

THE PRESENT

Written by

Joseph Hansen

Joseph Hansen  
(408)-960-5048  
josephjameshansen@gmail.com

OVER BLACK

SFX: DOORBELL RING

CUT TO:

1

**INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY**

1

CLIFFORD (40s, glasses) opens the door to reveal LAUREN's (20s) back, she wears a slim red dress with a BOW on the small of her back and a red clutch by her side.

She turns around with a smile.

LAUREN  
Hi, baby!

CLIFFORD  
Oh -- Oh! Golly.

He LAUGHS, nervous.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
Sorry, it's just, when I called, I  
didn't know you'd be so...

LAUREN  
So...?

His face cracks, devolves into a fit of HYSTERICAL GIGGLING --

She puts a FINGER to his LIPS

LAUREN (CONT'D)  
Call me Lacy.

Clifford's face scrunches up.

CLIFFORD  
Uh, do you mind if I call you  
Connie?

LAUREN  
Whatever you like, baby.

He awkwardly takes her hand from his lips and SHAKES it.

She steps inside and looks around. Photos adorn the walls: a family portrait, wedding photos, soccer teams. Clifford's not in any of them though...

LAUREN (CONT'D)  
So... is daddy being naughty while  
the family's away?

CLIFFORD  
What?

LAUREN  
Enjoying your alone time?

CLIFFORD  
Oh, I live here by myself now.  
She's... gone. They went with  
her...

LAUREN  
Bummer. So where do you want to uh -  
-

She GESTURES.

CLIFFORD  
Oh, heavens.

LAUREN  
Your request said you wanted to  
'open presents'?

She sways her hips seductively and the bow follows.

CLIFFORD  
That's right!

His face lights up and he rushes to the next room.

CLIFFORD (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Come on, Connie! I've got it all  
set up just how we like!

Lauren follows.

2

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

2

Clifford kneels in front of a meticulously placed pile of  
WRAPPED PRESENTS under a well-adorned CHRISTMAS TREE.

Lauren stops in her tracks.

CLIFFORD  
Well?

She furrows her brow, thinking. Is this too weird?

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
Hand me a present.

She joins him, hands him the closest one to her.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
Not that one, silly. That one!

It's marked 'CONNIE'. Lauren picks up another present, this time marked 'CLIFFORD'.

Clifford rips off the bow and tears into the wrapping paper, revealing the large-ish present to be a pancake griddle!

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
Yes! I was hoping for a new one!

LAUREN  
Did you not wrap these?

CLIFFORD  
Me? Ooooooh, I couldn't have done all *this* in one night! But do you know who could?

Lauren stares at him.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
Santa!

She blinks.

Clifford hands Lauren a present marked 'CONNIE'.

It's a medium-sized. She plies open the wrapping paper and the department store box inside to reveal FOOTY PAJAMAS.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)  
Try it on!

LAUREN  
Uhhh...

CLIFFORD  
It's Christmas...

She contemplates, he begs like a puppy dog. Is *this* too weird? She sighs.

LAUREN  
Fine.

Clifford grins from ear to ear.

3

**INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

3

Clifford sits in a reclining chair sipping coffee, wearing Christmas themed footy pajamas.

Lauren comes around the corner wearing what seems to be a matching pair to Clifford's pajamas. He lights up.

CLIFFORD

You. Look. Stunning! Come here.

Lauren puts on a smile and struts over, gets in his lap and puts a hand on his chest.

LAUREN

You still have one more thing to unwrap.

CLIFFORD

That's right!

He STANDS UP, she FALLS onto the floor.

He returns with two presents, sets one aside.

He rips open the wrapping paper on his to reveal a FUNKO POP!

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Awesome! Limited edition, too!

Lauren rolls her eyes. Clifford sets aside the figurine and hands Lauren another small present marked 'CONNIE'.

Lauren opens the present to reveal a LOCKET. She holds it in her hands, it's nice.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Do you like it, Connie?

She opens the locket to reveal a COUPLE and TWO KIDS except... Clifford's CUT AND PASTED his FACE onto SOMEONE ELSE'S BODY and the KIDS AREN'T THE SAME AS ON THE WALLS.

LAUREN

The hell?

She looks up: Clifford's making the EXACT SAME FACE.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

Okay, are we gonna have sex or not?

CLIFFORD

Honey! The kids!

He POINTS to the CORNER where two RAGGEDY ANN/ANDY DOLLS with the KIDS' FACES TAPED ON.

LAUREN  
Jee. Sus. Christ.

She gets up and LEAVES for the hallway.

CLIFFORD  
Wait!

He follows her.

4

**INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

4

Lauren gets her things from the bathroom, walks back towards the front door but Clifford BLOCKS her path.

CLIFFORD  
Please just wait!

She holds up her PHONE.

LAUREN  
I've got a 300 pound ex-NFL draft pick in the car ready to beat your ass if you don't get out of the way!

He obliges, she moves past him, he follows.

CLIFFORD  
Please! Just hear me out!

She spins around.

LAUREN  
Who the hell hires a hooker to pretend to be their dead wife?

CLIFFORD  
Woah, woah, woah, I did not order a prostitute!?

LAUREN  
What the hell -- what do you think I am, a social worker?

CLIFFORD  
The site said adult companions!

LAUREN

Yeah, dumbass, next to a bunch of pictures of women with their fingers in their mouths -- *Jesus Christ!*

CLIFFORD

That's how people model! It's modern and it's sexy and European and -- and --

Clifford's face melts with anxiety. A desperate, dry, WHEEZING sound escapes from his open mouth.

Lauren scoffs.

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

Look, she's not dead, okay? She's just -- She left with her Norwegian CrossFit instructor slash lover Armand to do gross things at some swingers' resort in Malibu.

LAUREN

And the pictures? I can see the Getty Images logo still.

CLIFFORD

It was the realtor's idea, we're trying to sell the place -- look, I'm sorry, I'll pay you for your time, could you just please do me one more favor?

She looks at him, unsure.

LAUREN

What?

He smiles.

5           **INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER**

5

They pose for a picture with the TAPED ON FACES DOLLS in front of the tree. Lauren forces a smile. FLASH!

MATCH CUT TO:

6           **INT. HALLWAY - LATER**

6

The "family" picture hangs on the wall with all the other STOCK PHOTOS.