

(The living room of the Calhoun residence, the modest yet tasteful upper-middle class home of a charming and attractive couple in their mid to late forties. Phone rings.)

CHARLOTTE

(answering the phone)

The Calhoun residence, the modest yet tasteful upper-middle class home of a charming and attractive couple in their mid to late forties. This is Charlotte Calhoun speaking.

(she listens)

I'm sorry, my husband Roger Calhoun, corporate attorney, is at his weekly anger management class, a condition of his parole. Is there something I can help you with?

(she listens)

My, what a strange and cryptic comment. I confess that I find the hauntingly familiar sound of your sultry, Kathleen Turner-like vocal mannerisms vaguely disturbing...

(listens)

I sympathize with your rage, mysterious caller, but I assure you that the Roger Calhoun you are seeking is not my Roger Calhoun. Perhaps if you told me your name—

(reacts sharply to what she has heard on the phone)

She hung up the phone sharply the moment I asked for her name. My suspicions are raised and I can't stop this presentiment of disaster and doom that hangs o'er this family like the sword of that Greek guy who always had a sword over his head. Fortunately, I am busy as a bee and therefore easily distracted.

(Pulls a piece of paper from her pocket and reads it)

To do list. Manicure. Pedicure. Leg wax. Stop by my young lover Eddie's bohemian apartment in the East Village for a quickie. What a full and exciting life I lead!

(ROGER bursts through the door.)

ROGER

Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE

Roger. You're home early.

ROGER

Yes, that's true. I usually arrive home from my behavior adjustment seminar shortly before six. Yet it's only 3:15. Your observation about my arrival time is most astute. Charlotte, as you know, you are my wife.

CHARLOTTE

Indeed.

ROGER

It is in my role as your husband that I rushed home to tell you that since the moment I met you on that cold February night sixteen years ago, I have had no sexual relations with

ROGER (cont'd)

any woman and therefore, cannot possibly be the biological father of a 16 year old girl who lives not far from here with her unwed mother, a two-bit actress named Maria.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you for setting my mind at rest, Roger, for only moments ago I received a troubling phone call from a woman with a hauntingly familiar voice claiming to be the mother of your illegitimate child. She hung up as soon as I asked her name so I cannot say whether or not it was Maria. Your reassurance is most welcome. Thank you, darling.

(She kisses his cheek)

ROGER

Hmmm. What is that seductive perfume you have sprayed liberally at all of your pulse points? It has infiltrated my olfactory nerves and aroused my sexual desire.

CHARLOTTE

I can't have intercourse with you now, dear...and don't assume that this means I have a young lover in the East Village who is a noted performance artist and satisfies my every need in ways you never could...in case that's what you were assuming.

ROGER

I wasn't but I am now.

CHARLOTTE

Not to worry. I don't have a young lover named Eddie, nor have I been supporting his cocaine habit by siphoning money from our son's college fund. Nothing could be further from the truth.

ROGER

What a relief.

CHARLOTTE

No, the reason I can't have sex with you is that I have so many things to do.

ROGER

For example?

CHARLOTTE

Well, there's my...committee meeting in the East Village...where I *do not* have a lover.

ROGER

(enraged)

Why must I always learn of these things at the last possible moment!!!

CHARLOTTE

I told you about my meeting at breakfast, dear, although you probably didn't hear me because you were railing incessantly about your oatmeal not being 'oaty' enough.

(BILLY, a teenage boy, enters.)

BILLY

Hi mom, hi dad.

ROGER

Hi Billy, National Honor Society member

CHARLOTTE

Hello son, the troubled only child of a dysfunctional marriage.

BILLY

Mom, Dad, I've met a girl.

CHARLOTTE

Wonderful. Is she black or Jewish?

BILLY

No.

ROGER

Do you fantasize as to what this young lady looks like naked?

BILLY

Yes.

ROGER

We're so relieved you're not a homosexual.

BILLY

She's right outside. Would you like to meet her?

CHARLOTTE

Quickly, son. If I don't get to the East Village on time I'll be cranky all through dinner.

(BILLY exits)

ROGER

The sudden appearance of this as of yet unseen young woman might fill me with dread and foreboding if, for example, I had received an anonymous phone call at work today threatening to reveal my creative yet highly illegal manipulation of corporate funds unless I cough up half a million dollars for my illegitimate daughter's college education.

CHARLOTTE

Thank goodness nothing like that happened today.

ROGER

Yes, it's most fortunate.

(BILLY enters with SUZIE, a pretty teenage girl)

BILLY

Mom, Dad, this is Suzie. Isn't she swell?

CHARLOTTE

I'm so glad I don't hate your hairdo.

ROGER

I can certainly see why my hormonally rich son is so fond of you.

SUZIE

What an inappropriate thing to say. I feel the need for an awkward silence.

(Awkward silence)

It certainly is a pleasure to meet you, Mr. and Mrs. Calhoun. Your charming and handsome son won my heart this morning when he text-messed me all of the answers during our first period algebra exam.

CHARLOTTE

Billy's always been good at math.

BILLY

Suzie let me French kiss her. Twice.

CHARLOTTE

Which is how many more than once?

BILLY

One!

CHARLOTTE

See what I mean? So, Suzie, tell us about yourself.

ROGER

Is your mother's name Maria?

SUZIE

Well, I'm a Virgo and...wait, did you just ask if my mother's name was Maria?

CHARLOTTE

Roger did, yes. He is concerned that you might be his illegitimate daughter from a one-night stand he had with some two-bit actress more than sixteen years ago.

ROGER

A Virgo? How interesting!

SUZIE

And the woman's name was Maria?

ROGER

I have never known anyone named Maria.

CHARLOTTE

Your sister's name is Maria.

BILLY

You had sex with your sister?

ROGER

I never met the woman.

BILLY

You never met Aunt Maria?

SUZIE

Not that Maria. The Maria I'm speaking of is—

ROGER

I do not know this Maria you speak of. In fact, she does not even exist. Nor, in my humble layman's opinion, was she a two-bit actress.

SUZIE

How do you know she wasn't a two-bit actress?

ROGER

I know talent when I see it.

SUZIE

But you said she didn't exist.

ROGER

Which is why I refused to sleep with her, although she begged me to.

SUZIE

Did you or did you not have sex with a woman named Maria sixteen years ago?

ROGER

That depends on what you mean by the phrase “Did you or did you not have sex with a woman named Maria sixteen years ago.”

CHARLOTTE

Roger, answer the question or I will start talking about size, if you know what I mean.

ROGER

I absolutely did not have sex with a woman named Maria sixteen years ago, if that’s what you’re implying.

SUZIE

Do you remember the date on which you absolutely did not have sex with a woman named Maria?

ROGER

February the 23rd, 1997.

SUZIE

February the 23rd, 1997 is exactly sixteen years and nine months before my sixteenth birthday, which I celebrated two months ago by watching my mother drink herself into a stupor and then sobbing my way through ‘Sixteen Candles’, a John Hughes coming of age comedy starring 80’s teen icon Molly Ringwald.

BILLY

I must intervene to say that I am ashamed to admit that I find the thought of French kissing my half-sister to be sexually arousing to an abnormal degree.

CHARLOTTE

Be at peace, son, for as you adjust to the idea of Suzie being your half-sister your sexual desires will be replaced with the warmth of sibling affection and mutual respect.

SUZIE

I’ve always wanted a brother.

BILLY

I’m all yours, sis.

(BILLY and SUZIE immediately lock into a passionate kiss; CHARLOTTE quickly intervenes, separating them)

CHARLOTTE

There will be plenty of time for bonding in the weeks to come.

ROGER

But is your mother’s name Maria?

BILLY

No, my mother's name is Charlotte.

SUZIE

I think he meant me.

BILLY

Her name is Suzie.

SUZIE

Let me handle this, bro. No, my mother's name is not Maria.

ROGER

See!?!

SUZIE

However, in February of 1997, the month that you did not have sex with my mother, she was playing the female lead in a revival of Rodgers and Hammerstein's underrated yet still cloying "The Sound of Music" opposite Robert Wagner and Stefanie Powers.

CHARLOTTE

Stars of ABC's popular "Hart to Hart."

SUZIE

Yet dreadfully miscast as Friedrich and Liesl, the eldest of the singing Von Trapp children.

ROGER

What part did your mother play?

SUZIE

Maria.

(‘ahhhs’ of recognition from the others)

She received excellent reviews. The Poughkeepsie Post said that her husky Kathleen Turner-like baritone added a whole new dimension to the title song.

CHARLOTTE

That's where I have heard that voice! I saw that production. Roger, do you remember? It was our second date. Your mother was wonderful, incidentally. The way she croaked her way through "The Lonely Goatherd" gave new meaning to the phrase, "that bitch can yodel!"

(turning on ROGER)

And it was the same voice that called me this afternoon just before Roger's arrival claiming that he was the father of her only child, a sixteen-year-old beauty completely devoid of mathematical ability. Roger Calhoun, that young woman standing there, is your daughter!

CHARLOTTE (cont'd)

(beat, no movement—until BILLY and SUZIE start kissing passionately.
CHARLOTTE intervenes)

Back away from the sibling. I said, back away from the sibling.
(She forces them apart.)

ROGER

But that can't be right. Wait, I remem—

CHARLOTTE

I remember, too. You went backstage, ostensibly to see an old army buddy who played Rolfe, young Liesl's love interest who breaks her tender and trusting heart when he becomes a Nazi youth. I was foolish to have believed you not only because the young man playing Rolfe was no older than 14 and clearly not Army material but because you were never in the Army! Thus, it is now clear, as I have long suspected, that you did have a one-night stand with Suzie's mother, meaning that you slept with another woman in the middle of our second date, meaning that you have lied to me all these years, meaning that our marriage is a sham, meaning that our poor son is virtually a bastard, meaning that my passionate and ultimately self-destructive affair with Eddie is perfectly justified under the circumstances, meaning that I really must get to that committee meeting. Ta-ta!

(She quickly heads for the exit)

ROGER

Wait!

(CHARLOTTE freezes in place)

The woman I had sex wi...the woman that I did *not* have sex with lo those many years ago was not, I repeat, not the actress who played Maria Von Trapp.

(simultaneously)

CHARLOTTE
Not the actress who
played Maria?!

SUZIE
A shocking revelation!

BILLY
Rhubarb, rhubarb.

ROGER

It's all coming back to me now—a flood of misty memories, reminiscences of yesteryear, like a bittersweet melody played on a lonesome guitar in the soft summer moonlight while the crickets—

CHARLOTTE

Wrap it up, this is supposed to be a ten minute play.

ROGER

I didn't sleep with your mother, Suzie, and am not your father. I did go backstage to see someone although I now confess that it was not my army buddy; I can't believe you ever bought that lie in the first place, you blithering idiot. I went backstage with the intention of introducing myself to a particular cast member but I accidentally opened the wrong door whereupon I discovered the actress who had played Maria. Her real name, if I recall, was Julie.

SUZIE

That's right!

ROGER

Now that I bethink me, she was in Robert Wagner's dressing room at the time and, indeed, they were in what can only be described as a very friendly position.

SUZIE

So, my real father is...

ROGER

Yes, that's right, Suzie. Your real father is a TV actor.

(BILLY and CHARLOTTE gasp in horror)

SUZIE

That certainly explains all the residual checks from ABC.

CHARLOTTE

But who made the phone calls claiming that Roger was the father of her child?

SUZIE

Oh, that was my mother. She calls someone new every day. The bitch is crazy.

BILLY

Wait. Does this mean that...?

ROGER

That's right, son, you and Suzie are not brother and sister and can have all the safe sex you want.

SUZIE

Oh.

(She shares a disappointed glance with BILLY)

I'm not that interested now.

BILLY

Me neither. Wanna go play Grand Theft Auto 5?

SUZIE

Wicked!

(BILLY and SUZIE exit)

CHARLOTTE

Oh, Roger, I'm so happy. All these years I was certain that you had slept with someone backstage at that theatre.

ROGER

I did. It was that girl who played Liesl.

CHARLOTTE

Stefanie Powers?

ROGER

I went backstage to tell her how hot she looked in lederhosen. She immediately suggested sexual intercourse which we undertook with wild abandon. She kept singing 'How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria' while we—

CHARLOTTE

Roger!

ROGER

So, having never seen 'Hart to Hart' and not knowing who the hell she was, I naturally assumed that her name was Maria.

CHARLOTTE

So you went backstage during our second date and made love to Stefanie Powers?!?

ROGER

Yes, and here's the kicker. Turns out she *was* a two-bit actress.

(They laugh)

CHARLOTTE

Oh, Roger!

(They continue laughing as the lights fade)

THE END