

Play Baby
by
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SCENE 1: EXTERIOR. DAY

SHOT 1-1: CLOSE UP OF NEWSPAPER CLASSIFIED AD.

Help Wanted: Live in nanny. Single mother needs help with her toddler. Experience preferred but not essential. Call 310-651-1285 for interview.

The ad is circled in red pen and beside it someone has written and underlined "2:30" in red felt tip pen.

SHOT 1-2:

We see CLAIRE KELLY in the front seat of parked beater car putting her folded newspaper down in passenger seat. She looks to be in her mid-to-late twenties. Probably a struggling actress. Apprehensive. She looks out the rolled down driver side window. Beyond her you get a view of a stately home. Claire looks at wristwatch. It reads 2:25. She flips visor to appraise herself in vanity mirror. Pulls hair back and applies lipstick. Buttons her shirt. She wants to make a good impression.

SHOT 1-3:

Rear view long shot of the car, it is indeed a beater car. Seems out of place on this manicured street. Driver door opens and Claire gets out. Smooths her dress. She has a small portfolio in her hand. Heads toward the house.

SCENE 2: INTERIOR. DAY

SHOT 2-1: STATELY RESIDENTIAL HOME HALLWAY, CAMERA FACES DOOR.

Offscreen you hear Sandra Lockwood's voice...

SANDRA (O.S.)
...Katzenburg can just kiss my ass.

Sandra, talking on cordless phone, passes through fixed camera shot. She is a well-dressed, middle-aged executive type. She's seems tough, put together.

SANDRA
 (partly o.s. as she paces
 in and out of camera
 shot)
 No, I can't make the meeting. I told
 you Tom, I'm home with Hally. Doing
 nanny interviews today.

Doorbell rings.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 ...Tom?... Tom I gotta go...

Sandra returns to door and opens it.

Shot 2-2: Exterior, door opening, two-shot framing Sandra on
 phone and Claire on front step. Sandra, finishing up her phone
 call, holds up her hand to visitor as if to say "hang on, be
 right with you."

SANDRA
 ...no really, I gotta go. But you
 call over to the suits at
 Dreamworks. Tell 'em we had a firm
 commitment. And its pay or play
 baby, pay or play!"

Sandra flips phone shut and addresses Claire.

SANDRA
 Honestly, people in this town,
 they'll just crap all over you if
 you let them.

Sandra motions Claire in.

SANDRA
 Come in, come in. I'm Sandra
 Lockwood. You must be my 2:30 nanny
 interview.

CLAIRE
 Hi! I'm Claire Kelly.

SANDRA
 Let's go in the living room, shall
 we?

Shot 2:3 Living room. Claire and Sandra settle on couch.

SANDRA
 Can I get you something? Water,
 coffee?

CLAIRE
No thanks, I'm fine.

Sandra rifles through a stack of magazines, bills and papers on the coffee table.

SANDRA
Just looking for that resume you faxed over. Now where did it go? I know it's here somewhere.

CLAIRE
I brought an extra with me.

SANDRA
Aren't you prepared! I like that.

Sandra takes resume from Claire, and takes a long look.

SANDRA
Hmm. Now let's see. Claire Kelly.
Hmm. I see a lot of retail work here, but no child care experience. Why do you want to be a nanny?

CLAIRE
I guess I just love children.

SANDRA
Really? Me, I could take 'em or leave 'em. Excepting my own of course. (beat) I've only got the one. Harold Junior.

CLAIRE
I'd love to meet the little guy.
I'm sure he's adorable.

SANDRA
Hally's down for his afternoon nap.
(then in stage whisper) So let's try to keep it down okay?

CLAIRE
Oh, sorry (quietly)

Sandra notices and then pulls some clear plastic packing material from behind one of the cushions. She offers a strip of it to Claire

SANDRA

So, Claire, the obvious question.
What's your child-rearing
philosophy?

CLAIRE

Uh... Dada-ism? Sorry, bad joke
there. No, uh my philosophy is to
be gentle... (Claire is unsure of
herself. Pauses to gauge Sandra's
reactions) Nurturing? ... but also
firm.

SANDRA

Firm is good.

CLAIRE

But not too firm of course.

SANDRA

Oh, my little Hally's a handful.
You can be firm. (beat) Just don't
shake him.

CLAIRE

What?

SANDRA (DEMONSTRATES)

You know shake him. Like this. I
caught the last nanny doing that so
I had her deported.

CLAIRE

That's horrible! Is Hally okay?

SANDRA

He's fine now, but I'd come home
from work and find him slumped over
and drooling. That's what got me
suspicious. So I installed a nanny
cam. Caught the bitch in the act.

Sandra has stood to pace and now stands in front of the
entertainment center. She again demonstrates the violent
shaking motion

CLAIRE

I would never shake a baby. Ever.

Claire looks around, unsettled. No doubt she is thinking of
the nanny cam. Sandra nonchalantly adjusts the position of a
teddy bear that happens to be sitting on the entertainment
center shelf.

SANDRA

That's settled then. Firm's good,
no shaking.

Maybe I should explain the position
a bit. You see Claire, I work crazy
hours so I really need someone live-
in. You'd be in charge of grocery
shopping, light cleaning, and of
course, taking care of Hally.
He's an angel but he's at that
stage, you know, where he can be
quite a handful. We're still
working on the potty training, but
I just got him off breast milk,
thank god. (then half to herself)
Toothy little fucker. (massages
chest)
Anyway, that's about it. You take
him to the playground in the
afternoons. He has Gymboree three
times a week.

CLAIRE

Sounds like the perfect situation
for me. I just love toddlers, Ms.
Lockwood.

SANDRA

I have a good feeling about you,
Claire Kelly. I really do. Suppose
we should talk money. I can pay 300
a week. Cash. Plus room and board
of course.

CLAIRE

That sounds more than fair.

SANDRA (APPRAISING CLAIRE)

You can have gentlemen callers too.
Yes, gentlemen callers. Anytime you
want.

Again, Sandra surreptitiously adjusts the position of the
teddy bear. Claire, uncomfortable at being stared at, looks
away to side table where there's a photograph of Sandra and a
man in embrace. A honeymoon picture perhaps.

CLAIRE

Is that Mr. Lockwood?

SANDRA

Yes. That's him. Harold senior. He's out of the picture now. Just me and Hally. I'm another pathetic single mother struggling to make ends meet.

Oh, I suppose I should feel guilty for letting another woman raise my child. But I have my career to worry about. You can't do it all. No matter what they say, you just can't.

Offscreen we hear the tinny sound of baby crying, Sandra and Claire's attention is drawn to Nursery Intercom.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Sounds like my boy's awake. Well Claire, you've pretty much got me sold. Now you just have to win over Hally. Why don't you come on up and meet him?

SCENE 3: INTERIOR DAY. UPSTAIR'S NURSERY.

Shot 3:1 View of closed door from inside room. Perhaps a partial view of hanging crib mobile in foreground. Offscreen sound of baby crying, as if directly below view of camera. Door opens. Sandra enters and moves up to crib. Smiles down at crying baby.

SANDRA (IN BABY TALK)

What are you crying about, huh?
What is it?

Shot 3:2 Claire's POV from doorway. Full shot of Sandra hovering over the crib.

SANDRA CONT. (IN BABY TALK)

You have a visitor Hally. That's right. Someone wants to meet you.

Sandra motions for Claire to step forward. Claire steps forward and is all smiles as she approaches crib. Gets to crib.

Shot 3:3 POV is from baby looking up. Claire's head pops into view looking down. Strong reaction shot of her smile breaking into severe shock, fright.

CLAIRE

Sweet Jesus!

O.S. baby wails.

Shot 3:4 POV cuts to Claire's view from over the crib. Now we understand Claire's reaction. "Hally Jr." is a fully grown man in swaddling clothes. In all respects he acts like a 2 year old.

Shot 3:5 Medium shot of Claire, Sandra and crib. Claire leaps back from crib.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What the hell is that!?

SANDRA
(put out by Claire's reaction) Shh!
You're frightening him. (then back
to Hally in baby talk) Did the
silly lady scare you? Oh, it's all
right.

Hally pulls himself up to the lip of the crib and raises his arms to be picked up. Sandra leans over and hugs him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Claire, grab his pacifier, would
you? It's over by the changing
table.

Claire hesitantly collects the red rubber pacifier. She advances to crib.

Shot 3:6 close up of Hally's face and Claire's shaking hand as it offers up the pacifier.

Shot 3:7 reaction close up shot of squeamish Claire.

Shot 3:8 Close up of Hally as he chomps down on pacifier. Immediately he closes eyes, sucks and coos contentedly.

CLAIRE
Oh man is this freaky.

Sandra carefully puts Hally back down in crib. She turns to Claire, puts her finger on her lips, takes Claire's wrist and leads her out into the hall.

Scene 4: Interior Upstairs hallway

Shot 4:1 two shot of Sandra & Claire.

SANDRA
Look, I'll thank you not to insult
my child.

CLAIRE

That's not a child. That's a grown man in diapers! (pause as realization dawns) Is that your husband?

SANDRA

I told you. Harold Sr. is out of the picture. I'm a single mother and Hally Jr. is my baby.

Claire looks dubious.

SANDRA

All right. If you have to get technical about it. Hally is an adult baby.

CLAIRE

Is this some sort of joke? (looking around expectantly) Are we on tv or something?

SANDRA

This is no joke, Claire. Harold Jr. is an adult baby. The clinical term is infantilism. I'll have you know it's a perfectly legitimate alternate lifestyle. Look it up on the web.

CLAIRE

I should probably go.

SANDRA

Frankly Claire, I was hoping you'd have more of an open mind. He's an adult baby, all right? He can't help it. He was born that way! And that makes me a single mother who's just trying to cope. I need help, Claire. I need a nanny. I said I'd pay you 300 a week. I'll double it.

CLAIRE

Geez, I don't know.

SANDRA

Oh come on! So he's a little bigger than other toddlers. It's no big deal. He's a sweetheart. Really.

CLAIRE

God. I just don't know.

SANDRA

700 a week and I'll let you use the Range Rover.

Scene 5: Montage (set to music)

(Note: the purpose of this montage is to show an increasing bond between Claire and Hally.)

Shot 5:1 Claire in front seat of Range Rover, she's using the rear view mirror to gawk at Hally in back, spilling out of a regular child safety seat. He seems happy, gnawing on a teething ring.

Shot 5:2 Claire changing Hally's diaper. Naked Hally is discretely below the screen but you can see his hairy man knees and above him Claire fiddling awkwardly with the diaper, baby powder, etc.

Shot 5:3 Claire burping Hally. He upchucks a bit of milky barf down her back

Shot 5:4 Claire in pool with Hally. He has on water wings and she is supporting him under his armpits. Blows in his face and then slides him under the water-- waterbaby style.

Shot 5:5 Claire reading a child's book to a slumbering Hally Jr. She kisses him lovingly on forehead and turns out the light.

Fade to black. Music ends.

Scene 6: Night. Claire's Bedroom.

Shot 6:1 Claire in bed asleep. Sound of Hally crying offscreen. She is startled awake by Hally's wails.

Shot 6:2 LED alarm clock reads 3:14 am.

Shot 6:3 Claire gets up. Throws on nightrobe and shuffles down the hall towards nursery.

Scene 7: Night. Upstairs hallway.

Shot 7:1 Claire sleepy, lumbering down hall to nursery. Just as Claire passes, Sandra's bedroom door opens. Sandra is very Joan Crawford with crows feet "wings", a night mask, etc.

SANDRA

Honestly Claire, he's been wailing for at least 5 minutes. I have a very important meeting tomorrow morning with Hilary Duff. Hil..ar..y Duff! This is a major deal I'm working on here. I need my sleep.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry Ms. Longwood. I'll quiet him down.

SANDRA

God. Please do. And if you need to shake him. Just this once, its allowed.

Sandra mimes a vicious shaking and then abruptly shuts her bedroom door. Claire is clearly aghast at Sandra's attitude. She proceeds to nursery and turns on light.

Scene 8: Baby's Nursery. Night.

Shot 8:1 Claire in doorway of darkened nursery. She flicks on light and in view beyond her is Hally in his crib. He is wailing, his head and bunched up fists just clearing the lip of the crib.

CLAIRE(BABY TALK)

Hey there Hally. What's wrong. Huh? Did you have a nightmare?

HALLY JR.

Scarwy... Scarwy....

Claire does her best to console him but he just beats his balled up fists on her back as she hugs him.

HALLY JR. (CONT'D)

I want my Mommy. Pwease! Where's Mommy!

CLAIRE (ALARMED)

Its okay kiddo. Mommy can't be here right now. But I'm here. Nanny Claire's got you.

Fade to...

Scene 9: Sandra's home office. Early Evening

Shot 9:1 Sandra is in front of her computer, engrossed. Her desk is strewn with papers. Claire knocks hesitantly at open door.

CLAIRE

Ms. Longwood?

SANDRA (LOST IN HER COMPUTER SCREEN)

Yes Claire.

CLAIRE

Sorry to bother you. I was wondering if I could get my paycheck for last week?

SANDRA

Oh, yes of course. Sorry about that. Don't know where my mind is lately. No wait. Yes I do. It's up Hilary Duff's skirt kissing her ass. Shoulda listened to Tom. He was pushing Lindsay Lohan but I was all like, 'no, lets go with the blonde one, she's a triple threat...'

CLAIRE

Ms. Longwood?

SANDRA

..I'm sorry, what? Oh yes, your paycheck.

Sandra locates checkbook from desk drawer and begins writing one out.

CLAIRE

Uhm,I was wondering if maybe you wanted to schedule some family time with Hally.Just you and him.

SANDRA

Family time?

CLAIRE

Its just, he misses you so much, and I feel like you're getting cheated out of his big moments.He's talking up a storm these days.

SANDRA
Well that's good. How's the potty training going?

CLAIRE
Almost there!(Winces, but gives a hopeful thumbs up.)

SANDRA
Keep me posted on that.

CLAIRE
So...

SANDRA
What?

CLAIRE
About that family time?

SANDRA (ANNOYED)
Claire, just spit it out. What are you getting at?

CLAIRE
Its just that, its just that Hally needs his mother. He doesn't see enough of you and he's been. Well he's been acting out. Yesterday at Gymboree, he pulled down his training pants and peed all over the yoga mats. Kept screaming 'Mommy doesn't wuv me, Mommy doesn't wuv me.'

SANDRA
Well that's just ridiculous.

CLAIRE
Of course it is. Of course you love him. But I think if you spent more time with him...

SANDRA
Claire, I don't really need a lecture from you about my parenting skills. I have an extremely stressful career. I have professional obligations. I pay you good money to take care of Hally Jr.

CLAIRE

I do take care of him. I love him dearly. But I'm not his mother. He needs you... and you've been ignoring him.

SANDRA (ICY)

You know Claire, I'm not sure this is really working out for me any more. I feel like maybe you've gotten overly attached to my son. It's not healthy.

CLAIRE

But. But...

SANDRA

No, I think I'm going to have to let you go. Here, this includes 2 weeks severance. (hands Claire a check)

CLAIRE

(Looks sadly at check) Well, if that's how you feel... I'll stay until you've hired a replacement.

SANDRA

That won't be necessary. I'll call a service tomorrow. I think maybe I'd like you to leave. Tonight in fact.

CLAIRE

Fine! (she storms out of room)

Fade out.

Scene 10: Entrance hallway a short time later

Shot 10:1 Sandra has arms folded, leaning against wall. Claire enters scene with two suitcases. She is dressed for departure.

CLAIRE

Here's the housekeys. (reluctantly hands a set of keys over) I'll just pop up to the nursery and say goodbye to the little guy.

SANDRA

(barring the way) That won't be necessary.

CLAIRE
What? I can't even say goodbye?

SANDRA
He's sleeping, Claire. Better not
to wake him.

CLAIRE (RELUCTANTLY, HEARTBROKEN)
All right then.... I guess that's it.
Tell him I love him.

Sandra opens door for Claire. Claire makes to leave, then
turns...

CLAIRE
Oh, he has a playdate with Tiffany
Plunkett tomorrow at three.

Claire steps out onto front porch. Turns...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

...I think he might be getting an ear
infection. His eardrops are on the
dresser.
...And the Huggies training pants
give him a rash. I'd just chuck
them and stick with the Depends.
Oh and...

Shot 10:2 Sandra abruptly shuts door on Claire.

CLAIRE (UNDER BREATH)
Bitch

Scene 11. Exterior. Night.

Shot 11:1. As credits roll, a long and lonely shot of Claire
lugging two heavy suitcases out to her beater car. Car starts
with loud rumble, drives off.

Shot 12:3 Slow pan to house. Slow zoom on upstairs window.
Through sheer, partially drawn curtain you can see adult baby
Hally peering over windowsill. He's sucking his finger with
one hand and waving goodbye with the other.

Fade out.