

PIPPI.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

"MEN."

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

PIPPI.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

"MEN."

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

(Pippi takes her buck-filled cowboy hat from the "Men.")

PIPPI.

Y'ALL WANNA PLAY?

COME ON AND MAKE MY DAY

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

"MEN."

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

PIPPI.

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

"MEN."

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

(Pippi notices that a new customer has entered the club: Norbert. He stands in the corner, trying not to draw attention. Pippi approaches him.)

PIPPI.

I THINK I'LL STAY A WHILE

THIS PLACE IS JUST MY STYLE

THE BUCK STOPS HERE!

(Song ends. The "Men" fold their lawn chairs, readying to leave.)

NORBERT. Fellas, you seen my brother Delbert?

"MEN." Nope, haven't seen him, not in years ... *(Etc. The "Men" exit.)*

NORBERT. Wait, fellas, I might need a ride. *(Pippi reenters in street clothes, counting cash.)* Hey.

PIPPI. Honey, the club is closed. If you want a private dance, try the "Grits 'n' Tits" out on Route 17.

NORBERT. I'm not lookin' for a dance, I'm lookin' for my brother —

PIPPI. Look. I have been drivin' all day and dancin' all night. I do not have time for this routine. I am a dancer, period. Not a "dancer with benefits." *(Norbert doesn't quite follow.)*

NORBERT. Well ... I don't care about your health insurance.

PIPPI. Don't you play dumb with me. I know your kind. And I can see that

shiny weddin' band all the way over here. I don't suppose the missus knew you were comin' here tonight.

NORBERT. Hell, *I* didn't even know I was comin' here tonight. My brother told me we was goin' for beers and he up and brings me to this place.

PIPPI. Gee, I'm so sorry you got dragged to the Litter Box Show Palace. Don't mind me up there dancin' my behind off. You have any idea what it's like to just stand here and collect dollar bill after dollar bill after dollar bill?

NORBERT. Yes I do.

PIPPI. Is that so?

NORBERT. I'm a toll collector.

PIPPI. Hey, how 'bout we start over. I'm Pippi.

NORBERT. I'm Norbert. I live over at Armadillo Acres.

PIPPI. Oh! That's where I seen you before. Well here I am chit-chattin' with my neighbor after he's already seen me dance half-naked in front of a group of strangers. *That* doesn't happen every day.

NORBERT. It does in Florida.

PIPPI. Well, I better get goin'. Hey, I'm sorry I laid into you. I'm just havin' a really bad ... decade.

NORBERT. Hey, I know how that is. (*Pippi and Norbert connect — there is a "spark."*)

PIPPI. Did you say somethin' about needin' a ride? 'Cause I could give you a lift back to the trailer park.

NORBERT. Yeah. That'd be great. I could use a ride. (*Pippi and Norbert freeze. Lights up on The Girls.*)

LIN. Use a ride? It looks to me like a certain toll-collector we know is lookin' at some cuuuurves up ahead.

BETTY. It looks to me like a certain toll-collector who should be hittin' the breaks is hittin' the fast lane. (*Pickles looks confused.*)

PICKLES. I don't know what ya'll are talkin' about, but it looks to me like those two people are gonna fuck. (*Norbert and Pippi exit.*)

up waiting for him.)

NORBERT. Oh, hey, Jeannie.

JEANNIE. Hey, Norbert.

NORBERT. Wow. Place looks nice.

JEANNIE. *(Casually.)* Really? Oh. Yeah, I been tidyin' up. Makin' some changes. I put up some old pictures of us. *(Norbert takes a closer look.)*

NORBERT. Look at that. I forgot about Delbert's Devo phase. He loved that jumpsuit. Whip it! Whip it good —

JEANNIE. *(Cutting him off.)* Norbert. I wanna talk to you about something.

NORBERT. You do?

JEANNIE. Come on, sit down here beside me. *(Jeannie pats the sofa next to her. Norbert tentatively sits.)*

NORBERT. You know, Jeannie ... I think I wanna talk to you, too.

JEANNIE. Me first. I just can't wait. I know our anniversary is still a week away, but I want to give you part of your gift tonight.

NORBERT. You do?

JEANNIE. I'm just so excited about it. *(She stands.)* You ready? Then close your eyes. *(He does. Jeannie walks to the door, quietly opens it and steps outside. From outside.)* Okay! Open 'em! *(Norbert sees that Jeannie is no longer inside the trailer with him. He runs to the door and sees her at the bottom of the porch steps.)*

NORBERT. Nuh-uh! *(Jeannie runs back inside and Norbert sweeps her off her feet.)*

Holy ham sammitches — when did all this happen?!

JEANNIE. Remember that day you threw them Ice Capades tickets on the ground?

NORBERT. Yeah. Jeannie, I'm real, real sorry about that.

JEANNIE. No, you were right to be mad, Norbert. I promised myself that very day I would leave this trailer so's we could celebrate our anniversary at that show. So I started practicin' — first it was a toe, then a foot, then my whole leg ... Then it was "Lies and Deception" weekend on Lifetime TV, so I got a little side-tracked —

NORBERT. *(Cutting her off.)* Wait. That's what you been doin' for the past few weeks while I been — *(Catches himself.)* Out?

JEANNIE. Thing is, I've only made it as far down as the bottom of the steps, and with just one week left ... I don't know, Norbert. Maybe this was a stupid idea.

NORBERT. Stupid idea? Just walkin' out that door is more than you done in near twenty years, Jeannie. You can do this. I know it.

JEANNIE. I think so, too, Norbert. I feel different. Do I look different?

NORBERT. You look ... You look beautiful. *(Jeannie is surprised and touched.)*

JEANNIE. So let's set the date — one week from tonight, on our anniversary

you are all mine, Norbert Garstecki. (*Jokingly.*) So you best cancel whatever hot date you got planned instead! (*Guilty, Norbert forces a chuckle.*)
NORBERT. Right. Jeannie, I'm just uh ... I'm just gonna go out and get some air. (*Norbert steps outside onto the porch.*)

SONG
OWNER OF MY HEART

JEANNIE.

THEM WEDDIN' VOWS SURE ARE FUNNY
FOR BETTER OR WORSE
WELL MY MAN'S SEEN THE WORST OF ME,
FOR SURE
BUT THE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL
IS GETTING NEAR
IT'S TIME TO MAKE THINGS CLEAR
GONNA WIPE AWAY MY FEAR
AND I'LL DO IT ALL FOR THE ONE
THAT I ADORE, FOR
YOU ARE THE OWNER OF MY HEART
KEEPER OF MY DREAMS
HOLDER OF MY THOUGHTS
WHEN AT TIMES IT SEEMS I MIGHT
SLIP AWAY, TOO FAR AWAY, SO FAR APART
GOTTA STOP MYSELF, REMIND MYSELF THAT
YOU ARE THE OWNER OF MY HEART

(*Lights up on Norbert outside the trailer.*)

NORBERT.

SOME PEOPLE SAY TIME REALLY FLIES BY
AND I THINK I AGREE
BUT TIME'S DONE MADE A STOP 'ROUND HERE
WHEN YOU SEE A SMILE ON YOUR WOMAN'S FACE
YOU AIN'T SEEN IN TWENTY YEARS
IT MAKES ALL TIME STAND STILL
SO BEAUTIFUL UNTIL

TRACKS

THIS SIDE OF THE

TRACKS

TRACKS

THIS SIDE OF THE

TRACKS

THIS SIDE OF THE

TRACKS

ALL.

THIS SIDE OF THE TRA-A-AAACKS!

(Song ends. Jeannie goes back inside her trailer. Pippi gets a key from Betty and goes off to hers. Norbert goes off to work. Betty smiles at the audience.)

BETTY. Hey, girls. We got company.

LIN. Oh! *(Lin turns on the perennial Christmas lights.)*

BETTY. *(To audience.)* Now I got a feelin' this might be some o' ya'll's first time in a trailer park so we're gonna tackle some unfair stereotypes up front. First off, we do not all have missin' teeth.

LIN and PICKLES. No, I got a full set, floss daily ... *(Etc.)*

BETTY. Second of all, we do not frequent Monster Truck and Tractor Pulls.

LIN and PICKLES. Not since prom, s'borin' ... *(Etc.)*

BETTY. And finally, we do not marry our cousins.

LIN. Hell no. Not without a pre-nup.

BETTY. Just stick around. We'll make sure your stay is pleasant. *(Betty walks over to the community mailboxes, checks her mail and also grabs the Garsteckis'.)*

LIN. And you'll need us for guidance 'cause around here, what you see ain't always what you get.

PICKLES. Sorta like a restaurant menu with no pictures of the food on it. *(Betty wanders over to the Garstecki trailer and deposits their mail into a make-shift bin that reads: Garstecki Mail Goes Here, Please!)*

BETTY. Take, for instance, Norbert and Jeannie Garstecki.

PICKLES. He's the toll collector and she's the one with the arachnophobia.

LIN. You mean "agoraphobia." She's afraid to go outside.

PICKLES. *(As if Lin is an idiot.)* She's afraid to go outside and live amongst the spiders.

BETTY. Ladies, Jeannie Garstecki is afraid to go outside, but it's not because of spiders. I've known Jeannie and Norbert since they met in high school. *(Lights shift — Flashback circa 1983. '80s music in. Jeannie enters in a belted "Frankie Say Relax" T-shirt and Madonna-wannabe accessories, carrying schoolbooks. Norbert enters in an '80s haircut and "Ratt" T-shirt. Teenage awkwardness:)*

NORBERT. Hey.

JEANNIE. Hey.

NORBERT. So, like, I hear you're gettin' straight A's in Geometry and I'm, like