a new life and having you here just is not part of the plan.

Shiloh:

I'm sorry that I don't fit into your plan but I'm here for work. You think seeing you was a part of my plan?

Freedom:
Was it?

Carol:
The only reason you are even seeing me right now is because I can't get out of my drive way.

Freedom:
Oh snap! Did I park you in? That sucks.

Shiloh:
Carol, don't worry. I'm not going to sabotage your life. I'm going to do the scene and get out of your hair as quickly as I can.

Freedom:
He does everything in one take!

Jan:
(Comes through the door) Oh how wonderful. Our stars have arrived on set! (Jan is followed closely by Steve and Silvia. Steve motions for Carol to come to him)

Steve:
Isn't this exciting honey? Real movie stars in our house and filming a big action movie.

Carol:
(Trying to coax the truth out of him) Yeah, just wait until your friends at WORK hear about this. You are going to tell them right? Your friends at WORK..

Steve:
Well it's a closed set. I don't know if I'm even allowed to say anything. Like anyone would believe me anyway, right? At least until the movie comes out.

Carol:
Is there anything that you'd like to tell me about WORK, Steve?

Steve:
Well I don't want to bore you with that while there are actual movie stars around! Just bask in the awesomeness.

Silvia:

(Walks directly to Shiloh) You ready to knock this one out Shiloh?

Shiloh:

(Pulls Silvia downstage left to be alone) Did you know?

Silvia:

I don't know what you're talking about!

Shiloh:

You DID know!

Silvia:

Oh come on. You needed closure on that part of your life. You know how many movies I've produced with you? You know how many times I had to hear you moan on set about her. This was the excuse to get you to get her out of your mind for good or at least make the move you've been fantasizing about since she left. You know. I only want what is best for you.

Shiloh:

I don't need that reminder from you.

Silvia:

I just want you ...

Shiloh:

Believe me I'm aware

Silvia:

To get over her! Now I see that won't happen.

Shiloh:

Well, I'm over this. I'm done.

Jan:

Come on, Come on... We're burning daylight here.

Carol:

Oh not that dumb comment again!

Steve:

Carol, they can hear you.

Carol:

Then they can also hear themselves saying they are burning daylight inside a house! They have a full set of lighting here. There are so many lights we are all roasting. It's basically not seeing the forest for the trees!