

Six Feet Under - Pilot

by  
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First 10 minutes

This script is based on the show's transcript used for making subtitles. I have added appropriate action based on the finished episode.

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TITLES

INT: White Studio - Commercial #1

A woman with a black dress and gloves advertises a black hearse as classical music plays in the background.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Sleek, sophisticated,  
seductive...The new Millennium  
Edition Crown Royal Funeral  
Coach. Because your loved one  
deserves the very best in style  
and comfort.

Image abruptly vanishes like a TV being turned off.

EXT. LA - MORNING

The hearse just seen advertised drives casually down a sunny street.

INT: HEARSE - CONTINUOUS

NATHANIEL FISHER, SR. drives a limo, cigarette dangling out of his mouth. "I'll Be Home for Christmas" plays on the radio.

NATHANIEL, SR  
(sings)  
I'll be home for Christmas. You  
can plan on me.

The cell phone rings. He lowers the radio and answers.

NATHANIEL, SR (CONT'D)  
Nathaniel Fisher.

EXT: FISHER & SONS - CONTINUOUS

Outside shot of funeral home with sign that says "Fisher & Sons: A Family Tradition for Over Forty Years."

INT. FISHER & SONS, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Inside the kitchen, RUTH, Nathaniel's wife is chopping vegetables. Their younger son, DAVID, sits at the table.

RUTH  
Nathaniel? It's Ruth. Did you  
take your blood pressure  
medication today?

NATHANIEL, SR.

Yes.

RUTH

Don't lie to me.

NATHANIEL, SR.

I took it. What do you want me to do? O.D. on it?

RUTH

Oh, I just realized. We don't have any of that soy stuff... natrax, you know, since you gave up milk. I don't know what it's called.

NATHANIEL, SR.

Why not just cut some milk with tap water? I'll never know the difference.

RUTH

Look, if you don't want to go, I'll go. It's not as if I don't have enough to do already.

NATHANIEL, SR

I'm kidding. I'll get some, but it has to be after I pick up Nate at the airport. I'm already running late. (He inhales on his cigarette.)

RUTH

Nathaniel, are you smoking?

NATHANIEL, SR.

Nope.

RUTH

Yes you are. I heard you.

NATHANIEL, SR.

I'm not. No, I'm not.

RUTH

Look. Forget you'll give yourself cancer and die a slow and horrible death, you should not be stinking up that new hearse.

DAVID

I told you not to let him take it.

RUTH

(to David)

Like I could have stopped him. He's every bit as proud of that thing as your fool brother was of that damn motorcycle he had in high school. And who still has a pin in his foot?

Nathaniel crosses his eyes.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Nathaniel, people want things to be nice when there's a funeral. They don't want their loved ones riding around in something that smells like an ashtray.

NATHANIEL, SR.

Alright, alright. Look, I'm quitting right now, I promise.

Nathaniel drops the cigarette out the window.

NATHANIEL, SR. (CONT'D)

I'll see you tonight.

Nathaniel hangs up the phone and leans over to take another cigarette. He bends over to light it, taking his eyes off the road. Just at that moment, a bus smashes into the side of the car his hearse and pushes it, as "I'll Be Home for Christmas" continues to play.

INT: FISHER & SONS, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Ruth cuts her finger on the knife.

DAVID

That new hearse was a total waste of money. There was nothing wrong with the old one.

RUTH

I think your father is having some sort of mid-life crisis.

DAVID

It would have made so much more sense to invest in re-paneling for the chapel or adding coffee bars to the slumber rooms.

RUTH

Well, I'd much rather he buy himself a fancy new hearse than leave me for a younger woman, or a woman my age for that matter, or, heaven forbid, a man, like my cousin Hannah's husband did. God sure has dealt that woman some blows in this life.

DAVID

Mom, can I do anything to help?

RUTH

No, no, honey. I'm fine. Besides, don't you have a viewing tonight? You should probably be getting ready.

DAVID

Right.

He kisses Ruth on the cheek.

INT: AIRPORT, ARRIVALS - DAY

NATHANIEL FISHER, JR. or NATE, the eldest son of Nathaniel and Ruth gets off the plane, talking to another passenger, a woman named BRENDA CHENOWITH. He does not yet know her name. They are in the middle of a conversation.

NATE

So, I enjoyed talking to you about that whole shiatsu thing. I hope that pans out for you.

BRENDA

You should let me work on you sometime.

Nate writes on a small piece of paper and hands it to Brenda.

NATE

Well, here's my cell number. I'll be here until the 29th. Here ya go.

Nate looks around.

NATE (CONT'D)

Huh, my dad is supposed to meet me here.

BRENDA

I could give you a ride.

NATE

That's alright. I'm sure he'll be here soon enough.

BRENDA

I wasn't talking about that kind of ride.

INT: FISHER & SONS, VIEWING ROOM - DAY

David and an old man, MR. DOYLE, stand by an open casket, where a dead old woman, MRS. DOYLE, lies.

MR. DOYLE

You've done a nice job. She looks so peaceful.

DAVID

Well, she is at peace now.

MR. DOYLE

If there's any justice in the universe, she's shoveling shit in hell.

David's cell phone rings.

DAVID

Excuse me.  
(into phone)  
David Fisher.

INT: CLAIRE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

David's younger sister, CLAIRE FISHER, a 17-year-old junior in high school, is driving her car... a hearse painted lime green.

CLAIRE

David... Claire. Is Nate there yet?

DAVID

Nope.

CLAIRE

I thought he was coming in tonight so we could do that whole forced Christmas eve family thing.

DAVID

Well--

CLAIRE

Because there are some really excellent parties I could be going to.

DAVID

Claire, this is one of the few times a year we're all together.

CLAIRE

Alright, alright. Don't get all Pat Robertson on me. I'll be there. I just... I have to drop some stuff off at a friend's house before I head over. Okay? Bye.

(Hangs up)

Fuckin' boy scout.

INT. AIRPORT, UTILITY CLOSET - DAY

Nate and Brenda are having sex in a cramped utility closet with their clothes on.

BRENDA

This is kind of disgusting.

NATE

Disgusting good or disgusting bad?

BRENDA

Disgusting very good.

NATE

You're so fucking hot.

BRENDA

You're so sweet... Shut up and fuck me.

INT. FISHER & SONS, KITCHEN - DAY

Ruth takes her pot roast out of the oven and the phone rings. She answers it.

RUTH

Hello? This is Ruth Fisher. Yes. I'm his wife. What is this about? What?!

She throws the phone across the room, and then does the same to the pot roast. She begins to scream and shriek, throwing and hitting things.

INT. FISHER & SONS, VIEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

David and the mourners hear her in the other room.

DAVID  
(to the mourners)  
Excuse me.

INT. FISHER & SONS, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

David enters the kitchen.

DAVID  
Mom, what the hell are you...

He sees his mother sat on the floor

RUTH  
There's been an accident. The new  
hearse is totaled. Your father is  
dead. Your father is dead, and my  
pot roast is ruined.

DAVID  
Oh, my God.

INT: AIRPORT, UTILITY CLOSET - DAY

Brenda is busy massaging Nate's back.

BRENDA  
You carry a lot of tension around  
in your lower back.

NATE  
(laughs)  
Not as much as twenty minutes  
ago.

They kiss.

BRENDA  
Just so you know, I never do  
this.

NATE  
Oh, yeah. Me neither.

They kiss again.

NATE (CONT'D)  
So, are you ever gonna tell me  
your name?

BRENDA  
Probably not.

NATE

Why not?

BRENDA

Because I'm a realist.

Nate's cell phone rings.

NATE

That's my father looking for me.

(Answering phone)

Hey, Dad. Oh, Dave. Hey. Merry Christmas. Of course I'm OK... Couldn't be better, in fact... What?

INT. FISHER & SONS, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

David sits at table.

DAVID

I'm so sorry, Nate. I hate to have to be the one to tell you.

INT. GABRIEL'S BASEMENT - DAY

Claire sits in the basement of her boyfriend, GABRIEL DIMAS. Other people their age are sitting around them on the couch and the floor, getting high off bong hits. Gabriel takes a hit.

CLAIRE

This is just speed, right? Promise me this isn't crack. Because I gotta spend tonight having Christmas Eve dinner with my demented family and it's gonna be weird enough without me being high on crack.

GABRIEL

No. It's just crystal meth. It just makes everything burn a little bit brighter. And it makes sex like totally primal. Here. It's alright.

Gabriel hands her the bong. Claire lights it and inhales

CLAIRE

Oh, well. It's too late now.

A cell phone rings.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

It's mine.

(Into phone)

Hello? David, hi. Hang on a second.

She goes into the next room.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

So is Nate there yet?

INT. FISHER & SONS, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DAVID

No, he's still at the airport.  
Claire, I've got bad news.

CLAIRE

What? Um... Yeah, sure. OK. I'm on my way.

Claire returns to where her friends are.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I have to go.

GABRIEL

No fuckin' way.

CLAIRE

Excuse me.

GABRIEL

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.  
You're coming back, right?

CLAIRE

Uh, I don't think so. My dad just got hit by a bus, and it broke his neck, and he's dead.

Some of the kids laugh.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I gotta go pick up my mom and take her to the morgue so she can identify his body.

(starts to laugh, then stops)

No, I'm not kidding. This is actually happening. And now I'm high on crack!

GABRIEL

Crystal.

CLAIRE

Whatever! So I guess this whole hellish experience I'm about to go through is just gonna burn a little brighter now, right? Great! Thank you! Fuck!