

Babysitters

A short screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

INT. BUICK SKYLARK: MOVING

...along a residential street.

TERRY CHAMBERS, female, early thirties, with overly teased hair, sits behind the wheel.

SHAWN FREEMONT, mid-thirties, thin and nervous, rides in the passenger seat.

SHAWN

This is it, baby. Our big day.

Terry smiles.

TERRY

Make sure you pick me out a nice engagement ring, Shawn. It's been five years.

Shawn turns his head to gaze at an attractive suburban home.

SHAWN

Yeah. I'll buy you a nice house, too.

EXT. CITY STREET

A commercial street in a normally sleepy, middle-American town.

The Buick pulls up across from a jewelry store.

INT. BUICK SKYLARK: STATIONARY

Shawn nervously tries to smooth out the creases in a black suit that looks slept in.

TERRY

Are you robbing the place or modelling in a fashion show?

SHAWN

I'm nervous, okay? It's not like I do this sort of thing every day.

TERRY

This was your idea.

SHAWN
Just don't pressure me, Terry.
Just don't, okay?

TERRY
Is that a gun in your pocket?

SHAWN
What?

TERRY
Shawn, I can see your gun.

The grip is sticking out from under his jacket.

SHAWN
Shit.

He stuffs it back inside.

TERRY
It's not too late to go home.

He tosses some brochures onto the back seat.

SHAWN
Forget it, baby. I'm done selling
encyclopedias to housewives in
sweats and curlers.

TERRY
You sure you know what you're
doing?

SHAWN
After today we're gonna have some
real money so we can get married
and have an old-fashioned church
wedding and a big cake and a...one
of those kids, you know -

Terry smiles.

TERRY
A flower girl.

She leans over and kisses him.

TERRY
I believe in you, sweetheart.

Shawn pulls a stocking over his head, climbs out of the car, heads across the street, then comes back.

SHAWN

The motor's not running. I told you to keep the motor running.

TERRY

Sorry.

SHAWN

You know this ain't gonna work if we don't do it right. You gotta pay attention to what I say, baby. I can't be always -

TERRY

Shawn, your mask.

He becomes aware that he's standing out in the street with a stocking over his head.

SHAWN

I'll be right back.

He scurries across the street.

INT. JEWELRY STORE

Terrified EMPLOYEES fill Shawn's sack with jewelry.

SHAWN

Just the good stuff! Hurry! Move it! Move it!

He glances nervously at the Buick, then snatches the bag from a clerk.

INT. BUICK: STATIONARY

Shawn skids on the pavement and bangs his knee against the side of the car.

SHAWN

Damn!

He limps around the car and jumps in.

SHAWN

Go, go, go!

Terry burns rubber as the Buick peels away from the curb.

INT. FOYER: SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Two story house, plus basement. Nicely furnished, spacious.

BREANNE, an exceptionally intelligent 10-year-old, in pajamas and robe, is sitting at a computer. She blows her nose. There's a baby CRYING in the b.g.

BREANNE

Croup refers to a group of viral conditions involving inflammation of the upper airway. Also known as...acute laryn-go-tracheo-bronchitis. It's usually treated at home. You're probably over reacting.

BREANNE'S MOM (FILTER)

I'm his mother. I'll decide who's over reacting.

BREANNE

I'm just saying.

MOM rushes in with Breanne's BABY BROTHER (CRYING and COUGHING) wrapped in a blanket, in her arms.

BREANNE'S MOM

I'll be right back, Breanne. If daddy calls, tell him I went to the hospital and not to worry. No, shit! Don't say that!

BREANNE

What? Sh -?

BREANNE'S MOM

Just don't answer the phone! I'll be back soon, sweetie. And close your robe. You'll catch a chill!

Breanne tightens the belt on her robe as her mom dashes out the door.

INT. BUICK: MOVING

Shawn peels off the stocking. It gets caught on his nose.

SHAWN

Piece of cake, baby. I don't know why I didn't think of this before. The hicks in this town wouldn't know what to do with someone with a little brains and imagination.

TERRY

I feel like Bonnie and Clyde. I mean, like Bonnie.

SHAWN

The difference, baby, is we got a plan. We just stick with it and we'll be fine.

An unmarked police car, siren blaring and blue light flashing on the dashboard, pulls in some distance behind.

TERRY

Shawn, you said it would take them fifteen minutes to respond!

SHAWN

It's okay! Don't panic! Turn here. No, not here! Right! Not left! Hell, Terry - you gotta listen to me -

TERRY

Don't yell at me!

SHAWN

I'm not yell - fuck!

The Buick flies through a four-way stop, narrowly misses another vehicle. The police car screeches to a halt and narrowly avoids a collision.

Terry turns a corner, passes the suburban home, and sees Breanne's mom pulling out of her driveway.

SHAWN

Okay, no biggie. Everything's cool. Just give me a moment. Just let me think.

Terry hits the brakes hard. A police siren grows louder.

SHAWN

Baby...what are you doing?!

In her rear view mirror, Terry watches Breanne's mom pull out of the driveway. She slams the car into reverse and barrels down the driveway as the automatic garage door comes down...and slides underneath with inches to spare.

The police cruiser races by, lights flashing as the garage door closes.

INT. GARAGE

Terry and Shawn breath a sigh of relief.

SHAWN

That was good. You did good, baby.
Let's just not...let's just take a
deep breath and relax.

They do. Then -

TERRY

We have to get out of here!

SHAWN

No, no - listen, Terry. That's
just what they expect us to do.
They want us to run. But we're
smarter than that. We're smarter,
right? So we're gonna stay here
and we're gonna hide until the
heat dies down.

TERRY

Hide? Hide where?

SHAWN

Right here. Right in that house.

TERRY

This house?

SHAWN

That house. Right over there. It's
a detached garage, honey.

TERRY

But what if someone sees us?

SHAWN

Shhh...

(kisses her forehead)

Just follow my lead. Everything's
gonna be okay. We're so close,
baby, we're so close.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME

Breanne blows her nose as she responds to the persistently
ringing doorbell.

EXT. PORCH

Shawn rings the doorbell. Terry is standing behind Shawn, who is holding a pair of volumes of a set of encyclopedias.

SHAWN

See baby, no one's home. Nothing to worry -

The front door opens until stopped by a chain. Breanne peers out, SNIFFLES.

SHAWN

Oh, uh...hi little girl. Is your mommy or daddy home?

BREANNE

They can't come to the door.

SHAWN

Why not?

BREANNE

Guess.

SHAWN

Oh, I don't know...they're...

He looks to Terry for help.

TERRY

Oh! They're not at home, are they sweetheart?

BREANNE

I have to go now.

She starts to close the door.

SHAWN

Wait, wait!

BREANNE

What?

SHAWN

Uh...

TERRY

Where's your mommy, dear?

BREANNE

She'll be right back. She had to take my baby brother to the hospital. He's got the croup.

TERRY

Oh, I'm so sorry.

SHAWN

The croup? What the fuck is?..uh...I can look it up...

He holds up some brochures.

SHAWN

...because I sell encyclopedias. And you look like you're in need of some home learnin'.

BREANNE

I'm not the one who doesn't know what the croup is. And what I need to know, I find on the Internet.

SHAWN

Did you know that after TV, the government, and corporate annual reports, the Net is the number one source of disinformation?

BREANNE

Where do door-to-door salesman rank?

Tightly, through his teeth.

SHAWN

I'm not a door-to-door salesman. We-have-an-appointment.

BREANNE

Not with me. Anyway, we can't afford encyclopedias. We're saving for my college fund. It costs over thirty thousand dollars a year to board at a good medical school.

TERRY

Forget it. Let's go.

SHAWN

What?

TERRY

I'm not comfortable with this. A young child home alone. That's abandonment.

BREANNE

I'm not abandoned!

SHAWN

See honey, she's not abandoned.

Terry starts walking away.

TERRY

I think we should report this to child welfare. They have zero tolerance for this sort of thing.

SHAWN

Uh, yeah...okay.

BREANNE

Wait!

TERRY

I'm sorry. We don't have time to babysit you.

Breanne releases the chain.

BREANNE

Just for a little while. My mom knows everybody around here. They hang on her every word. I bet they'll buy your encyclopedias if she tells them.

TERRY

I don't know...

Shawn finally catches on to the ploy.

SHAWN

Uh...didn't you need a potty break?

BREANNE

Don't use the blue towel. It's mine. It's got germs.

INT. KITCHEN

Shawn rummages around in the fridge. Breanne sits at the kitchen table.

SHAWN

What time does your dad get home?

BREANNE

He's out of town. On business.

SHAWN

Yeah? What kind of business? Say, you got any soda?

BREANNE

Only ginger-ale. It's in the cupboard.

Terry comes in with the jewel bag.

SHAWN

Feeling better, honey?

BREANNE

Why do you call her honey?

TERRY

He calls everyone honey, sweetie. Now shouldn't you be getting off to bed?

BREANNE

I'm not that sick.

Breanne SNIFFLES.

SHAWN

That's not catching, right?

BREANNE

The word is contagious.

SHAWN

I know what the word is. I'm not stu -

TERRY

What Shawn means is, we need to go over our sales pitch. In private.

BREANNE

Oh...okay. You two can talk here quietly amongst yourselves.

SHAWN

Right... Thanks.

Breanne holds a glass holds out to Shawn. He reluctantly pours the contents of his can of ginger-ale into her glass.

Breanne picks up her pajama bag, which is in the form of a teddy bear, and exits. Terry makes sure she's gone.

TERRY

So now what?!

SHAWN

We'll wait until dark and then slip out of town.

TERRY

But her parents -

SHAWN

Dad's away on business. Mom won't be a problem.

He pulls a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

SHAWN

Remember these?

BABY'S BEDROOM

Breanne listens in on the baby monitor.

TERRY (FILTER)

This wasn't the plan. We were supposed to have switched cars by now.

SHAWN (FILTER)

The true test of a criminal mastermind is to be able to improvise on the fly.

TERRY (FILTER)

Is that what you are? Shawn, you got lucky on one burglary.

Breanne's eyes go wide.

KITCHEN

Shawn leans in close to Terry.

SHAWN

Lucky? Well maybe I should take my luck and walk right out of here.

TERRY
Don't be an ass.

SHAWN
Go check on the kid. Tuck her in
or something.

HALLWAY

Terry tries to figure out which room is Breanne's. Finally she picks one with a poster on the door. She enters to see Breanne tossing a rope fire ladder over the window ledge and climbing out!

TERRY
Shawn! Help!

BREANNE'S BEDROOM

Terry dashes into the room and grabs Breanne by her ankles.

BREANNE
Let me go!

TERRY
Get back in here you little scamp!

Breanne SCREAMS.

TERRY
Keep quiet or we'll...

BREANNE
Help! Call the police!

Shawn races in.

SHAWN
Shit!

He grabs Breanne and hauls her in. Terry shuts the window.

BREANNE
Get the hell out of my house!

SHAWN
Shut up, kid!
(to Terry)
Do you think anyone heard?

BREANNE
Everyone heard.

SHAWN

I told you to shut up!

TERRY

It's quiet out. Everyone's at work.

SHAWN

Okay, don't panic. This is middle-America. No one wants to get involved. If we just stay calm -

Breanne bolts for the door.

SHAWN

Hey!

He bolts after her...

HALLWAY

...catches her.

BREANNE

Let go, damn you!

SHAWN

You got a potty mouth, you know that? Doesn't your mom teach you anything?

He hauls her down the stairs. Terry follows.

TERRY

Geez Shawn, I hope you don't want kids.

KITCHEN

Shawn leads Breanne over to a towel rod. He locks the handcuffs onto the rack and then onto one of Breanne's wrists. When she drops her hand it slips out of the cuff.

SHAWN

Damn.

TERRY

What?

SHAWN

They're not kid size.

He looks around...

SHAWN

I'm going to find some rope.

...exits. Pops his head back around the corner...

SHAWN

Make sure she doesn't go anyplace.

...disappears again. Breanne sits down at the kitchen table.

TERRY

Hey, how did you find out, anyway?

BREANNE

Two way speaker.

Breanne blows her nose, points. Terry shuts the speaker off.

BREANNE

Can I have more ginger-ale?

TERRY

No. Maybe. I don't know. Where is it?

BREANNE

Didn't your boyfriend give you any?

TERRY

No.

BREANNE

Is he always like that?

TERRY

Like what?

BREANNE

Never mind.

TERRY

No, what? I'd like to hear.

BREANNE

I don't know. I'm just a kid.

TERRY

Shawn's a good guy.

BREANNE

Do you have a gun?

TERRY

Shawn does. I drove the car. Why?

BREANNE

He made you drive the car?!

TERRY

He didn't make me. I wanted to.

BREANNE

But it was his idea, right?

TERRY

Yeaaaaah. Maybe.

BREANNE

I saw a movie once where this guy robbed an armored car by himself and he went to his girlfriend's place and dumped all these pretty diamonds out on a black velvet cloth. And she was really happy and then they went off together.

Shawn returns.

SHAWN

I can't find anything. I'm gonna check the garage.

And he's gone again.

BREANNE

See? That way if he got caught she wouldn't be involved. But what can you expect from a guy who won't even give you a ginger-ale?

TERRY

It's not even like that. Shawn had a plan.

BREANNE

Like I said, I'm just a kid. Anyway, it's your life. I hope he appreciates the chance you're taking.

TERRY

He does. I'm sure he does.

BREANNE

He probably tells you a lot, huh?

Shawn returns.

SHAWN

It's no good. We'll have to lock her in a closet or something.

BREANNE

Mister, closets don't have locks. And I think you need some serious professional help.

SHAWN

Shut the fuck up.

TERRY

Quit picking on her. She's just a kid.

SHAWN

Did you hear what she said? She's picking on me. What kind of a kid talks like that?

BREANNE

You're the one who likes to tie up little girls.

SHAWN

Hey! I'm not like that! You're twisting...she's twisting everything I say. I'm in control here, right? Right. Me. Not you. Not anyone else. Me!

TERRY

Shawn, lay off.

SHAWN

Whose side are you on?
(to Breanne)
Get in the basement.

BREANNE

But it's dark down there.

SHAWN

So turn a light on!

He opens the door.

Breanne starts down the stairs. Shawn slams and locks the door behind her.

TERRY

So, would it kill you to get me a ginger-ale?

UNFINISHED BASEMENT

Breanne plods down the stairs. With a demoralized SIGH she plunks herself down on the bottom step. Her eyes wander to a paint set kit resting on top of a stack of cardboard boxes.

KITCHEN

Terry pours her own ginger-ale. Shawn paces.

TERRY

You know, I've been thinking.

SHAWN

Geez.

TERRY

What? I can't think now?

SHAWN

Of course you can, honey, it's just that...

TERRY

Yeaaaah?

SHAWN

I'm the strategist here. It's what you'd call my forte.

TERRY

What happens if we get caught?

SHAWN

Nothing happens because we're not gonna get caught.

TERRY

I'm an accomplice to armed robbery, kidnapping...

SHAWN

We haven't kidnapped anyone. We're...babysitters.

TERRY

This is serious, Shawn.

Shawn stops pacing.

SHAWN

You think I don't know that? I'm the one with the Goddamned gun. I'm the one who walked into the jewelry store. It's my car the cops are looking for.

TERRY

That's the problem, Shawn. It's always about you.

Terry storms out. Shawn is perplexed.

UNFINISHED BASEMENT

Breanne has been listening at the door. She goes quietly down the stairs, throws herself down the last couple of steps and rolls onto the floor. She CRIES OUT in pretend pain.

The door to the basement slowly opens. Shawn peers in.

SHAWN

Little girl?

BREANNE

(cries)
I fell down. My ribs hurt.

SHAWN

If this is one of your games...

She WAILS.

SHAWN

Okay, okay! Just...don't move.
(calls)
Terry!
(a beat)
Damn.

Shawn stomps down the stairs.

BREANNE

I need to go to the hospital.

SHAWN

Forget it. What do you think I am, stupid?

BREANNE

I can't breathe. You can't just let me die.

SHAWN
 You're not gonna die.
 (calls)
 Terry!

BREANNE
 There's a first aid box in the
 corner.

SHAWN
 Where? Over there?

BREANNE
 Wait! I'm cold and thirsty. I
 think I'm going into shock.

Shawn hesitates.

BREANNE
 Shock is when the pulse becomes
 weak and rapid. Breathing gets
 shallow and irregular because poor
 circulation of the blood affects
 the breathing centre in the brain
 and -

SHAWN
 I know what the fuck shock is!
 (a beat)
 So what do you do for that?

BREANNE
 Keep the patient warm. Put your
 jacket over me.

SHAWN
 Right.

He does. Then goes to the stack of boxes and begins digging
 through them. He finds a box with a red cross on the
 side...

SHAWN
 Found it.

...opens it. There's nothing inside but old blankets. Shawn
 feels something on his fingers. It's red paint.

SHAWN
 What the?..

He turns around, sees Breanne, with his jacket slung over
 her shoulders, watching him from just inside the kitchen.
 Breanne slams the door shut.

KITCHEN

Breanne engages the deadbolt. A moment later Shawn starts pounding on the door.

SHAWN (FILTER)

Hey, you brat! Let me out of here!
I'm gonna kill you! No! I'm not.
Just open the door. Okay? We can
talk about this.

Breanne calmly gets a ginger-ale from the cupboard and sits down at the table. Shawn keeps pounding.

Terry enters.

TERRY

What's all the racket?

She stops short at the site of Breanne...with Shawn's gun lying on the table in front of her.

Terry steps closer, stops when Breanne picks up the gun.

TERRY

I'm your friend, remember? Hey,
Shawn and me are going to get
married. Would you like to be my
flower girl?

BREANNE

Nope.

Breanne takes the handcuffs from Shawn's jacket pocket and tosses them to Terry.

BREANNE

You know what these are for. You
can use that towel rack.

TERRY

You could just let us go, you
know. You'd never see us again.
Ever. I promise.

BREANNE

Just because I'm only ten don't
think I don't know how to use
this. I've played Grand Theft
Auto, you know. And I kick ass.

Terry reluctantly clamps one cuff around her wrist and the other around the towel rack.

FOYER

BREANNE'S MOM enters with the baby.

BREANNE'S MOM
Breanne, I'm home! Whose car is
that in the garage?

BREANNE
I'm in the kitchen, mom!

KITCHEN

Breanne's mom enters. Her jaw drops at the sight of Terry handcuffed to the towel rack and Breanne with her feet up on the kitchen table and casually pointing the gun in the air.

Startled by Shawn's sudden renewed pounding, Breanne's Mom SCREAMS.

Breanne is startled and topples backward in the chair. The gun goes off and takes a chunk out of the ceiling.

KITCHEN: LATER

Breanne has a gauze bandage tapped to her forehead. Shawn and Terry are led away by a SECOND POLICE OFFICER. The Officer who was driving the cruiser gives Breanne a puzzled look.

POLICE OFFICER
I don't know which is better. I'm
sure Yale and Harvard both have
good medical schools.

BREANNE
I'm going to apply to Johns
Hopkins, too.

POLICE OFFICER
Yeah....

He doesn't know quite what to say to that or what to make of this little girl.

BREANNE
I haven't decided on my speciality
yet. Maybe pediatrics.

POLICE OFFICER
Um...good choice. You're sure you
never saw any jewels?

BREANNE
I think I'd know it if I did.

POLICE OFFICER
No idea where they might be
hidden?

BREANNE
Maybe they dumped them overboard
when they were running. Like drug
smugglers!

The Police Officer gives her a skeptical look.

BREANNE
Hey, I'm just a kid. I have to go
to bed now.

She blows her nose, smiles, and picks up her pajama bag.
She hugs it close and smiles as she exits the kitchen.

It's uncharacteristically heavy.

FADE OUT

THE END