

Horesplay

By

Richie Owens, Hobert Thompson, Spencer Blair &
Lara McCann-Moran

Based On The Conversation Recorded For
The Please Make This Podcast

pleasemakethispod@gmail.com

Scene #1

By

Richie Owens

1

EXT. RICK'S CHILDHOOD HOME

1

Through the lens of a VHS camera, a family gets into a station wagon. The station wagon is clean, as if recently purchased. In fact, there are temporary plates on it. It was recently purchased. MOM (mid 40's, a nice summer dress, lightly done up) looks mildly happy, DAD (early 50's, wearing a baseball cap to hide his receding hairline, and a maroon polo) looks pretty annoyed, and RICK (14, behind the camera) is excited.

DAD

It's just a restaurant, Rick.

RICK

It's not *just* a restaurant, Dad.
It's my favorite restaurant and
today is its last day of business.

MOM

Let him have this, pa.

DAD

Fine as long as he doesn't turn on
the camera again until we're at the
restaurant.

DAD reaches out to cover the camera's lens. The camera turns off.

2

INT. THE STATION WAGON

2

There are a lot of Neon lights, and a synth pop song is playing on the radio. It's the 1980's. RICK looks out the window of his parents' station wagon as the bright lights of the street reflect off the window and show on his face. His parents are making married couple small talk.

MOM

Well when it gets warm out we'll go
back there. It gets too cold there
during the winter time, and you
know why that is?

DAD

The poor insulation

MOM

That's right the poor insulation.
You really need proper insulation
when you want to keep your place
open during the cold months.

(CONTINUED)

Rick is mumbling about insulation and his reflection is shown in the window. He rolls his eyes. Outside there's a mall that's shining bright. A JC Penney, a Marshall Fields, and an Orange Julius are highlighted as the car pulls into the parking lot.

3

EXT. HORSEPLAY

3

A giant neon sign of a cowboy on a horse, with the lights turning on and off to give the illusion of the cowboy rocking back and forth on the horse, lights up the street. It's definitely the most unique thing on the strip. The only negative is that, in big cursive neon letters, where it should say "HORSEPLAY", the lights have gone off on the "S".

DAD

Ready for Hore-play, Rick?

RICK

Dad!

MOM

Come on, pa. Let him enjoy his night.

DAD

Hey, what's wrong with my boy wanting to play with some hor-

The camera turns off.

4

INT. HORSEPLAY

4

The camera turns back on. The restaurant is packed. The entire restaurant is "booths", but they're calling "stables". All of the employees are wearing western garb. Cowboy hats, bandanas, spurs, and even fake tails. They're also all talking with southern accents, whether they actually have them or not. Rick zooms in on the plethora of peanut shells on the floor. Then the camera turns to some photographs of horses doing various activities: diving, playing baseball (from Mr. Ed), doing math. then to the mechanical bull with a horsehead on it in the center of the floor, then up to a cute blonde curly haired woman, 18, with the name tag JOLENE. She lights up when she sees the family walk in.

JOLENE

I was starting to get nervous you guys weren't going to show up!

DAD
(dryly) Yeah, well you know... We just had to convince Rick to come out. He really hates it here.

RICK
(annoyed) Dad!

BEAT

RICK
(continued, blushing) Hey Jolene.

JOLENE
Hey Ricky. I've saved you your usual stable for your last meal.

The family walks ahead and Rick's camera stays on Jolene. He bumps into a stable. And then another stable. And another. Each time, muttering "sorry" under his breath.

JOLENE
Here you guys go. Usual order? Horse fries, pony burgers, and some shetland shakes.

MOM
Actually, since it's a special occasion I think I'll have a glass of Eq-wine.

DAD
Yeah, and if you wouldn't mind putting some of your famous Horse tranquilizers in my drink I wouldn't mind, either.

RICK
Jesus christ

MOM
Pa...

DAD
I'm joking, ma! Take it easy.

CAMERA TURNS OFF

CAMERA TURNS BACK ON

The food has just arrived. The fries are the shape of horses, the burger has a stick through it with a little pony, and the shakes are in horse shaped glasses. There are a couple of empty beer bottles and DAD is a little tipsy.

(CONTINUED)

DAD

You know what, give me that camera.

He reaches out towards the camera.

RICK

(struggling) no, Dad, please just,
let me capture, this important
moment -

DAD

(at the same time) give it here,
come on don't be difficult, you
little piece of -

Dad wins the battle and gets the camera away, and we finally see a shot of young Rick. He's scrawny and has shaggy brown hair and glasses.

DAD

Hey, Jolene! Get in here. Let's get
one last shot of you and Rick
together, huh.

RICK

Dad! Stop!

Jolene walks into frame and puts her arm around Rick.

JOLENE

Yeah, stop!

She whispers into Rick's ear and he blushes. And then she kisses him on the cheek.

THE VHS TAPE ZOOMS OUT A BIT, AND NOW IT'S SHOWING THAT THIS
IS BEING WATCHED ON A TV IN CURRENT DAY.

5

INT. RICK'S GROWN UP HOUSE

5

Rick, now in his early 50's, has a little smirk on his face. He's sitting pretzel style on the carpet in front of the TV. Tiegly (17), Rick's daughter, comes into the family room and sees him. A look of concern goes over her face.

TIEGLY

Oh no, dad. What's wrong?

RICK

What do you mean "what's wrong"?
I'm just reminiscing about the good
ol' days.

(CONTINUED)

TIEGLY

Dad, you only watch the Horseplay video when you're REALLY sad. Whats. Wrong.

RICK

Nothings nothing!

Rick pauses the video on a shot of him and Jolene together. As he turns around, Rick's wife walks in. She seems younger than Rick, even though she isn't. She has curly blonde hair. It's Jolene. Jolene looks at the TV.

JOLENE

What's wrong?

RICK

Can't a guy get nostalgic without being harrassed? Yeesh!

JOLENE

Well, Rick, there's healthy nostalgia; like looking at a baby book or watching TV Land. And there's unhealthy nostalgia; like watching a 30 year old VHS of a restaurant's closing night. Which, I might mention, was **also 30 years ago.**

RICK

It's not just **a** restaurant. It's **the** restaurant. You know, where I fell in love with my lovely wife?

He walks between the two of them, grabs their shoulders, and pulls them in for a hug. He kisses Jolene on the cheek
(continued) Without whom I wouldn't have my lovely daughter?

He kisses Tiegly on the cheek.
(continued) The two people I love the most in my life. ...And the two people I'll get to spend more time with now that I was let go from my job.

TIEGLY

There it is.

JOLENE

Saw that coming.

(CONTINUED)

RICK

Okay you were right this time, but that doesn't mean I only watch this video when I'm in a bad mood!

JOLENE

You watched it when you didn't get that promotion two years ago.

TIEGLY

You watched it when the Bees lost the World Series.

JOLENE

You watched it when you broke your toe after you ran into the couch.

TIEGLY

You watched it when you got home from seeing *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* in theaters.

JOLENE

You watched it on 9/11.

TIEGLY

You w.. wait really?

Jolene nods silently.

RICK

Well I'm sorry for having something that makes me happy.

JOLENE

You should be able to be happy without having to reminisce about a mediocre horse themed restaurant, aaaand I shouldn't have called it mediocre

RICK

Mediocre?! It was good!

JOLENE

It was fine!

TIEGLY

Mom's just saying that you deserve to be happy without having to resort to a memory, dad.

Rick looks disappointed, because his daughter is right.

(CONTINUED)

RICK
I'm going to go for a ride.

TIEGLY
Let me come with you.

RICK
I don't know, I kind of want some
time to myself.

Tiegly bats her eyelashes.

TIEGLY
But dad don't you want to spend
time with your one and only
daughter before she goes away to
college in a year?

RICK
Don't pull that card on me.

TIEGLY
What card? I'm just telling the
truth and I want to prepare you for
my absence before you have to pull
out that video tape for another
reason.

Rick rolls his eyes and knows she's right. He opens his
mouth.

SMASH CUT TO:

6

INT. RICK'S MINIVAN

6

Rick and Tiegly drive through town. It's a stark contrast
from Rick's VHS. Most of the businesses are closed, or
converted to a chain, or converted to a chain and then
closed. The mall is open, but there is one car in the
parking lot and it has one wheel.

TIEGLY
Should I be filming this for future
use?

Rick turns up the radio a little bit.

RICK
What did you say?

TIEGLY
Should I be filming this for futur-

Rick turns up the radio louder and starts to sing "The Weight" by The Band.

RICK
AAAAAAAAnnnnndd

Tiegly smiles and joins in.

TIEGLY
AAAAAAAAnnnnndd

RICK & TIEGLY
.... you put the load right on
meeeeee.

The car pulls up to the spot where Horseplay used to be. It's now a combination "Gimme Your Gold! Gold For \$\$\$" and "Quicksand Car Loans: Loans So Quick You'll Sink."

TIEGLY
That slogan makes me angry every
time.

The sign that used to display "Horseplay" is now a big oval, but you can still see that it used to be a sign for a different place. The building is still saloon styled as well.

RICK
This is why I watch that video when I'm sad, Tiegs. When I was a kid... this place used to represent family, and community, and what we assumed was the American Dream. I have a family because of what this place meant to me. Now it's just a capitalist nightmare where you can trade your gold teeth to pay off a loan on a house you can't afford.

TIEGLY
You're being melodramatic.

A man with no teeth and a handful of cash walks out of the Gimme Your Gold storefront and walks straight into Quicksand loans. Tiegly sees the whole thing happen behind Rick's back.

RICK
Maybe you're right.

TIEGLY

Maybe I'm not.

RICK

I failed at a job I didn't like,
and now I have no plans for my
future. I feel like a
disappointment.

TIEGLY

Are you kidding me? Dad, if you
were a disappointment, then I
wouldn't be volunteering to spend
time with you in public. I'm
actually very picky about the
people I spend my time with. I care
a lot about my public image.

RICK

In that video, do you know what
your mother whispered in my ear?

TIEGLY

"We should have sex in 7 years and
name our daughter something dumb."

RICK

You're named after my grandmother!

TIEGLY

I know! It's dumb! What did mom
tell you?

RICK

She said to me "you know, if you
just bought this place we wouldn't
have to worry about shutting down."

Tiegly smiles.

TIEGLY

That's stupid.

RICK

It is! But it meant a lot to me.
Let's go back home. I've got to
start looking for work tomorrow.

SMASH CUT TO:

7

INT. RICK AND JOLENE'S BEDROOM (MORNING)

7

Rick is sleeping, but he still has a dissatisfied look on his face. A newspaper gets shoved in his face and he awakens in shock.

TIEGLY

Wake up, dad!

RICK

What the hell! You almost gave me a heart attack.

TIEGLY

Check out this listing before you complain.

Rick puts on his reading glasses and looks at the listing. It reads "COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR SALE."

RICK

What do I care?

TIEGLY

Look at the address.

The address is the address for Horseplay.

Scene #2

By

Lara McCann-Moran

1 EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - DAY 1

RICK stands in front of the boarded up, pathetic looking former restaurant. He squints as the sun peaks from behind it. The sounds of cars whizzing by fades away as Rick sighs and mutters quietly...

RICK
Here goes nothing.

2 INT. RESTAURANT DINING ROOM - SERIES OF SHOTS 2

RICK stands in front of a blank, white wall in the center of the dining room. He licks his lips and starts in, wielding a too-big paintbrush and a can of paint.

MONTAGE begins as Rick paints the wall, concentrated and determined. We can tell he's painting something big but we can't really tell what it is. As the painting grows more detailed, Rick smiles stupidly.

RICK holds his hands over Jolene's eyes and positions her in front of his painting. He reveals the wall to her and looks on proudly. She is unimpressed, her face fully of pity. His painting is of a horse--it's body oblong and stiff, it's eyes too close together. You could tell he was really trying to draw a life-like horse but it looks like the work of a child. Rick's face falls as he sees his wife's shitty reaction. She gives him a caring nod and they hug.

RICK, JOLENE, and their young daughter TIEGLY set paint cans on the ground and scan the room. They are all wearing matching blue painter's coveralls. They cover the sad horse with white paint and they playfully dab it on each other.

RICK hands a check to a man with paint on his hands--he's hired a professional painter and he's beaming at the work he's done. As the man walks away, we see a beautiful full-wall mural--cowboys riding through a field on majestic, life-like stallions.

3 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - DAY 3

RICK is on his hands and knees trying to wedge himself behind the industrial frier. He drops his screwdriver and curses lamely. JOLENE, his wife, enters carrying bags of trash she's just collected.

JOLENE
How are you going to fix that by yourself?

(CONTINUED)

RICK
(continuing to tinker with the
frier, determined.)
It just needs a bit of elbow
grease, Jo.

JOLENE
If you say so, Ricky.

RICK
Hand me that wrench, will ya?

JOLENE
(handing him the wrench.)
Maybe you can take a little break
soon? We could fool around in the
office.

RICK
There's too much to do around here!
Besides, what you're suggesting
sounds like a breach of food safety
standards.

Rick grunts. A loud thud is followed by sparks flying out of the back of the frier. If it wasn't broken before, it is now. Rick sighs as smoke starts to billow from the machine. He pulls himself out from under it to reveal a comically dirty face and un-realistic electrified hair sticking straight up.

JOLENE
Looks like you have time for a
break after all.

Rick smiles at Jolene in a way that is sexy for him. He hoists her up onto the countertop playfully and they make out like teenagers.

4 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - 3 HOURS LATER

4

Pieces of clothing are littered around the kitchen, clearly thrown off in the heat of passion. Jolene and Rick lay naked with their heads against two industrial bags of flour.

BOTH
Yee-haw!

5 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - SERIES OF SHOTS

5

MONTAGE

RICK and RICK'S DAD carry industrial kitchen equipment into the broken down kitchen. Tiegly stands on the counter directing them excitedly. They set down the heavy new frier with a thud and then high five. Tiegly jumps on Rick's back and they spin around laughing.

RICK'S MOM hangs a bulletin board and pins a Workplace Safety poster to it. She brushes her hands off and puts her fists on her hips, accomplished.

Jolene wipes down the shiny new countertop and rings the bell.

JOLENE

Order up!

Rick receives a plate over the line from DANNY who is interviewing for the position of head chef. Rick tasked him with making a burger. As he bites in, Rick rolls his eyes back into his head with ecstasy. They shake hands feverishly.

RICK

You're hired!

DANNY

Yee-haw!

6 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

6

Horse Play looks shiny and new. A sign that says 'Grand Reopening' hangs above the door.

7 INT. HORSE PLAY DINING ROOM - ALMOST 5 PM

7

RICK stands nervously at the host stand. His confidence is paper thin as he shifts back and forth in his chaps. He adjusts his belt buckle and places his too-big cowboy hat back on his head. The clock clicks from 4:59 to 5:00. Rick presses play on the stereo and the song 'Take Me Home, Country Roads' starts to play.

RICK

(To no one)

Giddy up.

A lone family of four sits at a table in the middle of the dining room. They shift uncomfortably in their saddles, not talking. Rick watches them, smiling intensely. A bowl of hay sits on the table untouched. The father of the family makes accidental eye contact with Rick and looks away quickly. Rick takes the bait. He hooks his thumbs through his belt loops and does sort of a square dance type walk over to the table. He doubts himself the whole way.

RICK

Howdy, y'all! Need me to fill up
your trough?

MOTHER

I think we are ready to order.

RICK

Hoo-wee!
(yells into the kitchen)
You hear that, Danny? Time to fire
up the grill!

DANNY yells yee-haw from inside the kitchen.

MOTHER

(Reading hesitantly from the
menu.)
Yes, we'd like to start with the
cornbread bean bake and the cattle
drive dipping sticks.

RICK

(Visibly shaking while he
writes.)
Alright, I love it! I love it!
Danny'll cook that up and get it
right out. Faster than a pig
squeals in a barn fire!

Rick jogs into the kitchen. We see him hand Danny the order and then turn to watch the family through the open kitchen window. As the grill turns on and starts to sizzle, Rick makes direct eye contact with the mother.

RICK

Here we go!!

The mother whispers to her husband intensely and within seconds, they are gathering up their children and leaving the restaurant. Rick sees this happening and his face drops. We thought we felt bad for Rick before but man, this is hard

to watch. He exits the kitchen, defeated. He looks back at Danny and they share a nod.

9

INT. HORSE PLAY DINING ROOM - ONE MONTH LATER

9

The saddles have been replaced with regular chairs and are now hung decoratively on the wall. The dining room is full of customers--the hum of conversation, music and plates clinking fills the air. A staff of servers gallop around holding stick horses between their legs.

EMMETT the bartender swings a lasso above his head and throws it around a bottle of vodka on the top shelf. It looks like the vodka is going to fall and break on the floor but Emmett catches it midair and spins it around like a basketball. He pours six shots and then locks the bottle into his holster. He's an amazing flair bartender. Everyone at the bar is clapping and screaming.

SONIA, a server, delivers a plate of "Neigh-chos" to an excited table.

SONIA

If you find the horse shoe, you get
a free round of shots! Giddy up!

The table applauds and digs into the neigh-chos wildly. As Sonia walks back to the kitchen she brushes arms with Rick who stands next to the server stand beaming. As he looks out at the sea of customers laughing and loving each other, he whispers quietly,

RICK

This is horse play.

Scene #3

By

Spencer D Blair

Int. Horseplay Back Office - Night

JOLENE aggressively pulls RICK into the back office. The doors are those old-timey saloon doors. They bounce back in forth in a way that would make RICK smile if JOLENE wasn't so tense.

RICK

What's wrong?

JOLENE

WHAT'S WRONG? Rick, your daughter is out there filling up a kiddie pool with water so Kristen and Sonia can jump into it while wearing the horse costume.

RICK

Yeah! We talked about it! It's an homage to *Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken!*

JOLENE

Rick, your daughter has never seen that movie. I've never even seen it! She just read the back of the VHS you keep above our bed.

RICK

What? It's a classic!

JOLENE

(Exasperated) *RICK.*

RICK

(Angry) What is it, Jolene?!

JOLENE

Your daughter is out there bringing your dream to life. She goes to school, comes here, works til 9, goes to bed, and then does it all over again. Her grades are slipping. She only sees her friends when they come to restaurant. She's 17, Rick.

RICK

So? Lots of kids her age have jobs! Plus we're making something great here. Maybe she can *take the reigns* when I retire!

Rick is very clearly proud of his horse pun. Jolene isn't feeling it.

JOLENE

Rick, you are so focused on the past and the future that you're missing what's happening *right now*. Tiegly doesn't care about the restaurant or horses or any of this. She just wants to spend time with you.

RICK

Really?

JOLENE

Yeah! You've always provided for us and I can't thank you enough for that. We have a wonderful life because you love us and want to give us the world. But all Tiegly wants is some quality time with her dad. You were never at her t-ball games, or spelling bees, or open houses. This is the first time that you and her are bonding over something *together*. And you're so focused on the restaurant, that you are missing out on her.

RICK

I've tried so hard to make things right for you two. I didn't have a lot of money growing up. Finally I've found a job that I love and can provide for my family. I haven't been this happy since I was a kid sitting in there.

JOLENE

Tiegly is still a kid. She is 17 and in a year she'll be off to college *IF* her grades don't slip too far. And then she'll be gone and grow up without us. This is your chance to bond with her before she goes off and you're missing it.

RICK

God. You're right. Jolene, I can't believe how blind I've been.

JOLENE

It's almost as if... *(She gives a wry smile)* you've been wearing horse blinders.

RICK

I love you so much.

RICK and JOLENE kiss passionately.

JOLENE

(Seductively) Yeeehaaaaaaaaaaw

TIEGLY pops in through the doors, interrupting them. They quick pull apart and look at her.

TIEGLY

Oh, gross. Isn't that some kind of health violation?

JOLENE

(Dry) Report us.

TIEGLY

(Even drier) Too much paperwork. Dad, the pool is full and we're ready for a dive!

RICK

THAT IS AWESOME!

TIEGLY

And I was thinking that I could come in this weekend and work on a routine with Kristen and Sonia. Honestly, their trotting is *atrocious*.

RICK

Oooh, we should get them on a canter!

RICK quickly glances at JOLENE who has her arms crossed and looks vaguely annoyed.

RICK (cont'd)

Actually, you should probably take the weekend off. You've been in here every day this week and I don't want to get thrown in the hoosegow for child labor.

TIEGLY

Are you sure? Who else is gonna fill the pool?

JOLENE

You know, I heard there was going to be a rodeo out near Benton this weekend. Maybe you two can check it out for some ideas?

RICK

But...

JOLENE

And I can hold down the fort here. You two go have a fun weekend.

TIEGLY

Hell yeah! Thanks mom!

Tiegly runs out, very excited. RICK turns to JOLENE who is now wearing a smug smile. RICK kisses JOLENE.

RICK

(Seductively) Yeeehaaaaaaaaaw.

Scene #4

By

Hobert Thompson

Int. Horseplay - Night

A FAMILY OF FOUR enters Horseplay on an exceptionally busy night. The area where people are waiting for their tables is packed, and DANIEL, a host, tries to get people's attention:

DANIEL

PETERSON?! PETERSON, PARTY OF...UM,
FIVE?

A woman seated in the back corner excited raises her hand.

MRS. PETERSON

OH! That's us! Honey! That's us!

MR. PETERSON

Barb, I heard the guy...

MRS. PETERSON

I'm just so excited!!!

The PETERSONS push through the crowd to DANIEL.

DANIEL

I hope you caballeros are ready!
You're sitting right next to the
stage!

MRS. PETERSON and the PETERSON KIDS look very excited, MR. PETERSON looks...concerned. DANIEL leads them through the crowded restaurant. At the bar EMMETT is mixing a whole row of his now famous drink: "the buckaroo". He fills the last horsehead-shaped glass in the row and hands one to a woman sitting at the bar, winking slyly. DANIEL leads THE PETERSONS past MARCUS, who is serving a table of people in business suits, sets down his last plate and quickly turns on his heel, drawing his pistol to mock duel with IRENE, who was setting down a pitcher of margaritas. MARCUS shouts out across the restaurant in his fake texas accent that still sounds kinda German:

MARCUS

Vell Vell Velll, looks like Ol'
Isabella Grady, the meanest outlaw in
zee whole land, has tried to get the
drop on me!

IRENE

Drat! I thought I had you this time,
Deputy...Klaus.

MARCUS gives her a look like "come on, I'm trying here".

IRENE

I'LL SEE YOU AT HIIIIIGH NOON!

IRENE walks back to the kitchen.

MARCUS

I'll see you there, you vicked voman!
 Root for me, Deputy KARL during our
 High Noon showdown, starting at 7pm!

He rushes back to the kitchen, as the door swings closed you can hear him shout at IRENE:

MARCUS

I DON'T SOUND GERMAN!

The PETERSONS are seated now, nearly in the front row of the stage area. DEB approaches.

DEB

Well howdy, pardners! Welcome to
 Horseplay, my name is Rebecca
 Salamante, the beautiful daughter of
 Victor Salamante, the richest man in
 town. Will I ever get out of this
 seven horse town? Will I ever see the
 gleaming shores of the Pacific? Will
 I make it to San Diego, where my love
 Pedro waits for me, or will my cruel
 father force me to marry his business
 partner, Bill "Mad Dog" Morgan?!?

The PETERSONS stare at DEB, who is clutching the locket around her neck and looking out across restaurant to the bar, where MILES is restocking glasses. MR. PETERSON starts to speak.

DEB

OH PEDRO! One day I will kiss your
 face again! One day we will run on
 the beach, and I will finally publish
 my book of poetry, which is the the
 real reason I so need to move to
 California. I have aspirations beyond
 this town, beyond just marrying a
 man. I'm a complex, well defined
 character and THIS TOWN CAN'T PEN ME
 IN LIKE SOME KIND OF...HORSE!

(a long pause)

So how are you folks today? Here are
 some menus and I'll be right back
 with some waters! We have a special
 burger today with Chef Grady's world
 famous sauce! Waters? Did I ask that?

Int. Backstage at Horseplay

RICK stands in the wings of the stage, wearing a very colorful, rhinestone-studded western wear outfit. He's nervously tuning his guitar. JOLENE comes up behind him and

puts her arm around him, placing her head on his shoulder.

RICK

What am I doing, Jo? Is this too
"look at me"?

JOLENE

Well...I still think the rhinestone
cowboy look is a little hard to get
used to, but you're doing a great
job. People love this!

RICK

But is it "Horseplay"?

JOLENE

Rick. I worked at the first
Horseplay. This is nothing like it.
Because this works! You've brought
this place back, and more
importantly, you've made this place
your's.

(Adopting a Southern Twang)

Now get yer handsome, bejeweled butt
out there and entertain these folks,
ya hear?

RICK takes a deep breath as JOLENE kisses him on the cheek and smacks him on the butt. Hard. The curtain in front of him parts, and RICK steps out onto the stage. Most of the restaurant patrons are still eating and talking at their tables, and from the bar EMMETT begins to applaud and lets out a shrill

EMMETT

YEEEEEEEEEEHAW!

RICK looks even more nervous as the crowd joins in the applause. He looks into the crowd and sees a little kid, staring at the stage while stuffing a chicken tender in their mouth. He smiles, thinking about all the memories he made at Horseplay with his family, and about how good chicken tenders are. He steps forward, strums his guitar to bring the rest of the chattering tables to attention, and begins to sing:

RICK

Oh it's hard out here
in this life for a horse
Broken, beaten, riden,
A life of cruel force

But you can't tame a wild spirit
You can't tame the land
It's hard out here for horse

And a man

Oh let the horses play
 Let the horses play
 Let them run and kick and neigh
 Let the horses play

They say there's greener pastures
 On the other side
 But from this life I see
 No reason to hide

Pain and misery
 Don't mean a lot to me
 As long as I am free
 As a horse

Oh let the horses play
 Let the horses play
 Let them run and kick and neigh
 Let the horses play

The audience applauds him politely (except EMMETT, who whistles and hollers and mimes shooting guns in the air) and RICK smiles broadly. This is more adulation than he's ever received in his life. He takes a deep breath.

RICK

Hello, I mean, howdy y'all! Thanks for coming on out to Horseplay. I hope you're enjoying your
(really dad-joke this up)
 HORSE-d'oeuvres and MANE courses. My name's Sheriff...Rick and I'll be your host for tonight's entertainment!

INT. Backstage

KRISTEN and SONIA play Rock / Paper / Scissors to decide who takes the back half of the horse. KRISTEN wins with Scissors, and turns up her hand to cut SONIA's Paper before waving her middle finger in SONIA's face.

KRISTEN

Butt duty! What is that? Two weeks in a row? Honestly, I'm starting to forget the choreography for the back half!

SONIA

You know it's exactly the same as the front, right?

KRISTEN has already disappeared into the front half of the horse costume. She turns, talking while moving the mouth of the horse costume.

KRISTEN

(In a goofy cartoon horse voice)

Quit bein' such a Naaay-gative
Naaaaay-ncy!

SONIA starts to pull on the bottom half of the horse, begrudgingly.

KRISTEN

Kristen, did you hear my wordplay...did you hear my horseplay?

SONIA

YES! I HEARD YOU

KRISTEN

Straight from my horse's mouth?

SONIA fastens the two halves together, disappearing inside the horse.

KRISTEN

He's wrapping up the song! Let's get ready to hoof it!

RICK

(From the stage)

Now let's meet a gal who's quite the hooper, Lucille the dancing horse!

KRISTEN

Fuck! He stole my joke!

(the front of the horse jumps slightly)

Ow! Did you just punch my ass?!?!?

SONIA

GO, KRISTEN!

The Dancing Horse makes its way out to the stage as RICK comes off, smiling broadly. JOLENE, helping MARCUS prepare for his showdown, smiles at RICK and then gestures toward the backstage exit with her eyes. RICK looks, and MR. PETERSON is standing in the door. RICK approaches him.

MR. PETERSON

Hey there! Wow, this is some kind of place, isn't it?

RICK

Thanks...we're pretty proud of it.

MR. PETERSON

You know, I remember coming here when I was a kid, kinda thought it was a shithole. My wife insisted we come, and I gotta say, I'm impressed. A dinner and a show joint where the food and drink are mass-produced shit, and the show is good enough to at least hold my kids' attention. Cocktails are stiff too.

KRISTEN and SONIA come off stage and quickly get out of the sweltering horse costume.

KRISTEN

(in the distance)

Wow! let's get Soni a water! She looks like a real...horse's ass!

SONIA takes the back end of the costume and tosses it over KRISTEN's head, stomping off.

MR. PETERSON

Heh, one tip: you gotta put the sexy girls on the OUTSIDE of the horse.

RICK

I'm sorry, but I need to prepare for the next act. Is there are reason you're back here staring at my staff?

MR. PETERSON

You run a tight ship around here, huh? I like that. Look, I'll be brief. My name is Hank Peterson, and I want to buy Horseplay from you. My wife grew up here, and she was over the damn moon to hear the old place had re-opened. I own several restaurants in Kansas City, and know a good idea when I see one. I could make you a very rich man...Sheriff.

RICK

Sorry, buckaroo, but this ranch isn't for sale.

MR. PETERSON

What?

RICK

It's the, I'm doing the character!

MR. PETERSON

Huh, ok. Well I'll have my people

call you this week. I think you might
want hear my offer.

MR. PETERSON begins to walk away.

MR. PETERSON

And good work with the stage show. I
could never do anything like this.
Too "look at me", yaknowwhatImean?

*He leaves. RICK looks at his reflection in the mirror in the
nearby dressing room.*

RICK

I knew it was too much...