

HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER, S1 E7.5
"MY DOUBLE-REVERSE MISS SAIGON"

Written by

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5/23/2022

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ACT 1

INT. 2029 LIVING ROOM, EVENING

NARRATOR speaks to his DAUGHTER and SON.

NARRATOR

If you kids think I'm a hopeless romantic, you should've met your Great-Grandpa Ed. A couple weeks before he died, he told me one of the greatest love stories I've ever heard.

INT. MACLAREN'S PUB, NIGHT

TED, ROBIN, MARSHALL, LILY, and BARNEY sit at a booth.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And to think your Uncle Barney almost talked me out of visiting him in the first place.

BARNEY

Two words, Ted. Nursing mothers.

ROBIN

Care to elaborate?

BARNEY

I've already said too much.

TED

Counterproposal. Nursing *home*.

BARNEY

Go on.

TED

Hot attendants. Vats of hand sanitizer...

BARNEY

Stick the landing...

TED

And my Grandpa Ed, who I have to visit on Wednesday.

BARNEY

I should've known. Nursing home?
Now I'm just disappointed with
myself.

(beat, then even more
dejected)

Vats of hand sanitizer?

MARSHALL

I thought Grandpa Ed died freshman
year.

TED

I swear to God, the man is like a
cat. He just never...it's always
like he's about to die and then--

ROBIN

It's like he has nine lives.

TED

How so?

ROBIN

Like a cat.

TED

Exactly, like a cat, but you said
something about "ny-lys"--

MARSHALL

I think what Ted is trying to say
is that Grandpa Ed has a flair for
the dramatic.

BARNEY

So he's gay like a cat.

TED

No, forget the cat thing. And he's
not gay. He just likes to play up
his death for attention. This time
he asked me to "digitize his
archives." Before it's "too late."

ROBIN

His archives?

TED

Don't ask. I don't know anything
about the man's life.

MARSHALL

Surely you know *something* about the man's life.

TED

I want to say he served in Vietnam?

LILY

Ugh. Don't get me started on Vietnam.

ROBIN

Too soon?

LILY

I have to take my class to a reenactment on Wednesday.

TED

A Vietnam War Reenactment? Seems heavy for Kindergarten.

LILY

It's part of this new Common Core nonsense.

BARNEY

If 5 Viet Cong perished for every 1 American...

ROBIN

Was justice really served?

LILY

One of the parents bailed so I need another chaperone.

BARNEY

Fine. Don't beg. I'll do it.

LILY

I was thinking Marshall.

BARNEY

Marshall? What does Marshall know about chaperoning?

LILY

What do you know about chaperoning?

BARNEY

Come on, Lily. You know I love--

MARSHALL
Single moms?

BARNEY
I was going to say experiential
education, but interesting that's
where your head went.
(to Lily)
Lily, I fear your fiancée is a
sexual deviant who shouldn't be
allowed near children.

LILY
(pleading)
Marshall?

MARSHALL
Fine.

ROBIN
Thank God. I didn't have an excuse
for Wednesday.

TED
Great, so you can come with me to
visit Grandpa Ed.

ROBIN
No, wait, I--

INT. CAR, DAY

Robin and Ted driving to see Grandpa Ed. Awkward silence.

TED
I'm starting to think you didn't
want to come.

ROBIN
Beats Barney's plan. What does it
even mean to "sneak up on" nursing
mothers?

TED
(defeated)
He calls it "tipping cows."

ROBIN
There's something wrong with that
man.

TED
It's gotta be something with *his*
mom, right?

ROBIN
Absolutely.

Awkward silence.

TED
Any fond memories with your
grandparents?

ROBIN
I have a vague memory of my
grandfather shooting a horse. And
then yelling at me to "cry, dammit.
Just cry for once."

TED
Was he a veterinarian or something.

ROBIN
I don't think so. Why do you ask?

TED
You know it's sad. These people
brought us into the world and we
hardly know anything about their
lives. They were young like us
once!

ROBIN
Speaking of, I wonder how this
field trip is going.

INT. SCHOOL BUS, DAY

Kids going crazy. Total chaos. Lily and Marshall trying to
wrangle them.

LILY
I don't know what's gotten into
them. They're never this crazy.

MARSHALL
That's it. I'm instituting Marshall
Law.
(to Lily, giddy)
I've always wanted to say that.
(to students, serious)
Alright you runts. Seatbelts on.
(MORE)

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Insulin patches off. The last thing you need is more sugar.

LILY

Marshall.

MARSHALL

Fine. You can keep your insulin patches on. But know that anything you say can and will be used against you in a Parent-Teacher conference. You have the right to an attorney. That attorney will be me, and spoiler alert...

(gestures to Lily)

I'm sleeping with the DA.

He corners a student, DANNY.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

Alright kid, give it to me straight. What are you on?

DANNY

Red Bull!

MARSHALL

That was easy.

LILY

Red Bull? Who gave you Red Bull?

ALL THE KIDS

(as if hypnotized)

If you're looking for the hand that tempted us, look no further than the back of the bus.

LILY

The back of the bus?

Lily and Marshall look to the back of the bus. Barney waves. They confront him.

BARNEY

Cool riddle, right? I thought "tempted" was going to be over the top, but Danny was right, it needed that Biblical oomph.

MARSHALL

How did you get here?!

BARNEY

Not "how." When. I've been here since 5.

LILY

And how much Red Bull did you give them?

BARNEY

Relax. I just wanted to get them a little spazzed out so I could prove how good I am at childcare. Speaking of, where are all the single moms?

MARSHALL

I thought you weren't interested in single moms, pervert.

BARNEY

Wow, Marshall. So now it's "deviant" to be attracted to single mothers? Because they're no longer "virginal"? Because their bodies have been ravaged by the travails of childbirth?

(to Lily)

Lily, I fear your fiancée is a misogynist who shouldn't be allowed near woman, let alone children.

LILY

Thankfully for everyone, it's dads only today.

BARNEY

I noticed. Don't these losers have jobs?

MARSHALL

Don't you have a job?

BARNEY

In a sense. In a sense.

LILY

We're pulling over and getting you off this bus. And you can take your devil juice with you.

BARNEY

Good idea. Cut off their supply. Because that's worked sooo well for the DEA.

LILY
What are you talking about?

BARNEY
You don't get rid of the guy with
the goods. Watch this.
(to students)
Kids, behave and maybe later we'll
take another ride on the Bull.

ALL THE KIDS
(as if hypnotized, staring
straight ahead)
Yes, Mr. Stinson. Thank you, Mr.
Stinson.

Marshall and Lily look at Barney, horrified.

BARNEY
What? I told you, I've been here
since 5.

INT. GRANDPA ED'S NURSING HOME, DAY

TED
(singsongy)
Grandpa Ed. It's your favorite
grandson.

ED
Brett? You look terrible.

TED
Ah yes. The wit that's put
generations of Mosby men through
therapy.

ED
Mosby *men* is an exaggeration.

ROBIN
(infantilizing)
Hi Grandpa Ed. I'm Robin.

ED
Not interested, sweetheart.
(to Ted)
Unless you've finally brought me
the mother of my great-
grandchildren.

TED

No, Grandpa Ed. Robin and I had our moment. But much like a certain bard's "star-crossed lovers"--

ED

Save it.

(to Robin)

He gave me the same speech after he chose Wesleyan over Bates.

TED

This place still treating you alright?

ED

Better than hell. Although of course, it's only a matter of time.

TED

Here we go.

ED

Which is why I brought you here. I need your help digitizing my records.

TED

I meant to ask you about that. Records of what exactly?

ED

Oh, I don't know. Just my ninety-three years of human life and activity.

TED

And why do you need them digitized?

ED

So that when I'm six feet under, my great-grandchildren have something to remember me by. Not that I'm ever going to meet them, at the rate you two are going. Although I suppose anything could happen in the heat of digitization.

He pretends to crank up the thermostat.

ED (CONT'D)

I'm not actually turning it up. Can you imagine? With the cost of heat?

ROBIN
But it's freezing in here.

ED
(irate)
Then put on a blanket. Or some
sensible trousers.

TED
Enough, Grandpa Ed. Why don't you
just tell us where these "records"
are so we can get to digitizing.

Ed gestures around. Zoom out to see boxes and boxes of papers
all over the apartment. Robin and Ted look defeated.

ED
What? You got somewhere better to
be?

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Two reenactment guides, one in American army fatigues, the
other in Viet Cong garb, run into frame. Students and
chaperones have been waiting for some time.

GUIDE 1
Did someone say Vietnam?!?

Everyone is silent.

GUIDE 1 (CONT'D)
Good. That was a test, and you all
passed.

GUIDE 2
(whispered)
Who here is familiar with the
concept of stealth warfare?

All the kids raise their hands.

MARSHALL
You taught them about stealth
warfare?

LILY
No, but I know who did.

INT. GIFT SHOP, DAY

Barney staring at a gorgeous cashier in a traditional Vietnamese tunic. Stout man, KEVIN, also in a traditional Vietnamese tunic, approaches him from behind.

KEVIN

Can I help you with anything--

BARNEY

(startled)

Jesus.

KEVIN

Love the suit. I'd wear one myself if it wasn't for this mandatory "period" garb.

BARNEY

What about that guy?

Guy in normal clothes stocks a shelf.

KEVIN

His heart's not in it.

BARNEY

(examining tunic)

Why is it so tight?

KEVIN

Just leave it alone, man. Leave it alone.

BARNEY

Say, what's the deal with the girl behind the counter?

KEVIN

Ah yes. Madame Kelly. Very elusive. Has yet to accept my LinkedIn friend request.

Barney makes eye contact with Kelly.

BARNEY

The key is to always leave them wanting more.

KEVIN

(frantic)

More of what? More of what?

BARNEY

When I come back, I want you behind the counter. *Helping me out.*

KEVIN

Say no more.

BARNEY

Are you sure you understand? I want you to--

Kevin puts a finger on Barney's lips.

KEVIN

Say. No. More.

Barney looks at him weird. Then starts to leave.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Wait, wait, wait!

BARNEY

What?

KEVIN

Should we make up a secret handshake just in case?

BARNEY

In case of what? Just act like you've never met me.

KEVIN

Ugh, that's going to be so hard. I wish you'd told me that before we bonded.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Guides still talking to the group.

GUIDE 2

Vietnam was a war of disguises. Of masking who you were. Has anyone here ever had to mask who they were?

Kids nod their heads. Marshall too, but he plays it off when Lily looks at him weird.

GUIDE 2 (CONT'D)

Excellent. That's going to come in handy during the Tet Offensive.

MARSHALL

Wait a second. The Tet Offensive? I thought we were *watching* a reenactment.

GUIDE 1

Watching a reenactment? What does this look like? The History Channel?

GUIDE 2

What are these kids going to learn from *watching* a reenactment?

LILY

What are they going to learn from *doing* a reenactment?

GUIDE 1

Jeez, that's a great question. *For their teacher.*

(to kids, gesturing to himself)

Get a load of this guy!

MARSHALL

That's not how you do that.

LILY

Listen, Rick, you seemed normal enough on the phone, but I'm not so sure--

GUIDE 1

Ah ah ah. Who is this Rick you speak of? My name is William Westmoreland, commander of a fearless yet naive American infantry!

Cheers from one half of the students.

GUIDE 2:

And my name is Võ Nguyên Giáp, commander of the merciless yet triumphant Viet Cong!

Cheers from the other half.

LILY

Shouldn't you at least have a Vietnamese person play...

(struggling)

Võ Nguyên Giáp?

Guides grimace in unison.

GUIDE 1

That would be a bit tokenizing,
wouldn't it?

GUIDE 2

Besides, we only do Vietnam on
Wednesdays. Thursdays are Civil War
and Fridays are Iraq.

MARSHALL

(sarcastic)

What about weekends?

GUIDE 1

Weekends are weddings. It's
stunning here in the spring.

GUIDE 2

Like Hanoi.

GUIDE 1

Too bad the summers are like
Baghdad.

They share a big laugh, then a big sigh.

GUIDES 1+2:

To Saigon!

Kids charge at each other.

INT. GRANDPA ED'S NURSING HOME, DAY

Robin holding an armload of cassettes.

ROBIN

(to herself)

How many cast albums can one man
own?

ED

(to himself, sarcastic,
passionate)

How much air can a man breathe? How
much light does a plant need?

TED

Grandpa Ed, who wrote all these
letters?

ED
What letters?

TED
From a man named Mark. Love letters.

ED
Oh right. Mark was a platoon mate from Vietnam. Good friend.

TED
Wait a second. Grandma had an affair with one of your platoon mates?

ED
Not quite, Ted. Mark was a *good friend*.

Takes Ted a second. Then he's visibly stunned.

ED (CONT'D)
Circle gets the square.

TED
(whispering to himself)
Gay like a cat.
(normal voice)
It all makes sense now. The histrionics. The showtunes.

ED
Watch it, Westboro. And it wasn't some big secret. I was in the *Gay Men's Choir of New York*.

TED
I thought it was a choir to *raise awareness* for gay men.
(gasps)
It all makes sense now. The histrionics. The showtunes.

ED
Will you relax?!

TED
So what? You had a torrid love affair with your brother in arms?

ED
Why *torrid*? Just because it was gay doesn't mean it was torrid.

Ted looks at him skeptically.

ED (CONT'D)
Alright, it was torrid.

TED
I knew it! And you met in Vietnam?

ED
Elementary school.

TED
He lived in Yonkers?!

ED
Still does, as far as I know. That
boy could never stray far from
home.

TED
Except for Vietnam, of course.

ED
Even there, he had me.

TED
My heart.
(beat)
Have you seen him since?

ED
In the supermarket from time to
time. But he's married now. We both
had lives to get back to.

TED
Married?! You guys are in your
nineties. If that beard ain't dead,
she might as well be, am I right?

ED
Cool it. He might not even be gay.
We were young.

TED
Wait a second. This one's unopened.

ED
They sent him home early.
Practically took a bullet for me. I
never got a chance to say thank
you.

TED
Grandpa Ed. We're going to find
Mark and deliver him this letter.

ED
Oh please.

TED
What? You're really going to die
having never said goodbye to your
first love? What do you have to
lose?

ED
My pride, Ted. My dignity. My
memory of that man. His memory of
me.

A somber silence.

TED
(strained)
But it would be so cute...

A pregnant pause.

ED
You know what? Fine. Alright. Let's
go.

TED
Really?

ED
I've been thinking about that
letter for years and...and I just
need it to be done.

A satisfied silence.

ROBIN
(out of a trance)
That horse was healthy. He only
shot it to see me cry.
(comes to awareness)
Sorry. What were you guys talking
about?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. FIRST RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

Ted, Robin, and Ed in the lobby.

TED

According to Yelp, there are 12 nursing homes in a 20-mile radius. Upon closer inspection, however, four are Denny's, three are cemeteries, and one's a Denny's inside a cemetery.

ROBIN

Better than the other way around.

ED

(to Ted)

Pin that one for later.

TED

So that leaves three to visit, in increasing proximity to your childhood home, around where you first met Mark.

ROBIN

(to herself)

That's convenient.

TED

This first one's the furthest out, but I figured it was worth a--

Ed sees ROB and gasps.

ED

Semper Fi!

ROB

Oorah!

They hug.

TED

Mark. It's so great to meet you. I've heard so much.

ED
Slow your roll, Sherlock. This
isn't Mark. This is Rob, another
platoon mate.

ROB
Magnificent Seventh, at attention.

ED
God, that brings me back.

ROB
I'll tell you, things aren't like
they used to be.

ED
You can say that again.

ROB
What happened to all the real men?
Now it's just a bunch of frou-frou
pansies. We used to be soldiers.
Now what are we? "Creatives"?
"Singer-Songwriters"? "Architects"?

TED
Alright, enough of this dog-whistle
homophobia. What if I was gay, Rob?
What would you say to me.

ROB
(beat)
Not interested, sweetheart!

Ed and Rob laugh hysterically.

ED
Rob here was *also* a member of the
Gay Men's Choir. You know. *To raise
awareness.*

TED
Then what makes you two so
different from us "creatives"?

ED
We did it for the cock!

Ed and Rob laugh again.

ROB
Millennials.

ED
Everything's a battle.

ROB
Imagine them at Hanoi.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Lily and Marshall army crawl towards each other, covered in war paint. Total mayhem.

LILY
Baby I'm scared.

MARSHALL
You're scared?! Rachel M. keeps threatening to take me as a P.O.W. Apparently Nguyễn Giáp's on her ass for 3 more scalps before lunchtime.

LILY
We need to get our hands on that Red Bull.

MARSHALL
Where the hell is Barney?

INT. GIFT SHOP, DAY

Barney comes back to find Kevin at the cash register.

BARNEY
Where's Kelly?

KEVIN
I told her to go home.

BARNEY
What? Why?

KEVIN
You said that when you came back, you wanted *me* behind the counter. *Helping you out.*

BARNEY
Helping me *get her number.*

KEVIN
(brain blown)
That makes way more sense. You should've just said that.

BARNEY

I tried to but you put your finger
on my lips and said "say no more."

(beat)

And it was so calloused...

KEVIN

(in a different Vietnamese
tunic from before)

What do I look like? Some kind of
frou-frou pansy?

BARNEY

Is that a different tunic from
before?

(beat)

Why is it even tighter?

KEVIN

I told you to leave it alone, man,
Jesus.

BARNEY

Listen, you've got to help me find
this woman. I think she might be
the one...

(stilted)

whom I would like to have sex with
today.

KEVIN

Whom.

BARNEY

What?

KEVIN

The one *whom* you'd like to have sex
with today.

BARNEY

That's what I said. The one *whom*
I'd like to have sex with today.

KEVIN

Please.

BARNEY

What?

KEVIN

The one *whom* you'd like to have sex
with today, *please*.

BARNEY
(lunging at Kevin)
Okay, you know what--

KEVIN
Alright, easy. She's been known to
hang out in the break room.
(whispered)
When she needs a break from me.

BARNEY
To the break room!

Kevin puts a finger on his lips.

KEVIN
Say no more.

BARNEY
Stop doing that. I wasn't going to
say anything else. Jesus.

INT. SECOND RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

Ted, Robin, and Ed in the lobby.

TED
Alright, I know I went a little
rogue at that first place, but I
promise I'll rein it in here.

Calm for a second, then lunges at the first WOMAN who walks
past.

TED (CONT'D)
Please ma'am. Do you know a man
named Mark Schafer?!

WOMAN
Know him? I was married to him!

ROBIN
(to herself)
That's very convenient.

TED
Can I ask what happened?

WOMAN
Divorced. Since '85. That man was
as gay as a cat.

ROBIN
(to herself)
Since when is that an expression?

WOMAN
Love him to death though. We still
do holidays with the kids.

TED
Do you know where we can find him?

WOMAN
Who's asking?

ED
Mark was an old buddy of mine. From
Nam.

WOMAN
Wait a second. Ed Mosby?

ED
One and the same.

WOMAN
Gosh, I've seen so many pictures. I
can't believe we've never met. Mark
talked about you all the time.
(beat)
Oh my. Were you two...

ED
In a sense.

WOMAN
I always wondered.

ED
I'm sorry.

WOMAN
For what?

ED
I don't know.

WOMAN
Love is complicated.
(beat)
But if there's one thing I know,
it's that that man loved you. I
can't say how he feels now, but
back then, he really, really loved
you.

TED
Where is he now?

WOMAN
At Chapel Oaks. Off Valley Creek.

Ted, Ed, and Robin look at each other anxiously.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
What are you waiting for? You two
only have so much time left. Go!

Ted, Ed, and Robin rush towards the exit.

INT. REENACTMENT BREAK ROOM, DAY

Barney barges in to find a person in a Vietnamese tunic in a swivel chair, back turned.

BARNEY
Excuse me, miss. I'm looking for a
Madame Kelly--

KEVIN
(swiveling around
devilishly)
Oh trust me. I know who you're
looking for.

BARNEY
(startled)
Jesus Christ, man. You come out of
nowhere. Like Beetejuice.

KEVIN
(frantic)
Don't say that.

BARNEY
What? Beetlejuice?

KEVIN
Stop!

BARNEY
You don't actually think he's going
to come out, do you?

KEVIN
Who?

BARNEY
Beetlejuice!

A woman's scream in the distance.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
She's in danger.

Barney rushes out.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Marshall tied up, high-pitched screaming. GIRL kindergartener in Viet Cong garb holding a machete.

MARSHALL
Please. I have a family.

GIRL
Kids?

MARSHALL
No, no kids.

GIRL
Wife?

MARSHALL
Kind of? I meant more like a
roommate.

GIRL
A roommate? How old are you?

MARSHALL
(mumbled)
27.

GIRL
27? Where do you work?

MARSHALL
I'm a student.

GIRL
(shaking head)
Listen. I'm going to do you a big
favor.

MARSHALL
Thank you. Thank you so much.

Girl raise machete. Marshall screams again.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Lily sits with Danny behind a barricade. He's wearing a ghillie suit. They hear Marshall scream.

LILY
Every sound I hear reminds me of
Marshall.

DANNY
You're telling me. Commander
Westmoreland told me to write one
last letter to my girl back home.
Before it's too late.

LILY
Your girl back home?

DANNY
Mindy S. She's home sick today.

LILY
Okay, let's try to turn this into a
teaching opportunity. Is there
something you've always wanted to
say to Mindy S. that you can only
say to her now? In the heat of war?

DANNY
I wouldn't even know where to
start.

Barney dives headfirst into the trenches, avoiding rock
artillery overhead.

BARNEY
You guys seen Kelly?

LILY
Who on Earth is Kelly?

BARNEY
Just another townie who broke my
heart. I swear to God I'm like a
reverse Miss Saigon.

LILY
Is she Vietnamese?

BARNEY
(beat, thinking)
Ok, like a *Double Reverse Miss*
Saigon.

INT. THIRD RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

Ted, Ed, and Robin arrive. Ed immediately sees MARK.

ED
That's him.

TED
Where?

ED
By the window.

ROBIN
Are you ready?

ED
As ready as I'll ever be.

Ed approaches Mark.

ED (CONT'D)
Mark?

MARK
(stunned)
Ed.

ED
It's been a while.

MARK
It sure has.

Awkward silence.

ED
Listen. I came because I found a letter back from our Hanoi days that I never got to give to you. If I'd known you were going home so soon, I would've said these things to you in person. But I haven't been able to stop thinking about them since, so if it's alright with you, I'd like to say them to you now.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Danny, Lily, and Barney still behind the barricade.

BARNEY
If only I'd known. The things I
would've said to her.

DANNY
(getting pen and paper
ready)
Say them to me, Mr. Stinson.

INT. THIRD RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

MARK
Say them to me, Ed.

ED
Okay.
(Clears throat)
Dear Mark...

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

BARNEY
Dear Kelly...

INT. THIRD RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

ED
It's interesting, a love like ours.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

BARNEY
So much of it secret. Told through
furtive glances and passing touch.

INT. THIRD RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

ED
My heart has never felt so full,
and yet...

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

BARNEY
I am forever left wanting more.

Danny is writing furiously on his notepad.

BARNEY (CONT'D)
I know we both have lives on the
other side of all this.

INT. THIRD RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

ED
Simple lives with simple comforts.
But I can also imagine a life in
which we want for nothing. In which
we make no compromises. For our
love or for ourselves.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

BARNEY
I know that sounds hard. But damned
if we haven't been through worse.

INT. THIRD RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

ED
Whatever you decide, I'll be there.
As your friend or something else.
Because no matter what...

BARNEY	ED (CONT'D)
You will always be my Double	You will always be my Double
Reverse Miss Saigon.	Reverse Miss Saigon.

INT. THIRD RANDOM NURSING HOME, DAY

Mark and Ed giggle flirtatiously.

MARK
(to Ed, abashed)
You dirty dog.

TED
(under his breath)
I really hope that's not a sex
thing.

MARK/ED/ROBIN
It is.

Ted gives Robin a look.

MARK

Ed.

(beat)

You were my first love. And I'd be lying if I said seeing you now didn't rouse up all those same emotions.

(beat)

But I can't start something serious right now. There just isn't enough time.

ED

Isn't that all the more reason to go for it?

MARK

Maybe if we were 85. But I need to spend these last couple of years with my friends. And with my family.

ED

Of course. I understand.

MARK

You do?

ED

I do.

(beat)

But can I tell you one last thing?

MARK

Of course.

ED

The day I heard you were headed home was the only day in my life I've ever really felt bittersweet. Bitter because I loved you and sweet because I loved you. And if I could relive that moment for a thousand more days, for the rest of my days, I would. In a heartbeat.

Ed and Mark look at each other.

ED (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Mark.

MARK

Goodbye, Ed.

Ed leaves. Ted and Robin are stunned.

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Kevin approaches the barricade.

KEVIN
Private Stinson?

BARNEY
Yes?

KEVIN
Kelly's headed home.

Barney is crestfallen. A beat.

DANNY
(holding up pen and paper)
I'm going to be honest. I don't
know how to write.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. REENACTMENT BATTLEGROUND, DAY

Guides reconvene with the group.

GUIDE 1

You fought a brave battle today.
I'm proud of each and every one of
you. Especially you, P.O.W.
Erickson.

Marshall's hair is all chopped off. He nods solemnly, but
plays it off when Lily looks at him.

GUIDE 1 (CONT'D)

Now tell me. What did we learn
today?

ALL THE KIDS AND MARSHALL

That American neo-isolationism in
the 21st century can be traced
directly back to the casualties
suffered during the Tet Offensive.

LILY

When did you guys learn that?!

GUIDE 1

And what else did we learn?

BARNEY

(sniffling)
That Kelly's a total jerk.

GUIDE 2

No, Private Stinson. We learned
that sometimes, it's easier to wear
a costume than to be ourselves.

KEVIN

(in a third, more ornate
Vietnamese tunic)
Amen to that brother.
(beat)
Anyone else boiling?

GUIDE 1

So let us shuck these costumes...
 (removes fatigues to
 reveal he too is wearing
 an ornate Vietnamese
 tunic underneath)
 ...and go forth into the world
 proud and honest. With ourselves
 and with others.

LILY

Why are *you* wearing a tunic?

GUIDE 1

(stern)
 Leave it alone.

MARSHALL

Is it bad I can't lift my hands
 above my head?

GUIDE 2:

Psychosomatic. Like McCain.

INT. CAR, DAY

Ted, Robin, and Ed drive home. Awkward silence.

ED

What? Now you all go quiet on me?

TED

(dejected)
 My heart.

ED

Buck up, kid. You would've gotten
 just as bullied at Bates.

TED

How can you put yourself through
 something like that and walk away
 unscarred?

ED

When you get to be my age, you
 realize that love is just a matter
 of timing.

(beat)

And of course, a preference for
 gashes or gonads.

ROBIN

Or both.

Ted gives Robin a look.

ED

I saw a lot of stuff in Nam. Guys
legs blown clean off. A shrimping
boat captain become a war hero.

TED

(under his breath)

Pretty sure that one's from Forrest
Gump.

ED

But you know what I learned from it
all? That there are a whole lot of
things outside my control.

(beat)

You have to pick your battles. I
did what I came here to do. I told
him. Now I can rest.

A satisfied pause.

TED

Let's get you home, Grandpa Ed.

ED

(eager)

That's okay. Here's good.

TED

But this is Rob's place.

ED

I know.

(beat, then giddy)

I always had a crush.

INT. SCHOOL BUS, DAY

DANNY

Buck up, Mr. Stinson. There's
always next year.

BARNEY

(desperate)

I can't go back there without you,
kid.

DANNY

Don't worry. I'm *definitely* getting held back.

LILY

He's not wrong.

BARNEY

You know, I'm starting to think I'm not upset about Kelly at all. I'm starting to think she's just a screen onto which I've projected all my other psychosexual hangups. Ditto with Vietnam.

LILY

(to Marshall)

What is going on?

BARNEY

I think deep down what I'm really upset about is...is...

DANNY

Say it Mr. Stinson.

BARNEY

(bursting)

That Lily and Marshall said there would be a ton of single moms on this trip and then there wasn't even one.

Barney breaks down. A beat.

DANNY

But Mr. Stinson. My mother is single.

A pregnant pause. Danny and Barney look at each other. Then, one by one, kids stand up on the bus seats like in Dead Poets' Society. I know there's already a Dead Poets' Society joke in Season 5, but since this is a Season 1 spec, I'm going to pretend like I thought of it first.

RANDOM KID 1

Mr. Stinson. My mother is single.

RANDOM KID 2

Mr. Stinson. *My* mother is single.

RANDOM KID 3

My mother is single, Mr. Stinson.

RANDOM DAD

No she's not, Trevor. Sit down.

BARNEY

Thank you, boys. Thank you.

(beat)

Now make a line so I can get their numbers. Hottest first.

INT. CAR, DAY

Robin and Ted driving the rest of the way home.

TED

I wish I could rebound like that.

ROBIN

You heard what he said. It takes time.

TED

I thought he said it was all about timing.

ROBIN

Jeez, sorry I've got my own stuff going on. My grandfather was a sociopath.

TED

I don't want to end up like him. Living my whole life in longing, only to get rejected on my deathbed.

ROBIN

Ted, that man has been through hell and back. More times than we can count. And for all it's hardened him, it's also made him less precious. Because you can't be so precious about love. It's elusive, and ephemeral, and it never goes the way you want it to. If love for him meant waiting until his deathbed to get rejected, then so be it. We'd be so lucky to have a love as strong, as, as *enduring* as that.

A somber silence. Ted notices something on the dash.

TED

Looks like he left one of his cast albums.

ROBIN

(reading)

Company.

She puts it in the car's cassette player. "Being Alive" starts.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That was the last time I saw your Great-Grandpa Ed. He passed away a few weeks later. Rob sang at the funeral. In his will, he left me his Purple Heart. On one condition.

INT. TED AND MARSHALL'S LIVING ROOM, DAY

Ted, Robin, Marshall, Lily and Barney sit surrounded by boxes and boxes of papers.

MARSHALL

You're telling me you have to digitize all these before you have kids?

ROBIN

How is he possibly going to enforce that?

TED

(resolved)

He won't have to. I'm going to do it.

LILY

My kids are going to love all this Vietnam stuff. They haven't shut up about it since the reenactment.

MARSHALL

I guess this Common Core stuff isn't so bad after all.

LILY

Well, they still can't count.

BARNEY

Guys. Do you think I have a psychosexual hangup with my mother?

ROBIN
Absolutely.

LILY
No doubt.

MARSHALL
I feel like we've told you this
before.

TED
But Barney. You have to pick your
battles.
(beat)
To Grandpa Ed.

They raise a glass.

END OF EPISODE