

SWINGING WITH THE FINKELS

Written by

Jonathan Newman

Pickups

V.5

18 April, 2010

1

**INT. ALVIN & ELLIE'S HOUSE**

1

[opening scene, note: shoot m2s and singles]

On Sofa to camera.

ALVIN  
Marriage takes work.

ELLIE  
Keeping that flame alive.  
(beat)  
Ultimately, a couple can survive  
the rocky road ahead if they have  
one thing.

ALVIN  
Comfortable shoes.

ELLIE  
No. A firm foundation of love.

ALVIN  
Yes.  
(beat)  
And... a 62' plasma tv.

2

**INT. ALVIN'S OFFICE**

2

[slots in near beginning]

ALVIN'S office, an architect's firm.

Henry is putting the finishing touches on a little model of a house. Alvin looks over his shoulder. \*

Jenny, Alvin's secretary, delivers a mug of tea to Alvin. She clearly has a bit of a crush on him. \*

JENNY \*

Your tea, Mr Finkel. \*

ALVIN \*

Thanks Jenny. \*

HENRY

What do you think?

ALVIN

I think you did a nice job, Henry.  
Well done.

HENRY

Can I have a raise?

JIM, Alvin's partner, appears holding blueprints.

JIM

Where'd you find this guy? He's funny.

(beat)

Ok, blueprints for the Morrison house. Got a second, partner?

ALVIN

Sure.

Jim unravels the prints and lays them on a table.

JIM

Kept it open plan. Took out the swimming pool. Who swims in this country anyway? Loose, modern design, beautiful to look at, much like myself. Hey, Finkel, you even listening?

ALVIN

Huh? Yeah, sorry. What?

JIM

You seem a little distracted lately.

(beat)

What is it?

ALVIN

Nothing.

JIM

Still having problems on the home front?

ALVIN

Kind of, yeah-

JIM

Did I ever tell you I majored in psychology as an undergrad.

ALVIN

Really?

JIM

No, not really, but I read a lot of books.

(beat)

Trust me - everyone is going through the same thing as you. The first few years of marriage are the hardest. For men, problems in marriage always boil down to sex.

ALVIN

Do they?

HENRY

You spend your whole life trying to get the booty. And when you finally have the booty, **the booty has a headache.**

\*  
\*

JIM

Wise words Ghandi. If your sex life is healthy, you can put up with all sorts of personality defects. We're very shallow in that respect.

\*

ALVIN

But what do you do when the sex dries up?

3

**INT. TEXTILE SHOP - DAY**

3

[slots in continuous from previous scene]

Ellie is browsing fabrics with Andrew, her assistant designer.

ANDREW

Shop. Shopping is always the best antidote to lack of sex.

(beat)

You like this fabric? I don't like it. Do you have any intimacy?

SHOP ASSISTANT

Is that a fabric.

ANDREW

Not you. Her.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Oh sorry.

ELLIE

Intimacy? Some. Not nearly enough.

4

**INT. PUB**

4

[continuous in edit]

Jim, Alvin, and their work colleague HENRY are sat at the bar of the pub.

JIM

Ya see. You want sex. They want intimacy. You end up with neither one and you blame each other!

(to barman)

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)  
Two pints and... Henry?  
(pointing to Henry)

HENRY  
Vodka Cranberry.  
(off their look)  
What? It's a refreshing fruity  
beverage.

JIM  
(looks at him funny)  
Yeah, if you're a girl maybe.  
(back to Alvin)  
Ok, you wanna know the secret. How  
we make it work?

Jim pulls out a photo from his pocket and shows it to Alvin.

ALVIN  
Eww! That's disgusting. You're  
naked.

Jim shows Henry.

JIM  
Yes I am. How do you like that bad  
boy?

5 **INT. TEXTILE SHOP**

5

[continuous]

Andrew and Ellie still.

ANDREW  
Let me show you something.

He pulls out a photo.

ELLIE  
Oh my god. Is that what I think it  
is?

ANDREW  
Sure is. Prada spring collection.  
It looks nice on me, no?

6 **INT. PUB**

6

[continuous]

As before.

ALVIN  
So what's your point, Jim? I  
should get naked?

JIM  
Look, Alvin, have you ever been to  
an Indian restaurant?

ALVIN  
Sure.

JIM  
Well what do you get there?

Alvin shrugs.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(turning to Henry)  
You tell him. You're Indian,  
Henry. If that is even your real  
name. What do you get at an Indian  
restaurant?

HENRY  
Curry, bindji baji. Sag aloo.  
Sometimes chicken korma.

JIM  
No! You get 'spice.' That's what  
you need... spice! Spice things  
up!

7           **INT. TEXTILE SHOP - DAY**

7

[continuous]

Andrew and Ellie.

ANDREW  
You have to at least TRY to spice  
things up. Wear something really  
sexy.

8           **INT. PUB - DAY**

8

[continuous]

As before.

HENRY  
Like, maybe... a fireman's outfit.

JIM  
Perfect! Yes! A fireman's outfit.  
Women LOVE fireman. Guaranteed  
spice. Then you can take out your  
big hose and fill up-

9           **INT. TEXTILE SHOP**

9

[continuous]

ANDREW

-a nice hot bath. It will relax  
you.

(beat)

Let's buy this fabric yes?

10           **INT. PUB**

10

[continuous]

JIM

You...uh, you want a copy of this  
picture? I have spares.

ALVIN

No thanks.

HENRY

I'll take one.

Henry puts it in his pocket. Alvin gives him a look.

11           **INT. ALVIN & ELLIE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM**

11

[continuous]

Candles are lit and the room is romantic.

Ellie puts the finishing touches on her sexy lingerie.

ALVIN (O.C.)

Hon!

ELLIE

Just a second!

She jumps into bed.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Ok.

Alvin walks in wearing a FULL FIREMAN'S OUTFIT: yellow hat,  
torch on his jacket, wielding an axe in one hand. He looks  
proud of himself.

Ellie looks baffled. The moment is gone.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Oh Alvin, really?

ALVIN

What? What?

She shakes her head and blows out the candle, annoyed.

12        **INT. BEDROOM**

12

[slots in before swinging, just after GOLF sequence]

Alvin and Ellie in bed.

From end of the bed, we see two sets of feet sticking out.

From this perspective, Alvin's lays on top of Ellie [we just see feet on top of feet]. The scene plays out from this angle.

Alvin and Ellie have sex. It is boring, functional, and doesn't last very long.

                  ALVIN  
That was good.

                  ELLIE  
Sure.

                  ALVIN  
"Sure?" That doesn't sound very convincing.

                  ELLIE  
Well if you call 30 seconds good then... sure, it was good.

13        **INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

13

[slots in after awkward dinner with grandparents]

Ellie is in bed reading. Alvin climbs into bed.

                  ALVIN  
So, what have I learned? I have learned that my wife likes to masturbate with a cucumber when I'm not around.

Ellie looks very embarrassed.

                  ELLIE  
Don't rub it in.

                  ALVIN  
I didn't have to. That's one of the joys of doing it yourself. Not only do I feel inadequate as a man, but I will never look at a salad the same way again.



14

## INT. CLOTHING SHOP

14

[slots in after grandparents go and before Ellie gets idea to swing]

Ellie & Andrew are looking at belts and shoes.

ANDREW

We can accessorize the outfits with something like this. Shoosh level of 4.

He holds up a belt.

ELLIE

Nice. Good eye.

ANDREW

I know. For a bit more money you can hire my other eye too.

ELLIE

If my runway show goes well, there'll be enough to go round. By the way, thank you for all your help.

ANDREW

I believe in you, Ellie... Well for as long as you keep paying me...

ELLIE

Thanks for your loyalty.  
(beat)  
Hey, you're a guy right?

ANDREW

Biologically yes. But up here-  
(he points to his head)  
I'm every woman. Chaka Khan.

ELLIE

How do you keep things fresh in your relationship?

ANDREW

I will let you into a little secret. Monogamy is overrated. Every married couple I know is unhappy.

ELLIE

You seem pretty happy in your relationship.

Andrew thinks about this.

ANDREW  
Swapsies.

ELLIE  
What?

ANDREW  
Swapsies.

ELLIE  
What's that mean?

ANDREW  
Do you have some time now? I want  
you to meet some friends of mine.

15

**INT. ALVIN'S OFFICE - DAY**

15

Alvin is drafting some blueprints. Henry is on the drafting  
board opposite him. \*

JIM  
Can I ask you a question?

HENRY  
Sure.

JIM  
Is it true that Indian people think  
that white people smell like milk?

HENRY  
Milk-ish, yeah. \*

ALVIN  
Bordering on the absurd. \*

JIM  
I'm from Saskatchewan. The only  
Indians I've ever seen wear loin  
cloths and live in Tee-Pees. \*

Jenny, Alvin's secretary, delivers a mug of tea to Alvin. \*

ALVIN  
Thanks Jenny. \*

She stands there waiting obediently, staring wide eyed at  
Alvin. \*

ALVIN (CONT'D)  
That'll be all, thanks. \*

JENNY  
Oh, ok. \*

She exits. \*

JIM

She's got a thing for you.

ALVIN

Jenny? Do you think?

JIM

Clearly, my friend. Some men  
wouldn't think twice-

ALVIN

What? Of having an affair? Going  
behind my wife's back?

JIM

Correct. The French have it  
sussed. Having a mistress is part  
of French culture... just like  
baguettes and smelly cheese. It's  
an option for some men, no?

HENRY

You know King Akbar? Some people  
say he had over 5000 wives.

JIM

Very astute, my friend. Take  
Brother Brigham Young. Founder of  
the Mormon church. One word...  
Polygamy.

HENRY

Ah yes. The ancient art of paper  
folding.

ALVIN

Am I the only sane one left in this  
office?

16

**INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT**

16

Ellie and Andrew walk into the bar. Andrew spots his Latin  
boyfriend, JUAN CARLOS, seated at a table.

ANDREW

Ellie, I want you to meet my  
partner, Juan Carlos.

JUAN CARLOS

Nice to meet you. I heard a lot  
about you.

They sit.

ANDREW

Ellie wants to know about  
'swapsies'.

JUAN CARLOS

Ah, yes. Swapsies. The key to a  
happy relationship.

ELLIE

Can someone please tell me what the  
hell swapsies are?

JUAN CARLOS

You don't know about swapsies? Ok.  
Pick a couple of men you like.

Ellie looks around and spots a couple of men.

ELLIE

Those two.

JUAN CARLOS

Watch this.

He gets up and goes over to the two men. He chats and after a  
minute he returns.

JUAN CARLOS (CONT'D)

Ok. It's all good.

ELLIE

What's all good?

JUAN CARLOS

The swapsy. We do a, how do you  
say, 'exchange program.'

ELLIE

You mean you... swap partners?

JUAN CARLOS

Yes.

ELLIE

Just like that.

JUAN CARLOS

Just like that. Very easy. Easy  
peasy.

ANDREW

That's what we call a swapsy. And  
that, my dear, is the secret to a  
happy marriage.



JIM (CONT'D)

As much as I complain, I'm willing to put in the effort.

ALVIN

She does have this big fashion show soon. I was thinking of trying to patch things up.

JIM

That's your perfect chance. Show her you care. You can't go through life being some passive limp nonsequitor like Henry here.

HENRY

I don't know. It's always worked for me.

JIM

Be a verb. Take action. Be in control.

ALVIN

You're right. Come with me to the show?

JIM

Did you not hear any of that conversation? While it might sound like I am in control, she will chop off my nuts in a cigar cutter if I am not home in 30 minutes. I don't want that. That, my friend, is making an effort.

(beat)

Gentlemen... goodbye and good luck.

Jim leaves. Alvin stands next to Henry.

HENRY

I'm free.

Alvin shoots Henry a look.

19

**INT. ALVIN'S OFFICE - DAY**

19

[slots in after fashion show]

Alvin is working at his desk. Jim is on the phone.

Alvin listens.

JIM

(into phone)

I don't know... just give them some paracetamol... well stick it in a piece of cheese or something.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

Always works with the dog... yes, I know they're not dogs... I'm just saying it works with the dog, that's all... no you don't need to go to emergency.... because it's just a cold and doctors are useless that's why... no, it doesn't mean I don't care. Well, you're busy, I'm busy... we're both tired... tell you what... let's go on a date... Wednesday. Like the old times... You got it... love you too...

He hands up.

JIM (CONT'D)

Well whatdya know? I'm going on a date with my wife!

Alvin reflects.

20

**INT. ALVIN'S BACHELOR FLAT**

20

[slots in just after Alvin looks at the ringpull]

Alvin dials a number on his mobile phone.

ALVIN

(into phone)

Hi mate... Happy New Year and stuff... listen, I need a hand.

21

**INT. LOBBY - NIGHT**

21

Alvin and Jim emerge from the lift of Alvin's block.

The doors open and Alvin and Jim begin walking out through the lobby and outside.

ALVIN

Thank you so much. Ellie has the car and you know what it's like getting a taxi on New Year's.

JIM

Hey, you did me a favour. I'd rather eat my own belly button cheese than sit and listen to my wife's friends. As long as I get back by midnight. So I need to drop you and head back.

His phone rings.

JIM (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, that's her. By the way, I told her you had a hernia and I was taking you to A & E?

ALVIN

What?

JIM

(into phone)

Hey honey. No he's ok... yeah, it's sticking out quite a bit... they just push it back in, I imagine... hey, that's what friends are for...

They get to Jim's car. It has a CLAMP on it.

JIM (CONT'D)

(spotting the clamp)

Holy crap... sorry honey... he just showed it to me and it's not pleasant.. Listen I gotta go... love you too...

(beat)

Houston, we have a problem. Dammit! Sorry, pal, looks like we're well and truly snookered.

Alvin looks around in frustration. A large YELLOW GARBAGE TRUCK drives past.

ALVIN

Look, Jim, I'm sorry about your car, but some friends once told me not to wait until the cow backs into my hand, but to go into the field to milk it.

JIM

Metaphorically, but yes. Wise words.

ALVIN

Yes. Yes. Wise words I gotta go, mate. Happy New Year.

Alvin runs off in the direction of the garbage truck.

JIM

Go! Milk the cow! Be a verb! God speed to you my friend.



22

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

22

Alvin looks desperately for a cab. None of them have their lights on.

A large yellow garbage truck drives past and stops nearby. A man gets out and grabs a dustbin.

Alvin has an idea.