

THE LADY DIVOTS' ANCHOR BABY

by

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FADE IN:

EXT: A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY - EARLY MORNING

Two new, red BMW convertibles, driven by two blonde teenagers, a boy and a girl, cruise down a wide residential street. Vanity plates identify them as "TWIN A" (the boy's car) and " TWIN B." Behind them is a silver, older-model sedan.

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SUPERIMPOSED OVER the scene: A CITY IN THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF A STATE THAT HAS A BORDER WITH MEXICO

INT. SEDAN

It is driven by Mr. MIKE, a distinguished-looking, middle-aged man with salt and pepper hair and moustache.

EXT. STREET

On the right is a large, professionally landscaped high school campus with sports fields that include a three-hole golf course. Across the street is a row of luxury homes, with landscaping that includes various types of palm trees.

The sedan drives past a stone marker with carved printing that identifies the school as: St. Imonious Preparatory, Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. The car turns right into a visitors' parking lot by the Administration Building.

The convertibles continue past the school building, turn into a student parking lot.

Mike exits the sedan with a small, black satchel, pauses to greet two students wearing uniforms and holding hands. SARAH, a Hispanic girl, wears a modest blue blouse with a school emblem on it and a matching knee-length pleated plaid skirt.

LANCE, a tall, athletic-looking young black man, wears a short-sleeved dress shirt and pants the same color as the girl's uniform, and a matching tie with the school emblem.

SARAH  
Hey, Mr. Mike.

LANCE  
Subbing for Sister Ann again?

MIKE  
Just her morning honors classes.  
Great. See ya in class.

Mike enters the Administration Building. Sarah gives Lance a kiss on the cheek; they walk in different directions.

INT. ADMINISTRATION LOBBY

The principal, SISTER VIVIAN, stands beside a counter talking to a middle-aged female receptionist. Sister wears a dark blue, mid-calf-length habit and matching headdress that reveals a crop of shoulder-length, dishwater-blonde hair.

Sister Vivian turns to greet Mike.

SISTER VIVIAN  
Good morning, Mike.

MIKE  
I'm doing senior English.

SISTER VIVIAN  
I know. The room's already open.  
Sister Ann gave the key to one of  
her early arriving girls yesterday.

MIKE

She always makes my day easy and well-scripted.

Sister Vivian smiles. Mike walks away.

INT. HALLWAY

Only a handful of students are in the hallway, which is lined by lockers on both sides. The door to the nearest classroom has an ornately printed sign in the door window that blocks the view into the room and identifies it.

"Senior English, home of St. I's most articulate Christians."

INT. CLASSROOM

Three uniformed female students, LYNN, BRITT and LESLIE, are inside, along with a big dog, a female golden lab. The girls are dressing the dog as a sister, in a make-shift but authentic-looking costume fashioned from blue crepe paper.

Suddenly, Sarah rushes in, exclaims loudly.

SARAH

Mr. Mike's already here!

LYNN

Go corner him. Keep him busy until the first bell rings.

SARAH

Busy? How?

LYNN

Tell him about your problem dad.

Leslie adds her two cents.

LESLIE

The only redneck bigot to survive four years under the golden dome.

SARAH

I'll try. You guys hurry up.

EXT. THE SCHOOL CHAPEL

Mike is standing outside the chapel with a brown-robed monk. Sarah rushes up.

SARAH

Mr. Mike, I need your help. I've a huge problem.

MIKE

A couple of minutes ago, you didn't seem to have a care in the world. What's changed?

SARAH

I couldn't say anything in front of Lance.

The monk smiles, walks inside the chapel.

MIKE

I usually leave relationship  
advice to Dear Abby.

SARAH

Can you help me ace the state  
writing test and win a scholarship?

Her voice quivers. She sounds as if she's about to cry.

SARAH

(continuing)

The test's only three weeks away.

MIKE

I thought you were going to Notre  
Dame ... with daddy footing the  
bill.

SARAH

He won't pay for anything unless  
I break up with Lance. He won't  
even let me go to the prom.

Mike looks at his watch.

MIKE

We both have to get to class.

SARAH

Just a few seconds more. We won't  
be late.

(grinning)

You're doing the attendance.

MIKE

This is because Lance is black?

Sarah nods affirmatively.

MIKE

(continuing)

It doesn't matter that he's the  
same shade of black as Larry  
Fitzgerald? He's one of the best  
high school wide receivers in the  
country.

She shrugs.

SARAH

Any shade above lily white is  
unacceptable. I think both of us  
were born at the wrong time. Fifty  
to 100 years from now, we'll all  
be the same nice shade of tan.

MIKE

Wow, that an interesting theory!  
You're probably right, although  
I'm unsure how long it will take  
for the races to meld together.

A bell rings.

MIKE

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(continuing)  
Let's go! We can talk more later.

INT. SENIOR ENGLISH CLASSROOM

The door is open. Students pour into the classroom, are startled by what they see, laugh loudly, remain standing.

The dog is in the front of the room, standing with both front paws on the lectern, dressed as a sister. Lynn stands beside the lectern.

LYNN  
Our substitute teacher, Sister Caninious, wishes to speak to you.

She emphasizes the word "speak." The dog barks loudly twice. Everyone laughs.

LYNN  
(continuing)  
Please sit down and give sister your full respect. This is gonna be a doggone good day!

INT. HALLWAY

As Mike and Sarah approach the classroom, they see Sister Vivian storm inside. Two middle-aged lay teachers follow her to the now open door, stand outside, whispering.

INT. CLASSROOM

Mike and Sarah enter, stand inside the doorway. They and the entire class seated inside watch in silence as Sister Vivian rips the costume from the dog, drags it and Lynn, both cowering, into the hallway. Sarah takes her seat.

INT. HALLWAY

Mike stands in the doorway, watches as Sister Vivian loudly addresses Lynn.

SISTER VIVIAN  
Take this animal back where it belongs!

She lowers her voice, but still speaks sternly.

SISTER VIVIAN  
(continuing)  
The instant study hall begins, I want to see you in my office, along with whomever helped you with this little charade.

LYNN  
Yes, Sister.

She leaves with the dog. Sister then turns to Mike, smiles.

SISTER VIVIAN  
So much for your routine, well-scripted day.

MIKE

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I think an impromptu lecture on the appropriate use of humor might be in order.

SISTER VIVIAN

I can think of no one more qualified to deliver it than a writer and former stand-up comedian.

Mike steps inside the room. Sister leaves, quietly shutting the door.

INT. CLASSROOM

The students sit quietly until they are sure Sister Vivian is out of earshot, then begin barking like dogs.

EXT. THE SCHOOL'S FENCED-IN, THREE-HOLE PRACTICE GOLF COURSE

Lynn walks her dog through a gate and toward a small, open shed with a covered patio that has blankets, food and water dishes spread about. Lynn hugs and talks to the dog as she takes off the leash.

LYNN

None of this is your fault, Honey. It's much ado about nothin', but I'm in big trouble. I don't know if they'll let you caddy for me anymore. They might even kick me off the team ... or out of school.

The dog wags its tail.

INT. CLASSROOM

Mike stands in front of the class, motions with his hands to quiet the few students still barking and laughing.

MIKE

What happened in here was funny. I'm sure even Sister Ann will agree with that. But it also was highly inappropriate in terms of where and how it was done.

A BOY in the back of the room raises his hand. Mike points at him.

BOY

You really used to be a stand-up comic?

MIKE

Yep. Still am. One routine I still use occasionally is a parody on Catholic schools.

He pauses.

MIKE

(continuing)

And no one has ever reacted the way Sister Vivian just did.

Britt interrupts him.

BRITT  
Why not, Mr. Mike?

MIKE  
Because I use the safest, most  
common form of American humor.  
Anyone know what that is?

No one responds.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
It's exaggeration. You take  
something that has a tiny element  
of truth and exaggerate it. Really  
exaggerate it, to the point of  
absurdity. That way your punch  
lines are too silly to be  
offensive.

He pauses, sips from a bottle of water another student, a  
girl, offers him.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Also, I make fun mostly of the way  
Catholic schools used to be, not  
the way they are today. That makes  
the audience less directly  
involved.

Leslie raises her hand.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Yes, Leslie.

LESLIE  
Where do you do Catholic stand-up?  
It doesn't seem like night club  
material to me.

MIKE  
You seem a little young to know so  
much about night clubs, but your  
point is valid. This routine is  
aimed at a sober audience ... so  
maybe I should ask Jack if he  
wants to be excused.

He looks at Jack, a droopy-eyed student resting his head on  
his hands. Jack grins, sits erect.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
I've delivered it a few times at  
Catholic school functions, parish  
clubs and parties. Some sponsored  
by the Knights of Columbus, which  
is a religious code for knight  
club, but the audiences rarely  
toasted my punch lines.

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LESLIE  
Quit talking about it and give us  
a demonstration.

She raises her water bottle in the air.

LESLIE  
(continuing)  
If it's funny, I'll toast you.

A student in a front seat, ADAM, backs her up.

ADAM  
Come on, Mr. Mike. Show us how to  
make fun of something without  
getting people mad.

Other students clap. Encouraging him to perform.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - NEAR THE CADDY DOG SHED

Lynn releases her dog outside the shed. As soon as the dog is  
free, it runs through the half-open doorway, barking and  
wagging its tail. Lynn follows the dog inside.

INT. CADDY DOG SHED - DIMLY LIGHTED

The only light is from the open door. Lynn sees a short  
Hispanic girl crouched on a blanket in a shadowy corner.  
She's wearing the school uniform, but it's rumpled and dirty.  
She reaches to pet the dog, which tries to lick her face.

LYNN  
Who's there?

Freshman MAGGIE Garcia puts on a pair of glasses on the floor  
beside her, responds.

MAGGIE  
Maggie Garcia. I guess I  
overslept. Am I late for class?

LYNN  
You slept here!?

Maggie stands, brushes herself off.

MAGGIE  
They locked me out of the  
apartment. No one paid the rent.  
My mom's in jail. She's being  
deported.

LYNN  
What crap! And I thought I had  
problems.

Maggie pushes a bowl of dog food away with her foot.

MAGGIE  
I'm sick of this stuff. You got a  
candy bar?

Lynn takes her arm, pulls her outside into the sunlight.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SHED - BRIGHT SUNLIGHT

Maggie blinks at the sunshine that engulfs the two girls and the dog. She rubs her eyes.

LYNN  
Come on. I'll get you cleaned up  
and find you some real food. We  
can hit the vending machines in  
the teachers' lounge.

MAGGIE  
Shouldn't you be in class?

LYNN  
I'm in so much trouble already,  
things can't get any worse.

Lynn kisses her dog on the nose, points to the shed.

LYNN  
(continuing)  
You stay.

The dog lies down as the girls walk away, hand in hand. After a few seconds, Lynn stops, looks back to make sure the dog is still by the shed.

MAGGIE  
She's well trained. What's her  
name.

LYNN  
Honey. Because she's so sweet, not  
just because of her color. I don't  
suppose you play golf.

Maggie shakes her head.

MAGGIE  
I've never even been on a course  
before.

LYNN  
Well, its about time to learn how.

INT. CLASSROOM

Mike sits on the corner of the teacher's desk, begin his comic routine.

MIKE  
Like many of you, I spent 12 years  
surrounded by nuns, but that was  
back in the old days. Before God  
invented dressed-down and plain  
clothed sisters. Our nuns wore the  
full battle gear. The big black  
combat boots, huge rosary beads  
that hung all the way to the  
floor, and usually a large cross  
on a chain around their neck.

He pauses for a few seconds to let this image sink in, stands in front of the lectern.

MIKE

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(continuing)

But there was one really cool thing about those old-fashioned nuns. They could never sneak up on you. You could always hear them coming.

He rests his hands on a front desk. Speaks slowly, directly into a student's face.

MIKE

(continuing)

Whenever you heard stomping boots, rattling beads, and clanking chains behind you, you knew what was comin'. You knew it was either a nun ... or a motorcycle gang!

He stand erect, lowers his voice.

MIKE

(continuing)

And we were all hopin' for the motorcycle gang.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY

Lynn and Maggie stand in front of the reception desk talking to MEGAN Olsen, the pretty blonde seen earlier driving one of the BMW convertibles. Several other students are seated at tables and at computers.

Maggie, who is munching on a candy bar, has cleaned up, but her uniform is still rumpled. Megan speaks in a soft voice.

MEGAN

You're not supposed to eat in here.

Maggie slips the candy bar into her pocket. Lynn responds in an equally soft voice.

LYNN

Sorry. This is Maggie Garcia, a freshman. Her mom's in jail. She's homeless. Found her in the dog caddy shack ... eating dog food!

She raises her voice slightly, emphasizing the reference to canine cuisine. Megan grabs her purse, stands, walks to a male student seated at a nearby row of computers, taps him on the shoulder.

MEGAN

Cover the desk for me for a couple minutes.

She motions for Lynn and Maggie to follow her into a small reference room. As she closes the door behind them, Megan gives Maggie a candy bar from her purse.

INT. REFERENCE ROOM

Maggie grins, mouths: "Thanks."

The three girls sit at a small table. Maggie pockets the bar Megan gave her, resumes eating the one she already had.

LYNN

She needs a place to stay. How about your guest house?

Megan nods affirmatively.

LYNN

(continuing)

Just for a couple days. Til I can arrange something more permanent.

MEGAN

Long as you want.

LYNN

Need to check with your mom?

MEGAN

Nope. Mitch and I use the guest quarters all the time.

She pauses, explains to Maggie.

MEGAN

(continuing)

Mitch is my twin brother.

Megan puts her hand on Maggie's.

MEGAN

(continuing)

Gotta get back to work. Meet me in the parking lot right after school. My car's the red BMW convertible. The one with the "Twin B" plate.

INT. CLASSROOM

Return to Mike and his humor presentation, which has picked up momentum. He sits on the corner of the teacher's desk. His delivery has become more animated. He gestures with flair and changes his voice inflection to emphasize points.

He also mimicks the voices of others. The students repeatedly laugh loudly.

MIKE

But the biggest punishment held over our head was public school.

He stands in front of the lectern, imitates a tough-talking nun.

MIKE

(continuing)

If you don't shape up, Mr. Mike, you'll end up over there at the public school.

(points dramatically)

All you'll learn about over there is drugs, sex and violence.

He pauses, returns to playing himself as a boy.

MIKE

(continuing)

I said, "Sign me up!"

He waits for the laughter to stop, then fakes an Italian accent to play his mother.

MIKE

(continuing)

But my mother wouldn't hear of it.  
"You go da public school," she warned, "you maybe lose you soul."  
I said, "That can't happen, Ma. They got lockers in the public school."

He returns to the Italian accent.

MIKE

(continuing)

But she wouldn't listen. She said, "Somma day, my son, somma day you gonna thanka me fer dis."

(in his own voice)

I said, "Why do you talk like that, Ma? You're not Italian. Your maiden name was Hernandez."

He stops to take a drink from a bottle of water on the lectern, continues.

MIKE

(continuing)

She said, "Is good enough fer da pope, is good enough fer me!"

He pauses, adds an explanation for his young audience.

MIKE

(continuing)

That was back in the days when the popes were always Italian.

EXT. A CAMPUS WALKWAY - BRIGHT SUNSHINE

Lynn walks Maggie to her classroom, hugs her new friend, then hurries back to senior English.

INT. CLASSROOM

Mike is again perched on the corner of the teacher's desk, stops talking when Lynn enters, quietly slips into her seat.

MIKE

While I have to admit that I got a pretty good education during those 12 years in Catholic schools, an unfortunate side effect was that I grew up socially retarded because of the way they kept the boys and girls separated. I didn't go through puberty until I was a sophomore in college.

He waits for a couple male students to stop laughing, then

continues.

MIKE

(continuing)

In elementary school, they had separate playgrounds for the boys and girls. In the second grade I got sent home from school because a nun caught me on the girls' playground.

And I was only trying to borrow lunch money from my sister.

He stands, quickens his delivery.

MIKE

(continuing)

In high school, there were no girls at all. Don't get me wrong. The place was co-ed. Lots of girls. But I never knew that. I was a senior before anyone told me there were actually girls in my classes.

He pauses, puts his hands on his hips, questions the class in a loud voice.

MIKE

(continuing)

Why are you all looking at me so strangely? Thinking what kind of a dork is this guy? How could he not know about the girls!?

He sits atop an empty front row desk.

MIKE

(continuing)

The girls in that school were really well camouflaged. They all wore uniforms, no doubt created by the head fashion designer for Fidel Castro. They all wore really baggy sweaters. The rules said they had to be at least three sizes too big for you, so they provided absolutely no clue as to the wearer's gender. They wore knee-length pleated plaid skirts with knee-high socks, and wearing makeup or any non-religious jewelry was strictly forbidden.

He pauses, steps back and loudly delivers his punch line.

MIKE

(continuing)

For three long years, I thought I was attending an all-boys school that had an unusually large Scottish marching band!

As they roar with laughter, the students realize the presentation is over, then they applaud wildly. When the

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class quiets down, Mike points to the board.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Your homework. Get on it.

Students take out their books, quietly begin the assignment.  
Mike sits behind the desk. He raises his voice, calls out.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Sarah!

When he catches her eye, he gestures with his right hand  
index finger for her to come visit him. Sarah walks to the  
front of the room, sits on a chair next to the teacher's desk.

SARAH  
You're gonna help me, right?

MIKE  
Tutoring you to ace an essay test  
will be easy. But what can we do  
about Lance, short of dying him  
lily white?

Sarah grins.

SARAH  
I don't think that would work.

MIKE  
Not now. Michael Jackson is no  
longer around to show us how it's  
done.

He hesitates, strokes his moustache.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Is your dad a betting man?

SARAH  
He's been inside a casino or two.

MIKE  
How about making a bet with him?  
If you excel on the test, he lets  
you go to the prom with Lance.

Sarah shakes her head negatively.

SARAH  
He'd call that a sucker bet. I've  
a 3.8 GPA. He expects me to score  
well above average.

MIKE  
Then we sweeten the bet. You win  
only if you get the highest score  
in the state.

Sarah has a look of disbelief.

SARAH  
Thousands of students are taking

that test. You really think you can pull that off?

MIKE  
No, but you might be able to.

SARAH  
Okay then, let's shoot for the moon!

Mike looks at his watch, shows Sarah the time. They both walk toward the back of the room. Sarah reaches her desk just as the bell rings. Mike stands beside the doorway.

As they leave class, KAYLA, ROLAND, and JASMINE comment on Mike's comic presentation. Others grin, nod their agreement.

KAYLA  
Your sense of humor is amazing!

ROLAND  
You crack me up!

JASMINE  
You are hilarious!

INT: CLASSROOM

SUPERIMPOSED OVER the scene: TWO HOURS LATER

Mike is finishing his comedy presentation to another of Sister Ann's English classes. This time SISTER ANN, a Hispanic woman in her late twenties wearing the same habit as Sister Vivian, sits at her desk watching.

MIKE  
... And for three long years, I thought I was attending an all-boys school that had an unusually large Scottish marching band!

Mike looks at Sister Ann, thinks for a second or two, decides to add to his presentation.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Okay, I admit it. I lied. I did know there were girls in that school. I even took one of them to the prom.

He pauses, lets audience anticipation build.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Sister Ann reminds me of a really tough nun who was a chaperone at my prom. I say that only because both of them were trained in the martial arts.

He looks over the students, gestures toward Sister Ann.

MIKE  
(continuing)  
I assume most of you know that

Sister Ann also teaches martial arts. She's a second-degree black belt in Tai Quon Do. She's also a lot nicer than "Sister Karate Chop," who used that Kung Fu stuff to intimidate us.

He imitates the low, gravelly voice of "Sister Karate Chop."

MIKE

(continuing)

You talk out of turn in my class and I will immobilize your vocal cords!

He strikes forward with his right hand, fingers extended, as he raises his other arm over his head and steps forward with a thud -- a rather clumsy imitation of a classic martial arts move.

MIKE

(continuing)

Haiii Yaaa!

As students laugh loudly, he turns to Sister Ann.

MIKE

(continuing)

I should explain that "Sister Karate Chop" was only a brown belt. Her form wasn't nearly as good as yours, Sister Ann.

SISTER ANN

(grinning)

Not by a long shot, Grasshopper!

MIKE

Anyway, that Ninja Nun quickly noticed that my date was wearing a strapless gown, a real no-no in those days. She redesigned it right there on the spot by pinning a dish towel around the top.

Sister Ann interrputs with mock seriousness.

SISTER ANN

I'd never do that. Not unless the gown and the dish towel were a tasteful color match!

MIKE

Embarrassing? You bet! For both of us. But I guess it all worked out in the end. That same girl and I have now been married for almost 20 years.

Several students applaud. Mike yells over the clapping.

MIKE

(continuing)

And it's still my favorite dish towel!

MORGAN, a female student, raises her hand. Mike points to her.

MORGAN  
Is the story about the dish towel really true?

MIKE  
Yes, but it happened at a different Catholic school.

MORGAN  
Unbelievable!

MIKE  
At one time, nuns even set up sewing tables at school dances, so they could alter what they considered inappropriate gowns.

Morgan and several other girls stare questioningly at Sister Ann. She stiffens and stares back wide eyed, then raises both hands to point at herself and shakes her head, mouthing the words "Not me!"

MIKE  
(continuing)  
Didn't some girls here get into trouble at the Homecoming Dance last year?

MORGAN  
Yeah, but they were giving guys lap dances!

Other students laugh. Shaking her head, Sister Ann enters the conversation.

SISTER ANN  
We're now getting some interesting insights into how Mr. Mike develops his material. That makes me wonder about "Sister Karate Chop." I doubt there were nuns trained in the martial arts when you went to prom. Not that long ago!

MIKE  
You're right. No Ninja nuns back in my day. It was enough that they were heavily armed - with rulers and pointers. And combat boots, don't forget!

Many students laugh and applaud.

SISTER ANN  
We've only a few minutes left. Get started on the homework while Mr. Mike and I discuss another topic.

She and Mike walk into the hallway, leaving the door to the room slightly ajar.

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INT: HALLWAY

Mike and Sister Ann stand against the wall across the hallway from her classroom.

SISTER ANN  
Sarah told me you've offered to help her on the state essay test, and I whole heartedly approve.

MIKE  
(smiling)  
But?

SISTER ANN  
But I hate to see you devote so much of your time and expertise to turning only one of my students into a first-rate writer. Teach her as much as you can, at least the basic theory, in class, so they all can learn. You've already made a great start.

MIKE  
Sure. I'll be happy to. For Sarah, I'll just do more one-on-one evaluating and editing of her practice essays.

SISTER ANN  
Great. My other students aren't competing with Sarah. This way, everyone will have an opportunity to learn how to write from a pro.

MIKE  
Want to talk more at lunch, maybe about your trouble-making golf team members?

SISTER ANN  
Yeah, that is a tough one. They're all top students. A suspension could really mess up their academic standings.

MIKE  
And kicking them off the Lady Divots would be tough on them and even tougher on St. I's top-ranked golf team.

SISTER ANN  
We need to suggest an alternative punishment to Sister Vivian. Something difficult to do, but something that would be a real accomplishment.

MIKE  
And turn all that pent-up energy and creativity into a force for good rather than classroom havoc. Got any ideas?

A bell rings. Students begin pouring out of the classroom.

SISTER ANN  
One, maybe. It needs a lot of  
refinement.

MIKE  
Refinement's my best suit.

SISTER ANN  
I'm counting on it. See you at  
lunch.

MIKE  
My wife's delivering lunch again.  
Jan always brings enough for  
three.

They join the flow of students in the hallway.

INT: TEACHERS' LUNCHROOM

About a dozen teachers are seated at tables. Mike is the only one sitting at a corner table, but his wife JAN, a pretty brunette in her late thirties, stands beside him serving a lunch she has divided into three place settings.

It consists of a large salad with steamed shrimp and two slices of veggie pizza. Sister Ann, the only nun in the room, enters and walks over to join them.

SISTER ANN  
Hi, Jan. Looks like you've catered  
a real tasty meal.

All three seat themselves.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
I haven't seen you in a while. I'd  
forgotten how young you look, and  
that confuses me.

Sister pauses to sip from her ice tea and add dressing to her salad.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
In a presentation to my students  
earlier today, Mike talked about  
attending his high school prom  
with the girl he's been married to  
for almost 20 years. Both my  
students and I thought that was  
really sweet.

Jan laughs.

JAN  
You were right to wonder about an  
age difference. When Mike went to  
prom, I was in the third grade!

Sister looks puzzled.

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MIKE

That's what it's like being married to a writer. When something interesting happens, a normal person just retells the event. A writer adapts it to fit varying situations.

Jan stops eating to join the conversation.

JAN

Let me translate that into plain English. He lies a lot.

SISTER ANN

(to Mike)

But you did go to a Catholic high school?

MIKE

We both did, but in different states at different times.

SISTER ANN

(to Mike, smiling)

It's nice to get that cleared up. Now what do we do about the Lady Divots?

MIKE

You said you had an idea?

SISTER ANN

Lynn, the primary instigator of what went on in my class ...

She pauses, appears about to explain to Jan.

JAN

Mike told me about that.

SISTER ANN

Anyway, Lynn is already trying to help Maggie Garcia, a freshman she found sleeping in the dog caddy shack. Her mother is in jail, facing deportation, and Maggie is homeless.

MIKE

That has the makings of a real project for the entire golf team. Helping not just Maggie, but her mother as well. Half those kids have at least one parent who is an attorney.

SISTER ANN

There's a somewhat similar case involving a fourth grade Hispanic boy at St. Augustine School. Both he and his mother are being threatened with deportation, even though his step-dad is an American citizen.

JAN

Why do the "ship 'em all back to Mexico" fanatics so delight in busting up families?

SISTER ANN

(to Mike)

Anyway, lets eat up and go plead our case.

After a few more bites, Mike and Sister Ann both stand up. Mike kisses Jan on the cheek, and he and sister both leave.

INT: SISTER VIVIAN'S OFFICE

Present are Sister Vivian, Sister Ann, Mike, Lynn, Britt, and Leslie, all seated around a conference table at one end of an expansive office.

SISTER VIVIAN

It's a tempting proposal. I'd love to see these young women become the focus of something positive, but it may be too late to focus on Maggie.

She pauses, quickly looks through a folder in front of her.

SISTER VIVIAN

(continuing)

Maggie's situation is heartbreaking, but her mother's arrest and immigration status isn't her only problem. The terms of her scholarship are rigid. If she drops below a B average she loses it. She was doing fine, but now she's not even close to qualifying.

Sister Ann responds.

SISTER ANN

The academic dive isn't surprising, considering everything that's going on in her life. The Lady Divots can quickly turn things around. There are excellent tutors in any subject she needs help with.

SISTER VIVIAN

The Mother's arrest was for shoplifting?

Lynn responds.

LYNN

She stole a pair of jeans for Maggie. They don't even fit her. They were taken by the police as evidence.

SISTER VIVIAN

We really have a chance of helping the mother?

Mike and Sister Ann repond.

MIKE

Definitely. Both of Britt's parents are high-profile attorneys, and several other girls have top legal talent in their extended families.

SISTER ANN

These cases usually involve discrimination and shoddy police work. On top of that, they take advantage of people who have no idea how to fight the system.

MIKE

Having the best legal talent and tactics should tip the scales our way.

Sister Vivian stands up.

SISTER VIVIAN

Okay. Let the Lady Divots' crusade begin. Tutoring for Maggie and top-notch legal talent for her mother.

The others stand, begin leaving the office.

EXT: A STRIP MALL - NIGHT

Except for a single, old-model car parked in front of a clothing store called "The Teen Scene," the parking lot is empty.

INT: INSIDE THE STORE

The PROPRIETOR and a TEENAGE FEMALE CLERK, are the only ones present. He's a bald, middle-aged, overweight man with thick glasses; she's Hispanic.

TEENAGE FEMALE CLERK

Sure is a slow night. Think we should close early again?

PROPRIETOR

Let's give it another 15 minutes.

Through the store's door and windows, they see a seemingly endless line of cars, including two red BMW convertibles (with tops up), pull into the lot.

Megan, Lynn, Britt, Leslie, and Maggie exit one convertible. Mitch, Lance, Sarah, and another girl get out of the other BMW. About 25 students, mostly girls, enter the store. They roam about laughing, talking, and looking at everything.

The clerk approaches a group of students near her that includes Megan, some already carrying items they have selected.

TEENAGE FEMALE CLERK

Anyone need any help?

MEGAN

Not yet. We look for clothes in packs like this all the time. We call them "shopping caravans."

The proprietor overhears the conversation and joins the group, as do Lynn and Maggie.

PROPRIETOR

"Welcome to our happy hunting grounds."

MEGAN

We're all students at St. Imonious Preparatory. A lot us are on the school's golf teams.

Lynn joins the conversation.

LYNN

We'll want to get stuff printed on some of the blouses and shirts we buy. Can you handle that?

PROPRIETOR

We sure can.

LYNN

I'm Lynn and this is Maggie.

PROPRIETOR

Hi, I'm Ron Goldberg.

LYNN

We've another reason for being here.

PROPRIETOR

What's that?

Lynn hands him a credit card.

LYNN

We want to pay for a pair of jeans Maggie's mother stole from you.

Maggie explains further, sounds choked up.

MAGGIE

She's in jail. They're trying to send her back to Mexico.

The proprietor looks shocked.

PROPRIETOR

My God, that's awful. You'd think we're in Nazi Germany. I'll drop the charges tomorrow.

Maggie hugs him and kisses him on the cheek.

MAGGIE

Thank you!

By now there is a long line of students waiting to check out. Megan, Lynn and Maggie join the students still shopping.

EXT: ST.I'S PRACTICE GOLF COURSE - A BRIGHT, SUNNY DAY

Lynn and Britt stand near the first tee. They are wearing matching blouses that have "Lady Divot" printed on the front, and "St. Imonious Preparatory" on the back. With them is NANCE Kurtz, a pretty woman, early thirties.

The women's golf bags are on a golf cart on the other side of the tee, which is driven by Lance. With him are a German shepherd and Lynn's golden lab, Honey. Both dogs wear special harnesses designed to carry a single golf club on each side.

SUPER: SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Attorney DEAN Chernoff, an athletic, distinguished-looking man in his 40s, walks toward the golf cart to drop off his bag. Lance meets him half way. Dan then walks to the women, hugs Nance.

DEAN  
(to Nance)  
I assume you've already met the girls.

Nance nods affirmatively.

NANCE  
Met their dogs, too. I'm impressed by all four girls. One reason I agreed to this meeting is because I've always wanted to see the Lady Divots' famous caddy canines in action.

DEAN  
And the other reason?

NANCE  
To find out why a defense attorney so renowned that the mere mention of his name gives most prosecutors a cold sweat is defending a lowly shoplifter.

DEAN  
Lynn told you I'm her uncle?

Nance nods.

DEAN  
(continuing)  
That's not the only reason. First let's watch the dogs, They're the most impressive performers.

He addresses Lynn and Britt.

DEAN  
(continuing)  
Nance is from the prosecutors' office, but she's not involved in Maggie's mother's case. She's a friend.

NANCE

(to the girls)  
The dogs don't stay here, do they?

Lynn and Britt both respond.

LYNN  
Sometimes when I play right after  
my last class, I bring Honey to  
school with me.

BRITT  
The dogs are allowed to ride our  
little white school bus.

Nance looks down the fairway.

NANCE  
(to Lynn)  
I'll use my three iron.

Lynn and Britt both call their dogs.

BRITT  
Dutchess, come!

Lynn simply whistles. Both dogs run to their owners. Lynn  
pets Honey on the head, talks to her.

LYNN  
Three iron. Guest club for Nance.  
You remember Nance?  
(points to Nance)  
I just showed you her bag and  
clubs.

The dog wags her tail. Lynn explains to Nance.

LYNN  
(continuing)  
We usually don't need to tell the  
dogs what clubs to bring us. They  
remember what we used before in  
similar situations. But we do need  
to tell them what new players want.

She points.

LYNN  
(continuing)  
Fetch, Honey.

As the dog runs to the golf cart, Lynn gives Nance a further  
explanation.

LYNN  
(continuing)  
They don't eye ball the clubs like  
we do. They find them primarily by  
scent.

DEAN  
(to Britt )  
Three iron for me, too

BRITT  
(to Dutchess)

---

Three iron. Guest club. Lance  
help. Go, girl.

Dutchess joins Honey at the golf cart. Honey clearly knows which bags belongs to Lynn and Nancy, and Dutchess knows Britt's bag. Both dogs select the proper clubs by placing a paw on them. Lance then puts them in their harnesses.

On each side, the harnesses have velcro strips far enough apart to balance the clubs so that the dogs can run with them. Lance shows Dutchess Dan's bag, but the dog selects the club. Both dogs run back to the players.

After hitting, the players return the clubs to the dogs, which wait until both their players have stroked, then return the clubs to Lance and run down the fairway to locate their players' balls. The players walk down the fairway talking.

NANCE  
The dogs are amazing. And they  
never touch the balls?

LYNN  
Never!

NANCE  
How does Honey identify my ball?

LYNN  
That's easy. It's the one with  
your scent all over it.

Nancy changes the subject.

NANCE  
(to Dean)  
So why are you getting into a case  
involving an illegal with stolen  
jeans?

DEAN  
The legal system has been used to  
persecute illegals for too many  
years. It's time for the pendulum  
to swing the other way. The  
shoplifting charge has been  
dropped anyway.

NANCE  
That doesn't make her a legal  
resident.

DEAN  
She's still the victim of illegal  
police action.

Half an hour earlier, the same  
officers who arrested her raided  
a suspected drop house near the  
same strip mall where the jeans  
were taken, but came up empty.  
That's when they learned about the  
theft.

NANCE  
They used the same search warrant?!

DEAN

No time to get a legal one. Stuck it under the nose of a woman they knew didn't read English and waltzed right in. When she tried to run, they threw her against a door frame and dislocated her shoulder, calling it "resisting arrest."

He points to Honey lying on the fairway near a ball.

DEAN

(continuing)

Just as sure as that short drive was yours, it's now become a case of illegal search and seizure, assault and police brutality.

NANCE

Even you aren't good enough to turn a botched arrest into a prosecution of the arresting officers.

DEAN

Not in criminal court, but it sure makes for a juicy civil suit. That will be handled by Britt's parents, Walter and Peggy Sharpe, who specialize in that sort of litigation.

NANCE

Wow! Is there no limit to the Lady Divots' legal resources?

DEAN

Only way to keep the opponent in the rough and the bunker at the same time.

EXT: AN UPSCALE SUBURBAN STREET

A large, Spanish-style home, elegant but not ostentatious. An expansive front courtyard with a large, cascading fountain is enclosed by a wrought iron fence. The double gate is open.

On one side is a guest house, unattached to the primary residence but of matching style. Megan Olsen backs her BMW convertible out of a garage and pulls in front of the guest house, as Maggie emerges from it, locks the door behind her.

Megan's mother, BEVERLY, exits the main house and walks across the courtyard to meet them. She opens the passenger side door.

BEVERLY

(to Maggie)

I'll ride in back. You sit up front with Megan. How long has it been since you've seen your mother?

MAGGIE

Almost two weeks.

BEVERLY

Soon you'll see her all the time.  
After she gets out of jail, she  
can move into the guest house with  
you. She can work part-time for  
some of our neighbors.

Maggie nods, smiles. The car drives away.

EXT: THE GOLF COURSE

As Dean and Nance stand beside Honey and Nance's ball  
talking, Britt and Lynn continue down the fairway. Honey runs  
to show Lynn where her ball is.

NANCE

So just the threat of a civil suit  
is supposed to scare everyone into  
dropping the illegal immigration  
case?

DEAN

(grinning)

Not necessarily. Peggy says they  
might get enough in punitive  
damages to regularly fly her  
daughter down to Mexico to visit  
for seven years or longer. Until  
Maggie graduates from college,  
perhaps with an advanced degree.

Nance smiles.

NANCE

Okay, no promises, but I'll tell  
the prosecutors who and what  
they're up against. I'll get back  
to you.

DEAN

At the very least, she needs to  
see a judge immediately and get  
out on bail.

NANCE

Where's that bail money coming  
from?

Dean spreads his arms in a sweeping gesture.

DEAN

All around us. Bail won't be  
steep. Some of Maggie's classmates  
have credit cards with limits high  
enough to cover it.

NANCE

I am going to get a chance to at  
least beat you at golf?

DEAN

Sure. If we can teach Honey to  
bring you a driver whenever you  
ask for a three iron.

EXT: A CITY PRISON

The red BMW convertible is in the parking lot.

INT: HALLWAY OUTSIDE A SMALL ROOM

A female prison guard stands beside a large window watching MARGARITA Garcia, an overweight but attractive middle-aged Hispanic woman dressed in prison garb. She is seated alone at a small table inside the room.

Another guard, a man, delivers Beverly, Megan, and Maggie to the room. He opens the door for them but remains outside, watches through the window.

INT: INSIDE THE ROOM

Maggie runs to her mother, hugs her.

MARGARITA

I've been so worried about you.  
When I heard you were locked out  
of the apartment, I was afraid  
Social Services would move you  
somewhere.

Maggie introduces her companions.

MAGGIE

This is Megan, one of the girl's  
from school, and her mother,  
Beverly. I'm staying with them.  
They live only about a mile from  
St. I's.

Margarita has tears running down her cheeks.

MARGARITA

I really messed up. I don't know  
what to do, even if they don't  
send me back to Mexico. I lost my  
jobs, too.

MAGGIE

Everything will be okay. You've a  
really good lawyer, and lots of  
people from school also are  
helping us.

Beverly interrupts.

BEVERLY

You can stay with Maggie in our  
guest house. Long as you want.  
We'll find you new jobs. Better  
ones.

Everyone sits down. Margarita wipes her eyes.

MARGARITA

I'm sure glad I sent you to St.  
I's. I can't believe how  
supportive everyone is.

BEVERLY

The school is like one huge

family. Where everyone watches each other's back.

Megan chimes in.

MEGAN

Don't worry, Margarita. You're going to stay here with Maggie. To see her finish high school and go to college. The Lady Divots are going to win. They're too determined not to.

EXT: A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY - EARLY MORNING

One red BMW convertible, with the top down, drives down the street in front of St. Imonious Preparatory, followed by a motorcycle cop. Megan Olsen is behind the wheel. Her twin brother Mitch is the front passenger. Maggie is in back.

SUPER: A FEW DAYS LATER

Mitch is turned around, using a cell phone to snap photos of the cop. He and Maggie spot Mike walking in the visitors' lot and both wave. Maggie yells.

MAGGIE

Mr. Mike!

He waves back. The convertible slows, signals a left turn, pulls into the student parking lot. The cop doesn't follow. Mike walks past the Administration Building toward the student lot. He and the three students meet on a walkway.

MIKE

What's with the motorcycle escort?

Megan and Mitch both respond.

MEGAN

Police harassment. They follow both of our cars, mine and Mitch's, everywhere. Waiting for some traffic violation, I suppose.

MITCH

My mother's using mine to go shopping. With a friend riding shotgun and taking photos, just like we're doing. They've got two motorcycle patrols assigned to this vital crime prevention.

MIKE

I'll tip off a friend at the newspaper.

He'd love to do a story on how taxpayer dollars are being wasted to shadow a pair of straight A suburban high school students.

They continue talking as they slowly walk across campus.

MAGGIE

(Excitedly to Mike)

My mom's now living with me in the guest house. It's so cool!

MIKE

Great. How steep was the bail?

MAGGIE

(shaking her head,  
smiling)

There wasn't any bail.

Megan interrupts.

MEGAN

Mr. Chernoff and the judge had a laugh together about that. She said it was stupid to ask Ms. Garcia to post money to keep her from running away when that's basically what they want her to do.

Mitch adds additional information.

MITCH

The Lady Divots have found some good jobs for Ms. Garcia, as a nanny, housekeeper, and even dog sitter and walker, but no money ever exchanges hands.

MIKE

That's smart.

MITCH

She does favors for her client friends and they buy gifts for her. Food, clothing, stuff for the guest house.

MAGGIE

(excitedly)

And Sister Vivian is going to let us use the school bus and driver on weekends. To go shopping and to church on Sunday.

MIKE

I guess that's because of that stupid law against transporting an illegal alien. That'll never stand up in the courts, anyway.

MITCH

Mr. Chernoff says they'd never risk a civil suit by the school.

INT: A CLASSROOM

Sister Ann stands in front of her seated students.

SUPER: FIRST-HOUR SENIOR HONORS ENGLISH

She and the students all cross themselves as she leads the morning prayer.

SISTER ANN

Holy Mary, mother of God, please join us in asking your son, and our savior, to continue guiding the Lady Divots, and the many fine Christians helping them protect marriage and the family. And thank Him for the help already provided. Amen.

The STUDENTS then raise fists in the air and shout.

STUDENTS  
Go, Lady Divots!

Sister Ann walks to the chalk board, erases the "assignment for the day."

SISTER ANN  
I'm sure you won't be upset to learn we're deviating from the lesson plan today. Mr. Mike is back. He should be here any minute.

The students applaud. Sister Ann fakes indignation.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
Now how is that supposed to make me feel? I tell you your sweet, kindly teacher is being replaced and you clap!

Sarah responds.

SARAH  
We love you the most, but he's "sooo" funny.

SISTER ANN  
Well, as it happens, today's lesson is on writing humor. Make me proud.

The classroom door opens. Mike walks in carrying his black satchel and a stack of papers.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
Speak of the fork-tongued devil and in he walks.

She sits behind her desk as Mike walks to the front of the room, setting his satchel and the papers on the teacher's desk. The students again applaud.

MIKE  
There isn't much opportunity to include humor in the papers you write for school, but you should always be ready just in case. One single well-crafted funny sentence could raise your grade ... and help keep Sister Ann awake while she's grading papers.

Sister Ann comments.

---

SISTER ANN

I do have a sense of humor. And so do your other teachers.

MIKE

(to students)

The safest person to poke fun at is yourself. Years ago I was shocked when I first noticed my hair was thinning.

In those days, there was nothing you could do, short of expensive transplants, but I still tried. I walked around wearing a lanolin lotion that smelled so strong ...

He pauses, looks around the audience.

MIKE

(continuing)

Someone give me a funny punch line.

There is no response.

MIKE

(continuing)

Lanolin comes from sheep, doesn't it?

Students nod affirmatively.

MIKE

(continuing)

Now give me a punch line. Shout it out!

Only one student, Roland, answers. He speaks tentatively, unsure of himself.

ROLAND

People thought you were a sheep?

MIKE

You're on the right track, but we need something more subtle like ... People thought I was moonlighting as shepherd. How about something even funnier?

SARAH

Whenever you asked a girl out, she said, "Baaa!"

She sticks out her tongue as she makes the sound. Students laugh, then applaud. Mike pulls a stack of three by five cards from his stachel, writes on one of them.

MIKE

I'll be passing out cards to shills, to ensure none of the best punch lines are missed.

Sister Ann explains.

SISTER ANN

A shill is someone planted in the audience to help the speaker.

MIKE

If I give you one, don't use it until I point at you. I just wrote a new card with Sarah's punch line to use in the other classes.

He stands beside Roland.

MIKE

(continuing)

A lot of you don't know this, but Roland is scared to death of horses. He's so horse-shy, he won't even date a girl with what?

He walks over to Kayla, discreetly points a finger at the back of the head of Jasmine, the girl in front of her.

KAYLA

A pony tail!

Mike gestures at another student, NELSON. Everyone looks at Nelson.

MIKE

Nelson, here, won't date French girls. Has to do with an ex-girlfriend who dumped him. He's taken the anti-French stuff to an extreme. He won't even eat what?

As different students shout out, "French fries," "French toast," "French bread," and "French onion soup," Mike slips a card to Leslie, then points at her.

LESLIE

Yeah, and he won't French kiss either!

The class erupts. Even Sister Ann is laughing.

EXT: A RESIDENTIAL STREET

A red BMW, with the top down, is driving beside the centerline, followed by a police motorcycle. Beverly Olsen is behind the wheel. A female COMPANION, about the same age, is beside her, turned around.

The companion uses a cell phone to photograph the COP. The street is wide and lined with luxury homes on both sides.

No other vehicles are in sight in either direction. A bright sun is almost directly overhead.

BEVERLY

Well, we're almost home and this is about as quiet as it gets. I think I can safely switch lanes without signaling.

COMPANION

You're going to break the law with

a cop right behind you?

BEVERLY

On advice of attorney. And you're my witness.

The car switches lanes. Lights flash. Beverly pulls the car to the curb, shuts off the engine. The cop parks behind her, walks to the car.

INT: CLASSROOM

Return to Mike's humor presentation. He is standing in front of Sister Ann's desk.

MIKE

Let's pick on one more girl before we move on to another type of humor. Cassie, you're at the tee.

He pauses, as everyone looks at CASSIE.

MIKE

(continuing)

Cassie is such a flirt that ...

Cassie shows mock surprise, points to herself questioningly. After a few seconds of silence, Jasmine responds.

JASMINE

She stole my boyfriend before I even met him!

MIKE

Good enough! Let's move on to humor based on a play on words. Different meanings of the same word, or two different words that sound alike.

He pauses, looks over the audience.

MIKE

(continuing)

Is there a girl in here who's had her belly button pierced?

He glances at Sister Ann.

MIKE

(continuing)

Please turn around, Sister. I don't want you to see the identity of the girl displaying this sinful ornamentation.

Sister smiles and shrugs, but complies. None of the girls in class respond.

MIKE

(continuing)

Still afraid to fess up with Sister in the room, eh? That's okay, let's just say that Sarah plans to have it done soon.

He walks to Sarah, stands beside her desk.

MIKE

(continuing)

A cousin is graduating from Annapolis later this year, and Sarah will be there to snag a date. She has cleverly deducted that those future Navy officers are sure to be turned on by what kind of a piercing?

When no one else responds, Sister Ann does.

SISTER ANN

A navel piercing!

The students applaud. Sister stands, picks up a piece of chalk.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

It is, of course, a play on the words ...

She writes "naval" and "navel" on the board.

MIKE

This is, of course, a backup plan in case things don't work out with Lance.

SARAH

Glad you're still on my side there.

Mike walks back to the front of the room.

MIKE

Sometimes you can throw in something nonsensical and make it work. Like when my sister became so concerned about the bags under her eyes, she tried to shrink them by applying Preparation H.

Students laugh.

MIKE

(continuing)

It didn't do much about the bags, but it did improve what?

It's a few seconds before anyone responds. Finally, Sarah does.

SARAH

She's got a new outlook?

MIKE

That's a good one! I was going to say "It improved her hindsight."

Some students laugh. Others groan.

EXT: A RESIDENTIAL STREET

Return to the red BMW and the traffic cop who stopped Beverly. He has finished writing her a ticket and hands it, along with her driver's license, title, and proof of insurance, to her.

COP

To avoid this going on your record, you can attend traffic school. You still have to pay ...

Beverly interrupts him.

BEVERLY

No way. This will go to trial. I look forward to seeing you again. How much longer can we expect you people to continue following our cars?

COP

I've no idea, Ma'am. How much longer will Ms. Garcia and her daughter be living with you?

BEVERLY

Why do you ask? Are the two things related?

COP

Just curious, Ma'am. I've seen the stories in the newspaper. I'm just a traffic cop doing his job. Don't know anything about immigration cases.

He returns to his motorcycle, roars away.

INT: CLASSROOM

Return to Mike guest speaking in Sister Ann's English class. He counts and distributes papers to each of the students in front seats, who pass them back. He holds up one of the papers.

MIKE

Notice that the setups allow you to respond opposite ways. For instance, "my parents are so uptight, slash easygoing ..." I'm trusting you not to step over the line of propriety that Sister Ann has drawn.

Sister Ann adds a comment that results in a laugh from the students.

SISTER ANN

At least no further than Mr. Mike has already tiptoed.

The first student to respond is Roland.

ROLAND

My parents are so uptight, they won't let me fly because they're afraid I'll get high.

---

Kayla responds.

KAYLA

Mine are so easygoing, my curfew  
is three hours after theirs.

Nelson chimes in.

NELSON

My girlfriend is so sexy, the only  
string in her guitar is the G-  
string.

MIKE

One more, from a girl.

Cassie complies.

CASSIE

My boyfriend won't eat buttered  
popcorn at the movies. Says it's  
just a feminist ploy to keep his  
greasy hands off me.

When the laughter stops, Sister Ann comments.

SISTER ANN

Very funny. And very close to the  
line. On which side is debatable.

She looks at the clock.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Mr. Mike has to leave now, for a  
meeting with Sister Vivian and  
another family with immigration  
problems that the Lady Divots are  
trying to help.

As Mike walks out, she makes a parting comment.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Don't give Sister Vivian too much  
detail about what went on in here  
today.

Mike grins, waves.

INT: SISTER VIVIAN'S OFFICE

Sister is at the conference table with EDUARDO Torres, and  
his wife MARIA.

Their son, ANTHONY, sits beside Sister's desk, reads a book.  
A knock on the door. Sister answers it. Mike, Dean Chernoff,  
and Walter and PEGGY Sharpe all enter.

The Sharpes appear to be in their late thirties, younger than  
one might expect because of their high-profile reputations.  
Sister introduces the Torres family, now standing except for  
Anthony.

SISTER VIVIAN

This is Eduardo and Maria Torres,  
(pointing to Anthony)  
and their son, Anthony, a student  
at St. Augustine's School.

With a flourish, she also introduces the others.

SISTER VIVIAN  
(continuing)

This is St. I's distinguished legal  
team, Walter and Peggy Sharpe, and  
Dean Chernoff. You have, of  
course, already met our publicist,  
Mr. Mike.

Eduardo addresses the lawyers.

EDUARDO

This has been an unbelievable  
nightmare for me and my family. We  
thought our case was hopeless  
until we heard what St. I's golf  
team and its lawyers were doing to  
help Mrs. Garcia and Maggie.

Marie adds her voice.

MARIA

It's wonderful to find out there  
are people on our side. People the  
authorities will listen to.

Peggy responds.

PEGGY

We're happy for a chance to prove  
our justice system can protect  
anyone, documented or undocumented.

SISTER VIVIAN

I'll leave you in these very  
capable hands.

Anthony and I will go down the  
hall and see if we can find  
something good to eat and drink.  
That okay with you, Anthony.

ANTHONY

That's cool, Sister Vivian.

As Sister and Anthony leave, hand in hand, everyone else  
seats themselves around the conference table.

EXT: THE SCHOOL'S GOLF COURSE - A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY

Dean Chernoff and Nance Kurtz are again playing golf, this  
time without the assistance of caddy dogs. They walk together  
down a fairway, pulling their golf bags behind them on  
wheeled carts.

SUPER: SEVERAL DAYS LATER

DEAN

Now that was a good drive. Your  
ball may have gone farther than

mine.

NANCE

Too bad we don't have Honey and Dutchess to show us exactly where we lie.

DEAN

Sorry that there aren't any caddy dogs on campus today.

She stops to rest. He does likewise.

NANCE

I'm still afraid of some canine challenging my choice of club.

DAN CHERNOFF

Then don't ever go out with Betsy, a border collie I've been told is the smartest pooch of all. Virtually never needs to be told what club to get. She belongs to Lorie Ross, a sophomore.

NANCE

I've heard that's a very intelligent breed.

She pauses, changes the subject.

NANCE

(continuing)

I assume you're curious what I've heard about the reaction to Walter and Peggy Sharpe's civil suit being filed. The powers that be considered that a safer situation than Ms. Garcia's. The Torres arrest was by the book. No irregularities.

She begins walking again. So does he.

NANCE

(continuing)

Everyone expected the suit to be on behalf of the two illegals, Anthony and his mother. Maybe even on behalf of St. Augustine's school, but not the American-born stepfather, Eduardo Torres.

DEAN

Pretty inventive approach!

NANCE

Claiming the city is, in effect, trying to force him to end his eight-year marriage or give up his business and property, so he can move to Mexico with his wife and son? I doubt there are any legal precedents.

DEAN

This may set a precedent.

Excitedly, Nance points and shouts.

NANCE

Look! My ball is closer to the green than yours.

DEAN

By a few yards.

He returns to the subject at hand.

DEAN

(continuing)

Did the numbers raise some eyebrows?

NANCE

I'm sure they did. The potential real damages are huge, and the punitive potential is even bigger. And the public would never tolerate a settlement, not in this economy. I predict the authorities will forget about Anthony and his mother. Look for easier targets with less-influential friends.

They stop by his ball. He selects a club from his bag.

NANCE

(continuing)

How about you? Are you going to be equally creative at the defense table?

He takes practice swings with an iron.

DEAN

That table will be in traffic court. Monday morning.

She laughs.

NANCE

Traffic court!

DEAN

Motorcycle cops are constantly tailing the Olsen twins' convertibles. Finally ticketed their mother.

NANCE

That court scene will be like a pro-am. You can strut around like Tiger used to.

EXT: A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY - EARLY MORNING

A white school bus with "St. Imonious Preparatory" painted on the side drives down the street in front of the school. It is shorter than most public school buses. More than a dozen students and one border collie look out its windows.

Just as the bus is about to turn into the school, two police squad cars appear with lights flashing. One pulls in front of the bus, preventing the driver from pulling onto school property.

Dozens of people, mostly students, gather around to watch as everyone is removed from the bus. Sister Ann and two lay teachers appear, herd the bus riders onto school grounds, then try to disperse all the students gathered.

Only three police officers, the bus driver, and LORIE Ross and her dog remain off school property. One officer writes the driver a ticket as another talks to Lorie, who is hysterical and crying loudly.

LORIE

No, you can't take her! She's our dog!

The OFFICER responds, politely but firmly.

OFFICER

I'm sorry, young lady, but we can take her. And we will.

He motions to another officer to put the dog in the back seat of a squad car. The other officer does, then drives away. Lorie screams loudly as the squad car drives out of sight, curses at the officer holding her.

LORIE

You bastards!

Then she sees Mike, yells to him.

LORIE

(continuing)

Mr. Mike, help me! They took Betsy!

Mike runs to her, addresses the officer still holding her.

MIKE

Let her go. You've already done enough to spend the rest of your law enforcement career as a mall security guard.

The officer hesitates.

MIKE

(continuing)

Her dad is George Ross, president of Ross Industries. Know anything about GOP politics?

The officer's face flushes. He releases Lorie. Mike puts his arm around her, walks her onto the campus, dials a number on his cell phone as they walk to Sister Ann, now surrounded by several of her first hour students, including Sarah.

MIKE

(continuing)

Does anyone know where Dean Chernoff is? He's not answering his cell.

SARAH

I think he's supposed to be in court today, but not this early.

MIKE

Son of a ...

He looks at Sister Ann.

MIKE

(continuing)

I guess I'll have to take care of this problem myself.

He steps a few paces away, too far to be overheard, talks softly on his cell phone. When he returns, about a minute later, only Sister Ann, Sarah, and Lorie remain. He speaks first to Lorie.

MIKE

(continuing)

Go to your first hour class. Betsy will be back here before it's over.

Lorie throws her arms around his neck, hugs him.

LORIE

I love you, Mr. Mike.

As Lorie heads for another class, Sister Ann, Sarah and Mike walk towards Sister's classroom. In the background, the school bus pulls into the parking lot. The second squad car is gone.

SISTER ANN

Who'd you call?

MIKE

The mayor's office.

SARAH

Did you talk to the mayor?

MIKE

No, but his secretary had him on another line before I hung up.

Our mayor knows the two secrets to political survival. Never mess with a key supporter's daughter ... or his dog!

As they approach the classroom, Mike excuses himself.

MIKE

(continuing)

I need to talk to Sister Vivian. I'll see you guys in a few minutes.

He walks away.

INT: CLASSROOM

Sister Ann stands in front of her class, leads morning prayer.

SISTER ANN

Let's all bow our heads and pray  
silently for the prompt and safe  
return of Betsy, our beloved caddy  
dog.

After a moment, she walks behind the lectern, glances at her  
notes, addresses the students.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

You and Mr. Mike have had a lot of  
fun -- and a lot of laughs -- in  
here. I think he's shown that  
writing humor, like any type of  
writing, is a learnable skill.

Mike walks into the room, stands just inside the door as  
Sister finishes introducing the day's lesson.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Today we're moving on to a more  
serious approach to writing. Now  
humor me by learning how to grab  
the reader's interest and never  
let go.

Mike walks to the front of the room as Sister sits behind her  
desk.

MIKE

What's the biggest mistake you can  
make when writing?

ADAM raises his hand. Mike points at him.

ADAM

Criticizing the bishop?

Students laugh.

MIKE

That can lead to problems. It's  
gotten the school newspaper in  
trouble once or twice. But an even  
worse mistake is boring your  
readers. Instead, startle them.

He walks to the other side of Sister's desk, still facing the  
students.

MIKE

(continuing)

Writing is an unique adventure.  
There is no magic formula. No one  
right way to write. Assembly line  
structure creates only monotony.

He walks to Cassie's desk, stares directly into her face.

MIKE

(continuing)

I don't want you to write the way  
I do. I want you to write like  
Cassie, with a distinctive style

and voice that readers recognize  
as yours alone.

His oratory is interrupted by the classroom LOUD SPEAKER.

LOUD SPEAKER  
This is Sister Vivian. As you may  
know, Betsy, one of our canine  
caddies, was dragged off the  
school bus and arrested this  
morning. We consider Betsy a full-  
fledged member of the Lady Divots,  
who are engaged in a crusade to  
protect the Garcia and Torres  
families.

She pauses briefly.

LOUD SPEAKER  
(continuing)  
Betsy is now being returned to us.  
Teachers may orderly dismiss  
classes for 10 minutes so students  
can assemble in front of the  
Administration Building and  
properly welcome her back.

Sister Ann looks at Mike, smiles. She stands up.

SISTER ANN  
Let's go. Line up in the hallway.

EXT: SCHOOL CAMPUS - A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY

Sister Ann and Mike walk her class to where hundreds of  
students and faculty members are already assembling. Members  
of the school band are present, play the school song. Many  
students sing along.

Also present are reporters and photographers from newspapers  
and TV stations. Some are already interviewing and  
photographing Sister Vivian and Lorie Ross, who are standing  
in front of the crowd.

When a police squad car pulls into the parking lot, the  
students greet it with loud applause. Two officers climb out.  
One opens a back door, takes out Betsy. More applause and  
cheers. Everything is filmed by TV stations.

As the officers walk Betsy, on leash with her tail wagging,  
to Sister Vivian and Lorie, two male members of the band  
provide a drum roll. The officers shake hands with Sister and  
Lorie, and one of them hands the leash to Lorie.

The cheers and applause grow even louder. STUDENTS yell:

STUDENTS  
Three cheers for Betsy Ross. Hip,  
hip, hooray. Hip, hip, hooray.  
Hip, hip, hooray.

Students then hold fists in the air.

STUDENTS  
(continuing)  
Go, Lady Divots!

---

The band again plays the school song. Almost everyone sings along. Although they appear uneasy and embarrassed, the two officers stay, are interviewed and photographed, along with Sister, Lorie and Betsy.

Students then begin to return to class. Lorie leaves with Betsy. The police officers also leave, but Sister Vivian remains, talking to reporters.

Sister Ann questions Mike as they walk the students back to class.

SISTER ANN

I assume this whole thing was your idea.

MIKE

Sister Vivian added a few touches, like the band. I thought the drum roll was really neat, didn't you?

She laughs, nods affirmatively.

SISTER ANN

Since they gave up the dog so easily, do you think they'll drop the case against the bus driver?

MIKE

Probably not. They don't really need the dog. Just took her as a form of harassment. They may think the case is a slam dunk. But a big surprise may await them in court.

INT: THE CLASSROOM

Sister Ann helps Mike pass out papers. He talks to the students as they do so.

MIKE

(continuing)

The first passout is a fact sheet for a feature story on a Florida girl who won a million dollars in a gas station promotion that was tied into NASCAR racing. I wrote it a few years ago, but we're going to pretend it happened yesterday.

He picks up another stack of papers.

MIKE

(continuing)

This is a copy of a photo from the magazine.

Shows her standing on the hood of the winning NASCAR car with an oversized check. I want you to understand this is about a real girl even richer than some of you.

Students laugh.

MIKE

(continuing)

Take a minute and read over the facts. The basic who, what, where, when, and why. You aren't going to write the full story, just the beginning hook, and ending.

He passes out a two-page handout. Sister Ann helps, comments on the papers.

SISTER ANN

I've talked to you in the past about using your first sentence or two to hook your readers, whether it's a news article, a novel or an essay.

MIKE

There are many kinds of hooks, with a variety of baits attached.

SISTER ANN

First take a minute, read the fact sheet.

Both Sister and Mike sit down, she behind her desk and he beside it, whisper to each other as the students read quietly. Still seated, he then resumes talking to the students.

MIKE

I like to divide story beginnings into three types: front door, back door, and side door. The first ones we'll look at are front door.

SISTER ANN

That means the story will be told primarily in chronological order, as events happened.

MIKE

Read along as sister reads the first hook, a rhetorical question.

SISTER ANN

(reading sheet of paper)

"How would it change your life if you suddenly had all the money you wanted? For a 19-year-old waitress, that question was answered when she won \$1 million in a gas station promotion."

MIKE

Next is a hook that I like to think was created just for Catholics. I call it "lie and confess."

Students laugh.

SISTER ANN

(reading paper)

"A 19-year-old waitress pulled into a gas station, stuck the nozzle in her tank, and out came a million dollars. Well, it was almost that easy."

MIKE

Read over the other sheet quietly, try to come up with hooks that sound captivating, unusual.

Sarah raises her hand.

SARAH

I've a new rhetorical hook.

MIKE

Okay! Drive it straight down the fairway!

SARAH

(reading from here  
notebook)

"How does a million dollars sound? To a 19-year-old waitress, it sounded like a NASCAR racer speeding around the track at 175 m.p.h."

Students applaud.

MIKE

Great job! Now someone else write a better side door hook, but start out with a quote. That's a relatively common way to begin a story.

SISTER ANN

By side door, he means something that isn't an essential part of the story, but still interesting enough to be used as the hook. Like the stuff in your fact sheet about all the marriage proposals Betty received.

Mike's cell phone rings. He steps outside the classroom to answer it. Sister Ann returns to her desk. Britt moves her desk beside Leslie's. They begin writing together. Mike returns, sits beside Sister, whispers to her.

MIKE

Dean Chernoff is on campus. I invited him to stop by, fill us in on his day in Traffic Court. With Mrs. Olsen and the motorcycle cop.

Sister responds in an equally soft voice.

SISTER ANN

Sure. That's fine.

Britt walks up, hands Sister a piece of paper.

---

BRITT

Leslie and I wrote the side door  
hook together.

Britt returns to her seat while Sister Ann reads her work.  
Sister whispers to Mike.

SISTER ANN

This is good. I'll read it to the  
class.

She stands up, reads with voice inflection and emphasis.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

"I won't marry you," Betty told  
the handsome young man kneeling in  
front of her. "I hardly know you.

Besides, if I wanted a husband,  
I'd buy a good one. I can afford  
it."

She pauses at the end of the paragraph, then reads another.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

"She was joking, and so was the  
fellow college student making the  
tongue-in-cheek proposal, but she  
does receive frequent, serious  
marriage proposals, most of them  
from men she has never met. They  
are men who covet her money rather  
than her."

Students applaud.

MIKE

Good job, girls. A little humor  
always helps.

Dean enters the class, walks to the front of the room.

SISTER ANN

Let's take a break from writing.  
So Mr. Chernoff can tell us what  
happened in Traffic Court.

DEAN

The Olsen twins' mother, Beverly,  
was there, accompanied by a  
neighbor woman who was with her  
when the motorcycle cop followed  
them for half an hour before  
finally giving Mrs. Olsen a  
ticket. We had about 100 time-  
dated photos of cops tailing both  
of the twins' BMWs, including  
dozens the neighbor shot of the  
cop who stopped them.

MIKE

How long did the case take?

DEAN

It was over before it started.  
About as long as it took the judge  
to bang her gavel and say, "Case  
dismissed." No one had the guts to  
show up for the prosecution,  
including the motorcycle cop.

Students applaud.

SISTER ANN

So you never got to even submit  
the photos.

DEAN

I'll give them to the Sharpes, to  
use in a civil harassment suit  
against the city.

Sarah raises her hand.

SARAH

What about stopping the school bus  
and taking away Betsy?

DEAN

That's another Traffic Court case,  
but one we'll really have to fight  
to win.

Dean's cell phone rings. He answers it inside the class,  
listens quietly for a minute while students continue to work  
on their assignment. Then he closes his phone, addresses Mike  
and Sister Ann.

DEAN

(continuing)

Waler and Peggy Sharpe called.  
They heard about Betsy being taken  
away and then returned.

SISTER ANN

Already? It just happened.

DEAN

It's "breaking news." Local TV  
stations are breaking into network  
programming to show Betsy's  
triumphant return to campus.  
Anyway, they want to meet with me  
to help me plan my upcoming  
defense.

He turns to Mike.

DEAN

(continuing)

Why don't you come too, Mike? Your  
publicity connections are just as  
important as what I do in court.

The more people who learn about  
all the harassment, the sooner  
it'll stop.

MIKE

Okay, will you finish up here,

---

Sister?

SISTER ANN  
Sure. Go give 'em ... heck.

Mike and Dean leave the classroom.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
For homework, guys, take a closer look at the "Bam!, bam!, bam!" hook. That's an exception to what I told you about never writing short, choppy sentences one after another.

She pauses, glances at one of the papers.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
Also look at the last hook. It's more subtle than the others, and could be used as either a beginning or a conclusion.

She looks at Sarah.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
In an essay test, never start your last paragraph with the phrase "In conclusion." ... or "In summary." Those have become buzz words for formula writing. In your ending, never repeat anything you've already said.

Sister walks back to her desk.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
Also look at the back door hooks and the other side door examples. Then look at endings. We're soon going to put your new writing skills to good use.

Lynn responds.

LYNN  
Doing what, Sister?

SISTER ANN  
I'm going to have you submit articles to school newspapers throughout the area. Telling them about Maggie and her mother and what you're doing to help them.

LYNN  
That's a great idea!

Other students clap in agreement.

SISTER ANN  
(grinning)

---

Don't forget to pet your dogs when  
you go home tonight.

EXT: THE SCHOOL CAMPUS - SUNNY, NO WIND

Mike and Dean walk across the campus together, soon meet  
WALTER and Peggy Sharpe. Peggy speaks first.

PEGGY

Let's find someplace quiet to put  
our heads together and see if we  
can figure out some way to turn  
"dog being where she shouldn't be"  
into "police dognapping."

MIKE

Want to use the teachers'  
lunchroom? Shouldn't be many  
people there this time of day.

WALTER

I'd prefer some place off campus.  
Come on, I'll drive.

They walk toward the the parking lot.

PEGGY

Even if you lose and the driver or  
the school pays a fine, we still  
have the makings of a viable  
harassment suit.

DEAN

But that does create a problem.  
The school could no longer use the  
bus to transport the dogs.

WALTER

And it might even embolden the  
police to challenge your use of  
the bus to transport Ms. Garcia.

They arrive at the Sharpes' car.

INT: A COURTROOM

A uniformed BAILIFF stands beside the bench. A court reporter  
sits at the opposite end of the bench. Dean sits at the  
defense table, with St. I's bus driver. At an adjacent table  
is a bald male, overweight prosecutor with thick glasses.

Seated in the front of the small gallery are Walter and Peggy  
Sharpe, Sister Vivian, three police officers, and several  
newspaper and TV reporters. Lance and Sarah sit in the back  
row.

BAILIFF

Traffic Court is now in session,  
Judge Ruth Averbook presiding.  
Please stand.

JUDGE AVERBOOK walks in, seats herself and stares first at  
the defense table, and then at the gallery. The bailiff  
motions and everyone else sits.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

Do my old eyes deceive me, or is that Dean Chernoff, one of our city's most renowned defense attorneys, looking so out of place in these humble surroundings.

Dean nods affirmatively, waves to her.

JUDGE AVERBOOK  
(continuing)

What brings you slumming in Traffic Court, Mr. Chernoff?

DAN CHERNOFF  
My dogged determination to avoid a miscarriage of justice, Your Honor.

He says the word "dogged" with emphasis. Apparently that is a signal.

Lorie Ross walks into the courtroom with Betsy on a leash. She sits at the edge of the bench in front of Sarah and Lance.

BAILIFF  
No animals are allowed in here.

DEAN  
Ah, there's the rub, Your Honor. Both of these young females are witnesses for the defense.

The prosecutor mumbles.

PROSECUTOR  
What a bitch!

JUDGE AVERBOOK  
My curiosity has indeed been aroused. I hate to wait to hear what I'm sure is a most innovative defense, but unfortunately tradition says that the prosecution goes first.

DEAN  
Maybe you needn't wait so long, Your Honor. In the interest of saving time and getting three of our city's finest back out there protecting our streets, the defense is willing to certify that the dog Betsy was indeed on the St. I's school bus, and has ridden it before. Also that the school principal, Sister Vivian, was aware of canines on the bus and approved it.

PROSECUTOR  
If the defense is so willing to win my case for me just to take the stage early, he may go first.

JUDGE AVERBOOK  
You may proceed, Mr. Chernoff.

---

DEAN

I call to the stand Miss Lorie  
Ross and her dog Betsy.

Lorie and Betsy walk to the bench. The bailiff presents a Bible for Lorie to swear on. She places her hand on it. Betsy stands on her hind legs beside Lorie, also places her right front paw on the Bible.

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the truth,  
the whole truth, and nothing but  
the truth, so help you God.

LORIE

I do.

Betsy barks twice.

Lorie sits beside the judge, Betsy lies on the floor beside Lorie.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

Please state your name for the  
record.

LORIE

Lorie Ross. This is our dog, Betsy  
Ross. She's a border collie.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

How appropriate. We all know this  
case is really about the border.

As he approaches the bench to question Lorie, Dean nods to Lance. One at a time, he takes three golf bags, all filled with clubs, and distributes them to different parts of the courtroom. Dean explains to the judge.

DEAN

As a canine caddy, Betsy must be  
able to find her golfer or  
golfers' bag among other people's.  
The person holding the bags may be  
too far away to even know who  
requested clubs.

LORIE

Your Honor, why don't you select  
a club for me to ask her to get?

JUDGE AVERBOOK

How about a sand wedge? That's a  
club I rarely use.

DEAN

The rest of us should be so  
fortunate.

LORIE

Sand wedge, Betsy. Fetch.

The dog runs to one of the bags, stands on her hind legs,  
paws at one of the clubs.

---

JUDGE AVERBOOK

I take it that is your bag.

LORIE

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

Bailiff, would you please verify that the dog has selected a sand wedge?

BAILIFF

I've never played golf, Your Honor.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

That's okay, I'll go. This is fascinating fun.

She walks swiftly to the golf bag. Betsy again paws at one of the clubs.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

(continuing)

Amazing. She is pawing at the sand wedge.

PROSECUTOR

(sarcastically)

Would it be inappropriate to ask for a brief recess, Your Honor? I'd like for Jack Nicklaus to be a special witness.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

Be quiet and pay attention!

LORIE

When playing, she wears a harness that you'd put the club in, so she can carry it back to me. When she is with me, I almost never have to tell her what club to bring. As soon as she sees where the ball is, she just runs for it.

She shifts in her seat to better see the judge.

LORIE

(continuing)

She has an extremely good memory. Just goes for a club she has seen me use in similar situations. Ask her for another club. After a sand wedge, she'd expect me to want a putter.

Dean mutters, but loud enough to be heard.

DEAN

Not necessarily right away.

LORIE

Ask for a driver. See if you can confuse her.

JUDGE AVERBOOK

I've an even better idea.  
(smirking)  
Foot wedge, Betsy. Fetch.

The dog sits, cocks her head, looks at Lorie.

LORIE  
Foot wedge, Betsy. Fetch. The dog  
barks at her twice. Lies down.

The judge kneels beside the dog, pets her.

JUDGE AVERBOOK  
You are one smart pooch, aren't  
you? You know w're playing a game  
with you, other than golf.

PROSECUTOR  
What's a foot wedge?

DEAN  
The only club that could save your  
case. It's a slight nudge by one's  
foot to improve a ball's lie or  
position. Against, the rules, of  
course.

PROSECUTOR  
That hasn't stopped you, so far.  
This is all very entertaining, but  
what's the point of it?

Dean responds to the judge rather than the prosecutor.

DEAN  
The point, Your Honor, is that  
Betsy is obviously a utility dog,  
and they are exempt from rules  
about where a dog can be taken.

PROSECUTOR  
What rubbish! It isn't like the  
girl needs a seeing-eye dog to get  
around.

DEAN  
Actually, Your Honor, I've seen  
Lorie putt. On the greens, she may  
actually be legally blind.

As if on cue, Lorie drops her glasses on the floor. Although they are clearly in sight, she fumbles with her hands looking for them. Betsy run to her, picks up the glasses, gives them to her.

PROSECUTOR  
Surely you're not buying this  
nonsense, Your Honor.

JUDGE AVERBOOK  
Indeed I am. There are many kinds  
of ulility dogs, and this dog is  
as smart and well trained as any,  
and better than most.

She walks back to the bench, stands in front of it, picks up

---

her gavel and bangs it.

JUDGE AVERBOOK  
(continuing)  
Case dismissed.

She then addresses the prosecutor.

JUDGE AVERBOOK  
(continuing)  
The people I'd like to see in my courtroom are those orchestrating the harassment of private law-abiding citizens and now one of our state's finest schools. If they were here right now, I'd hold them in contempt of court. For thinking I'm dumb enough to believe they are really trying to enforce rules of the road.

Lorie whispers in Betsy's ear. The dog sits in front of the judge, offers her right paw. The judge shakes it, pets her and kisses her on the head. Dean walks to the prosecutor, shrugs his shoulders and displays his hands questioningly.

DEAN  
No appeal?

The prosecutor shakes his head negatively.

PROSECUTOR  
I don't know an appellate judge who doesn't play golf.

The reporters approach Dean. One of them, A WOMAN, asks:

A WOMAN  
Can we talk outside the courthouse, where the cameramen are?

DEAN  
Sure.

Lance and Sarah, Walter and Peggy Sharpe, all join the group. They walk out of the courtroom together.

EXT: THE GUEST HOUSE AT THE OWENS' HOME - NIGHT

Several cars are parked by the lighted entrance. The dark shape of the large primary residence is in the background.

INT: INSIDE THE GUEST HOUSE

A dozen students are working together at a kitchen table and on couches and an end table in the adjacent living area. They include Megan and Mitchell Olsen; Lance and Sarah; and Britt, Cassie, DANIELLE, Jasmine, Kayla, Leslie, Lynn, and Maggie.

Maggie's mother, Margarita, bakes, slices, and serves pizza to the students. Everyone drinks soda from paper cups. A variety of soda flavors are on the kitchen counter.

SARAH  
Thanks for getting all these old

essay test prompts, Megan. This year's question may be similar to one of them.

MEGAN

I knew that part-time job in the library would eventually come in handy.

SARAH

With so many of us working together, we're getting a lot of potentially good hooks, but if I use someone else's idea it's like writing fiction, not nonfiction.

Lynn adds a sage comment.

LYNN

Doesn't really matter, so long as the people grading it don't know.

SARAH

Cassie, your rhetorical hook for the third prompt is really good, but I cannot read a couple of your other responses. There's pizza sauce on your paper.

Cassie walks over to her.

CASSIE

(laughing)

Those are really spicy hooks. I'll rewrite them for you.

Sarah looks over several papers in front of her.

SARAH

So far, no one's come up with a side door hook to any of the prompts, but I don't have a paper from you, Lynn. Or from Jasmine.

LYNN

We're both just getting started on the assignment. We were helping Maggie with her math, but Lance has now taken over.

SARAH

He's probably better at math than you two, anyway.

Maggie jumps into the conversation.

MAGGIE

He explains stuff really well.

SARAH

It's that football playbook mentality. He thinks in X's and O's.

Britt yawns.

---

BRITT

We've been at this for almost an hour. We need a break to stimulate our creativity.

DANIELLE

That gives me an idea for the prompt on relationships.

SARAH

Let's hear it.

Danielle reads from her notebook.

DANIELLE

People tell me that I have good taste in men. But when you first meet a man and like him, those signals aren't coming from your taste buds.

SARAH

On that note, I formally declare a 15-minute break. Any of the veggie pizza left?

Ms. Garcia responds.

MS. GARCIA

There's a new one in the oven. It'll be ready in a minute.

Megan grabs the strap to Ms. Garcia's apron, pulls it, unties the apron.

MEGAN

Then you sit down and take a break with us, Margarita. Forget about the diet. How much harm can a couple of slices of veggie pizza do?

INT: CLASSROOM

Sister Ann sits behind her desk, addresses her class.

SISTER ANN

Today, let's show Mr. Mike how much you've learned already.

She then addresses Mike, who is sitting at an empty desk beside Sarah.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Mr. Mike, I've asked my students to write articles about Maggie and her mother and what the Lady Divots and others are doing to help them.

She stands in front of the desk.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Individually written stories will

be submitted to school newspapers throughout the area. Hopefully, my students already have well-crafted hooks and endings to share with us.

MIKE

That's certainly a cool way to put their writing talents to good use, Sister. I'll be there in just a second.

He and Sarah talk in soft voices.

MIKE

(continuing)

So how'd the essay test go? What was the prompt?

SARAH

Tell about an event that changed your life. I did the whole thing tongue-in-cheek. About the joke you did about having my belly button pierced. Used lots of naval jargon, like "had it inserted amidships, slightly to starboard."

MIKE

Sounds like a winner to me. Let's talk more later.

He walks to the front of the room, sits beside Sister's desk.

SISTER ANN

Let's start with some rhetorical hooks. Just stand at your desk and read them aloud.

Cassie is the first to respond. She stands and reads from her notebook.

CASSIE

"Why do people keep telling 14-year-old Maggie Garcia to go back to Mexico? She's an American citizen who's never been south of the Rio Grande."

SISTER ANN

Good job. Cassie! How about another one?

As Cassie sits, ADAM stands, notebook in hand.

ADAM

"What does your school have in common with one in the lily white suburbs, where some students drive to class in BMW convertibles and play golf on their own private course? Her name is Maggie Garcia, and she's fighting deportation to Mexico, a country she's never been to."

MIKE

Any more?

Lynn stands.

LYNN

"How do you deport a young woman who was born here and is a legal citizen? Easy! You send her mother back to Mexico.

MIKE

Thanks, Lynn. Short and to the point, but very effective.

SISTER ANN

One more.

Sarah joins in.

SARAH

"Should a \$12 pair of jeans that don't even fit cause a 14-year-old American citizen to be deported to Mexico?"

SISTER ANN

Equally short, to the point, and effective. Good job, Sarah.

The discussion is interrupted when Dean walks into the classroom.

DEAN

Hope I'm not interrupting something important, and I apologize, but I bring good news.

SISTER ANN

Nothing's more important than good news from our favorite attorney.

DEAN

We've recruited a top-notch pro bono immigration attorney to try to get Ms. Garcia a green card. I think he'll succeed.

The students applaud.

SISTER ANN

That is good news, and our students have the perfect place to use it. They are writing articles for school newspaper throughout the area about the Garcias and how we're trying to help them.

She gestures for him to sit at an empty student desk.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Sit and listen for a while, if you want to.

DEAN

I'll do that.

He slips into the empty desk.

MIKE

Did anyone use a quote for the opening hook?

When no one responds, Sarah stand again.

SARAH

Me again. Sorry. I did one of those, too.

She reads from her notebook.

SARAH

(continuing)

"It doesn't matter that I'm an American citizen, or that I've always lived here and all of my friends are here," said 14-year-old Maggie Garcia. "How can I stay here if they send my mother to Mexico?"

SISTER ANN

Anyone else do any offbeat hooks ... of any kind?

Roland responds.

ROLAND

I wrote a laid back one.

SISTER ANN

Sounds interesting, let's hear it.

ROLAND

"Some people walk in the sunshine as proud citizens. Others, who came here in the dark of night, hide in the shadows. Still others are in limbo, innocent but being punished for the sins of others."

MIKE

I really like that. And I love that we're getting such variety from the class.

SISTER ANN

I agree with Mr. Mike. Anyone else do something equally unusual.

Leslie stand up.

LESLIE

I tried a Bam!, Bam!, Bam! hook. I've mixed feelings about it.

SISTER ANN

Then let the rest of us be the judges.

LESLIE

"Cards are stacked against Maggie. Her mom stole some jeans. The cops grabbed her. And the jeans.

Are trying to deport her. Maggie's only hope is golf-playing school mates and their lawyer parents."

MIKE

Not that great, Leslie, but that's not your fault. That kind of a hook works best when you have fast-paced material. Like the NASCAR race in my article. Different hooks work best with different stories.

SISTER ANN

Now, let's move on to endings.

MIKE

Something that's short, but packs a punch.

Kayla stands up. Mike walks to Leslie, kneels beside her desk, talks to her quietly about her hook. Kayla waits until Mike finishes before she starts reading.

MIKE

(continuing)

This is still a good effort. As good as could be done under the circumstances. The important thing is you realized this wasn't the best hook for this story.

KAYLA

(reading from her notebook)

"Maggie's problems ended when teenage golfers put aside their clubs and swung away at social injustice."

SISTER ANN

Excellent. Let's hear another.

Nelson is next.

NELSON

"Today, Maggie Garcia's biggest challenge is trying to sink a 20-foot putt on her school's practice golf course. Legal concerns have been eliminated by the Lady Divots and their lawyer parents."

MIKE

Equally impressive. One more.

Lynn waits a few seconds to see if anyone else responds. When no one does, she again stands up.

LYNN

"Does Maggie now buy only at the store that dropped shoplifting

charges against her mother? No, but she shops only with the free-spending golfers who made doing so good business."

INT: CLASSROOM

Sister Ann sits behind her desk. Mike is on a chair beside her desk.

SUPER: A FEW DAYS LATER

Sister addresses her class.

SISTER ANN

Since this will be Mr. Mike's last day guest speaking in my classes, let's make the program less formal. Just ask him any questions you still have about writing, and talk about freelancing and how to get started.

MIKE

It's been a while since I got started, but hopefully I'll remember.

SISTER ANN

There are probably more future doctors, lawyers, chemists, and engineers in this classroom than either teachers or writers, but let's do some "just supposing" ... about Sarah living in a college dorm somewhere, maybe in South Bend.

Everyone looks at Sarah. She smiles.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Suppose she needs a little extra spending money, but doesn't want to ask her parents for it. So she decides to freelance part time. What are the mistakes she needs to avoid?

MIKE

Writing an article before you know who will publish it and how much you'll be paid. And never write for magazines that don't pay until publication. It's way too risky.

LYNN

Risky? Why?

MIKE

I've written only one article that was never published, but I was paid big money for it. If I'd been writing for someone who paid on publication, I wouldn't have gotten a dime.

LYNN

Why wasn't it published?

MIKE

Wish I new. It was part of an assignment I did in Brazil a few years ago.

INT: ADMINISTRATION BUILDING LOBBY

MARY Villareal, a stylishly dressed middle-aged Hispanic woman, sits in an overstuffed chair, thumbing through a St. I's yearbook. Sister Vivian walks up, greets her.

SISTER VIVIAN

It's nice to see you again, Mrs. Villareal. It's such a beautiful day, why don't we just stroll around campus as we talk?

MARY

I'd like that.

They walk out the lobby doors together.

EXT: ST. I'S CAMPUS - A BRIGHT, SUNNY MORNING

A walkway outside the Administration Building. Sister Vivian and Mrs. Villareal slowly walk together, talking as they stroll the campus.

MARY

I know Sarah has told you that her father is a racial dinosaur, Sister, but he is who he is.

SISTER VIVIAN

(smiling)

It's an old, but still relatively common species.

MARY

He isn't going to change. At least not at more than a snail's pace.

SISTER VIVIAN

Many parents are shocked by how radically different their children's feelings are from their own.

MARY

We grew up on the south side of Chicago, watching our ethnic neighborhood change. It's now a solidly black ghetto.

SISTER VIVIAN

Yet, your feelings are obviously more moderate than your husband's.

They stop by a bench beneath a tree.

SISTER VIVIAN

(continuing)

Let's sit for a moment. We planted this tree when Sarah was a freshman. Look how its grown.

Mary nods. They both sit.

MARY

I admit I was shocked myself when Sarah started dating Lance. She didn't try to hide it from us. She was surprised by what she called "our overreaction."

She pauses, thinks for a second.

MARY

(continuing)

But I instinctively knew she wasn't going to change. I had to ... or I was going to lose her.

SISTER VIVIAN

Hopefully, your husband will realize the same thing. Irrational feelings are always the most difficult to change.

MARY

Will John's ever really change?

SISTER VIVIAN

Perhaps, but he first has to realize this isn't something that started a few months ago. It's a process that began the first time he told a little girl to do something, and she stood there, looked him right in the eye, and said, "No!"

MARY

That happened so long ago, I'm not sure she was even able to stand.

SISTER VIVIAN

It happens to everyone. It's called "growing up." But it's always hardest for fathers to adjust.

Mary sighs.

MARY

I know.

SISTER VIVIAN

He might succeed in pushing Lance away. Sarah's still a young woman. The relationship might not last even if he didn't object.

MARY

That what he's praying for.

SISTER VIVIAN

But you have to make him realize

that the more he pushes, it's  
Sarah who's being pushed the  
farthest away.

They stand up, begin walking back toward the Administration  
Building.

SISTER VIVIAN  
(continuing)

If Sarah does score highest on the  
state essay test, will he keep his  
promise and let her and Lance go  
to the prom together?

MARY

He doesn't think it can happen,  
but he'll bite the bullet and keep  
his promise.

SISTER VIVIAN

He could be surprised. Sarah is a  
top student in a top school. And  
she was tutored by a professional  
writer.

INT: THE CLASSROOM

Return to Sister Ann's class, where she is discussing Mike's  
writing career with him, and her students.

SISTER ANN

While you traveled a lot, Mr.  
Mike, it seems most of your  
assignments were in the U.S.,  
especially in the South and  
Southwest. By the way, how long  
were you in Brazil?

MIKE

Two weeks, in the spring. Mostly  
in Rio. I guess an assignment like  
that would make a good spring  
break activity for a college  
student.

SISTER ANN

Hmm. Spring break in Rio. I'll  
have to think about that one.

She pauses, grins.

The discussion is interrupted when Dean walks into the  
classroom.

DEAN

Hope I'm not interrupting  
something important.

SISTER ANN

We were just talking to Mr. Mike  
about his writing career.

DEAN

Sounds interesting. Can I sit in?

SISTER ANN

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You know you're always welcome here.

She addresses Mike.

SISTER ANN

(continuing)

Mr. Mike, you never once wrote an article first and then sold it?

MIKE

Only once. A humorous piece I sold to World Tennis Magazine. Humor is like fiction, you do have to write it first.

ROLAND

Did you ever use an agent to sell stuff?

MIKE

Magazine articles? No, never. I don't know a writer who does. Write your own queries and establish your own relationships with editors.

He pauses for a few seconds, thinks.

MIKE

(continuing)

And don't even so much as tip your hat to an agent who charges reading fees. That's just a racket and those who do it are con men.

EXT: A QUARTER-MILE OVAL TRACK - A BRIGHT SUN OVERHEAD

On an athletic field inside the track, a couple of dozen boys do a variety of exercises under the supervision of a male TEACHER with a shaved head. On the track, Lance and other boys are running laps. The football stadium is behind them.

Lance and two other boys see Betsy, the border collie caddy canine, and stop jogging. Lance calls to Betsy.

LANCE

Come on, Betsy. Good girl. What are you doing here? Come, girl.

Instead of coming to them, the dog runs back a few yards. She stops, looks back at them and again barks. Lance speaks to the teacher, who has walked over to join them.

LANCE

(continuing)

She wants us to follow her.

TEACHER

Go ahead. All three of you.

The boys jog after Betsy, who runs toward the practice golf course. When they reach the course, instead of continuing to follow the dog, they run toward an area where golf carts are stored, leap into two carts. Betsy waits for them by the tee.

As soon as the carts are in sight, the dog races down the

fairway. The boys follow. Betsy starts into the rough by a wooded area, then stops and returns to the fairway, realizing she must take a less direct route so the carts can follow.

The dog leads them deep into the course. Aboard one cart, Lance, who is driving it, yells to the others.

LANCE

I think she's headed for the third green!

INT: THE CLASSROOM

Return to Sister Ann's class, where she is discussing Mike's writing career with him, Dean, and her students.

SISTER ANN

You've done a lot of work for corporate rather than newsstand publications. Is that a plan you recommend for beginning writers?

MIKE

Yes, for several reasons. Major corporations have a lot deeper pockets than most independent publications. Especially on overseas assignments. Great travel perks, too.

He pauses, thinks for a few seconds, then continues.

MIKE

(continuing)

There is much less competition from other writers. And they usually tell you what to write about, eliminating half the job. The most important reason ...

SISTER ANN

We're all listening.

MIKE

You work with editors who have the time to help you. I did a story for Exxon's shareholder magazine on the world's largest gas station in Luxembourg. Before I did the interview, by phone in the middle of the night ...

SISTER ANN

Because of the time difference.

MIKE

The editor sent me 25 questions to be sure to ask. And he only wanted a 500-word story.

He points to students throughout the class.

MIKE

(continuing)

Any of you could have written that story.

ROLAND

How much did you get for the story?

MIKE

A thousand.

ROLAND

Two bucks a word. Cool.

MIKE

In those days, international stuff always paid at least double domestic stories, but that was in a strong economy. Everything is probably less now.

He stops to take a drink of water.

MIKE

(continuing)

In any economy, freelance writing can be feast or famine. In lean times, I did corporate per diem work. Two years as an editor with IBM in White Plains, N.Y. Then a year in Manhattan with a joint venture between IBM and The New York Times that published trade magazines.

SISTER ANN

You have to keep busy.

MIKE

Also did a 400-hour writing project for a power company, a regular newsletter and brochures for an electronics firm. A lot of advertorials for airline in-flight magazines. Those are ads disguised as feature stories. A lot of brochure work is out there for housing development projects, but it's puff writing. Clients expect every noun to be modified by three adjectives. Also did some executive speeches, which can be fun.

EXT: THE PRACTICE GOLF COURSE

Standing on and near the third green are Sister Vivian; four police officers, one shooting photos; the gym teacher with the shaved head; and two other physical education teachers, a man and a woman. Four golf carts are parked nearby.

White paint has been spread on the green, in the bunker, and on the fairway near the green. Parts of the green and the nearby fairway have been dug up. Another portion of the green has tar on it. The flag is burned, and the pole bent.

There are three crudely printed cardboard signs, stapled to pieces of wood driven into the ground. One reads "Real Americans play baseball, not a gay sport with fags and flags." Another says, "Lady, like these divots?"

A third sign states, "Promote the rule of law, not a socialist Europe game!" ONE OFFICER speaks to Sister Vivian.

ONE OFFICER  
This probably happened overnight.  
We found tire tracks outside the  
back fence. They gained entry by  
backing pickup trucks up to the  
fence.

INT: THE CLASSROOM

Return to Sister Ann's class. Mike is questioned further about his writing career.

DANIELLE  
Did you always get a byline with  
your stories, Mr. Mike?

MIKE  
Usually, but I never cared. Except  
the one time I didn't want one.

ADAM  
Tell us about it.

Mike sits on the corner of Sister's desk.

MIKE  
It was when I did a piece on a  
nudist colony in Arizona. I asked  
the editor not to use my real name.

Cassie laughs.

CASSIE  
I can understand why you would be  
embarrassed.

Mike continues the story.

MIKE  
The names of everyone I quoted  
were followed by a parenthetical  
"not his/her real name." Below the  
title in large type was the byline  
with my name followed by "his real  
name" in parenthesis.

Students laugh and nod their heads vigorously.

CASSIE  
(laughing)  
Where did you carry your pencil,  
Mr. Mike!? Behind your ear!?

Sister Ann, obviously flushed and embarrassed, jumps into action.

SISTER ANN  
That's the perfect place to end  
this discussion. Everyone please  
copy down the homework assignment  
and get started on it.

Lynn looks at Cassie, grins, mouths the words "Good

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question!" The phone rings.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
Saved by the bell!

Sister Ann answers it, speaks too softly to be overheard.

SISTER ANN  
(continuing)  
Sister Vivian wants to see you,  
Mr. Mike. She'll meet you on the  
back green of the golf course.

Mike, who also was embarrassed by Cassie's question, eagerly takes advantage of the excuse to leave.

EXT: THE VANDALIZED GREEN - A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY

Mike walks about examining the damage. An empty golf cart is nearby. Sister Vivian arrives on another cart, walks toward Mike.

MIKE  
They sure made a mess, didn't  
they?

SISTER VIVIAN  
Who would do something like this?

MIKE  
We'll probably never know. There  
are some real right-wing fanatics  
on the fringe of the anti-  
immigration movement. White  
Supremists and even Neo-Nazis.  
Their involvement is embarrassing  
to everyone else, but difficult to  
prevent.

SISTER VIVIAN  
Should we press charges if the  
police do find out who did it?

MIKE  
I think we'd get better press and  
more public support if we didn't.  
Don't fix anything until after I  
get people from the newspapers and  
TV stations out here. Let's try to  
have Lance, Lorie, and Betsy here  
at the same time.

INT: THE CLASSROOM

Sister Ann stands behind the lectern. Sister Vivian also is present, sitting at an empty desk beside Sarah.

SUPER: NEARLY A MONTH LATER

Mike enters the classroom.

SISTER VIVIAN  
Hi, Mr. Mike. I just stopped by to  
tell Sarah that she did get the  
highest score in the state on that

essay contest. Eight hundred and eighty-five out of a possible 900.

MIKE

Great job, Sarah! I guess you'll soon be looking for a prom dress.

Many students laugh. Mike looks puzzled. Sister Ann comments.

SISTER ANN

For a professional journalist, Mr. Mike, you're surprisingly not up to date on essential current events.

Lynn explains.

LYNN

We all went shopping with Sarah more than two weeks ago. Picked out one gorgeous gown.

Sister Ann joins the discussion.

SISTER ANN

Sarah's dad sees Lance in a new light now that he's no longer black. He's becoming a fighting Irishman.

MIKE

He's been offered a football scholarship to Notre Dame!?!  
Fantastic!

He turns to Sarah.

MIKE

(continuing)

I suppose you're headed for South Bend, too, and no longer want a scholarship at an in-state university anyway.

Sarah smiles, nods affirmatively.

SISTER ANN

I'm sure Mr. Mike does know that Walter and Peggy Sharpe settled their civil suit on behalf of Edwardo Torres out of court.

Mike shakes his head negatively.

SARAH

Mr. Mike, where have you been, anyway?

SISTER VIVIAN

Mr. Mike and his lovely wife have been on a well-deserved, long-overdue second honeymoon.

SISTER ANN

Anyway, the city kept the punitive damages below seven figures by

promising to never again harass Mr. Torres or any member of his extended family.

Sister Vivian explains further.

SISTER VIVIAN

I wasn't sure the Sharpes' suit would work. Remember, they sued for damages for Mr. Torres, an American citizen, because deporting his family could end his marriage or force him to give up his business and property to follow his wife and son to Mexico.

MIKE

Apparently the city was afraid to risk letting the Sharpes present so innovative an idea to a jury.

SISTER ANN

Apparently so. Mr. Torres is donating half the money to St. I's, to set up our own scholarship fund for Hispanics and other immigrants who otherwise couldn't afford to go to school here.

MIKE

More fantastic news. I can't wait to learn more. Right now, however, I have to shop for an anniversary present for my wife.

Sister Vivian nods, agreeing.

SISTER VIVIAN

Give Jan our best wishes.

MIKE

Will do. I'll be back this afternoon.

SISTER VIVIAN

Can you come to the teachers' lunchroom right after school? There's someone I want you to meet.

MIKE

Sure, I'll be there.

He leaves the classroom.

EXT: ST. I'S CAMPUS - A BRIGHT, SUNNY AFTERNOON

Mike walks toward the Administration Building amid a sea of students leaving school. He spots Lance and yells to him.

MIKE

Hey, you! The tall, dark Irishman!

Lance turns, walks toward Mike.

MIKE

(continuing)

Congrats! That's fantastic news  
about Notre Dame!

Those super glue fingers of yours  
may be just what the Fighting  
Irish need to bring back the glory  
days of old.

They hug vigorously.

LANCE

At least, they'll help me pick up  
Sarah for the prom ... long as I  
use the back door.

He shakes Mikes hand.

LANCE

(continuing)

Her old man's still a pain-in-the-  
ass bigot, just with a shot of  
what he calls "tolerance."

Mike laughs.

MIKE

It's a start, anyway.

INT: TEACHERS' LUNCHROOM

Sister Vivian sits at a corner table with JULIA Garcia, a  
Hispanic woman in her mid twenties. Except for a female  
teacher who quickly checks her mailbox and leaves, no one  
else is present. Mike enters, joins them.

SISTER VIVIAN

Mr. Mike, this is Julia Garcia.

Mike and Julia shake hands. Sister grins.

SISTER VIVIAN

(continuing)

She's no relation to our own  
Maggie Garcia, but they do have a  
lot in common. Julia graduated  
from St. I's five years ago.

MIKE

(to Julia)

Some of our less than enlightened  
officials want to send you back to  
Mexico?

Julia nods affirmatively.

JULIA

I was less than a year old when I  
came here. It's the only home I  
know.

SISTER VIVIAN

She's about to graduate from the  
university Magna Cum Laude, with  
a Masters Degree in aeronautical  
engineering.

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MIKE

(to Julia)

And the powers that be fear you may steal a job from a legal resident, less than one in a million of whom could qualify for the type of position you can. Even in this market, companies search for months for employees like you.

Julia smiles shyly.

JULIA

Not for someone without a path to permanent residency.

Mike pauses, lays out the facts.

MIKE

At the very least, we can help you find you a great job, although it may be in Canada or overseas somewhere. Canadian officials tend to be a lot more pragmatic, and less pig-headed, than the homegrown variety.

Sister Vivian adds a comment.

SISTER VIVIAN

Canadians love immigrants who qualify for their best jobs and will spend the next 40 years paying taxes and contributing heavily to social programs the equivalent of Social Security and Medicare.

JULIA

I'm not used to cold climates, but one thing I have learned is how to adapt.

Mike begins painting a more cheery picture.

MIKE

And you may not need to adapt. There's still a good chance we can get you a green card, or temporary resident status in another state.

Sister Vivian interrupts.

SISTER VIVIAN

How about the rest of your family?

JULIA

There's only my parents, and they've already returned to Mexico.

SISTER VIVIAN

I'll talk to our lawyers and we'll get back to you.

MIKE

I understand you don't have a

driver's license. Do you need a ride somewhere?

JULIA

No, thank you. One of my professors drove me here. He's waiting in the parking lot.

They all stand. Mike takes her hand again.

MIKE

I'll see you again soon. Don't worry. The toughest times are already behind you.

Sister Vivian kisses Julia on the cheek.

SISTER VIVIAN

Come back and see us soon. You're always welcome here at St. I's.

(to Mike)

I've got all the information you need in my office.

As Julia walks the other direction, Mike walks Sister Vivian back to her office. Once Julia is too far away to overhear, he reveals his trump card.

MIKE

I didn't want to say anything to her and raise her hopes, but the Sharpes still have another harassment suit against the city that we could use as a bargaining chip. Maybe we could keep Julia here, and bring back her parents.

EXT: THE FRONT OF ST. I'S CAMPUS - A BRIGHT SUNNY AFTERNOON

Mike walks out of the Administration Building, heads toward his car in the staff parking lot. He stops when he notices a red convertible driving around in the nearly empty student lot, goes to investigate.

SUPER: HALF AN HOUR LATER

As usual, Megan's BMW has the top down. Megan is in the front seat, but isn't driving. Maggie is. The car pulls alongside Mike and comes to a jerky stop. Maggie greets him excitedly.

MAGGIE

Hey, Mr. Mike! Megan is teaching me how to drive!

MIKE

I see that. It's a good thing you no longer have motorcycle cops following you.

Megan explains.

MEGAN

We're killing time, waiting for Lorie and Betsy to finish practicing on the course. It's all

fixed now. Better than ever. A big landscaping company donated the work.

MAGGIE

We're giving Lorie and Betsy a ride home.

Megan explains why.

MEGAN

Betsy now refuses to ride the bus.

Maggie turns around excitedly, points to a golf bag in the back seat.

MAGGIE

Take a look at my clubs, Mr. Mike? A bunch of the girls gave me their old ones. I now have a full set. I'm going to try out for the Lady Divots.

Mike looks at the clubs.

MIKE

These are nice, but don't spend too much time on the course until your grades are back up.

MAGGIE

My grades are fine now.

Megan adds a comment.

MEGAN

She's really working hard, and our tutoring has helped a lot. Her scholarship is safe.

Maggie adds to the good news.

MAGGIE

You know that my mom now has a green card don't you, Mr. Mike?

MIKE

I do now! That's really great!

He takes a step back from the car.

MIKE

(continuing)

I'll see you girls later.

As he walks past the Administration Building toward his own car, Mike begins running in place. He raises both fists in the air and yells, but not very loudly.

MIKE

(continuing)

Go, Lady Divots!

He looks around sheepishly to see if anyone heard him. He stops running in place, walks slowly to his car.

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FADE OUT:

-The End-

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