

BEAUTY PAGEANT

by

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EXT. FRIENDLY VILLAGE TRAILER PARK - LUBBOCK, TX

Actually, scratch that.

EXT. FRIENDLY VILLAGE MOBILE ESTATES - LUBBOCK, TX

There we go. We find ourselves right smack in the middle of Lubbock, Texas. STD capital of the United States.

We PUSH IN ON a double-wide FEMA-looking mobile home --

INT. JOHNSTON HOME - CONTINUOUS

Operating out of what is *generously* called the kitchen is a little SALON AREA.

There's a beautician station and styling chair with a slovenly nematode sitting in it.

She's an OLDER WOMAN busy getting her enormous hair did by --

MARY-JO JOHNSTON, 30's. Fun, fly, and flashy.

Even though she clearly shops at The 99¢ Store, she keeps her shit tight.

Mary-Jo curls, snips, and irons like the pro that she is.

OLDER WOMAN

Remember, hon'. I want it big.

MARY-JO

I've been at this a while. Don't worry, you're gonna look great for your daughter's party.

The Older Woman SIGHS indignantly.

OLDER WOMAN

It's not a party. It's a pageant.

MARY-JO

Like them ones on TV?

The Older Woman holds up the magazine she's been flipping through. Mary-Jo leans in and sees pages and pages of creepy little Toddlers & Tiaras.

If this was Saudi Arabia, these kids would be married by now.

OLDER WOMAN

My pride and joy Bella places every time. Never lower than fourth.

The Older Woman whips out her phone and flips through a series of child glamour shots.

MARY-JO

(squinting)

Good for her. You know, I've always thought my little girl would love dressing up, too.

The Older Woman instantly perks up and twists her head around to see Mary-Jo full on.

OLDER WOMAN

(excitedly)

Oh, they're wonderful! They make you-- er, *your kids*, feel sooooo good.

The Older Woman goes back to digging in her purse and pulls out a flyer for --

MISS TINY TEXAS -- The biggest little pageant in the Lone Star State.

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)

We're getting ready for the big one in a couple weeks. Have you ever considered joining the circuit?

Mary-Jo rests her hands on her hips and thinks for a second. She grabs a FRAMED PHOTO off a shelf next to her.

MARY-JO

This is my Flora. Makes you just wanna sop her up with a biscuit.

(beat)

Do you like her chances?

The Older Woman's eager face drops like someone's just told her cheez whiz is going out of style.

OLDER WOMAN

Oh, she's...cute.

Mary-Jo, missing the dismissive tone, beams with pride.

MARY-JO

Isn't she though?

Mary-Jo puts the photo back -- which we don't see yet -- and finishes off her customer with A TOXIC CLOUD OF AQUANET.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
Okay, all done here!

Lifting with her legs so as not to dislodge the 3 foot tall creature now resting on her head, the Older Woman struggles out of the chair.

She pays Mary-Jo in cash and they ad-lib their goodbyes.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
(to her back)
Wouldja mind leaving that pageant literature behind?

The Older Woman looks at Mary-Jo like she can't be serious, but hands her the flyer anyway.

OLDER WOMAN
Good luck.

When she turns around to leave --

OLDER WOMAN (CONT'D)
(loudly)
You're gonna need it.

Mary-Jo SEETHES as the Older Woman walks out of the trailer. She makes it out the front door. But her *hair* doesn't --

The doorway KNOCKS HER GIANT MOP ALL THE WAY OFF revealing it to be a highly stylized wig.

It hits the floor in a wet lump like yesterday's road kill.

Mary-Jo looks down at it and then at the woman. She pockets the cash and with a sweet smile on her face says --

MARY-JO
No touch ups, dear, sorry.

The Older Woman raises her hand to protest, but Mary-Jo SLAMS THE DOOR IN HER FUGLY FACE.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT./INT. LUBBOCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOLYARD - DAY

We suddenly find ourselves at Lubbock Elementary. Home of the Buckin' Broncos.

Also childhood obesity and juvenile diabetes.

We meet Mary-Jo's daughter. Little FLORA JOHNSTON, 7, in the flesh. She's surrounded by a group of feral SCHOOLCHILDREN.

SCHOOLCHILDREN

Where'd you get that ugly-ass shirt? It doesn't even fit right.

FLORA

(softly)
My Mama made it.

SCHOOLCHILDREN

Out of what? Food stamps?!

The kids EXPLODE with laughter.

Poor Flora SIGHS. She's used to this crap, but that doesn't make it any easier.

A particularly douchey child, one you would slap yourself, knocks the notebook out of her hand. Flora bends down to pick it up when --

She splits her (also homemade) pants.

The schoolchildren all laugh and point.

SCHOOLCHILDREN (CONT'D)

You're family's broke *and* you're ugly!

FLORA

Shut up, all of you. My Mama says I'm gorgeous!

SCHOOLBOY

Then your Mama needs glasses!

SCHOOLGIRL

But she can't even afford 'em!

FLORA

That's not true! And money isn't everything!

SCHOOLCHILDREN

You would know!

Tears start forming in her eyes when suddenly --

THE BELL RINGS and a DODGE CARAVAN, rocking spinner dubs straight outta 2003, rolls up to the front of the school.

MUSIC CUE: "212" - by Azealia Banks

The DRIVER'S SIDE DOOR OPENS and, in slow-motion, out comes --

Mary-Jo. She puts one Lady Reebok on the ground, followed by the other, as she --

LOCKS EYES onto her daughter's bullies.

She points at them, then herself, and mouths the words --

MARY-JO
I'm comin' for you, fuckers!

The kids collectively shit a brick and run away screaming.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
Yeah, you better run! Move those
scrawny asses!

Flora is even more upset having her mom fight her battles. So the waterworks start coming. And there's a lot of 'em.

Mary-Jo takes a knee in front of her daughter.

FLORA
They were pickin' on me because of
my clothes again...

Mary-Jo wipes the tears out of Flora's eyes and says --

MARY-JO
Don't mind them, baby. They're
just jealous.

FLORA
(pulling at her shirt)
Jealous of *this*?

MARY-JO
That's right! What have I always
told you?

FLORA/MARY-JO
Money don't buy class.

But only one of them seems to really believe that sentiment.

MARY-JO
Hey, I've got an idea. Why don't
we stop by the Queen on the way
home. I'll buy you a Blizzard with
all the trimmings.

Flora's stomach GROWLS and Mary-Jo knows she has her on the hook. She leads her daughter back to the mini-van.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

Just be thankful you have a mama
like me, sweetness. Some kids have
it way worse.

EDITH KRANZLER (PRE-LAP)

(screaming)

Come on, baby girl, take her
fucking down!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. GEORGE R. BROWN CONVENTION CENTER - HOUSTON, TX

Welcome to H-Town. Home of sittin' sidewayz, sippin' sizzurp,
and the LIL' MISS SIX-SHOOTER PAGEANT.

The screaming woman we've just met is EDITH KRANZLER, 30's.

She's the spitting image of her little girl up on stage.

Only Edith has more crow's feet, higher stress-levels, and a
hair cut copied from Kris Jenner, ringleader of the
Kardashian Klones.

She's adrift in a sea of overweight, under-dignified STAGE
MOTHERS. Everyone looks on as the WINNER of this year's L-M-
Double-S is about to be crowned.

UP ON STAGE --

CLAUDETTE KRANZLER, 7, Edith's little girl, stands nervously
grinning a toothy (and forced) smile.

The EMCEE -- a creepy Bob Barker type -- holds her hand and
the hand of her fierce competitor:

A FIVE YEAR OLD GIRL whose head CANTS AT A RIGHT ANGLE under
the weight of hairspray, hair straightener, and hair *whatever*
else that's gooped onto her tiny head.

EMCEE

(into the mic)

Aren't they both just lovely?

The CROWD erupts in a torrent of Palin-esque "you betchas!"
as our Emcee takes out an ENVELOPE from behind his back.

This is the moment we've been waiting for. The camera PANS
BACK to Edith whose been waiting just a bit harder than
everyone else because --

Pageantry is her life.

The only one in the room standing, she squeezes the back of the chair in front of her in a G.I. Joe kung-fu grip that makes her knuckles turn white.

Someone taps her on the shoulder. Edith looks back to see Anna Nicole Smith's unfortunate After-Photo HISSING at her.

STAGE MOTHER

Excuse me, lady. Would you mind sitting down? Some of us can't see!

Edith NARROWS HER EYES like she's looking through the scope of a sniper rifle.

EDITH

Is *your* child up there?

Edith's challenger awkwardly looks down.

STAGE MOTHER

Dakota lost in Round 2...

EDITH

Then shut your shit-mouth. That's my little girl up there -- *the pretty one* -- and if I miss her big moment, I'll--

EMCEE

Without further ado, this year's Lil' Miss Six-Shooter, the pride of Texas, drum roll please.

The drums roll, of course.

EMCEE (CONT'D)

Claudette Kranzler, 7 years old, from San Antonio! ISN'T SHE BEAUTIFUL?!

The crowd EXPLODES IN APPLAUSE. Forgetting her fight instantly, Edith SHRIEKS IN ECSTASY AND RUSHES THE STAGE.

The Stage Mother left behind about shits herself in relief watching Edith run away and --

BOUND UP THE STAGE SCREAMING --

EDITH

We won!! We won!! Ohmigod, we won!!

Edith SCOOPS up a BOUQUET OF ROSES meant for Claudette and starts weeping openly as she RIPS the mic away from the confused Emcee.

EDITH (CONT'D)
 Never count out the Kranzlers!
 Baby, tell the crowd what I told
 you!

Edith jams the mic in her daughter's face.

Claudette shrinks away. Her eyes look a little frightened, but that grin is still plastered on her face.

Just like Mama taught her.

Edith, with rivers of mascara crud running down her face, looks at her daughter expectantly.

CLAUDETTE
 (into the mic)
 Uh, mommy loves a winner?

EDITH
 (yanking the mic away)
 That's right she does!
 (to the crowd)
 22 and 6! Peace!

She drops the mic like Chris Rock and walks off a winner.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. DAIRY QUEEN - DAY

Mary-Jo and Flora walk into their neighborhood DAIRY QUEEN and up to the counter.

DQ EMPLOYEE
 What can I get you today, ma'am?

MARY-JO
 One Oreo Blizzard with everything
 on it.

Mary-Jo looks down sweetly at Flora.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
 My baby's favorite.

DQ EMPLOYEE
 Great, anything for you?

MARY-JO
No, that's it's, thanks.

Flora tugs on her mom's purse.

FLORA
Don't you want anything, Mama?

Yes, she does, but Mary-Jo digs through her bag for change, and obviously comes up short.

MARY-JO
(to Flora)
Aren't you sweet to ask.
(to DQ Employee)
No, thanks. Just the blizzard.

The DQ Employee works the rickety soft-serve machine and then hands off the Blizzard.

Mary-Jo and Flora take a booth. Flora struggles to see over her shake.

There's a warmth here in direct opposition to what we just saw in Houston. Mary-Jo would do anything for her daughter.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
Eat up, baby. Let's chase those blues away.

FLORA
(nursing the Blizzard)
Mama, what did you do about bullies when you were growing up?

Mary-Jo's heart breaks for her daughter. She reaches over and holds her hand.

MARY-JO
I went through the same thing. You just have to hold your chin up high, and say, "This is who I am".

FLORA
I do say that, Mama. I do!
(beat)
But then they tell me we're "low-rent Oxy-heads". I don't even know what that means.

MARY-JO
(sotto)
Oxy-heads? The fuck?

FLORA

And that the only thing you know
how to cook for dinner is meth.

MARY-JO

What?!

FLORA

And that Daddy is--

MARY-JO

Okay, I get it, Flora.

Flora looks down into her Blizzard.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

Just remember Mama loves you.

FLORA

I don't *feel* loved...

MARY-JO

Don't you ever let me hear you say
that again. Me and your Daddy love
you to Reese's Pieces!

FLORA

I know, Mama, but you're not the
only people in the world. I don't
want everybody else to make me feel
bad 'cause of how I look...

Mary-Jo sits back like she's just been punched in the gut.
Suddenly, a thought dawns on her.

She slowly reaches into her purse, takes out the beauty
pageant flyer from earlier, and smooths it out across the
table between them.

MARY-JO

If you don't believe *me* when I tell
you how special you are, maybe you
will when a group of judges do.

FLORA

(nervous)

A beauty pageant? You think I can
win? All those girls look so
fancy...

MARY-JO

You're the prettiest little girl in
Texas. I know you can win.

Flora CRACKS A SMILE from ear to ear. It's the first time we've seen her look happy.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
What have I always told you?

FLORA/MARY-JO
Money don't buy class!

Flora excitedly CHUGS HER BLIZZARD AND THEN LETS OUT A LOUD BURRRRRRRRRPPPP.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN ANTONIO - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Edith drives her and her daughter home in a Sebring Convertible. Ridin' dirty with the top down.

In the passenger seat, Claudette awkwardly cradles a trophy as big as she is.

EDITH
(eyes on the road)
If you were President of the World,
what social issue would you change
and why?

Claudette doesn't answer. Edith looks over to see her little girl has nodded off. Drool comes out of her mouth and it's smudging her tastefully excessive makeup.

Edith melts like any other mom would, but then she --

SLAMS ON THE BREAKS!

Claudette BANGS her head a little and wakes up instantly.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Ooh, sorry baby, a pretty little
poodle just ran out in the middle
of the road. Were you napping?

CLAUDETTE
(shaking it off)
Where? I want a puppy!

EDITH
You know Mommy is allergic to pets,
sweetie. Now, answer the question.

CLAUDETTE
What question?

EDITH

The one I just asked you.

CLAUDETTE

Mommy, I was in dreamland.

EDITH

You're just going to have to learn to multi-task, dear. All the best pageanters do.

Edith and Claudette pull up to a neon home straight out of Edward Scissorhands. It's almost as dolled up as Claudette.

Almost.

Edith helps the trophy, and Claudette, out of the car.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You've earned fifteen minutes of TV time before yoga.

Claudette lights up like the seven year old she is and RACES INTO THE HOUSE SCREAMING --

CLAUDETTE

Yo Gabba Gabba!

Edith shakes her head warmly and carries in the trophy like a newborn baby swaddled in her arms.

HOLD ON -- EDITH'S VANITY PLATE. It reads --

"Live by the pageant, die by the pageant".

CUT TO:

INT. KRANZLER HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Claudette races past her defeated-looking father DAVE KRANZLER, 30's, solemnly sitting at the kitchen table going through a bunch of bills.

She throws off all her clothes, lets her hair down, and plants herself in front of the TV.

Edith comes in and sits with Dave. In their case, opposites really do attract.

Or rather opposites hit 30, become desperate, and settle for each other.

DAVE
Looks like we won, huh?

Edith holds up the trophy.

EDITH
First place! The mud bugs she went
up against didn't stand a chance.

DAVE
(hopeful)
Did it come with any prize money?

EDITH
Five thousand!

DAVE
Fantastic! I was just going through
all these bills and --

EDITH
(not listening)
But I have to recoup all the
expenses that went into this one.
The acupuncturist, the masseuse,
hair, make-up. Winning isn't
cheap.

DAVE
How much does that leave us then?

EDITH
Honey, it *almost* sounds like you're
putting money in front of your
daughter's happiness.

Edith goes into the living room where we find a MASSIVE
SHRINE dedicated to Claudette and her many wins.

Dave follows her and turns off the TV. Claudette freaks the
fuck out.

CLAUDETTE
Daddy, I have 12 minutes left!

DAVE
Go watch in our room, baby. Mommy
and Daddy need to talk.

Claudette runs away as fast as she can. TV time is counting
down and she knows it.

DAVE (CONT'D)

We're already two months behind on the house payment. If you want to keep competing you might have to get a job...

Edith gets the same look in her eyes she aimed at the pushy stage mother back in Houston.

EDITH

I'm sorry.

(beat)

You don't consider *all this* a job?

She waves a hand at all the ribbons, banners, and trophies.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Because *I* sure as hell do.

Dave seems to shrink in on himself. They've had this argument before and it always ends the same.

DAVE

We can't pay the mortgage with trophies. Besides.

(beat)

Is this really what *Claudette* wants?

Edith pauses in her tracks.

EDITH

Look, if I could enter *myself* and win I would.

A momentary sadness comes over her.

EDITH (CONT'D)

But I'm too old...

And just like that it's gone.

She snaps out of it and walks over to the hall closet and starts digging around inside it. It's stuffed to the gills and only her feet stick out.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I swear, Dave, sometimes I think you have no foresight.

DAVE

(sotto)

Not the dream board again...

EDITH
Remember my dream board?

Edith HAULS OUT A MASSIVE DISPLAY BOARD WITH ALL SORTS OF IMAGES PASTED ONTO IT.

We notice sports cars, dollar signs, mansions, and a GIANT picture of EDITH'S face all in the center of it.

EDITH (CONT'D)
The more wins I coach Claudette to,
the closer we get to me doing what
Mom and Mee-Mah couldn't.

Dave mouths along with the next part having heard it a million times before.

EDITH (CONT'D)
I can open my own agency.

She starts pointing to the dream board.

EDITH (CONT'D)
But it takes time and money to get
there.

DAVE
A lot of money...

EDITH
Yes, Dave, a lot of money. Think
of it as an investment in your
daughter's future.

DAVE
At this rate we won't last three
more months.

Edith instantly rips a flyer out of her pocket. The same one Mary-Jo showed Flora. For this year's MISS TINY TEXAS.

EDITH
More time than I need.

CLOSE-ON the flyer.

DAVE
Miss Tiny Texas? You think
Claudette is ready for that?

EDITH
The second biggest glitz pageant
for girls 7-9 West of the
Mississippi?

(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)

Yes, I think Claudette is ready for that. If she wins, she gets an automatic berth for Miss Tiny USA, the biggest pageant of them all.

(beat)

I've been building up to this moment since we got pregnant. We win these two and we're golden.

Edith grabs Dave's hands and walks him down the hallway in a very familiar tour. Adorning the walls are family portraits dating back decades.

These aren't ordinary family photos. In each and every one, a young girl is shown winning a beauty pageant. As they walk, the pictures get older and older.

We see Edith as a child winning in the 80's, her MOTHER winning in the 60's, and on until we come across a picture *clearly* from the 1800's --

EDITH (CONT'D)

Great-Granny Edith. My namesake and the first in our family to win a pageant. I'm -- we're -- so close to honoring her memory. We win Tiny Texas and the world is our oyster.

Dave doesn't look convinced, but he knows better than to stand in between Edith and her life's work.

DAVE

I'll try and move some money around.

EDITH

Great, because Claudette's spiritualist is 50 bucks an hour.

She kisses him on the cheek and blows by him.

EDITH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Claudette! Yoga!

CUT TO:

EXT. FRIENDLY VILLAGE MOBILE ESTATES - JOHNSTON HOME - NIGHT

BUDD (PRE-LAP)

You what?

INT. JOHNSTON HOME - CONTINUOUS

MARY-JO

Oh, come on, I know you heard me.

Mary-Jo sits at a computer desk. Yes, they have a computer. And high speed internet, thank you very much.

She addresses her husband BUDD, 30's. Big heart, small paycheck. He sits in an easy chair with a SIXER OF SHOCKTOP.

BUDD

Did you even do any research before you filled Flora's head with all this? Look at those numbers again. There's no way we can afford that.

MARY-JO

Well how was I supposed to know the difference between --

Mary-Jo raises a pair of doty half-glasses in front of her eyes and turns back to the screen.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

(slowly)

Glitz...and...natural pageants?

BUDD

Says right there. The *difference* is about two thousand dollars.

It might as well be two *million* dollars.

Mary-Jo gestures to her "salon" in the kitchen.

MARY-JO

Well, I already have hair and make-up covered...

BUDD

And just how are we supposed to come up with the rest?

Mary-Jo knits her fingers together. Her daughter's happiness is priceless...but she has to face facts that they aren't the Rockefellers.

Or even the Clampetts.

MARY-JO

(weakly)

What about the RV fund?

Budd huffs knowing full well she was going to go there.

BUDD

(pleading)

We've been savin' that money since our honeymoon. You just wanna flush that trip down the chemical toilet?

MARY-JO

We have to make a choice.

(beat)

Do we want our lil' girl to be happy? Or do we wanna collect spoons from road side diners in all 50 states?

BUDD

But it ain't about the spoons. It's about seein' the nation. Besides, what're we gonna do if Flora doesn't win? Some of those girls look like super models.

(beat)

Scary, underage super models.

MARY-JO

Flora can win. I know it. She takes after her daddy in the looks department anyway.

Flattery will get you everywhere. Especially with Budd and his beer gut. He begins to waffle.

BUDD

Do you even know how to get started?

Mary-Jo knows that tone in her husband's voice. He's sweet and that's why she married him.

MARY-JO

Everything we need is right here on this web site.

BUDD

Then bring home the gold, baby.

He knocks back some beer. Mary-Jo SQUEALS WITH DELIGHT, leaps up and TACKLES Budd mid-drink, along with his chair, into the wall.

From outside, their flimsy mobile home SHIFTS RIGHT OFF ITS BASE.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRESS BARN - PARKING LOT - THE NEXT DAY

Mary-Jo's minivan pulls up to the classiest place in Lubbock.

The Dress Barn. Yeehaw.

Mary-Jo and Flora hop out. Flora carries a check-list and Mary-Jo crams a stack of two G's in cash into her tiny clutch.

FLORA

I ain't never seen so much money!

MARY-JO

Me either. You ready, baby?

FLORA

Prettyprettydressesyay!

Flora runs off like she just hit lightspeed. Mary-Jo stuffs the cash back into her purse and jets off after her.

INT. DRESS BARN - CONTINUOUS

A bespectacled SALES ASSOCIATE, doing her best to look white trash chic, comes up to them.

Ala PRETTY WOMAN, she has a rude look on her face when she sees her new customers.

SALES ASSOCIATE

(condescending)

May I help you?

MARY-JO

You sure can, Glasses. We're lookin' for a dress.

SALES ASSOCIATE

I'm sorry, I don't believe we have anything in your...price range.

Mary-Jo narrows her eyes, but Mama keeps calm.

MARY-JO

Last time I checked, this is the Dress Barn not Rodeo Drive.

Yes, she pronounces it "rodeo".

FLORA
I'm entering Miss Tiny Texas!

SALES ASSOCIATE
(scoffing)
The pageant? You can't be serious.
(beat, to Mary-Jo)
You really think she has a chance?

MARY-JO
Mister Benjamin and his buddies do.

Mary-Jo opens her clutch and CASH EXPLODES OUT OF IT.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. DRESS BARN - PARKING LOT - LATER

Mary-Jo and Flora head back to the car carrying a --
BRIGHT PINK, SEQUINSED-OUT COWGIRL OUTFIT WITH MATCHING HAT.

MARY-JO
What's next on the list, baby?

FLORA
Says here -- spray tan?

Mary-Jo stops in her tracks.

MARY-JO
What kind of a sicko would spray
paint their seven year old?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TANNING SALON - SAN ANTONIO, TX - DAY

EDITH
Hold still, Claudette!

Edith holds one of those SARS masks over her face.

She oversees a STYLIST spray tanning the shit out of
Claudette in the back room of a beauty salon.

A sign on the door reads, "I'm a beautician, not a magician."

The Stylist puts down her nozzle.

STYLIST

That's two coats. What do you think, Mom?

With her hawk-eyes, Edith moves in close to her daughter and goes over every inch of Claudette's little body.

She even checks her tan lines.

EDITH

Let's go three.

CLAUDETTE

Mommy, no!

EDITH

Mommy loves a winner, sweetheart!

She raises her mask to her face and takes a step back.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Fire!

THE STYLIST BLASTS CLAUDETTE FULL THROTTLE.

CUT TO:

TITLE UP -- ONE WEEK LATER -- MISS TINY TEXAS PAGEANT

EXT. DALLAS CONVENTION CENTER - DALLAS, TX

Remember Lil' Miss Six-Shooter? Miss Tiny Texas (in the heart of Dallas, Go Cowboys!) shits all over that.

In the crowd outside, we find Edith physically dragging Claudette, Dave, and a ton of bright pink luggage that looks like it came out of Malibu Barbie's Dream House.

We notice Claudette now looks like she belongs to a totally different ethnic group.

She holds her stomach and does her best to keep up.

EDITH

Pick up the pace, you guys.

DAVE

Edie, Claudette has a tummy ache.

Edith reaches into a purse that matches her luggage and hands Claudette a THING OF TUMS.

EDITH

That's just gas from the kale
smoothie. Don't worry, it'll pass.
Chew, baby.

They fight their way inside.

CUT TO:

INT. DALLAS CONVENTION CENTER - SIGN UP TABLES

Edith leads her family inside to register where they find --

Mary-Jo, Flora (looking cute as a button), and Budd who feels
severely out of place.

Even though he looks the part, a Pageant Dad he is not.

OFF TO THE SIDE --

A nervous LITTLE GIRL PUKES while her OVERBEARING MOTHER
about faints of embarrassment.

EDITH

See, Claudette. Not everyone is
made for the Big Show.

(to Mary-Jo)

You might wanna get a move on it
and put some sawdust down.

Mary-Jo looks befuddled. Who is this woman?

MARY-JO

I'm sorry. Can I help you?

EDITH

That puke isn't gonna mop itself
up.

Oh, no she didn't.

MARY-JO

What was that?

EDITH

You're the janitor, aren't you?

Oh, yes she did. Mary-Jo flips her hair back.

MARY-JO

No, I'm not. My daughter is
entering the pageant.

Edith snorts derisively. She sees Flora shoving a breathmint up her nose.

EDITH

You mean that little troglodyte?

Mary-Jo gets heated. She cocks her arm back and grabs Edith's Gucci collar.

MARY-JO

Okay, bitch, let's see how your perfect posture looks with my fist up your ass.

Dave and Budd intervene. They make eye contact like two prisoners of war stuck on opposing battleships.

BUDD

Now, honey, leave the lady and her family alone. Let's just go register.

EDITH

Listen to your man, Mama June.

(beat)

Quit now and take Honey Boo Boo outta here before I get *really* angry.

Edith lets Dave and Claudette walk her away.

Mary-Jo seethes at the retreating Kranzlers.

VOICE (O.S.)

I'd look out for her...

The Johnstons turn around to find WAYNE LEGARRETT, 40's.

Think Danny McBride as Kenny Powers, only frumpier.

Dressed like Larry the Cable Guy, he has a TODDLER in his arms wearing more make up than a 40 year old woman on her first date in 3 years.

WAYNE

Heyo, I'm Wayne. This little darling is Prudence Nightengale LeGarrett.

MARY-JO

(unsure)

Your daughter?

WAYNE

My niece. My own little pageant queens are all grown up. 12 and 10 and never lookin' back.

MARY-JO

She looks a little young to enter.

WAYNE

For this one, yep, but Prudy's already won two Texas Toddler pageants. We're just here trying to get her comfortable in the big leagues. Anyway, friendly word of advice, watch out for Edith. She's ruthless.

MARY-JO

Thanks for the tip Wayne, but that bitch is going down.

FLORA

Mama said a bad word!

Flora laughs so hard her breathmint shoots out of her nose.

WAYNE

Well, from one pageant parent to another, we'd all love to see that.

CUT TO:

INT. DALLAS CONVENTION CENTER - BALLROOM - LATER

A stage is set up at the front of the room. THREE JUDGES, two creepy OLD LADIES, both of them enormous, and one MALE JUDGE who definitely looks like a diddler, sit at their table going through today's contestants.

A stuffy old PAGEANT DIRECTOR whose better days are way, way, way behind her walks on stage and steps up to the PODIUM placed in the center of it.

A hush falls over the crowd.

PAGEANT DIRECTOR

Ladies, gentlemen, and little darlings. Welcome to Miss Tiny Texas!

Everyone cheers in the crowd. Especially Flora. Which makes it hard for Mary-Jo to finish painting her fingernails.

PULL-BACK -- we finally see Flora dressed up in full regalia.

She's glammed out with tons of makeup in her hot pink dress. She looks beautiful...

In that creepy, living doll way that so many on this pageant circuit seem to find pleasing.

PAGEANT DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
As you all know, the lucky girl who places in First receives an automatic berth for Miss Tiny USA.

A hallowed murmur ripples through the crowd.

PAGEANT DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
So without further ado, let's meet our girls.

The Pageant Director starts a chant that the crowd echoes --

PAGEANT DIRECTOR/CROWD
Glitz! Glitz! Glitz!

We see Edith leading Claudette to her place in line with the other girls at the side of the stage.

Claudette hasn't quite mastered the art of walking in six inch stilettos, but she does her best, bless her heart.

ON STAGE --

PAGEANT DIRECTOR
Our first contestant is Champagne Brunch-Brown, 7, from right here in Dallas. Let's give her a big hand!

MUSIC CUE: "**STUPID HOE**" - by Nicki Minaj

Champagne heads up the stairs onto the stage but -- oh no! -- she TRIPS a little on the last step.

The women Judges take notice. As does Champagne's MOTHER who bites her hands.

And the Male Judge. He *really* notices. But Champagne recovers nicely and does a "sexy" pirouette.

PAGEANT DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Champagne enjoys swimming and having her daddy wrapped around her little finger.

A slew of ah's come from the crowd.

Champagne finishes off her routine and preens for the judges before leaving stage left.

BACK IN LINE WAITING THEIR TURN --

Are the rest of the mothers and daughters. Including Mary-Jo and Flora and Edith and Claudette.

PAGEANT DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Next up, Claudette Kranzler, 7,
from San Antonio.

EDITH
Ohmigod, this is it!

Edith practically SHOVES CLAUDETTE ONTO THE STAGE --

MUSIC CUE: "**MOVES LIKE JAGGER**" - by Maroon 5

Claudette, still unsteady in her stripper shoes, does her best to glide across the stage.

And again, the Male Judge, really, really likes it...

PAGEANT DIRECTOR
This is Claudette's first run at
Miss Tiny Texas. She enjoys
jumping rope and being good for
mommy.

More ooh's and ah's from the crowd. OFF-STAGE --

Edith saunters back over to Mary-Jo, arms crossed smugly.

EDITH
That's a beauty queen. Save
yourself the embarrassment and go
home.

Mary-Jo moves Flora behind her and rolls up her sleeves.

MARY-JO
What is your *problem*, lady?

EDITH
Professionals like me don't like
amateurs like you. You're making a
mockery of this entire pageant.

MARY-JO
Look, I don't care if your botox
backfired or you just haven't been
laid in a long time. But leave me
and mine alone.

Just then, Claudette exits the stage and it's --

PAGEANT DIRECTOR
Now little Flora Johnston's turn!

Mary-Jo ELBOWS Edith out of the way. She takes Flora by the shoulders and whispers into her ear.

MARY-JO
Remember, sweetie, I don't care if
you win or lose, you're already the
prettiest girl in the room.

Flora about melts and then rushes the stage in her bright pink cowgirl outfit.

MUSIC CUE: "**FUCKIN' PROBLEMS**" - by A\$AP Rocky

(*not the edited version, bitches.)

Flora drops it like it's hot. She shakes her grade-school ass in front of the judges. The Pageant Director seems stunned at so many f-bombs, but she presses on anyway.

PAGEANT DIRECTOR
Flora, 7, uh, comes to us from
Lubbock. Her hobbies are playing
the recorder and frog gigging.

The Pageant Director covers her mic and asks off stage --

PAGEANT DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
What's frog gigging?

She gets a response we don't hear.

PAGEANT DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Oh, Good lord.

Just then, the doors open in the back of the ball room and a man looking like a less plastic version of Tim Gunn walks in.

Meet REED REYNOLDS, 50's. Curious at what he sees, he raises his hand to his chin. More on him later.

Flora continues her freestyle routine that gets lewder by the second as she starts doing a raunchy strip tease.

She takes off her hat and then her jacket. Before she goes further, she --

Grabs a MIC STAND and starts lasciviously POLE-DANCING!

Like, really. Lasciviously. Pole-dancing.

Watching this, Edith Kranzler absolutely loses her shit.

EDITH
Fuuuuck this!

She runs over and UNPLUGS THE SOUND SYSTEM causing the music to die instantly. She then rushes the stage and tries shooin' Flora off like a stray dog.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Somebody shoulda spayed your farm
animal mom years ago!

Flora winces, she's hurt being yelled at by an adult like this.

And Mary-Jo can see that it she's hurt.

MARY-JO
(off-stage)
OH -- HELL -- NO!!

She rushes on stage and yells out in her Ellen Ripley voice --

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
Get away from her, you *bitch*!

Like Miley Cyrus before her, Mary-Jo COMES IN LIKE A WRECKIN' BALL AND --

BOTH GO FLYING INTO THE AUDIENCE!

Wrestling on the ground, Edith kicks Mary-Jo square in the nuts. Mary-Jo recovers and springs up yelling --

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
Come at me, bro!

Locked in Mortal Kombat, a ring of death forms around the two. The women kick, claw, and scratch like gangsta bitches.

Mary-Jo reaches out and RIPS A LOCK OF HAIR RIGHT OUT OF EDITH'S SCALP.

Edith bellows in anguish until a booming voice pierces the crowd.

It belongs to Reed Reynolds. Remember him? He calmly marches into the circle.

Despite her bleeding head wound, Edith immediately takes a knee. So does everyone else. It's like Jesus come to Earth.

Mary-Jo wheezes as she struggles to pull up her pants that have been ripped down to her ankles.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

Who are you?

EDITH

(hissing)

He's Reed Reynolds, you hillbilly!
The President of the ICPC!

MARY-JO

The what?

REED REYNOLDS

The International Child Pageant
Committee. In all my years
overseeing these baby beauties,
I've never seen anything so
disgraceful.

Reed looks away and walks over to Edith. Only now do we realize he's flanked by two SECRET-SERVICE LOOKING DUDES who would fit right in at the White House.

REED REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

You know *my* name. What's *yours*?

EDITH

Edith. Edith Kranzler. Sir, I
follow you on Twitter and I've read
all your books. You're my --

He shuts Edith up with a wave of his hand.

REED REYNOLDS

And you. What's your name?

MARY-JO

(wiping blood from her
chin)

Mary-Jo Johnston.

REED REYNOLDS

You and your daughter are banned
from the Child Pageant Circuit -
natural and Glitz.

Edith gleefully jumps straight up in the air.

EDITH

Thank fuck nuts, there is a God!

REED REYNOLDS

Not so fast, *Mrs. Kranzler*. You're banned, as well. As long as you both shall live.

(to his bodyguards)

See that they're escorted out. Six-Shooter is cancelled this year.

Reed drops a WHITE HANDKERCHIEF like he's starting a drag race and marches off leaving the CROWD to angrily boo Edith and Mary-Jo.

Flora looks crushed. With big, teary eyes she looks up at her mother --

FLORA

I knew I shoulda never entered. They'd never let a girl like me win anything. I'm not beautiful...

Mary-Jo looks devastated. So does Edith. At the same time --

MARY-JO/EDITH

Wait!

CUT TO:

EXT. DALLAS CONVENTION CENTER

Mary-Jo and Edith race after Reed and his entourage. A decked out BLACK LIMO pulls up to the curb.

Reed has one foot in the door when Mary-Jo and Edith TRIP EACH OTHER UP and go rolling right into him.

They struggle to their feet. Edith catches her breath first.

EDITH

(grovelling)

Mr. Reynolds, please. I throw myself on the mercy of the ICPC and it's illustrious Voice On Earth. Give me a second chance.

REED REYNOLDS

I'm afraid my decision is final. Please leave me out of your hoe-down.

He makes to leave again, but Mary-Jo rushes to block his way.

MARY-JO

My little girl means the world to me. I only signed her up for this pageant to make her feel good about herself. She gets picked on a lot at school...

Reed isn't made of stone. He softens, if only a bit. But Edith ruins the moment when she pipes up again --

EDITH

Look, I'm from a long line of proud pageanters. And Claudette is one of the best on the circuit.

Reed looks unimpressed.

EDITH (CONT'D)

(cracking)

Pageanting is my life.

Reed still looks unimpressed.

Both women start talking at the same time again, but Reed cuts them off.

REED REYNOLDS

Clearly you're both very passionate about the circuit. And that's something I can certainly appreciate, but, as President of the ICPC, situations like...*this* cannot be allowed to happen again.

Edith puts her head in her hands. Mary-Jo waits anxiously. Reed has an a-ha moment.

REED REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

I have a proposition for you ladies.

(beat)

Mrs. Austin County is in three days.

EDITH

The adult pageant?

REED REYNOLDS

One and the same. If both of you ladies enter and prove that you can compete with the same honor and dignity we expect from our little ones...then I'll let the winner compete for Miss Tiny USA.

Mary-Jo and Edith eyeball each other.

REED REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
Take it or leave it, ladies.

EDITH
(overeager)
I'll take it!

Edith turns slightly and whispers with venom to Mary-Jo.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Beauty Queen vs. Welfare Queen.
(to Reed)
I'm gonna go buy a new dress right
now!

Edith rushes over to shake Reed's hand and then she's out of there like a bedazzled lightning bolt.

MARY-JO
(shaky)
Money don't buy class...

REED REYNOLDS
Good day, Mrs. Johnston.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. IHOP - LATER

TIGHT ON -- two kinds of syrup being drizzled onto an ironically named "short" stack of pancakes.

PULL BACK TO -- Mary-Jo, Flora, and Budd are splurging at IHOP.

BUDD
So now *you're* entering a beauty
pageant? When is this ever gonna
end?

Mary-Jo puts down the two syrup bottles. Strawberry and blueberry.

MARY-JO
Hey, it wasn't my idea. I'm doing
this for Flora.

Flora pokes at her food, still down in the dumps. Now more than ever.

BUDD

Are you sure you're not doing it
for *Mary-Jo*?

She doesn't answer, she just cuts her hot cakes.

MARY-JO

Of course not. I think Flora can go
all the way. All the way to Miss
Tiny USA. She already had Tiny
Texas in the bag and her self-
esteem had her sadness in a half-
nelson.

(beat)

Wouldn't you like that Flora? To
win it all?

FLORA

What's the point? Even if I win
some mean old lady will just pick
on me in front of everybody all
over again.

MARY-JO

Well, we can't let that snobby
witch win. Our family honor is
worth more than any of her fancy
dresses and high-falutin' hair
styles. I can win Mrs. Austin
County, and you can win Tiny USA.

(beat)

Together.

Flora's sad veneer begins to crack.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

You in?

Mary-Jo holds out her pinky. Flora excitedly takes it in her
own.

FLORA

I'm in, Mama!

Budd still looks uneasy about all of this.

Just then, Wayne LeGarrett, the pageant dad from before,
comes up to the table.

WAYNE

I *thought* that was you.

MARY-JO

Uh, Wayne, right?

BUDD

Who??

WAYNE

We met at the pageant.

BUDD

(suspicious)

Now I remember.

WAYNE

(not waiting)

Can I have a seat?

Wayne SHOVES in and moves Budd down the bench.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

I just wanted to tell you that
fight was amazing.

MARY-JO

But we ruined the whole thing.

WAYNE

So? I loved seeing you beat the
piss outta Edith.

Mary-Jo blushes.

MARY-JO

Aw, it was nothin'.

WAYNE

It was not nothin'.

MARY-JO

You're right, it got us banned from
the circuit and ruined Flora's big
day.

WAYNE

And now you have to win Mrs. Austin
County to get her back in.

MARY-JO

(confused)

How'd you know that?

Wayne pulls out a smartphone.

WAYNE

I follow Reed on Twitter.

FLORA

So do I!

WAYNE

So that's why I'm here. I want to help you win to keep Edith off the circuit for good.

MARY-JO

Why do you care so much, what'd she do to you?

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CHILD PAGEANT HALL - 1980'S

WAYNE

It was over 30 years ago now.

Up on stage, we see YOUNG EDITH, 8, competing in one of her own pageants.

Even at this age, it's clear she's already a bitch.

Wearing little 80's leg-warmers, Young Edith sings My Little Tea Cup for a row of JUDGES.

Next to her, YOUNG WAYNE performs a VENTRILOQUIST ACT.

WAYNE (V.O.)

I was a pageant kid myself, my mom always wanted a daughter, but when she got me, she dressed me up all nice anyway.

The Judges each hold up score cards when Young Edith and Young Wayne finish. Young Edith receives a 10, 8, and a 6.

But Young Wayne scores higher and Young Edith's eyes go red with the fire of a thousand suns.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - 1980'S

Young Wayne is HANDCUFFED and roughly THROWN OVER the hood of his mom's Buick LeSabre.

Two POLICE OFFICERS manhandle him as a crowd of STAGE MOTHERS look on shielding their child's eyes.

WAYNE'S MOTHER WAILS INTO HER HANDS.

One cop digs around in Wayne's tiny couture man purse and pulls out a --

GIANT ZIPLOCK BAG OF SPEED.

WAYNE (V.O.)

The cops found Speed in my bag.
Edith framed me by slipping them in there from her ma's secret stash.

CUT TO:

INT. IHOP - PRESENT

WAYNE

I was banned from the child circuit like you were.

BUDD

Wait, they let boys do this, too?

MARY-JO

(sympathetic)
Shhh, honey.
(to Wayne)
Your life must have been ruined...

WAYNE

(abrupt)
Well, no, I became the bad-ass you see before you. Even if I couldn't compete, I became one of the best pageant dad's in the industry.
(beat)
And I want to help you get that bitch back. Watching you ghetto-stomp her ass yesterday reminded me just how much.

MARY-JO

Fair enough.

WAYNE

So if you want to beat her, you'll need to win. And if you want to win, you'll need my help.

He looks her up and down.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

All of it.
(beat)
Whaddya you say?

Flora answers for her mother.

FLORA
Let's ghetto-stomp her ass!

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. KRANZLER HOME - LIVING ROOM

DAVE
So now *you're* entering a pageant?

We find Dave in the living room talking to a pacing Edith.

EDITH
What part about Mrs. Austin County
do you not understand?

DAVE
But you're not even *from* Austin.

EDITH
Sweetie, that doesn't matter. It's
a challenge from Reed Reynolds
himself.

DAVE
Even after you, I mean, *she* ruined
the last one?

EDITH
Don't you see? It's my duty to
make sure that woman never sees the
light of the pageant circuit again.
This is a little bump in the road,
that's all. I win this and
Claudette can finally enter Miss
Tiny USA. Like I always dreamed she
would.

Dave starts waving around his ever-present stack of past-due notices.

DAVE
How do you intend to pay for *this*
one? The Visa and the MasterCard
are maxed out.

EDITH
I've already thought of that.
(beat)
I'm just going to dip into
Claudette's college fund.

DAVE
 You mean again? What if you don't
 win?

Edith answers by speed-walking into the bedroom. Dave follows her until she stops before her closet and THROWS IT OPEN.

It looks like a DRY CLEANER'S RACK; there's a million skirts, dresses, and formal gowns.

Dave only gets a 2x2 cubby in the back for his tube socks and blue jeans.

With her back to Dave, Edith starts pawing through her clothes. Dave reaches down deep and finally finds his balls.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 I'm out Edith. Enter if you want,
 but I'm getting off here.

EDITH
 (still digging)
 Don't be so dramatic, Dave.

DAVE
 I mean it. I'm going to Mother's!

EDITH
 Fine, run to mommy. We'll win
 without you.

Dave fights back a sob or two and stops in the doorway --

DAVE
 What if you don't win?

EDITH
 I'm Edith Kranzler, dammit.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. 24 HOUR FITNESS - DAY

Wayne THROWS OPEN a set of DOUBLE DOORS and walks into 24 Hour Fitness like he owns the place.

He wears a very revealing exercise outfit with no sleeves and tiny short shorts that make his pubes pop out.

Behind him, Mary-Jo comes in wearing Daisy-Duke cut-offs and an old shirt that says --

"Don't Mess With Texas"

WAYNE

We need to get you into gameshape.

MARY-JO

But I'm only a hundred and thirty pounds.

WAYNE

A buck-thirty won't fly in the Majors. We need to get you as toned as possible.

Mary-Jo's confidence fades as soon as she lays eyes on the SEA OF SEXY, SWEATY BODIES exercising in front of her.

It's nothing but fit women in Lululemon see-through workout gear.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

We in the biz call this "immersion therapy". Now let's go.

Wayne leads Mary-Jo and Flora deeper into the gym. They catch the eyes of various sexy people who look down on them from their stair masters and ellipticals with disdain.

From an ab-roller, one GYM BITCH in particular teases --

GYM BITCH

Hello, Cellulite City...

Mary-Jo's skin reddens. She tugs her cutoffs down as far as she can get them until they finally reach --

A TREADMILL.

She sizes it up like she's about to be given the electric chair. Wayne notices.

MARY-JO

Are you sure about this? I haven't run since Community College.

He powers on the machine and starts to psych her up.

WAYNE

Do you want to win?

MARY-JO

(weakly)
Yes...

The treadmill picks up speed.

WAYNE

I can't hear you. I said -- DO YOU
WANT TO WIN?!

MARY-JO

(more powerful)

Yes!

The treadmill picks up even *more* speed.

WAYNE

ARE YOU GONNA GIVE IT YOUR ALL?!

MARY-JO

YES, I AMMMM!!!

WAYNE

Then get your ass up on that
treadmill!

Mary-Jo lets out a ROAR SO LOUD FLORA HAS TO COVER HER EARS!

SHE EAGERLY CHARGES THE TREADMILL --

And runs like a gazelle. She huffs and puffs and swings her arms to and fro determined to prove all the gorgeous people around her wrong for laughing at her.

She tries to push herself, but she starts lagging. Wayne ignores her and keeps increasing the speed.

The treadmill moves so fast that Mary-Jo gets --

FLIPPED END OVER END UNTIL SHE'S HURLED LIKE A BOWLING BALL
ACROSS THE ROOM INTO A WEIGHT WRACK.

Strike!

Everyone in the gym stares at her in awkward shock. Mary-Jo soaks in the shame, the pity she sees, but something inside of her changes.

She wobbles to her feet and boldly tells Wayne to --

MARY-JO

Fire that bad-boy up again. Here
comes Mama!

Wayne does as he's told and Mary-Jo LURCHES ONTO THE TREADMILL like a champ. The speed increases and Mary-Jo jogs for her life.

TIME CUT TO:

It looks like Mary-Jo has been running for hours. She lurches like a sweaty zombie from The Walking Dead.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
(out of breath)
How long has it been?

WAYNE
(checking his watch)
Fifteen minutes.

Flora walks besides her mother on her own treadmill, inspired by her earlier show of courage.

She's sweating too, but at least it doesn't look like she's about to have a coronary.

Wayne jogs in place in front of them while EATING A CORN DOG from his fanny-pack.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
The entrance fee isn't going to be cheap. But I'm going to stake you.

Mary-Jo looks up and wipes her sweaty brow.

MARY-JO
I don't take charity.

Wayne FLICKS UP THE SPEED ON HER TREADMILL AGAIN.

WAYNE
I don't give it. Think of it as an investment. Now we also have hair, make-up, and clothes to cover.

MARY-JO
Don't worry about hair and make-up. That's my speciality.

Mary-Jo looks to Flora and does her best to offer a little wink.

WAYNE
No, it isn't. You're amateur hour, this is the big leagues.

Mary-Jo frowns.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Now if I'm fronting the money, that means I own your ass. We only have three days. I'm going to start by putting you on a liquid diet.

MARY-JO

(huffing and puffing)
For three whole days?

WAYNE

Do you want to win?

MARY-JO

More than anything.

Wayne increases the speed again.

WAYNE

Then cankles up!

MARY-JO

I. DON'T. HAVE. CANKLES!

CUT TO:

BEGIN TRAINING MONTAGE --

INT. SALON

Flora and Budd sit outside the door of a back room waiting for Mary-Jo.

Inside, Mary-Jo, half-naked and covered only with a white towel, sits on a table --

WITH HER LEGS SPREAD-EAGLE IN STIRRUPS.

Standing in the corner, watching the SPA TECHNICIAN WORK is --

WAYNE

Hold your breath, this is gonna sting.

The technician rips a WAXING STRIP the size of a HEAVY-FLOW MAXI PAD RIGHT OFF MARY-JO'S CROTCH.

It comes off her body looking like a black CHIA PET. She screams like someone just ripped all the hair off her pussy.

Because that's just what happened.

MARY-JO
CHEESE AND CREPES!

Outside, Budd frantically covers Flora's to shut out the howling inside.

When Mary-Jo has caught her breath, Wayne tells the technician --

WAYNE
Take care of her poop chute and
then we can move onto bleaching.

MARY-JO
(scared)
Bleaching?

RRRRRIIIIIIPPPP!

CUT TO:

INT. SALON

In another room of the salon, Mary-Jo is as naked as a jay bird.

She rests on her hands and knees as another poor salon technician busies herself bleaching Mary-Jo's asshole.

She lowers her mask just long enough to tell Wayne --

TECHNICIAN
We're gonna need a bigger
applicator.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOTHING STORE

Mary-Jo, looking noticeably more sophisticated sips from a NEON-GREEN SMOOTHIE as she, Flora, and Wayne pick out clothes.

WAYNE
You're gonna need an evening dress
and a bathing suit.

MARY-JO
What's wrong with the dresses I
have?

WAYNE
They all suck.

Mary-Jo looks a little embarrassed and sucks down more of her smoothie.

BUDD
Why not take it easy on that stuff,
Jo?

Wayne shoots Budd a disapproving look and searches through the racks until he finds what he's after.

WAYNE
Perfect.

He holds up his discovery to Mary-Jo and she looks perplexed.

MARY-JO
Isn't that a little plain?

WAYNE
It's a girdle, not a dress.

BUDD
She doesn't even need a girdle.

BUDD (CONT'D)
(to Mary-Jo)
You do if you want to win, Dumbo.

MARY-JO
Wait, are you calling me fat or
stupid?

WAYNE
Both.

Wayne shoves the girdle into her chest and looks toward the FITTING ROOMS.

MARY-JO
Flora, hold mommy's smoothie.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. CLOTHING STORE - FITTING ROOMS

Strapped in, Mary-Jo waddles out of the fitting room to see that Wayne is now joined by two waifish SALES GIRLS.

WAYNE
Ready?

Flora looks confused and pipes up.

FLORA
Why do you need to do all this
stuff, Mama?

Wayne takes a knee.

WAYNE
Because people like your mom don't
win beauty pageants, honey.

Flora looks to her mother with a hurt look on her face.

FLORA
Is that true?

BUDD
Of course not. Right, honey?

Mary-Jo doesn't know what to say, but Wayne doesn't give her the chance.

WAYNE
Okay, girls. Pull!

The sales girls take hold of the STRINGS coming out of the back of the girdle and -- RUN IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

Mary-Jo INHALES SHARPLY AND HER EYES CRISS-CROSS.

MARY-JO
(screaming)
Sweet Jesus! My organs!

WAYNE
(to Mary-Jo)
Pain is beauty!
(to the girls)
Go tighter!

THEY PULL AND PULL UNTIL MARY-JO LETS OUT THE LOUDEST FART YOU'VE EVER HEARD.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
(sniffing)
I smell ketchup. You better not be
cheating, girl!

Mary-Jo can only manage to WHISPER --

MARY-JO
I think I crapped my pants...

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO

Flora does cute little ballet moves on her own in the corner.

Wayne wears a leotard that shows EVERYTHING, and sits in a folding chair with a MILLER HIGH LIFE (the banquet beer) hidden in a paper bag.

He claps his hands at Mary-Jo who manages to move pretty light on her feet for someone with no training.

WAYNE
Turn, pause, step, pause, pivot,
turn, pause. Repeat after me!

MARY-JO
Turn, pause, step, pivot, step,
pause, turn?

She executes her moves, but they're clumsy.

WAYNE
You can't be serious. You look
like you have MS.

Flora sees her mom getting insulted. It doesn't sit right with her, but what can she do.

Wayne rises from his chair.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Flora, hold my beer.

Flora takes it, sniffs the top of the can, and squints her eyes in disgust.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
(to Mary-Jo)
Now hear my steps, and listen to my
moves.

MARY-JO
(confused)
Wait, what?

Wayne ignores her and launches into his routine.

WAYNE
 (perfectly)
 Turn, pause, step, pause, pivot,
 turn, pause.

Even though he looks like he can barely touch his toes, Wayne moves with the grace of an Olympic gymnast.

The really good Chinese ones.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Half the pageant is knowing where to stand and how to move to that point. If you ain't graceful, you won't get past the semi's.

He takes a seat.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Your turn.

Mary-Jo looks nervous. She locks eyes with Flora, still holding the beer, who gives her a thumbs up. That's all it takes. Mary-Jo copies Wayne exactly.

MARY-JO
 Turn, pause, step, pause, pivot,
 turn, pause.

Nailed it.

WAYNE
 Great.

He throws her a blindfold.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Now do it with your eyes closed.

MUSIC CUE: "**MONSTER**" - by Kanye West

CUT TO:

SPLIT SCREEN OF MARY-JO --

POSING IN A LITTLE BLACK DRESS.

ANSWERING PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM WAYNE DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS.

DANCING AS HER BODY MOVES BUT HER HEAD STAYS STILL AND SMILING LIKE A CREEPY GYRO-SCOPE.

Until finally ending on --

MARY-JO
Trained doves?

Wayne removes a curtain from an ornate BIRD CAGE where two white turtledoves (just like the song, awww) sit COOING.

WAYNE
(pointing at the birds)
Meadowlark and Prudence II. For
the talent portion of the
competition.

MARY-JO
(worried)
Can't I just sing?

WAYNE
I don't know. Can you?

An awkward pause. Nope, she can't.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Thought so. These are my secret
weapons. They're fully trained.
You just need to hold some bird
seed, and they'll do whatever you
want.

MARY-JO
You think Edith is working this
hard?

WAYNE
(dead serious)
Harder.

CUT TO:

INT. TEXAS CANYON ROAD - AFTERNOON

MUSIC CUE: **"YOU'RE THE BEST AROUND"** - by Joe Esposito

Karate Kid style as VULTURES CIRCLE OVER --

Edith, wearing a Rocky sweat suit and matching head band.
She jogs uphill carrying TWO CINDER BLOCKS LOOPED TOGETHER BY
A ROPE AROUND HER NECK.

She chants to herself --

EDITH
I'm the best --

CUT TO:

INT. BOXING RING

EDITH
-- around!

Edith spars with a RUBBER DUMMY. She peppers the shit out of it with all kinds of mom-sized high kicks.

She goes nuts on it and pummels the face repeatedly where a --

Picture of Mary-Jo eating chicken wings (thanks, facebook) has been pasted onto it.

CUT TO:

INT. EDITH'S BEDROOM

Claudette reaches up and FLICKS ON THE LIGHT to find Edith sleeping upside down in gravity boots.

Her arms are crossed in front of her like Dracula and her eyes snap open.

EDITH
Nothin's ever gonna keep me down!

Claudette screams like a little girl and runs away.

Still hanging, Edith nods to herself in smug satisfaction and starts doing VERTICAL CRUNCHES. She counts off --

EDITH (CONT'D)
Austin.
 (up)
County.
 (down)
Austin.
 (up)
County.
 (down)
I'm coming for you, bitch...

TITLE UP:

THREE DAYS LATER...

EXT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - MRS. AUSTIN COUNTY PAGEANT
TEAM MARY-JO pulls up outside.

Budd is behind the wheel of the mini-van. Mary-Jo rolls her window down and looks up at the Convention Center.

It looks so big, so intimidating. Budd notices.

BUDD

You sure you wanna do this, baby?
You don't have anything to prove to
Flora.

(beat)

Or to me.

Mary-Jo looks in the backseat where Flora sleeps like a little white-trash angel.

MARY-JO

You're wrong, babe. I do.

She locks eyes with Budd and they SLOWLY LEAN IN FOR A KISS when --

WAYNE (O.S.)

Hey!

Wayne, crammed in the way back, yells at them.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

I think I have a tire iron up my
ass. Cut that out, we have a
pageant to win!

Budd and Mary-Jo settle for a quick peck.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOMS

The dressing rooms for Mrs. Austin County are a sight for some very sore eyes.

Women ages 30-39 spackle, spray, and scrape every inch of their bodies.

Even if some are pushing 40, 40 isn't pushing back. There's some stiff competition here and Mary-Jo can see it.

She looks intimidated at her make-up counter as Wayne lightly dusts her face with Twilight body glitter.

WAYNE
 (snapping his fingers)
 Hey. Eyes on the prize. Don't
 worry about the competition.
 That's *my* job.

FLORA
 You look so pretty, Mama!

Wayne steps in front of her and continues on like she's not even there.

WAYNE
 Step one is the interview process.
 That's not public. You tell the
 judges why you want to win and why
 you're here.

He tears her COLLAR slightly letting Mary-Jo's tatertots break free of her shirt.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Don't be afraid to show cleavage.

He turns her around and shows off her butt crack.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
 Front *and* back.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - INTERVIEW ROOM

Mary-Jo, wearing a number on her chest like those losers from American Idol, finally gets her turn to be interviewed.

She walks into the room and finds THREE JUDGES --

A HISPANIC MAN of about 50.

A silver-haired COUGAR who looks even older. a

And a 40 something "WEATHER ANALYST" you might see on any nightly news cast in the Mid-West. Pretty, but small time.

When they see Mary-Jo Johnston, they look to be at something of a loss.

To put it nicely.

Mary-Jo takes her seat and the Weather Girl, er Woman, er Analyst, gets the ball rolling.

WEATHER ANALYST

So, Mrs. Johnson, what brings you to Mrs. Austin County?

MARY-JO

It's Johnston. With a T like Texas.

Mary-Jo tries to be cute, but she just gets blank stares.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

(pushing on)

I'm here because I want to win and prove to my little girl it's not where you come from or how much money you have, it's what's inside that counts.

HISPANIC MAN

I see...

COUGAR

You look a little familiar?

Mary-Jo turns BEET RED and unconsciously pulls at her too-tight outfit.

HISPANIC MAN

Wait, I remember you.

WEATHER ANALYST

You're the woman who beat up that other mother at the kiddie pageant.

MARY-JO

Actually, she started it. See--

The Cougar cuts her off.

COUGAR

See here, Mrs. Johnston, those antics might work in the junior pageants, but Mrs. Austin County is for women. Ladies, actually. Can you prove to us you're a lady?

MARY-JO

Ma'am, I wouldn't be sitting her right now if I didn't think I could. I'll show you I'm nothing but class.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL --

Mary's Jo's LEFT BREAST HAS COMPLETELY FLOPPED OUT OF HER SHIRT. She casually tucks it away.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
 Oopsies, nip-slip.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOMS

Still adjusting her rack, Mary-Jo makes it back to the dressing rooms.

Somebody SHOULDER CHECKS HER, and as she turns around, Mary-Jo, and the audience, comes face to scary face with --

EDITH holding a RACKET and wearing a WHITE TENNIS OUTFIT that looks hand crafted by Martha "M. Diddy" Stewart herself.

She looks even more put together than we've ever seen her. Claudette, again out of costume, trails behind her.

EDITH
 So you *actually* bothered to show.

Mary-Jo squares her shoulders.

MARY-JO
 Wouldn't miss it for the world.

EDITH
 You don't really think you can win, do you?

MARY-JO
 I *think* you look like a giant tampon.

Behind the mothers, Claudette and Flora look like they're getting along.

They giggle over a STUFFED ANIMAL that Claudette holds.

EDITH
 Nobody asked you, Babe, Hick in the City. You won't make it past the opening number.

MARY-JO
 (worried)
 What opening number?

Just then, Wayne walks up behind her and hands Mary-Jo a similar white tennis outfit.

EDITH
You're kidding? You're being
coached by Bacon Bits here?

Wayne answers for her.

WAYNE
Damn right, she is. You look like
a tampon, Edith.

MARY-JO
Right?! That's what I said!

Edith stalks up to them and gets in their grills.

EDITH
(to Wayne)
Be careful, I heard they're drug
testing here.

Low-blow. Bad memories. Wayne visibly winces.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Now if you'll excuse me, I have a
pageant to win.

Edith looks for Claudette and zeroes in on the girls playing together. Edith GRABS her daughter and drags her away from Flora.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Claudette, heel!

The girls sadly wave bye to each other.

MARY-JO
(turning around)
You never said anything about an
opening number.

He thrusts her outfit out at her.

WAYNE
One disaster at a time.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BALLROOM

The place is packed looking like a more mature version of Miss Tiny Texas.

Budd sits in the audience with Flora in his lap and Wayne beside him.

Last year's winner, Mrs. Austin Texas JOANNE FLANNERY takes the stage wearing a crown and sash. She stands before a MASSIVE CURTAIN yet to be raised.

FROM BEHIND THE CURTAIN --

The women line up and take their places.

We see Edith sizing up her competition. And like Mary-Jo before her (whether she wants to admit it or not), Edith knows she's in for a challenge.

She unconsciously raises a hand to her throat hiding the turkey-neck she imagines to be there.

She imperceptibly gulps, but YANKS HER HAND AWAY when she notices Mary-Jo glaring at her.

FROM IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN --

JOANNE FLANNERY
Welcome, everybody!

The crowd responds in kind.

JOANNE FLANNERY (CONT'D)
That time of year is back, Mrs. Austin County! Over the next two days, and across four competitions, my successor will carry on my reign serving in the community as a role model for our young people. As well as being the spokesperson for Lube & Go AutoShops, the smoothest service you'll ever receive! So without further ado, let's welcome our ladies!

CURTAINS UP AS -- Mary-Jo, Edith, and the rest of the contestants sashay up on stage and twirl around like chickens with their vacuous heads cut off.

Determined to win, Mary-Jo, still dancing in step with the others, puts on her game face.

She tries keeping up with the beautiful women all around her, but it's proving hard than she thought.

JOANNE FLANNERY (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce our
contestants!

Joanna begins doing a ROLL CALL and reading off everyone's names and cities of origin.

When Mary-Jo is called, she preens at the front of the stage and goes to step forward --

When her girdle SNAPS AND BUSTS OPEN letting part of her beer belly spill out of her top!

Mortified, Mary-Jo tries pulling down her shirt, but it's no use. People in the crowd start laughing. A snivelling Edith drinks it in while pretending not to notice.

Unable to get her outfit back together, Mary-Jo rushes off the stage to save her dignity.

JOANNE FLANNERY (CONT'D)

Woopsy daisy, looks like a little
wardrobe malfunction.

From his seat, Wayne gets up and races backstage. Budd and Flora follow him. Joanne keeps reading off names and introducing the contestants one by one she reaches the end of her list.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - DRESSING ROOMS - BACKSTAGE

Mary-Jo powerwalks backstage while trying to retie her girdle. It's an awkward process. The more she walks, the more she rips, but she's desperate.

Wayne rushes in and meets her with her husband and child right behind.

WAYNE

What the hell happened out there?

MARY-JO

(consumed)

What do you think?

Wayne gets behind her and starts pulling and yanking.

WAYNE
 We discussed this.
 (pulling)
 Double knots!

Budd looks increasingly worried. Flora clutches his leg.

FLORA
 Don't hurt my Mama!

BUDD
 (agreeing)
 Take it easy there, Wayne. She's
 not as strong as she looks.

Mary-Jo looks indecisive, like she's choosing sides between her trainer and her family. But after a beat, she makes her decision.

MARY-JO
 Harder, Wayne!

Wayne pulls and pulls and they finally seem to get everything in order.

JOANNE FLANNERY (O.S.)
 Now that we've met them, let's see
 just how talented our ladies are.
 The Talent Portion of Mrs. Austin
 County starts in 15 minutes!

WAYNE
 You heard her, we have to get
 ready.

Mary-Jo nods. Budd and Flora don't like what they're seeing, but Mary-Jo is a woman possessed.

MARY-JO
 I'll be fine. I'm just gonna check
 my make-up.

She walks slowly by them and to the bathroom --

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE - LADIES' ROOM

Mary-Jo walks inside and locks the door behind her. It's a small bathroom with a couple of stalls.

She walks up to the vanity mirror and pretends to check her make-up. But that's not what she's in her for...

With a frown on her face, and making sure no one's looking, Mary-Jo pokes and prods her stomach, her hips, her thighs.

All the places where there's a little too much of her to love.

With a sigh, she turns on the sink and tries to splash some water onto her face, but she winds up knocking the little bottle of soap off of the counter.

She tries to pick it up, but can only make it half-way because of the girdle she's been Frankensteined into.

Giving up, Mary-Jo leaves the soap on the ground, looks into the mirror --

And splashes water onto the sad reflection she sees in front of her.

Over a loud-speaker --

 JOANNE FLANNERY (O.S.)

 Ten minutes to curtain, ladies!

Something changes in her. Mary-Jo locks eyes with her reflection in the mirror as the water runs down it.

 MARY-JO

 (sotto)

 Let's do this.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Mary-Jo is with Wayne hurriedly going through his trained dove tutorial. Flora and Budd nervously watch.

The sounds of a white woman over 35 (badly) rapping ON STAGE can be heard wafting in.

 WAYNE

 Remember what I told you. Bird
 seed in each hand. Then wave like
 me.

He performs the movements he wants to see from her.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

North. South. East. West. Cross
your wrists for a loopy-loop, hold
them over your head for a barrel
roll, and slap your knees for a
nose dive. Audiences eat this shit
up.

Mary-Jo goes through the movements.

MARY-JO

(sotto)

North. South. East. West. Got it.

Joanne Flannery's voice comes over the PA system.

JOANNE FLANNERY

Let's all hear it for Peggy Smith
and her beautiful rendition of LOSE
YOURSELF by Eminem!

The audience replies with weak enthusiasm. Poor, Peggy.

MARY-JO

What about Edith? What's she gonna
pull? Will birds be enough to beat
her?

WAYNE

You don't have to worry about that.

JOANNE FLANNERY (O.S.)

Up next, Edith Kranzler from San
Antonio. Who will be singing My
Heart Will Go On from the best
movie of all time, TITANIC!

WAYNE

She's allergic to coconut so I
laced her Gatorade with this.

Wayne sneaks a Coconut Water out of his pocket.

MARY-JO

Won't that kill her?

WAYNE

(too casual)

Maybe.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BALLROOM - STAGE

Edith waits in the wings as Joanne finishes introducing her.

She takes a swig from the poisoned Gatorade and absentmindedly rubs her scratchy throat right after.

When Joanne leaves the stage, Edith walks on revealing she's changed into a LOUNGE DRESS.

She wears smoky eye shadow that make hers eyes pop like a frightened racoon.

The lights go down and a MIRROR BALL speckles the room with little lights like every middle school dance in 1997.

MUSIC UP AS --

EDITH

Every night in my dreams, I see
you. I feel--

Edith's VOICE CRACKS. She looks immediately worried, but presses on.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Far across distance, and spaces
betweeeeeeen UUUUUGHHHH.

Edith makes a noise like she's hocking up a phlegm ball that would choke a donkey. She turns her head and tries to spit, but nothing comes out.

Only now do we realize - holy shit - Edith's THROAT IS CLOSING UP!

With frantic jazz hands, she tries to signal the DJ to cut the song. It takes an agonizingly long time, but the music cuts out and the house lights come on revealing --

EDITH'S SKIN HAS TURNED CHERRY RED!

PARAMEDICS RUSH THE STAGE.

PARAMEDIC #1

She's going into anaphylactic
shock!

PARAMEDIC #2

Clear!

The Paramedics hit her with a defibrillator for some reason and then bust out an EIPEN the size of a 12 inch dildo.

THEY STAB EDITH IN THE NECK WITH IT AND THE ENTIRE ROOM GOES QUIET.

FROM BACKSTAGE --

Mary-Jo watches from behind Wayne with her hands clutching his shoulders.

MARY-JO
(worried)
Too far?

Suddenly, EDITH GASPS AND SUCKS IN AIR.

PARAMEDIC #1
Ma'am, are you okay?

EDITH
(near-death)
...music and lights...

The shocked Paramedics look at each other before one reluctantly signals the DJ.

The mood resumes and Edith lurches to her feet to finish in a gristly voice --

EDITH (CONT'D)
My heart will go on!!

She holds the note until she PASSES OUT.

JOANNE FLANNERY
Edith Kranzler, everybody!

CUT TO:

CUE MONTAGE --

Of our ladies of the evening showing off their various talents.

Some tap dance, some strip tease, some do those one minute portraits that just have to be fake.

There's even a TRAPEZE ACT involved, but the lady chickenshits out when she's hung from the rafters.

FINALLY -- the CURTAINS RAISE as we welcome --

JOANNE FLANNERY
Mary-Jo Johnston from Lubbock!

MUSIC CUE: "ROCK YOU LIKE A HURRICANE" - by The Scorpions

Mary-Jo, now wearing a STAR-SPANGLED CAT SUIT, storms out on stage. She's dressed like a cheap magician's assistant.

A FOG MACHINE (thanks, Wayne) kicks on and floods the stage. The audience oohs and ahhs as Mary-Jo --

RAISES HER ARMS TO THE HEAVENS AND TWO WHITE DOVES FLY RIGHT OUT OF HER HANDS.

If we didn't know better, we'd swear Mary-Jo has been practicing for years.

Holding the birdseed, she gives them directions looking like an Air Traffic Controller out on the runway.

The birds move to and fro in perfect synchronicity. It's like a mini-airshow. And country bumpkins LOVE air shows.

Meadowlark and Prudence II swoop and dive, glide and roll setting the crowd on fire.

AS BACKSTAGE --

Wayne can barely contain his glee.

This shit looks damn good.

But his mood darkens when he's rudely NUDGED from the side. He turns to see Edith ROLL UP TO HIM IN A WHEELCHAIR.

She yells at him, but because of the music and her collapsed throat, it's difficult to hear her.

Frustrated her threats aren't getting through, Edith reaches up and stuffs something into Wayne's hands.

He opens his palm and squints down to see what she's deposited there --

HIS EYES GO WIDE.

He drops whatever it is, and tries to run out on stage, but he's stopped by a GUARD who refuses to let him past.

ON THE FLOOR -- the dropped item rolls until it comes to rest against Edith's front wheel.

We see it's an empty bottle of ALKA-SELTZER.

Edith laughs maniacally, and because of her condition, it sounds like the CACKLE from the Wicked Witch of the West.

ON-STAGE --

Mary-Jo's spell over the audience is broken when, in quick succession, --

MEADOWLARK AND PRUDENCE II EXPLODE LIKE FIREWORKS ON THE FOURTH OF JULY.

Beautiful white feathers, and a shit ton of bird guts, rain down on the crowd.

The song ends and the audience sits back in shock.

MARY-JO

Uhh...ta-da?

THE CROWD SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - NIGHT

Where every pageant contestant, and their poor husbands and boyfriends, shack up for the night.

Including the Johnstons and the Kranzlers.

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - MARY-JO'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Budd and Flora sit on one bed watching TV and Wayne sits on the other going over sketches of which outfits Mary-Jo will wear for the rest of the pageant.

Mary-Jo comes out of the shower wearing a WHITE ROBE and toweling her hair into oblivion.

MARY-JO

Well, that's the last of the bird guts. If I scrub any harder, we're gonna see skull.

FLORA

Mommy, are Meadowlark and Prudence II gonna be okay?

The adults in the room make eye contact playing a game of "not-it" for who's going to tell Flora the truth.

Mary-Jo draws the short straw.

MARY-JO

They're gonna be fine, sweetie.
They're just...sleeping. Inside
out. In Heaven.

Flora doesn't quite understand the response, but she seems to drop it.

Wayne gets off the bed and holds PAINT SWATCHES up to Mary-Jo's face trying to find her skin tone.

WAYNE

We can call the Talent Competition
a loss so that leaves Evening Wear
as our best chance.

(beat)

But before that, we have to somehow
get through Swimsuit.

Wayne goes over and pulls TWO SWIMSUITS OUT OF THE CLOSET.

One looks like something Barbara Bush would wear and the other is a two-piece microbikini.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Pick one.

Budd pipes up. He tries to protect his wife by picking the more, uh, "refined" choice.

BUDD

The black one looks like an eye
patch. Why not the blue one?

Mary-Jo eagerly jumps on the suggestion.

WAYNE

That was a trick question.
(raising the eye patch)
This is the correct answer.

Mary-Jo nervously walks over to get a closer look. She checks the tag.

Budd notices how tired his wife is.

BUDD

Babe, shouldn't you get some beauty
sleep?

WAYNE

That would take a beauty *coma* and
we don't have time for that.

Budd is insulted.

BUDD
Now you listen here--

MARY-JO
(interrupting)
Baby, he's right. I'm all in here.
But Wayne, this lil' thing will
never fit me. I'm a size 9.

WAYNE
Not for long.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - GYM - CARDIO AREA

Wayne shouts at Mary-Jo running on another treadmill in a tight-fitting sweat suit.

Her half-moon pits have reached all the way to her hooters and she's run about 8 miles already.

WAYNE
Let's hit an even 10! Come on,
pick it up. Up! Up! Up!

Flora watches her mother pushing herself so hard, and the intensity kind of scares her.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - GYM - WEIGHT AREA

Mary-Jo is on her back on the bench-press. Wayne keeps loading weights onto the bar as she does her reps.

WAYNE
We need those bi's toned as much as
possible!

It all becomes too much and Mary-Jo's arms give out. THE BAR DROPS leaving Flora and Wayne to frantically ROLL IT OFF OF HER.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - GYM - SAUNA

Mary-Jo, Wayne, and Flora all wear matching towels. They sit and stew in their own juices.

MARY-JO
Does this really work?

WAYNE
This or the treadmill. You pick.

Mary-Jo answers by pouring more water on the HOT ROCKS in the middle of the room. Steam rises and we --

FADE OUT TO --

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - MARY-JO'S ROOM

It's 2 in the morning. Mary-Jo and Flora limp into their room. They barely make it to bed. Mary-Jo tucks Flora in next to a sleeping Budd and then heads for the second bed.

Wayne sees her and points.

WAYNE
Don't hog the covers. I'm gonna exfoliate.

Wayne heads into the bathroom and closes the door only to open it immediately and hand Mary-Jo a GIANT WATER BOTTLE.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Almost forgot. Chug this.

Mary-Jo weakly takes it, barely able to lift her arm.

MARY-JO
What is it?

WAYNE
A laxative. I want you looking bulimic up there.

Wayne shuts the door again without waiting for an answer.

Mary-Jo lurches over to the couch. She takes a sip of the stuff. It tastes fucking awful, so she pours the rest out into the fern next to her and then hits the light.

In the darkness --

FLORA
 Mama, I wish you wouldn't push
 yourself so hard...

No response.

FLORA (CONT'D)
 Mama?

Flora finally gets an answer in the form of a series of WET,
 HEAVY SNORES. Mama's down for the count.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - EDITH'S ROOM - MORNING

Sunlight peaks into Edith's room. Claudette is sound asleep
 in her own bed.

Edith lays next to her wearing a sleep mask while being
 wrapped head-to-toe in SEAWEED that makes her look like a
 green mummy.

A WAKE-UP SERVICE CALLS THE ROOM, but Edith doesn't stir.
 After three rings, little Claudette crawls out of bed,
 answers the phone, and then goes to wake up Mommy.

Edith JUMPS AWAKE, always in a state of cat-like readiness.
 Remembering where she is, --

EDITH
 Baby, cut me loose?

Claudette does as she's told. She takes a pair of scissors
 off the night stand and cuts Edith free.

With her hands loose, Edith loses the sleep mask, takes out
 EAR PLUGS, and then spits out a MOUTHGUARD.

She checks the clock.

EDITH (CONT'D)
 Claudette, order room service. No
 dairy, no sugar, no gluten.

CLAUDETTE
 (sotto)
 And no flavor...

EDITH
(not listening)
Mommy's gonna squeeze in a quick
tan.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - DINING AREA - LATER

The Johnstons and Wayne get breakfast from the Inn's Texas-sized buffet.

Beauty Pageanters are everywhere. We can tell because they're the ones eating tic-tacs and Sweet'N Low.

Budd, Flora, and Wayne sit down at their table with heaping stacks of pancakes, bacon, waffles, bacon, and more bacon.

Mary-Jo has a tiny fruit salad and an ice water. Hey, but there's a cucumber in it.

MARY-JO
Can't I just have a piece of toast?

Wayne slathers his food in butter. Not margarine. BUTTER.

WAYNE
Fuck no, carbs are the enemy.

MARY-JO
There's no way Edith wins after her solo yesterday. Come on, one bite.

WAYNE
I said no. Here, chew these.

Wayne throws her some STRAWS.

She ignores them and reaches out for Wayne's plate, but he GROWLS AND SLAPS HER HAND AWAY.

Budd keeps his eyes on his food. He doesn't want to get into this.

FLORA
You can have some of mine, Mama.

Flora sweetly slides her plate over to Mary-Jo. Mary-Jo refuses.

MARY-JO

(snapping)

Didn't you just hear what Wayne said? Don't try to sabotage me, Flora.

(getting up quickly)

I'm just gonna get in a light work out before the pageant starts up again.

Mary-Jo gets up and leaves the table. Flora looks downright frightened of what her mother is turning into.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - GYM

Mary-Jo chews on a straw and does light cardio work on a STATIONARY BIKE.

Only a couple of other people are in the gym and most are just pretending to work out. You know the type.

From the bike, Mary-Jo sees Edith enter the gym and head to the back. She's able to hide in plain sight because Edith is too focused to see her.

Intrigued (or more likely just wanting an excuse to stop), Mary-Jo kills the bike and quietly follows Edith into the --

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - GYM - TANNING AREA

Sure enough, the Hampton Inn & Suites has its very own TANNING BED.

From the shadows, Mary-Jo watches Edith carefully set a timer, put on some headphones, get down to her skivvies, and hop in the bed.

Mary-Jo sidles over and CRANKS UP THE KNOB from 3 to 10.

Oh, and she grabs a MOP from a Janitor's Cart in the corner, BREAKS OFF THE HANDLE, and slides it into the space between the bed's doors.

MARY-JO

(slinking away)

Hot jambalaya!

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - MARY-JO'S ROOM

Mary-Jo's swimsuit and evening dress are laid out on the bed for her, along with a SHITLOAD OF LIPSTICK, EYE SHADOW, BLUSH, FOUNDATION, AND HAIRSPRAY, HAIRSPRAY, HAIRSPRAY!

We may or may not notice that the fern Mary-Jo poured the laxative into last night is now dead. What was *in* that stuff?

Wayne, wearing a make-up belt, keeps checking the clock.

WAYNE

Where's your wife, bro?!

Budd sits on the couch trying his best to be invisible.

The door opens and Mary-Jo comes in.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Where the hell have you been?

MARY-JO

(with a devious smile)

Oh, just finished popping something in the oven...

WAYNE

I said no food until after the show.

MARY-JO

I heard you!

(beat)

I'm ready. What first?

WAYNE

This.

WAYNE TEARS OPEN A FRESH ROLL OF DUCT TAPE.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - GYM - TANNING AREA

The lid on the tanning bed lifts up ever so slightly. It does so again.

And again.

And again.

Until Edith realizes she's fucking trapped.

EDITH
HELP MEEEE!!!!

Her cries go unheard.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - MARY-JO'S ROOM

Wayne has DUCT-TAPED THE SHIT OUT OF MARY-JO'S ASS. It's almost like she's wearing a bikini *already*.

WAYNE
Okay, now your boobs.

Wayne starts taping.

MARY-JO
Why are we doing this again?

WAYNE
To get those bad boys as perky as possible. Budd, gimme a hand.

Budd takes a hold of Mary-Jo's right boobie and holds it up like a canteloupe.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Over, under, and back around.
(beat)
Okay, done.

Wayne takes a step back to admire his handiwork. Mary-Jo stands like she has a rod up her ass because she can barely move.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
Okay, put this on.

He throws her the black micro-bikini. She makes a play for it, but it lands at her feet. She struggles to bend down again.

MARY-JO
Uh, lil' help?

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BALLROOM

We join the Swimsuit Competition already underway.

Our JUDGES watch in earnest as the contestants try their best to hide tummies and C-section scars.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOMS

In back, Mary-Jo doffs her white robe and Wayne starts smearing BRONZER onto her with a paint roller.

MARY-JO
Damn, that's cold!

WAYNE
(looking up from her
bellybutton)
Suck it up, we need this!

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - GYM - TANNING AREA

Edith has been in the tanning bed so long that smoke starts coming out of it.

Like, no joke, SMOKE.

But then, like a mother trying to raise a car off her child, Edith BREAKS FREE OF THE TANNING BED with a burst of adrenaline.

She climbs up out of it looking like Freddy Krueger.

Only worse because, in QUICK CUTS, what we see of her skin looks burned beyond recognition...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - EDITH'S ROOM

Edith breaks the door down to see Claudette eating a lonely breakfast.

We don't see Edith, but when Claudette does she screams bloody murder!

EDITH
Claudette, it's Mommy. Be quiet!

Edith starts rifling through her bags.

CLAUDETTE
Ma-mommy, what happened to you?

EDITH
Tanned too long.

Edith rips through her clothes until she finds what she's looking for --

A MINI VIBRATING POCKET ROCKET. The discreet kind because life on the road is lonely.

And Edith has packed accordingly.

She hides the VIBRATOR, and its matching REMOTE CONTROL, behind her back and turns around --

EDITH (CONT'D)
Now help Mommy into her swim suit.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - DRESSING ROOMS

Flora watches through criss-crossed fingers as Wayne finishes putting the BRONZER on her mother.

FLORA
You look like a carrot!

A HAND FALLS ON THE LITTLE GIRL'S SHOULDER.

It looks like an over-done, leathery turkey leg.

We PAN UP to reveal it belongs to Edith in all her "glory".

EDITH
Something tells me your mom here prefers the darker tones.

She's the spitting image of the Tan Mom. (Google Patricia Krentcil. NSFW, btw.)

WAYNE
Holy shit, Edith. You look.
(beat)
Terrible.

EDITH
Fuck your mother, Wayne.
(to Mary-Jo)
And I suppose you had nothing to do with this.

MARY-JO

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

EDITH

My tanning bed "somehow" malfunctioned.

MARY-JO

Maybe you just didn't set it right.

EDITH

Bullshit. I know those things like the back of my hand!

Edith holds her right one up to prove her point. She notices a BIG FLAP OF DEAD SKIN HANGING FROM IT, and PEELS IT OFF.

Gross, dude.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I should end you right now.

Mary-Jo gets into an action stance.

EDITH (CONT'D)

But I'm not going to.

Team Mary-Jo seems genuinely perplexed.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I can't win like this. And maybe we've gone too far and it took this to happen for me to realize it...

(beat)

I'm dropping out of the pageant. Good luck.

This is the first true humility we've seen from Edith. Too bad it took deep-frying her skin to make her see the light.

Mary-Jo, a good person underneath Wayne's handiwork, can't help but feel a little bad ruining this woman's life.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Come on, Claudette.

They watch mother and daughter leave until --

FLORA

Wait!

Edith stops and turns and she, Mary-Jo, and Wayne watch as the little girls hug it out.

FLORA (CONT'D)
I'll miss you!

CLAUDETTE
I'll miss you, too!

It's the sweetest moment we've seen yet.

True friendship between two little girls whose mothers can't stand the sight of each other.

EDITH
You know, we could learn something from them.

MARY-JO
(caving)
I guess you're right.

Edith holds out her arms for a hug.

EDITH
I'm so sorry for the way I've acted. Best of luck to you, I hope you and what's-her-face make it to Tiny USA.

She continues awkwardly holding her arms out. Mary-Jo is reticent, but she does the decent thing and returns the embrace.

If only to set a good example for her daughter.

MARY-JO
Sorry it had to end this way.

Edith turns and takes Claudette away.

EDITH
(sotto)
I'm not...

Mary-Jo's name is called and she walks off to the stage. Only then do we realize Edith hasn't meant a fucking word she's said because --

Her MINI-VIBRATOR has been stuffed down the back of Mary-Jo's bikini bottoms.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BALLROOM

JOANNE FLANNERY

Now modeling her swimwear is Mary-Jo Johnston. Let's hear it for -- Ohmigod!

Mary-Jo walks out wearing almost nothing. Her swim suit clings so tight to her body it looks like twine wrapped around loaves of baking bread.

Under the bright lights, Mary-Jo appears to lose what confidence she had as she sees everyone's faces.

MARY-JO

(sotto)

What was I thinking?

Suddenly, she sees REED REYNOLDS and his ICPC AGENTS in the crowd.

Mary-Jo remembers why and steels herself.

MUSIC CUE: "**WORK B**CH**" - by Britney Spears

With the music propelling her forward, Mary-Jo launches into a DANCE MOM routine.

Everything is going great until Edith - bleeding out of the shadows - whips out her REMOTE CONTROL.

EDITH

Yippee Ki Yay, motherfucker!!

SHE TURNS IT UP AND RIPS THE KNOB OFF!

On stage, Mary-Jo feels the first PANG of intense pleasure emanating from the unseen vibrator buried close to home.

The first wave throws her off her game.

MARY-JO

(butterflies)

Ooh.

FROM BACKSTAGE --

Wayne notices something going wrong almost immediately.

WAYNE

The hell?

ON STAGE -- Mary-Jo keeps trying to maintain focus but it's getting harder and harder.

And her MOANS are getting louder and louder.

The song runs its course, but Mary-Jo can't stop hip thrusting.

The Judges, and the audience, watch in terror as she collapses on the stage and starts writhing in pleasure.

In between MEWLING like a cat in heat, Mary-Jo screams --

MARY-JO
I think something's wrong!

Her cries of ecstasy grow LOUDER AND LOUDER.

Reed looks disgusted, Edith smiles so hard all we can see is the whites of her teeth, and Wayne tries desperately to get Mary-Jo's attention.

Some people in the crowd shift in their seats watching this woman have the time of her life.

Wayne screams to be heard over the crowd, but it's too late --

MARY-JO CLIMAXES IN A SCREAMING, ROCKING, EARTH-SHATTERING MULTIPLE-ORGASM.

WAYNE
Get off the stage!

MARY-JO
I'm coming!!!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - DRESSING ROOMS

Mary-Jo SLUMPS DOWN INTO HER MAKE-UP CHAIR. Utterly spent, she can barely stand.

She reaches into her bottoms and finally fishes out --

THE VIBRATOR

MARY-JO
Well, I have to get me one of these.

She throws it in the trash and Wayne comes up to her with her Evening Dress.

WAYNE

I managed to convince the Judges
you're an epileptic.

MARY-JO

They bought it?

WAYNE

(holding the dress)
You were pretty damn convincing.
We have to get you into this. You
might actually have a shot at
winning if people feel sorry enough
for you.

Mary-Jo looks into the mirror. Maybe she's starting to feel
sorry for herself, too.

MARY-JO

At least Budd didn't see me.

Her introspection is cut short when a frantic Budd runs up to
them holding what looks like a kid's drawing you'd put on the
fridge.

BUDD

Mary-Jo!

Wayne waves him off.

WAYNE

Don't harsh her Zen right now, bro.

Budd physically PUSHES WAYNE OUT OF THE WAY.

BUDD

Flora's run off somewhere!

Budd holds the drawing up to Mary-Jo. She half-looks at it
seeing --

TWO LITTLE GIRLS holding hands and running up a rainbow away
from TWO WOMEN who fight like MOTHRA VS. GODZILLA.

BUDD (CONT'D)

This whole pageant thing is off the
rails. First you cum in front of
everyone like I've never seen, and
now my little girl is missing!

Mary-Jo looks totally overwhelmed. Like somebody's asking
her to choose between Coke or Pepsi.

WAYNE

The show's over in an hour. Let us finish it and then we'll go looking for her.

BUDD

Are you outta your damn mind? We have to go right now. Come on, Mary-Jo.

Budd grabs his wife's arm and tries lifting her out of her chair. Mary-Jo rises, but then resists.

MARY-JO

Budd, it's only an hour. Can't you go find Flora on your own?

Budd looks completely thunderstruck, flabbergasted, bamboozled, and several other old-timey words we don't use anymore.

BUDD

Are you kiddin' me?

Mary-Jo rips her arm away from Budd.

MARY-JO

No, I'm not. I'm close to winnin' this thing.

BUDD

Who you trying to win for, Jo? Flora or yourself?

Mary-Jo takes her eyes off her husband.

MARY-JO

Wayne, hand me my dress. Budd, go find Flora. She couldn't a got far.

Budd looks disgusted. He tapes the picture up on her vanity mirror.

BUDD

I'll leave this with you in case you want to remember why you came here in the first place.

He snorts and rushes off to find his daughter.

Wayne comes up behind Mary-Jo and pulls her dress over her head.

WAYNE
Come on, suck it in!

CUT TO:

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES

Edith walks through the hotel back to her room. People stop to stare at her goblin-ghoul appearance and she actually HISSES at them.

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - EDITH'S ROOM

Edith again KICKS THE DOOR OPEN in anger and starts packing her bags.

EDITH
(not looking)
Pack your shit, Claudette. We're leaving.

Edith keeps working, but she stops when she notices there's --

NO ONE ELSE IN THE ROOM.

Edith starts looking everywhere until she finds a DRAWING similar to the one Budd showed Mary-Jo resting on Claudette's pillow.

Edith holds it up and reads the little message scrawled on the back.

"Flora and me ran away so we can play and be happy."

SHE INSTANTLY CRUMBLES UP THE PAPER. Under a Hitchcockian zoom --

EDITH (CONT'D)
MY BABY'S MISSING!!!

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOMS

We can hear host Joanne Flannery prattling on and introducing the final portion of Mrs. Austin County --

THE EVENING WEAR COMPETITION.

The ladies, and coaches, in back run around the room like strippers getting ready for Happy Hour.

We find Wayne putting the final touches on Mary-Jo who is now in her elegant evening wear - a floor length black dress.

She's wearing at least seven layers of make-up (in fact, everyone is). Wayne finishes the last of Mary-Jo's blush and then helps her up.

Joanne calls for the ladies to line up, and everyone immediately rushes to obey.

Mary-Jo does so as well when she stops and freezes --

MARY-JO
My half-jacket!

Mary-Jo stops and runs back to the various CLOTHING RACKS everywhere.

She paws through them like a junkie trying to get a fix.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
Where is my half-jacket? I cannot
go on without my half-jacket!
Where is it? Where is it? I can't
find it.

Wayne, having come so close, is losing his cool.

WAYNE
For fuck's sake! Here's your damn
half-jacket!

Wayne rips it off a rack and helps Mary-Jo into it. But she can only get it half-way on because --

THE COAT HANGER IS STILL IN IT.

Mary-Jo struggles to put it on anyway. The sharp hook DIGS into her back. Wayne keeps pushing her to get in line.

Just as she gets the jacket on, ripping it a bit to compensate for the coat hanger now embedded in her back, the worst happens.

ON MARY-JO'S ASS AS --

THE DUCT TAPE WAYNE SLAPPED THERE GIVES WAY.

Mary-Jo's ass falls like the walls of Saigon.

MARY-JO
(at Def Con 5)
We need to retape!!

Mary-Jo awkwardly lopes back to her makeup chair. Her ass jiggles, her backs twinges, and --

HER HAIR EXTENSIONS SLOPE RIGHT OFF HER HEAD WHEN SHE SITS.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

WAYNE!!!

Wayne can't believe the utter train wreck he's witnessing.

Joanne starts calling out names over the PA. We should be sweating right now because THIS. IS. TENSE.

WAYNE

We don't have time for this!

(breaking)

There's only so much lipstick you
can put on a pig!

That does it.

Mary-Jo sees herself in the mirror. What she's become.

A gussied up, middle-age-approaching stage mother who looks so, so ugly trying to look so, so pretty.

MARY-JO

(to herself)

Look at me...

Mary-Jo pulls the extensions all the way off. She grabs some BABY WIPES and begins removing the make-up CAKED on her face.

Her eyes go to the drawing Budd taped up on her mirror. Mary-Jo has an epiphany. A bolt of lightning strikes her brain as she remembers --

MARY-JO (CONT'D)

Flora! I have to find my baby!

Mary-Jo leaps out of her chair, throws on her slip-on Wal-Mart sneakers and hauls ass out of there.

WAYNE

(astonished)

What about the pageant?! I own
you!

Mary-Jo stomps back up to him.

MARY-JO

Consider this my payment in full
for services rendered.

MARY-JO HIKES UP HER DRESS AND SCISSOR-KICKS WAYNE RIGHT IN THE FUCKIN' BALLS!

He flies back and lands GROANING in a pile of clothes. Mary-Jo pushes up the tip of her nose with her finger and OINKS like a pig.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
How's that for lipstick, asshole.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - HALLS

Edith, finding yet another way to look even crazier, runs up and down the halls of the convention center yelling for Claudette.

EDITH
Claudette Kranzler you answer your mother right this instant!

She grabs little girls milling about and looks them up and down trying to find her daughter.

MOTHERS and FATHERS scream at the homeless vet accosting their children.

Edith keeps running until she bumps right smack into --

MARY-JO who is also yelling for her own daughter. They take a moment to realize they're EACH holding up a similar drawing.

MARY-JO/EDITH
What have you done?!

EDITH
What have *I* done?

MARY-JO
Where's my daughter?

EDITH
That's what I want to know. She's kidnapped my Claudette!

MARY-JO
Wait, *your* kid is missing, too?

EDITH
So is yours? Good Christ, maybe they're together?

MARY-JO
We've driven both our little girls
away...

EDITH
We have to find them.

MARY-JO
(wary)
Truce until then?

EDITH
Truce. Let's go.

The mothers turn to keep looking when suddenly they come upon REED REYNOLDS, in the flesh, with his ever-present ICPC escorts.

REED REYNOLDS
(shocked)
I came to see if my challenge has
been met. I think I got more than
I bargained for.

He eyes them both up and down, not liking what he sees.
Like, at all. Bitches be crazy.

REED REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
I would say based on the
circumstances, my original ruling
still stands. I'm afraid you're
both--

Mary-Jo and Edith rush Reed like offensive linemen and KNOCK HIM ON HIS ASS.

MARY-JO
Out of the way, Pageant Boy.

EDITH
God that felt good.

They HIGH-FIVE and run outside.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - HALLS

Budd keeps running around trying to find Flora. No dice. He stops a PAGEANT OFFICIAL and explains his situation.

PAGEANT OFFICIAL
 Sir, I'll be happy to run an
 announcement over the intercom just
 as soon as the pageant wraps up.

BUDD
 What is wrong with you people?

The Official flashes an ICPC BADGE.

PAGEANT OFFICIAL
 Sir, don't make me use this.

Budd is incredulous. HE PULLS THE GUY'S SHIRT OVER HIS HEAD
 and keeps on looking.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER - SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Edith and Mary-Jo scan up and down the street.

MARY-JO
 Where could they be?

Edith looks down at the drawing, again trying to find some
 sort of clue.

Her eyes fall on the RAINBOW drawn there and it dawns on her
 that it actually looks a lot like --

EDITH
 I know where they are!

INT. HAMPTON INN & SUITES - KID'S KORNER

CLOSE-ON -- a RAINBOW SLIDE in the middle of the room. It's
 a daycare/fun center inside the hotel.

It's where mommies and daddies drop their kids off when they
 want to give each other a lying down hug on vacation.

EDITH AND MARY-JO BURST into the room. And every kid in
 sight immediately shits their pants and runs away from them.

At the top of the slide, Claudette is about to push Flora
 when they see their moms.

MARY-JO
 Flora Fauna Johnston, you get off
 of there right now!

EDITH
 (to Mary-Jo)
 You named your kid Fauna?

MARY-JO
 (quietly)
 Family name.

EDITH
 (wha?)
 Uh, you too, Claudette. Come down
 here instantly.

The girls, looking like fugitives on the run who've finally
 been caught, come down the slide.

It's the saddest slide you'll ever see.

Each mother scoops up their daughter in a giant hug and
 breaks down further.

FLORA
 (being squeezed)
 Why are you crying, Mama?

MARY-JO
 Baby, I'm so sorry. I lost track
 of why we came here in the first
 place.

Mary-Jo loosens up a little so she can look Flora in the
 eyes.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
 I wanted to prove to you we were
 beautiful just the way we are.
 Instead, I turned ugly and you
 shouldn't have to see that.

FLORA
 But Mama, I always thought you were
 pretty. Because you love me.

MARY-JO
 Oh boy, here come the waterworks.

True to her word, Mary-Jo starts crying. And then her make-
 up runs.

She looks away to dab it, but when she turns back to look at
 Flora her face looks like Bozo the Clown fresh out of the
 microwave.

MARY-JO (CONT'D)
 Thanks for saying that, baby.
 (pointing to her heart)
 It doesn't matter how pretty you
 are on the outside or that we live
 in a trailer or that our clothes
 aren't the best. It's what's in
 here that matters.
 (beat)
 Can you ever forgive me?

Flora answers by squeezing her mom around the neck and
 kissing her on the cheek.

Flora pulls back and we see her mouth is covered in tons of
 white foundation.

FLORA
 I love you, Mama!

ON EDITH AND CLAUDETTE WATCHING THE TEARY REUNION.

CLAUDETTE
 (sadly)
 Mommy, why can't you be like
 Flora's mom?

Wait, what? Did Edith just hear her right? She gets on her
 knees and looks Claudette in the eyes.

EDITH
 Because Mommy has all of her teeth,
 baby.

Now it's Mary-Jo and Flora's turn to watch.

Claudette lightly pushes Edith's shoulder. A child
 chastising her wackadoo parent.

CLAUDETTE
 That's not what I meant. She loves
 her baby for who she is.

Edith looks gut-checked.

CLAUDETTE (CONT'D)
 Not who her mommy wants her to be.

EDITH
 Sweetie, I've done all this for
 you. Every step of the way. So
 you could win Miss Tiny USA.

CLAUDETTE

But Mommy... I don't like pageants.
I never did.
(beat, softly)
Please, don't make me do any
more...

Edith's world comes crashing down. This is the first time she's ever really heard her daughter.

Edith looks to the side in shame and sees her REFLECTION looking back at her in a crazy fun house mirror that the Kids' Korner has set up.

She looks grotesque with her distended head, burned skin, fried hair, and twisted limbs.

It's an exaggeration of course, but perhaps she finally realizes the monster she's become forcing her daughter to chase a dream that was never hers in the first place...

She rocks back onto her ass and starts crying, too.

EDITH

What have I done to you...

Claudette, even at her young age, seems to realize Edith is crying for her. And for herself.

She wraps her little arms around Edith to comfort her.

CLAUDETTE

It's okay, mommy. Don't cry. I
still love you.

Edith throws her own arms around Claudette, her little 7 year old life preserver.

After a few more seconds, she calms down and looks her daughter directly in the eyes.

EDITH

No more, pageants, sweetie. I
promise.
(beat)
Mommy will find something else to
do...

Across the room, we see Flora cutely cup her own mother's ear and whisper into it.

Mary-Jo listens intently and then looks at her daughter with a look that says, "Are you sure?".

Flora nods ups and down as hard as she can.

MARY-JO
Edith... Maybe you won't have to.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUSTIN CONVENTION CENTER

The Beauty Pageant is over by now. Some other sad lady from some other sad Texas town has won, but do we really care about that?

The answer is no. Because --

Out front, Reed Reynolds waits for his limo. It pulls right up to him. He has one leg inside when, up the sidewalk, Mary-Jo, Edith, Flora, and Claudette come running.

Reed starts slapping the top of the limo.

REED REYNOLDS
(frantic)
Go, go, go!

The limo starts pulling out, but Mary-Jo stands in front of it and stops it by putting her jugs on the glass.

BUDD (O.S.)
Thank you, Baby Jesus, Moses, and
Buddha. There you are!

Budd runs up to the group. He scoops up Flora, but Mary-Jo stops him. They have a quiet moment.

MARY-JO
Baby, please. I'm sorry for the way I acted. Never again. But this is what Flora wants. So gimme a minute.

These two have been together a long time and that's all it takes. He puts Flora down.

BUDD
Go get 'em, sweetie.

He hangs in the background.

MARY-JO
Mr. Reynolds, please! Just one more moment of your time.

Reed lets out a GIANT EXHALE and closes the door. He gets back on the sidewalk.

REED REYNOLDS

If either of you speaks to me again after this, I'm filing a restraining order.

MARY-JO

Fair enough. So needless to say, neither of us won the pageant.

REED REYNOLDS

(eyeing them up and down)
I think it's safe to say that, yes.

EDITH

(in stride)
Be that as it may, in spite of the, uh, circumstances, we at least wanted you to know we're better people now and we've buried the hatchet.

REED REYNOLDS

Well, that is surprising. But also none of my concern. Good day, ladies.

Reed goes to open the door, but Claudette stops him and closes it.

CLAUDETTE

Please, give them a chance, Mister.

Reed softens.

MARY-JO

We have a new proposal. You won't have to worry about letting us both back on the circuit.

(beat)

Mr. Reynolds, my daughter's been bitten by the pageant bug.

REED REYNOLDS

(wistful)
I remember the feeling.

MARY-JO

Flora technically won Miss Tiny Texas. Give her a shot at Miss Tiny USA, and *Edith* will be her consultant and coach.

Reed looks dubious. He connects eyes with Edith...that proves difficult considering her charred visage.

REED REYNOLDS

(to Mary-Jo)

You'd willfully accept never being able to directly coach again?

MARY-JO

I only started this whole mess so my Flora could show the world how beautiful she is. I don't need to continue.

REED REYNOLDS

I see. What about you?

EDITH

My daughter's retired. My passion is the pageant, but it's not hers.

(beat)

I'd like to help Flora win fair and square. Because I think she can.

Reed Reynolds takes in the quartet before him. In his infinite wisdom, he takes the time to mull over what they're asking of him.

REED REYNOLDS

You two look like train wrecks, but despite my pageantry background, I don't judge everything by looks. You both obviously love your daughters. And even more obviously, putting you two on the same team seems far less dangerous than having you compete against each other.

He looks down at Flora. She looks up at him, not intimidated one bit, but she's very respectful.

REED REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

Young lady, if I grant your petition, will you, and your *coaches* here, do your best to uphold the tenants of Miss Tiny USA?

Flora looks up at Edith, Mary-Jo, and to her new friend Claudette.

FLORA

I double dog promise with extra
sugar and frosting on top!

REED REYNOLDS

Well, then...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.INT./ ASTRO-DOME - MISS TINY USA PAGEANT - A MONTH LATER

The inside of the AstroDome looks like the goddamn Emerald
City.

Mothers, daughters, and the freaking wall hangings are
glitized out beyond belief.

ON STAGE - FLORA - looking like pre-tween jailbait - is
crowned --

PAGEANT HOST

MISS TINY USA, Flora Johnston!
Let's hear it for her!

A crown as big as her entire body is placed on her head as
the music swells and the lights blaze. In the crowd --

MARY-JO, BUDD, a newly returned DAVE, CLAUDETTE, and EDITH
(whose skin is now a healthy, if too dark, brown) APPLAUD
THEIR NUTS OFF.

Edith wears a shirt embossed with the logo of the newly
formed EDITH KRANZLER AGENCY.

Mary-Jo leans into Edith.

MARY-JO

I'm surprised Wayne isn't here
"scoping out the competition".

EDITH

(innocently)
Didn't you hear? They caught him
with more Speed in Austin.

MARY-JO

You didn't?

EDITH

I did! Wooooo, Flora!

Edith holds up a sign that reads -- "STAR CLIENT 3:16"

ON STAGE -- the HOST holds the mic up to little Flora and asks --

PAGEANT HOST
Do you have a few words?

Flora finds her mother in the crowd. They lock eyes and Mary-Jo nods like, "Go ahead, baby!"

Flora does a sexy strut and ends with a 360 spin screaming --

FLORA
Money don't buy class!

She BOWS and her CROWN FALLS OFF, but no one seems to care because --

Flora.

Fuckin'.

Won.

THE END