

Forbidden Marriage

Story
by
Richard R. Roller

Screenplay
by
Richard R. Roller & Greg Bell

Developed in association with:

Friend Ship Productions

Copyright 2017
Registered WGA

agency@friendshipproductions.org

FADE IN:

1 EXT. ESTABLISHING - STREETS OF DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES -
MORNING

Caption: Los Angeles - Present Time

MASON ANDREWS, mid-40s, well-worn and ruggedly handsome walks along a sidewalk in downtown Los Angeles. As a FOXY GIRL passes him by, he turns his head to check her out.

He stops at a newsstand to look at the magazines. The attendant, JOEY, greets him.

JOEY
Morning, Mase.

MASON
Hiya, Joey. What's new in the world since I went to sleep last night?

JOEY
Same ol', same ol'. Were all going to hell in a hand basket.

Mason picks up a copy of Esquire. After flipping a few pages, he reaches for his wallet.

MASON
How are the kids?

JOEY
Tony's back in rehab and Trudy's back in school.

MASON
So, it's not all bad, huh?

JOEY
Being a parent's tough, man.

Mason reaches out to pay for the magazine with a twenty dollar bill.

MASON
Here, Joey, keep the change. Take the kids out for some Ice Cream on me.

JOEY
Thanks pal.

2 EXT. LOS ANGELES TIMES BUILDING - MORNING

Mason enters the front door of the LA Times Building.

3 INT. LOS ANGELES TIMES - LOBBY

As Mason begins to make his way to the elevator, he's greeted by BILLY, the Security Guard.

BILLY
Morning, Mr. Andrews

MASON
Good morning to you, Billy and, it's
just Mason.

4 INT. LOS ANGELES TIMES - BREAK ROOM

SHERRIE and MARLA, two very sexy females, with classic hourglass figures, hover near the sumptuous pasty tray as Mason enters.

He stops to admire the view.

MASON
Mmmmm...Nice buns, ladies!

The two women turn and feign shock as he moves closer to them and the pastry tray.

SHERRIE
Did you mean what you said yesterday,
Mason?

Mason responds, without looking at them as he fills his coffee mug and adds cream and honey.

MASON
I always mean what I say Sherrie,
just don't quote me.

MARLA
Well, we just want you to know -

SHERRIE
- Your buns look pretty good, too.

As the girls leave, Sherrie pats Mason on the butt.

MASON
(feigning insult)
Hey! That's sexual harassment.

MARLA
Just playing.

MASON
Right! Everyone's just playing.

He lightens up.

MASON (CONT'D)
Besides, now the other cheek feels neglected.

5 INT. MASON'S OFFICE

Mason sits at his desk with his coffee mug and a plate of sweets. He opens his laptop. The phone rings. He answers.

MASON
Andrews here. Oh, hi Irene. Um
hmm... I don't really see how I can
make it...

TONY MANCUSO, the editor-in-chief, enters, carrying a folder. He's stocky, balding. Mason continues with his call, listening.

Mancuso looks over papers in a folder.

MASON (CONT'D)
It's just that, well... they work
you to death around here.

Mancuso looks up from what he's reading and smirks.

MASON (CONT'D)
Yes, I know. Look, I'm sorry. I
had some unexpected expenses,
and...(pause) All of it? Look,
Irene...

Mason holds the phone away from his ear to ease the verbal tirade before responding.

MASON (CONT'D)
No, I don't want to talk to her.
Not right now.

He looks to Mancuso.

MASON (CONT'D)
I'm in a meeting.

He continues listening.

MASON (CONT'D)
Okay, you're right, I'm not much of
a father, but then you're not exactly
Donna Reed!

There's a loud CLICK on the line.

MASON (CONT'D)

Damn!

MANCUSO

Another spin on the marriage-go-round?

MASON

I thought I'd hopped off.

MANCUSO

Doesn't end with divorce.

MASON

You should know!

MANCUSO

Yeah, working on number three.

Mancuso lays the folder on Mason's desk.

MANCUSO (CONT'D)

Check this out.

Mason casually takes his time, looking over the material. Impatient, Mancuso grabs the folder and reads aloud.

MANCUSO (CONT'D)

'Salt Lake police officer loses job...faces trial for polygamy.'

Mason shows little interest.

MANCUSO (CONT'D)

Would you like to cover the trial?

MASON

I thought Utah wasn't prosecuting polygamists these days.

MANCUSO

They've got a new Catholic female prosecutor who's trying to make a name for herself. She found out this guy's still legally married in another state.

Mancuso lays the folder back on Mason's desk.

MANCUSO (CONT'D)

This is right in your wheel house, Andrews.

MASON

Chief, I see that mad glint in your one good eye.

MANCUSO

I see a series here.

MASON

I assume the guy's a Mormon.

MANCUSO

He's one of thousands of fundamentalists who say they're on 'the true path.' Whaddya say, man? Wanna go an find out how they do it?

MASON

Do what?

MANCUSO

Hell's bells, man, get along! These men are married to two or three or even more women at the same time. No alimony, no child support, just one big happy family.

MASON

Don't believe everything you read, it'll warp your view of reality. Say, Chief, you know the penalty for polygamy?

MANCUSO

No. But I'm sure you'll tell me wise guy.

MASON

More than one wife!

MANCUSO

I want you to cover the trial.

MASON

You gotta be kidding. I'd miss out on the ladies' luncheon for the emotionally disturbed children of Beverly Hills shrinks!

MANCUSO

I found an old polygamist, one of the last ones jailed way back when. They offered him an out if he'd dump his second wife. He told 'em, shove it, did two years, then came out and married again!

Mancuso picks up the research material and begins reading.

MANCUSO (CONT'D)

'Samuel Jamison...78 years old...three wives, 34 children, 278 grandchildren and over 100 great and great-great grandchildren....'

MASON

Busy man.

Mancuso looks up.

MANCUSO

He's agreed to an interview. How about it? Wanna go?

MASON

Chief, last time you sent me out of town I ended up in the drunk tank. I don't want to go through that again.

MANCUSO

But you're dry!

Mason looks at his watch.

MASON

Six months, one week, four days and -

MANCUSO

- O.K. So what's the point?

MASON

I don't think I'm ready.

MANCUSO

I think you are.

MASON

But what about all those free luncheons?

Mancuso walks away, muttering to himself, then turns back.

MANCUSO

... free luncheons... Maybe you're right. Maybe you're not the man for the job.

MASON

Sorry.

MANCUSO

You sure as hell are.

6 EXT. MARINA CONDO - NIGHT

Mason, flowers in hand, enters the plush channel-side condominium complex.

7 INT. CONDO HALLWAY

Mason knocks on a door. Just as he's about to knock again, COLETTE opens, wearing only a bathrobe. She's gorgeous.

COLETTE

Mason, you should have called.

MAN, (O.S.)

Who's there, Colette?

Colette turns, keeping the door barely open.

COLETTE

A friend. I'll be right there.

She turns back to Mason. He responds before she can say more.

MASON

I should have called.

8 EXT. MARINA CONDO

Mason exits the building, walks to the boat channel, smells the flowers, then throws them in the water and watches as they float away.

9 EXT. STREET IN HOLLYWOOD - LATE NIGHT

Mason walks along Hollywood Blvd. He passes an assortment of street characters: a BAG LADY, a BUM, some PUNK ROCKERS, a wildly-sermonizing MADMAN.

A water-spewing, street-cleaning vehicle approaches. The street characters are unconcerned with their imminent soaking.

He jumps into a doorway to avoid getting drenched. In the shadows of the doorway, he's greeted by a TRANSVESTITE.

10 EXT. 50'S CAFE

Mason removes a copy of The LA Times from a dispenser in front of the 50s-style diner. He glances at the paper, tucks it under his arm, turns and enters the diner.

11 INT. 50'S CAFE

Mason sits at the counter. SADIE, the time-locked waitress, approaches.

She has a beehive hairdo and ferociously chews gum.

SADIE
Hiya hon, the usual?

MASON
Sure, Sadie.

LATER

Mason reads the paper as he wolfs down his eggs, meatloaf and potatoes. As she pours more coffee, Sadie looks over his shoulder at the headlines: *'Republican Congress Considers Bill to Block Gay Marriage - Again!'*

SADIE
Ain't that somethin' 'bout all them
gays gettin' married?

MASON
What you think about all this, Sadie?

She twists her wedding ring then moves in closer to whisper.

SADIE
I say, suffer an' let suffer.

Mason gazes at the assortment of burned-out CHARACTERS in the diner. Suddenly, he gets up and puts money on the table.

SADIE (CONT'D)
Where ya goin' in such a hurry, hon?

MASON
Outta Hollyweird and off to
Mormonland.

SADIE
That near Disneyland?

12 EXT. NEVADA DESERT HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Mason's motorhome heads north on Highway 15 toward Salt Lake.

13 INT. MASON'S MOTORHOME - NEVADA DESERT

Mason passes a highway sign that reads 'Wallings Junction.' He pulls off the road, sits there in the dark, thinking. The calm is broken when a semi zooms by, shaking the RV.

When the road is clear, he makes a U-turn.

14 EXT. WALLINGS OUTSKIRTS

The motorhome rolls down a country road. The headlights go off as the vehicle slows down and continues by moonlight.

15 INT. MASON'S MOTORHOME

Mason turns down another road and slows to a stop. A rural home is thirty yards ahead. Lights glow inside. It's the home of his ex-wife, Irene, her dad and Mason's daughter, KATY.

He sits, staring for a few minutes, then turns and leaves, headlights still off.

16 EXT. UTAH PLAINS - PREDAWN

Mason's motorhome travels between the vast expanse of plains on his left and moonlit snowcapped mountains on his right.

17 INT. MOTORHOME

In the distance is the city of Saint George, Utah, an island of twinkling lights in the predawn hour. Far off to the left is a brilliantly lit Mormon temple, a beacon of light on the high plains.

18 EXT. SAINT GEORGE UTAH

Mason pulls into the town of Saint George. He passes a sign with the state symbol: a beehive. He parks his RV in two spots next to the Saint George Cafe.

19 INT. SAINT GEORGE CAFE

Mason sits at the counter. Next to the register are HENRY, the owner, and a few TOOTHLESS LOCALS. The men watch television.

The waitress, TINA, takes Mason's order.

MASON

High-test, please, with cream and honey.

TINA

Honey? I don't think we have any.

Henry points to a shelf.

HENRY

Look under that shelf, Tina.

MASON

Thanks. Sorry to put you out, but...
well, the beehive state an all.

HENRY

We're called the beehive state for
our industriousness.

MASON

Oh!

Tina pulls out some old, dusty honey packets.

TINA

Hope these haven't spoiled.

MASON

Honey never spoils. It's even been
found in the pyramids.

TINA

Well, I'll be.

Mason squeezes three packets of honey into his coffee then
pulls out his journal and begins to write.

HENRY

You a writer?

MASON

Journalist.

HENRY

What brings you to Saint George?

MASON

I'm on my way to Salt Lake to cover
the Lehi Brewster trial.

HENRY

Well, ain't that something now.

MASON

You a Mormon?

HENRY

Sure, most of the folks here in Saint
George are, but I'm whatcha call a
'Jack' Mormon.

MASON

A Jack Mormon?

HENRY

I smoke, drink, cuss and do a number of things the mainline folks frown on. Me and my kind catch a little flack, but them pligs are even a few steps lower.

MASON

'Pligs?'

HENRY

Polygamists!

MASON

Are there polygamist families here?

HENRY

Nah! But nearby, in Joshua, there's a bunch of 'em. Ever' now'n then some a the men 'n their families come in 'n eat.

MASON

What are they like? I mean, do they seem different from regular folks?

HENRY

Their money spends just like everybody else's.

MASON

Tell me about Joshua.

HENRY

You really are a reporter, ain't ya. Now, don't you go an get yourself no ideas 'bout goin' there! Them folks'd just as soon the outside world leave 'em alone.

MASON

(softly to himself)
Outside world?

20 EXT. MAIN STREET JOSHUA - DAY

Mason slowly drives down the main drag of Joshua. The few visible FEMALE INHABITANTS wear 19th Century garb.

21 INT. GENERAL STORE

Mason looks around for a salesperson. The store appears deserted.

MASON

Hello!

He looks around, sees no one, then looks up and sees the PROPRIETOR, a tall bearded man on a ladder replacing some overhead lights.

PROPRIETOR

What can I do for you?

MASON

I'm a reporter from Los Angeles on my way to cover the Lehi Brewster trial.

The proprietor gets down from the ladder.

PROPRIETOR

I'd say you are a bit off course.

MASON

I'm here to get some insight into your practice of plural marriage.

PROPRIETOR

We have nothing to say. Is there something I can get for you before you are on your way?

MASON

Look, I'm just trying to understand -

PROPRIETOR

- Mister, that is just not possible.

22 EXT. SALT LAKE CITY - AERIAL VIEW - DAY

Mason's motorhome makes its way into Salt Lake City.

23 INT. SALT LAKE HILTON - COFFEE SHOP

Mason enters information in his laptop as he eats. A MAN nearby gets up and carries over his plate.

MAN

Mind if I join you?

The man sits before Mason can answer.

MASON

Sure. Have a seat.

MAN

The money's great, but the life of a traveling salesman is damn lonely.

He looks around, pulls out a flask and pours something into his coke.

MAN (CONT'D)
How about you, friend? Have a little
of Kentucky's finest?

MASON
No. No, thank you.

MAN
Come on, it takes the edge off being
in this straight-laced state.

The man looks around to be sure no one is listening.

MAN (CONT'D)
You're not one of 'them' are you?

MASON
Them?

MAN
Yeah, them Mormons.

MASON
No, I'm not.

MAN
I just don't get these people, they're
all just so damn holier than thou.

As the man continues his rant, Mason slips into a drinking-days FLASHBACK.

24 INT. PLAYBOY CLUB - NIGHT

Mason is at a table with other REPORTERS. They down drinks and flirt with the BUNNIES. "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" blares in the background.

25 HILTON COFFEE SHOP

The man looks worried as Mason comes out of his daydream.

MAN
You all right, fella?

MASON
Me? Sure, I'm fine.

26 INT. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETING - SALT LAKE - NIGHT

The room is filled with coffee-drinking, chain-smoking, donut-snacking ALCOHOLICS. Everyone is chattering.

Mason enters and takes a seat. FRANK approaches the podium and everyone quiets down.

FRANK

Welcome to the Tuesday night meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, my name is Frank and I'm a grateful recovering alcoholic and your leader for tonight.

Applause.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Will those of you who care to, please join me in the Serenity Prayer?

GROUP

God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

LATER

The meeting has concluded. Mason chats with Frank, NANCY and ARLENE. Arlene is in her mid-thirties, has thick glasses, is overweight and looks much older than her years.

Nancy is attractive in a weather-beaten sort of way.

NANCY

I don't get it, any man I's with better keep both eyes on me.

Everyone laughs except for Arlene. Frank notices someone.

FRANK

Good to meet you, Mason.

They shake hands.

MASON

You, too. Thanks.

Frank walks away, leaving Mason alone with Nancy and Arlene.

NANCY

I don't know a thing about polygamy; but I know Salt Lake, and I'd be happy to show you around.

Nancy pulls out her card and hands it to Mason.

MASON

Substance Abuse Counselor?

NANCY

Go with what you know. I gotta get home to my daughter. Give me a call.

She leaves. Arlene hesitates before speaking.

ARLENE

Take my number, too. I have some information that might be helpful.

MASON

Thank you.

Mason takes Arlene's card, but is distracted by Nancy's shapely rear as she walks away.

INTEREST:

If you've sparked to these first 15 pages of **Forbidden Marriage**, and would like to read the rest of the script:

CONTACT:

Agency@Friendshipproductions.org