

Bermuda Short

Current Revisions by

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EXT. BACK LAWN OF MILDRED'S HOUSE - DAY

MILDRED, CASSANDRA, and FRANCES are lounging on three lounge chairs, fanned out and facing a kidney-shaped swimming pool. The women are sipping iced tea from large, clear glasses standing on side tables next to their lounge chairs.

Mildred is the mother. Frances and Cassandra are her two adult daughters.

Behind the women is Mildred's modest brick ranch house and a deck.

There is a large, heavy saucepan on the table next to Mildred's chair.

FRANCES

(proudly)

I bench-pressed 240 pounds yesterday.

CASSANDRA

Barbells or free weights?

FRANCES

No, my personal trainer, Morris. We were at his place..

Laughter.

CASSANDRA

No shit. Does he have good kettle bells?

FRANCES

He sure does. And a nice gym bag. We did 50 or 60 reps.

CASSANDRA

You know you love Morris.

FRANCES

I SURE DO. I love his kettle bells.

CASSANDRA

You love his whole damned body. You two should get married.

MILDRED

Stop talking like that! Marriage is for idiots. Little Willie made the mistake of getting married. Until I fixed it.

INT. FLASHBACK. BEDROOM OF LITTLE DEBBIE AND LITTLE WILLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mildred is standing over the bed where LITTLE DEBBIE is sleeping. Mildred's legs are wide apart and her arms are akimbo. She stares with hatred at Little Debbie.

Little Debbie wakes up. She is confused. Her eyes widen in horror.

MILDRED

Little Willie wants a divorce.

Mildred stalks out of the room.

EXT. FRONT LAWN OF LITTLE WILLIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Inside Mildred's red truck, parked alongside the road, LITTLE WILLIE is tied up in the passenger seat. There is a gag over his mouth and he is struggling. His wrists are handcuffed.

Mildred folds up Little Willie's wheelchair and tosses it into the back of her truck.

EXT. FLASH FORWARD. BACK LAWN OF MILDRED'S HOUSE, DAY.

We are back in the present. Mildred, Cassandra, and Frances are sitting on lounge chairs around the kidney-shaped pool.

MILDRED

Nobody who's sane ever gets married!

FRANCES

Some sane people do get married.

MILDRED

Not in this family! Marriage is against my personal religion.

CASSANDRA

Mother, you need to get a life.

INT. BEDROOM IN MILDRED'S HOUSE - SAME

Little Willie lies on his back, unconscious, on a single bed in a small, shabby bedroom wearing only his boxer shorts. His wheelchair is folded and propped in a far corner, away from the bed so that he can't reach it.

Throughout this scene, the laughter and conversation of Mildred, Cassandra, and Frances are audible but indistinct.

On the dresser next to the bed is a jumble of medicine bottles.

As the women's voices rumble in the background, Little Willie slowly wakes up and holds his head.

Little Willie realizes what is going on and looks frightened. He raises himself up on his elbows with difficulty and looks at one of the medicine bottles.

He lies back on the bed. His head hurts. He tries to raise himself up out of the bed and sees his wheelchair in the far corner.

EXT. BACK LAWN OF MILDRED'S HOUSE - SAME

Cassandra, Mildred, and Frances are continuing their conversation.

CASSANDRA

Frances needs to move in with Morris. This house is too much like a prison!

MILDRED

(Angry)

It's a comfortable prison with a swimming pool.

FRANCES

I sure do like Morris. But he lacks language skills He doesn't really speak English. He speaks PT. Nobody can understand it, except for trainers.

CASSANDRA

The less men talk, the better.

FRANCES

I adore a foreign accent! If a man has a foreign accent, I might let him get on top. And serve.

Laughter

MILDRED

You girls are disgusting! I'm not sure you will be invited to vacation in Bermuda.

(MORE)

MILDRED (CONT'D)
 Bermuda is a place for
 sophisticated poets, like me.

Mildred stands up to recite poetry, dramatically.
 The waves upon the shore;
 The fish within the sea.
 I love Bermuda, and...

FRANCES
 Don't start, Mother. You are not
 going to Bermuda. That is one fancy-
 assed dream. We don't even have
 enough money for the lifestyle
 we're living now.

INT. LITTLE WILLIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

While the women are talking, Little Willie furtively lowers himself onto the floor and begins crawling toward his wheelchair that is folded up in the far corner of the room. He uses his hands to pull himself across the floor.

Little Willie's useless legs drag behind him. When he reaches the wheelchair, he pauses to catch his breath. He is trying to do all of this without making any noise.

Little Willie reaches for his cell phone on the high table next to the wheelchair. He reaches the cell phone, but a vase of plastic flowers falls over and crashes.

EXT. MILDRED'S BACK YARD - SAME

Mildred, Frances, and Cassandra continue talking despite the faint crash that occurs in the background.

Cassandra and Frances are sitting in their lounge chairs. Mildred is standing because she just finished reciting her poem.

MILDRED
 I'm like the cow puncher on a
 train, headed for Bermuda.

CASSANDRA
 You'll get wet. Bermuda is an
 island.

Mildred sits back down on her lounge chair, deflated.

MILDRED

Oh, yeah. Then we need to get more money, for a cruise or a plane ride. Maybe we could work more shifts at S&M Manufacturing, make more guns. I could ask Mr. Outlaw for a favor.

FRANCES

I don't want to work more shifts.

CASSANDRA

Work stinks.

EXT. FRONT YARD OF MILDRED'S HOUSE - SAME

Little Willie has rolled himself in his wheelchair out the front door to the front gate of Mildred's house. He is trying to open the gate, but it's locked with a padlock.

Little Willie rattles the padlock. He is frightened and distressed.

EXT. BACK LAWN OF MILDRED'S HOUSE - SAME

FRANCES

We don't have enough time as it is for boxing.

CASSANDRA

And tennis.

MILDRED

And poetry. Listen. We are going to Bermuda. I need moral support. Since Harry, the policeman, left me for no good reason, I need moral support.

FRANCES

It's a good thing Harry didn't press charges after he got out of the hospital. We could have done ten years, all of us!

MILDRED

I wasn't worried. His boss, the chief of police, is a special friend of mine. Praise Jesus.

CASSANDRA

Thank you, Lord!

FRANCES

Praise him!

From around the corner of the house, Little Willie extends his head, tentatively, and stares at the women. He is still in his wheelchair.

CASSANDRA

I dunno. Marriage is okay.

MILDRED

Cassandra, you are a fool. Living with a man means you have to share things with him, like the television remote, and our swimming pool. I don't enjoy sharing!

FRANCES

That means you'll be poor for the rest of your life.

CASSANDRA

Being poor stinks.

FRANCES

In the United States, men make more money than women for doing the same work. It's a national fact I'm not too crazy about. Mother, your lack of a relationship with a man means we have no money for Bermuda after you built that damned kidney-shaped swimming pool.

CASSANDRA

Mother, goddammit, I wanted a tennis court.

FRANCES

Little Willie's VA lump sum benefits are all gone thanks to you.

From behind the corner of the house, Little Willie reacts with horror to this statement.

MILDRED

This is my house, and it's my money.

CASSANDRA

I thought the money belonged to Little Willie.

Little Willie nods his head in agreement.

MILDRED

"Possession" means it's mine. I can do what I want with that money. Plus, I like the kidney-shaped swimming pool.

FRANCES

But we live here too, Mother. I needed that money to take boxing lessons.

CASSANDRA

Shaddup, Frances. You can't box, and your are not Miss George Foreman. I'm hungry. Get up. Fix me a ham and cheese sandwich.

FRANCES

Fix your own sandwich, and get me some ice cream while you're at it.

CASSANDRA

I won't do it.

FRANCES

Fix me that sandwich or I'll punch you right now, Cassandra. I'll show you who can box, Stupid Cow!

Frances and Cassandra stand up to fight each other. They see Little Willie, who rolls from the corner of the house, up the ramp, onto the back deck.

LITTLE WILLIE

(Yelling to neighbors)

Help me! I'm being held prisoner by my own family!

Frightened, Little Willie wheels himself back into the house through the sliding glass door.

CASSANDRA

(Nonchalantly)

I thought he was in a coma.

MILDRED

He got better.

FRANCES

Well you need to do something about it or we'll lose that VA disability check.

Mildred sighs, picks up the heavy saucepan, and slowly follows Little Willie into the house.

MILDRED

Children! They're always demanding something more from you.

Frances and Cassandra plop themselves back down into their lounge chairs.

FRANCES

Little Willie. Is he even related to us? He must have inherited all the recessive genes.

CASSANDRA

They say he's a military hero.

FRANCES

I don't believe it. When we were kids, he was easier than anybody to chase up a tree. Even YOU ran faster than Little Willie. You and your overweight self.

CASSANDRA

And I wanted to join the military. I should have. Not him. They told me I couldn't because I was mentally deranged. I'm not any crazier than anybody else in this country.

FRANCES

You got that right.

CASSANDRA

How'd Little Willie lose his legs, anyway? Falling out of a tree?

From off screen comes the sound of the heavy saucepan clanging on a skull. CLANG! Frances and Cassandra glance toward the noise.

FRANCES

I don't know. They say he saved some of his comrades from a bombing out in the desert. I don't believe it.

Mildred re-enters, carrying the saucepan. She slowly lowers herself into her lounge chair.

MILDRED

(Satisfied)

That should take care of it. We need that VA check. Just fifteen hundred more dollars and I can buy us that vacation in Bermuda.

FRANCES

I guess we can go along with you, mother. Since you no longer have a supportive relationship after Harry the Policeman left. You need your daughters. And I DO want to see Bermuda.

CASSANDRA

Me too, I guess. Do they have tropical fish in Bermuda?

INT. LITTLE WILLIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Little Willie is dazed, sitting up in bed, and on his cell phone, furtively dialing.

LITTLE WILLIE

(Whispering frantically)

Little Debbie! Little Debbie! Come and get me. I'm at Mother's house. No, I don't want a divorce. Mother kidnapped me.

EXT. BACK LAWN OF MILDRED'S HOUSE - SAME

MILDRED

Yes, all you can eat at the seafood restaurants. And every Bermudian is rich! I heard it on NPR Radio. One hundred thousand dollars average annual income for every man, woman, and child.

FRANCES

That means four hundred thousand dollars a year per average household.

CASSANDRA

Are the men in Bermuda good-looking?

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF MILDRED'S HOUSE - SAME

Two police cars turn the corner, approaching Mildred's house. Little Debbie is in the front seat of one of the cars.

Little Willie is in the front yard of Mildred's house, waving for help from his wheelchair.

EXT. BACK YARD OF MILDRED'S HOUSE - SAME

MILDRED

Yes, they are very colorful and fine. And they wear shorts all the time, everyday, to work. You can see their big calf muscles. Helmets on their heads, too.

FRANCES

Do they have a Platinum Gym in Bermuda?

MILDRED

Probably. Everything in Bermuda is the best.

From off screen, we hear the sound of police sirens.

FRANCES

What's that siren? What's going on?

CASSANDRA

He's escaping.

Mildred, Cassandra, and Frances get up and rush around the house toward the front yard. They see Little Debbie wheeling Little Willie toward the police cars and then helping him into one of them.

MILDRED

Little Willie must have called the police.

FRANCES

It's Little Debbie! She rescued him.

CASSANDRA

That skinny cow.

FRANCES

She can't even cook!

CASSANDRA
Come back, brother.

MILDRED
We need those VA benefits! Come
back, son.

*****END*****

BERMUDA -- screenplay

Pitch

Whoopi Goldberg. Queen Latifah. Niikki Carr from Last Comic Standing.

My story is about Mildred, a strong, marriage-hating, very bad poet who feels she deserves a vacation in Bermuda, but can't afford it. Mildred recruits her two grown daughters as her partners in crime to help get the money for the vacation.

At first they kidnap Mildred's son, Little Willie, to steal his VA disability benefits. Little Willie is an Iraqi veteran in a wheelchair.

When Little Willie escapes (aided by his wife, Little Debbie), Mildred and her daughters come up with a second scheme - stealing guns from S&M Gun Manufacturing, where they work, to sell on the streets of Toad Hollow, South Carolina where they live.

Luckily, the owner of S&M, as well as many local judges and police officers are Mildred's special friends.

Mildred's plans get messy when her daughter, Cassandra, meets and falls in love with the very upright, law-abiding Robert - the owner of a clothing store in Toad Hollow.

The story ends happily, but not until Mildred, Cassandra, and Frances get into and out of a heck of a lot of trouble.

Here is a link to part one of the staged version of this story:

Bermuda

www.vimeo.com/106748503

no password