

The Perils of Pauline's Family Business

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Act I

The stage is set with a 6' table placed diagonally just left of center, a side board or side table up stage left, and andirons down center. The dinner table is set with table cloth, candle sticks, flowers in a vase, and a bowl of nuts. The side board has all the place settings, glasses, decanter for drinks, silver chest, etc. on top. As the scene opens, Mary & Pauline are setting the table while talking.□□

PRESET: Stage - 1/4, Podium - 1/4, House - Full

VISUAL QUE: Narrator moves to podium.

House - Out, Podium - 8

NARRATOR:

Good evening everyone, and welcome! I invite you to take a look at the inside story of a real-life drama of a family business client I've worked with for many years, and to join me as co-consultants in understanding their dynamics and devising strategies to assist them.

Let's start with a historical perspective of a special woman and her family of origin. With all due respect for her privacy, we'll call her Pauline, Pauline Whitacre.

Pauline and her two older brothers grew up working in their family's hardware business. Pauline also graduated first in her class from Wellesly Pauline.

So she and her family were together celebrating Thanksgiving. It was a day which marked a turning point in her life. (Enter Mary, wearing apron, and Pauline, from stage left. They begin setting the table and talking silently to each other).

The year was 1956, and the story went something like this (turns to stage)

QUE: Stage - 8, Podium - out

MARY: So?

PAULINE: (Puzzled) So, what mom?

MARY: So how's it going with Howard? Did he ask you to marry him yet?

PAULINE: Mom! No he did not. But if he did you would be the first to know. Do you like the flowers? They look perfect on the table here.

MARY: Yes, they're beautiful. You really have such a gift for design.

PAULINE: Thanks ma. You know, I've been concerned about dad. How's he doing?

MARY: Well sweetheart, (sighs) to tell you the truth...
(Enter John Sr. - stage right,)

JOHN SR.: Mary, Mary, Where is my brown belt? I've been looking all over the bedroom for it. I can't find it anywhere.

MARY: It's on your tie rack right where you left it last night, after the Chamber meeting!

JOHN SR.: The tie... I didn't leave it on the tie rack! The tie rack?

MARY: John, I swear, I don't know how you keep track of four foreman, twenty eight employees and four stores, and can't even keep track of your clothes. What is this shirt?

PAULINE: Dad, we got a 50% insertion credit from the Register for tomorrow's big Christmas ad.

JOHN: (tries to stop Mary from fussing with him and now is focused on Pauline) Great job Paulie. It's about time we got a break from them. And didn't you get that spot on channel 8?

PAULINE: Yeah, I did that too.

JOHN SR.: I swear this television advertising will make us bigger than Railroad Salvage (Or substitute some local well known business) .

MARY: She does have a gift for design.

PAULINE: Really? You think so?

MARY: You do. Now, we're almost ready to eat. Would you go change that old shirt John. Its Thanksgiving!

JOHN Sr.: Oh Mary. Now, look there's no fire yet. I thought I asked John to get a fire started. I'm going to go get some wood and I'll change later. (moves to walk off SR.) .

MARY: (Chasing after him) Now is later. John Northrop Whitacre... (To Pauline) Honey, would you check the turkey for me?

PAULINE: Sure mom. (exits SL)

MARY: I don't want you worrying about wood. I don't want you worrying about anything! After what the doctor said I'm extremely concerned!

JOHN SR.: What are you worrying your pretty little head about. Huh? Are you worried about our little announcement tonight?

MARY: Yes!

JOHN SR. I've told you we're going to give Pauline the Ingersoll Rand stock. That's more than fair. You know this business needs to be run by a man. Hardware is no place for a lady.

MARY: I know, I'm just a little concerned she won't take it well. You know how she loves the business.

JOHN SR.: Well, some things are what they are. They can't be changed. John

has got to start running this business as if it was his own. You know it makes sense for him to take over while I'm still around to help him along a little bit. And besides, I thought we were going to go on vacation and travel a little bit? London. Rome? And aren't you the one who is always telling me to take time and smell the roses, get out and go fishing? Take whole afternoons off to learn how to play golf?

MARY: Well she really has her heart set on staying at work.

JOHN SR.: I know. But, hardware is no place for a lady, especially Pauline. With that education of hers she needs to go out and find herself a husband and start a family for crying out loud!

MARY: Oh honey, I know, but, (sighs) It's just that she's, well frankly I think she may do a better job at some things than John Jr.. Especially...
(Enter John Jr. - SR. carrying an armful of wood. Takes it Down Center to fire place)

JOHN JR.: Hi dad! I brought some wood in.

MARY: Thank you!

JOHN SR.: Aha, you saved me from a heart attack.

JOHN JR.: Hey dad, I need to talk to you about Jeff. You know, he left the lights on in the Elm Street store all night last Tuesday. I swear, if he doesn't stop drinking, we're gonna have to get rid of him.

JOHN SR.: Huh?

MARY: That Jeff Adams hasn't been sober for the last thirty years, and why you keep him on is a mystery to all of us, Mr. Whitacre.

JOHN JR.: Yeah dad. I know the guy worked for grandpa, but gosh, we can't afford to carry him forever. Pete's tracked his hours, and I swear, I don't think he's at Elm street more than 10 hours a week. Sooner or later you gotta let him go. And the thing with Pete. He hasn't been turning the packing slips into accounting and that's starting to mess up the books .

JOHN SR.: Why are you telling me this? (more intensely) Why are you going on and on like this? You can tell the whole world about your problems today, son, but you're still gonna have to wake up tomorrow and solve them. We both know Peter's like that sometimes but he's your younger brother. You have to take your brother by the hand, set the example for him, bring him along, and... You know one of these days I'm not going to be around here and your...

(Enter Peter - SR.)

PETER: Sorry I'm late. Had to stop by the Elm Street store. Hey, who called the meeting? I didn't get any memo (Laughs, moves Up to Mary and kisses her cheek) .

MARY: Oh Peter. We need to find your father's brown belt. It seems we

had a break in last night and they left all of my jewelry, but took your father's best brown belt. Come on, Mr. Whitacre. Maybe we can even find you a dress shirt for the occasion. (Exit: Mary & John Sr., SR.)

JOHN JR.: (To Pete) So, Jeff left the lights on at Elm street again, eh Pete?

PETE: Yeah, second time this week. Saw them driving by. Jeff must of been celebrating early. If you know what I mean(both chuckle but then John gets serious)

JOHN JR.: I think he always celebrates early. Best I can figure he just stops in every morning, sets up the contractors, and then goes out and has himself a liquid lunch for the better part of the day.

PETE: That's right.

JOHN JR.: (more seriously) But you know Elm street is your store Pete. You know we've talked about it before, but Jeff's your problem. If he screws up it's gonna be you that's on the line. You have to talk to Dad. You gotta straighten this out, cause when it comes down to it, it'll be your store that takes the loss.

PETE: Gol-ly John, don't look at me. (Enter Pauline -SL with a pie) I don't hire and fire around here and you don't either, yet. (smile at each other) I mean, we both know he has to go, but... (Sees pie and follows Pauline) Ooh, wow Paulie...

PAULINE: Petie, your favorite. (tries to pick at one but Pauline shoos him off)

PETE: That looks really good. Is that those sweet nutty things - what do you call them?

PAULINE: Pralines.

PETER: Yeah, Pralines. And they're arranged so nicely. Reminds me of that Holiday display you did at the State street store. It was really good. I heard a bunch of nice comments on it yesterday? What did you think John?

JOHN JR.: Yeah it was good. Nice job Pauline.

PAULINE: Really? Thanks guys.

PETER: You should ask dad to put you in charge of the floor displays in all the stores. I know he likes what you do. Maybe he'd even... (Enter Mary - SL without the apron , carrying cranberry sauce .)

MARY: OK, everybody we're ready to eat. Why don't you boys sit down now. Dad's bringing in the turkey. Pauline would you bring in the last two vegetables please? They're right there on the counter.

PAULINE: Sure mom. (Exits SL)

MARY: (To the boys) And no talking about business during dinner.

JOHN JR. AND PETE: Okay mom.

(Enter , John Sr. - SL, wearing dress shirt ,& Tie carrying the turkey.
followed by Pauline with two vegetable dishes)

JOHN SR.: This turkey could feed three families.

PAULINE: (beaming) Mom, I don't know how you get the time for it. What a great meal. (looks at dish in her right hand as she sets it on table)
Candied carrots (then at dish in her left hand) Broccoli au gratin, and that turkey smells like heaven.

JOHN JR.: (sitting down at the table as Dad enters) Dad did you know Jeff left the lights on at Elm street again? I swear, he's really getting out of hand, holiday or not.

MARY: I mean it, no hardware talk during dinner! or at least until after we say grace, for heaven's sake.

PAULINE: Mom's right. Lets just enjoy the meal.

MARY: (to Pauline) Honey, why don't you start grace?

PAULINE/ALL: Lord, bless this family, bless this food. Amen.

JOHN SR.: Now, before we eat.

MARY: (concerned) John!

JOHN SR.: A toast! (Smiling at Mary) To a wonderful family, to a beautiful and supportive wife, who can find my belt. To talented children and sixty years of success and may we have many more. Cheers!

ALL: (Respond appropriately) Here, here.

JOHN SR.: And now, I have an announcement to make. (all quiet, long pause)
As you know we've had our ups and our downs. But as a family business we've done what has needed to be done. We've put our shoulders to the wheel and everyone has sacrificed when we've needed to And as you all know my little ticker problem here has created some concern for your mother - she wants me to slow down. So, effective Monday, John - It's your business. (ALL respond)

That's right, John, it's time you made the decisions about Jeff and the lights in Elm street, and the final decisions on forecasts for Spring, and...

MARY: Don't forget to tell Pauline!

PAULINE: Dad? I don't understand. I've given my heart to this business. What about the Christmas advertising, and the store layout for Spring. I had my heart set on running the advertising - and...

MARY: John I, John you really... (to Pauline) Pauline dear, we haven't forgotten about you dear...

JOHN SR.: Now Pauline, hardware is no place for a girl. Your mother and I have talked it over and we know your concerns. That's why we're going to give you most of the Ingersoll Rand stock.

MARY: Which is, by the way, a fair and equal share and will make an wonderful nest egg for you so you can settle down and have kids of your own.

PAULINE: But that's not what I want. You, you just don't understand. I don't want to have - I, I want to build this business, bring on another store. Daddy, how could you?

JOHN SR.: Pauline, are you listening to your mother? You're a woman of culture. With this fine education of yours, God knows, more than I ever had, you need to find yourself a husband and start a family, before it's too late.

PAULINE: But Dad. I love Whitacre's. And I'm good at what I do. You just finished congratulating me on the deal with the Register, and those new spots on channel 8. Now all of a sudden I'm, I'm not even part of the business

PETE: Pauline, we all knew John would take over the business, but that doesn't mean you can't do the advertising. Everyone loves the Holiday display, it's so cute, and... (Long silence around the table. John Sr. looks at Peter disapprovingly)

PAULINE: (Outraged) Cute? (Another Long Pause)

JOHN JR.: Pauline, Dad's been putting in sixty hour weeks for the last thirty years. It's a real grind, but that's what it takes. It's gonna take a real push to get the financing to buy Dad out and grow this business and...

PAULINE: Buy Dad out? You think I don't have what it takes? You really think that after all of the work I've done I want to end up like, (starts to say Mom but doesn't) like...

JOHN SR.: (Sternly) That's enough!

PAULINE: (to John Sr.) I know this is how it's done. But it's not right. (To Mary) It's not right! I know I have more to offer this business than any of you are all willing to admit and I deserve to be a part of it.

JOHN SR.: Now Pauline, your mother and I know this comes as a surprise, and I know it's not easy, but things are the way they are. This is not a discussion. This is my decision and I don't want to hear any more about it. Now I want us all to have a nice Thanksgiving, it's what your mother would like, all right?

PAULINE: All right.

PETER & JOHN JR.: Okay dad.

JOHN SR.: All right then, (picks up carving knife and fork and starts to

carve the turkey) Who wants white meat? (ALL FREEZE)

VISUAL QUE: Actors freeze.

QUE: Blackout. Podium - 8, Stage - 2.

NARRATOR: So, Thanksgiving day was pretty traumatic at the Whitacre household that year, wouldn't you say?

VISUAL QUE: Narrator walks up on stage to the actors. Stage - 8.

Not like any of your Thanksgivings, I'm sure. If you were John and Mary what kind of decision do you think you would have made? Do you think they made the best decision, under the circumstances?

And Pauline, how do you think this would effect her future? What kinds of things would she need to be thinking about?

And John Jr. What kind of steps would he need to take to become prepared to take over his father's business, to buy his dad out with those increased responsibilities.

Please take about 10 minutes to discuss these issues with the experts at your table and then we'll come back together and hear some of your ideas.

QUE: House - Full, Stage & Podium - Preset

VISUAL QUE: After about 10 minutes Narrator calls group back together and facilitates discussion with large group for about 5 minutes.

QUE: Podium - 8

At end of discussion - House out. (Podium - 8, Stage - 1/4)

ACT II

Narrator: Thank you for all of your valuable insights. Here's what happened.

Pauline, with her tremendous energy and vision, did indeed, become frustrated by the limitations imposed on her at Whitacre's hardware. She left there after about a year and used a portion of her Ingersoll Rand stock to start her own business which she called Pauline's Pralines.

She also married and had 3 children who grew up working in the business. So, Many years later Pauline and her kids were together for another very interesting Thanksgiving day.

Janice, her oldest was 28. She had her MBA from Harvard Business School, and worked as the controller at Pauline's. Janice's husband George accompanied her, he was a former classmate at Harvard who worked as a plant manager at a local manufacturing company.

Pauline's son, Howard, 27 was the sales manager- a real go-getter. And her youngest, Brian, 26, worked in the production area of the business, where he was especially dedicated when he wasn't up all night performing in his rock band.

(Enter Janice and Pauline SL. Set the table)

So, the year was 1986 and the story went something like this . . . (turns to

the stage)

QUE: Stage - 8, Podium - out.

PAULINE: (To Janice) Honey, you know your brother. Howard just loves to sell. I know some of the larger deals, like that Smiley's one caused us a lot of growing pains, but look at where we are now because of him. Since Howard's come on board we've doubled the business.

JANICE: I know Mom, and that's great. Don't get me wrong. I love Howard. Its just that - he's totally undisciplined. Everyone knows, he's a little out of control. I recovered from the Smiley's deal, after spending six months lining up the financing for the new plant. I must have talked to every banker this side of the Mississippi. But now, now Mom, he's planning some bigger deals with no plan for expansion? How are we going to do it, even with the new plant? He doesn't have a clue about creating a strategic sales and marketing plan?

PAULINE: That's your specialty, Jan. You two have to work together on this.

JANICE: I do work with him. But he doesn't seem to understand it from my perspective. I don't know what I'm gonna do with him?

PAULINE: Honey, you can handle it. With an MBA from Harvard you ought to have more confidence in yourself. And besides, you know we all want to grow this business right?. People love Pauline's Pralines.

JANICE: Yes Mom, people do love them. And I can control the business. But can anyone control Howard, the out-of-control sales maniac. He's becoming the master of the special order. Do you have any idea what that is doing to production, let alone finished goods inventory?

And then there's Brian? We have to cover for him at every production meeting because he's become friends with all of the staff and slowing everything down.

PAULINE: Now Janice, you're a smart young woman, and you've got a chance to take over and run this business. A chance that I never had. You're also the oldest of the family and I expect a lot from you. You know Brian is trying to find himself. After all, he's only 26.

JANICE: Only 26? Give me a break - trying to find himself? C'mon mom.

PAULINE: And Howard is our star salesman. I know that George thinks that he...

(Enter George, SR.)

GEORGE: Hi honey. Hi mom.

PAULINE: (With sincere sweetness) George, how do you deal with salesman like Howard your company? Help Janice understand the pressures of sales.

GEORGE: Well, some salesman just love to sell. Sometimes without regard to the consequences to the rest of the company.

PAULINE: George, you know we really need someone like you on board right now.

JANICE: Yeah, you do know how to deal with difficult people.

GEORGE: Oh no you don't. Don't you get me in the middle of this one. No, you two are going to have to solve this one on your own. It's your business

JANICE: Look mom, the bottom line is, I know what I have to do, but I was taught to lead not to follow...

PAULINE: Honey, I know you can do it. Let's just put it on the back burner, we'll talk about it later. It's Thanksgiving Why don't we just put this conversation on hold until dinner is over. I have to check the turkey.
(Starts to walk off stage left. Stops. Turns to George) George, when you've gotten yourself a drink would you come find me in the kitchen?

GEORGE: Be glad to Pauline.

JANICE: (To George) So George how do I deal with my out of control brother?

GEORGE: Have a drink! Is that what you are really talking about here?

JANICE: No! You know. It's just this family. Its so ironic. I'm so sick of it but, I mean I still love them. I just that I feel trapped. If it's not one brother I'm picking up after it's the other. You know it's not just Howard, it's also Bri...

(Enter Brian stage right, abruptly)

BRIAN: Hi guys!

JANICE: Oh, hi Brian. We were just talking about-.

BRIAN: Yeah, I heard. Hey, did you hear, late last night Howard closed a deal with General Foods for \$4.2 million. Man, I can't believe it. A whole new line of Pauline's popsicles!

JANICE: (In horror) What? We agreed to a family meeting before closing deals like this. Brian when did Howard tell you this? (Hysterically) Pauline's popsicles? Has he lost his mind. We're not even in that business.

BRIAN: (Laughing) Jan--Jan-.(louder but still with pixie like cuteness) Jan, I was only kidding. It's just a joke? Re-lax. Geese are we in for a fine Thanksgiving.

GEORGE: (Laughing) Really. You need to take it down a few notches. I'm gonna go talk to your mother.

JANICE: George, please don't say anything to mom about...

GEORGE: Relax honey, don't worry about it.

(exit George SL)

JANICE: (To Brian) I'm gonna kill you! (They wrestle a bit)

BRIAN: Ow! Geeze, you're worse than Howard when he's on a sales call.

JANICE: Yeah, well sometimes even he knows when to stop.

BRIAN: I hear it. Howard really can be a little too hyper?

JANICE: Oh Brian, sit down, will you talk to me?

BRIAN: Yeah? What's going on?

JANICE: Can you imagine, If there were no Pauline's Pralines what would you do with your life?

BRIAN: Anything I wanted to do?

JANICE: Yeah.

BRIAN: (Pauses thinking a minute dreamily) I'd sing with Led Zeppelin.
(Breaks out into song - the end of Stairway to Heaven)

JANICE: (Amused but frustrated) That's really great, no seriously Brian, I mean it. What would you do?

BRIAN: I don't know, seriously I'd try to get the band in a recording studio, do a demo, get a contract go on the road. How about you? Would you do the whole MBA route all over again?

JANICE: No! I'd teach English, be a professor or something. No more talking to bankers all day. No more racing to double the business every five years. Have more time to spend with George.

BRIAN: Maybe have a few kids Eh? The clock's ticking. Tick tick tick tick.

JANICE: Well, maybe. Why not. I know mom has it in mind to have me take her place someday. But I don't really want to live the life she's had. Especially since dad left. Isn't there's more to life than business?

BRIAN: Well, I hear what you're saying. But you should talk to mom about it.

JANICE: You think so?

BRIAN: Yeah I think you should tell her how you feel. She has a right to know. Anyway I know how you feel. I've felt that way ever since Bro - "Mr. All Star" joined the team.
(Enter Howard jauntily - stage right).

HOWARD: Hey everybody, happy Thanksgiving,

BRIAN: (to Janice) Speak of the devil

HOWARD: Ready for the big fourth quarter push?

BRIAN: Yeah, I don't know if you're ready for it big shot? I thought you would have gotten us at least two new accounts for us by this time? You must've been slacking a bit, buddy?

HOWARD: Little brother you have no idea of the deals I am working on this very minute. Seriously I think if you put your nose to the grind stone, maybe even cut your hair a bit you could really help push us a head. You're just too much of a hippie freak.

JANICE: Okay you two. Enough all ready, enough. It's not even funny. Leave him alone.

HOWARD: Jan, I'm only joking with him. And Jan, we need to talk about the fourth quarter forecast?

JANICE: (Snippy) Howie, I really don't want to business shop today. Okay? (Exits SL)

HOWARD: All right, but we need to have a meeting tomorrow, if possible.

(Enter George SL)

George, how the hell are you. Hey, how 'bout those 49'ers. Big Joe Montana-all right! Highest percentage completions, most consecutive passes completed. We're talking super bowl here buddy.

GEORGE: I'll bet you five bucks he's gonna get MVP this, the way he out of the pocket like that. I can just see it.

HOWARD: I bet that guy scores as much off the field as he does on it.

GEORGE: And how about that rookie Jerry Rice?

HOWARD: Hey, speaking of seeing it, the Lions game is on right now. Let's check it out!

GEORGE: Let's go!

BRIAN: ?

(Enter Pauline SL followed by Jan , each with a dish in hand)

PAULINE: OK everyone, huddle up. We're ready to eat. Howard would you please bring in the turkey, its on the kitchen table?

HOWARD: Okay ma. (to George) Maybe after dinner.

(Exit Howard - SL)

PAULINE: George, would you sit over here next to me. Jan, you next to him and then Brian. And Brian, please put your hair up for dinner sweetie, keep it out of the food.

BRIAN: No problem, ma.

(Enter Howard with the Turkey. Places it at the end of the table and notices where George has been seated. All sit and start to grab at the bowls of food. Jan tries to say something to Pauline but is ignored)

PAULINE: Excuse me, before we start, how about grace.

ALL: Lord, bless this family, bless this food. Amen (All start to pass around the plates. Howard begins carving the turkey.)

JANICE: MOM... (Again she is ignored)

PAULINE: Now I know we have our problems in this business... George, we've talked about this before and we could really use someone with your skills. I'd really like you to seriously consider coming to work for Pauline's Pralines .

GEORGE: Well, Janice and I have been talking and...

HOWARD: (Interrupting) Mom, George hold on. Mom we did talk about this, and I thought it was perfectly clear. This is a family thing. Pauline's is a family owned business, plain and simple. OK? (ALL FREEZE)

VISUAL QUE: Actors Freeze.
Blackout. Podium - 8, Stage - 1/4.

NARRATOR: Did you catch some tension in the air? I felt it was understandable, considering there was some potential change brewing.
VISUAL QUE: Narrator walks up on stage.

Stage - 8.

And like any good family business consultant, I took the opportunity to interview each of other family members individually to hear what some of their perceptions were, and how they were experiencing all of this. (call each by name and touch them. Each respond with one sentence answers)
HOWARD: If Jan would just do her job we wouldn't have to have George around here at all.

BRIAN: George is great, you know? He could definitely help out. We could definitely use him. But one way or the other I'm not really attached to it.

JANICE: She never listens to me. I don't know why I bother any more.

GEORGE: I'm really concerned that joining this family business might be like jumping out of a frying pan into a fire

PAULINE: I really thought if I could get George on board then Janice would be happy.

VISUAL QUE: Narrator returns to Podium. Stage - 1/4.

Now, if you would put on your consultant hats once again, there are some

interesting issues here that need to be addressed.

1) What do you think Janice should've done about her desire to leave the business and teach?

2) What would've been the pro's and cons of George being asked to join Pauline's and what kinds of things should he have considered in making his decision?

3) How could the family have dealt effectively with Howard's you know, loose cannon tendencies?

We'll come back together in about 10 minutes, or so, to hear some of your ideas.

QUE: House - Full, Stage & Podium - Preset

VISUAL QUE: After about 10 minutes Narrator calls group back together and facilitates discussion with large group for about 5 minutes.

QUE: Podium - 8

At end of discussion - House out. (Podium - 8, Stage - 1/4)

ACT III

NARRATOR: Thank you. I know your feedback would have been very helpful to them. But, the story's not over yet, let me bring you up to date.

Pauline's Pralines has grown to a \$20 million dollar business! God love her, Pauline is still in charge at age 66.

Janice stayed on in her dutiful role as Controller, Howard kept selling and selling and selling, Brian buckled down and made a real contribution in the production area of the business. And George did join Pauline's about 9 years ago as Plant Manager.

(Enter Janice and Pauline SL. Set the table)

So the year is 1996 and the family celebrate Thanksgiving Dinner together.

So the story went like this . . . (turns to the stage) .

QUE: Stage - 8, Podium - out.

Long Pause.

PAULINE: Janice, I... JANICE: Mom, I (Both laugh nervously. Pause)

PAULINE: What dear? JANICE: What Mom? (Both laugh again. Pause)

PAULINE: Janice, I'm retiring. JANICE: Mom I'm leaving the business.

JANICE: I got offered an assistant professorship at Yale and they want me and I'm going to take it.

PAULINE: Oh my god.

JANICE: Mom, sit down. Yeah I'm finally doing it. I know it sounds crazy but the time has come. If I don't do it now... It's Yale, I've got to do it.

(I know you've been thinking about retirement but I've been wanting to become a teacher for the last ten years and, well, it's just something I have

to do now.)

PAULINE: Janice, you're so wonderful. I know things have been hard for you. I just want you to be sure, I want you to be happy. I'm just worried that if you give up on us now you're giving up on yourself.
(But honey, I never really thought you were that serious about it. I just can't believe you'd pass up the opportunity to pull this family together and lead the business. After all Pauline's is a family business.)

JANICE: I'm not. I made a decision.

PAULINE: I just thought my retirement would be...
(Enter Howard SL carrying the turkey)

HOWARD: Mom? Did I just hear you say retirement?

JANICE: Yes Howie, there are going to be a number of changes around here. Mom's retiring and I'm planning to leave the business and take a job as an associate professor at Yale. I'm finally going to become a teacher.

HOWARD: Associate position at Yale? Are you kidding? We have a multi-million dollar business to run here.

(Moves DSL and looks out over the audience in a dreamy state)
I mean here we are, a business, poised on the edge of the international market.

(Enter George SR. with flowers. Moves to Pauline & Janice and speaks with them sotto voce)

I can see it now. Satellite branches in Tokyo, Beijing, Hanoi. Of course there'll be some small details to handle without mom and Janice to pick up aft..., er, uh, handle the small details. Like preparing for the Rausch account. Oh god, the Rausch account! There coming in Tuesday and... (George walks up to Howard breaking his reverie) George! how are ya!

GEORGE: Howard. Well, some big changes around here, hey?
(Enter Brian SL carrying one of the platters for dinner. Goes to Pauline & Janice and converses with them -sotto voce)

HOWARD: To say the least. I've got the Rausch account coming in two weeks, and now mom and Janice are planning their exit strategies...

GEORGE: Wo. Wait a minute - Rausch? As in the real estate developer Rausch?

HOWARD: Yeah, you know Rausch, as in the largest mall developer in the country, Pauline's Pralines in every mall throughout the US. - I told all about this at the sales and marketing meeting that Brian held two weeks ago...

GEORGE: Yes, and I told you then that Janice & I are going to be on vacation, in Spain in two weeks. Don't you ever listen?!
(Long pause)

HOWARD: On vacation... In Spain... In two weeks? I, you... Brian? (moves U.S .to Brian)

BRIAN: Yeah, what?

HOWARD: At your marketing meeting did George mention any thing about this vacation to Spain?

BRIAN: Yeah, their trip. (to George and Janice) Sounds like a good time for you to go on vacay and enjoy yourselves a bit. (To Howard) Howie, we just have to carry on without...

HOWARD: (Disgusted) Carry on? Howie? Has everyone lost sight of our goals here? We've got the largest mall developer in the country coming in here in two weeks, a chance to really move this thing along and everyone is either retiring, retreating or going on vacation! And this fantasy of some associate professorship..

GEORGE: Wait, wait wait a minute...

JANICE: Fantasy?! Now you wait a minute here Howie, I'm really sick and tired of... (George, Janice and Brian all crowd around Howard and have a group argument which turns to stage whispers as Pauline moves Down Center for soliloquy)

PAULINE: I don't believe this. All my life I've spent building this company. I really wanted to make things different for her. I wanted it to be easier. And now she wants out. If I put George at the lead, I don't know he acts like he has it all together, but without Janice to manage Howard, I just don't know. And Brian - I'm not sure he's ready. Maybe I should just hire a total stranger. (Moves Up to table takes a glass and rings it three times with a knife. The others stop talking and look to her.)

All right, all right, all right. It's Thanksgiving, we are going to have a wonderful meal. Let's all sit down, I know we have a lot to talk about. How about everybody tell me where you're at before we eat. Just a few brief words about what you're feeling right now. We can talk more about it after supper. Howard let's start with you.

HOWARD: Well, I guess in all honesty whether I end up taking over the business, or someone else does, that no one around here cares about sales at all. And I love to sell. It's all I like to do.

JANICE: Now I feel guilty. I know it sound crazy but I have to go now. I'm going to do all I can to help out, I promise. I'll stay through and help all I can but I've got to do this now. (But right now I have to do what I really need to do for myself. And I need to do this now.)

GEORGE: Well, I really enjoy being in this business, most of the time. But, unless there is a clear mandate for leadership I'm going to wish I were still back at Essex Manufacturing.

BRIAN: Well, I think this is just exactly what this family needs. A change. And a challenge. This family and this business has always done well with handling challenges and change and this is no different. I'm actually excited about what lies ahead.

PAULINE: Thank you for that positive note Brian. And all I want is to have a process that clearly respects everyone's needs and feelings - and the needs of our business. So for now let's just say grace, have supper and we'll talk about this later. Okay? (All fold hands and prepare for the blessing following Pauline's lead)

ALL: Lord, bless this family, bless this food, Amen. (ALL FREEZE)

VISUAL QUE: Actors Freeze.
Blackout. Podium - 8, Stage - 1/4.

NARRATOR: So, now that you're up-to-date, there's one other thing you need to know, I have a meeting scheduled to advise Pauline and her family and we need to come up with some recommendations.

These are your questions:

- 1) On what basis should Pauline decide who her successor will be?
- 2) Who do you think that should be chosen?
- 3) What specific processes and steps should her succession plan and transition include?

Please take about 10 minutes, then let me know what you think they should do! (Cast breaks freeze and starts to eat their meal together keeping the fourth wall.)

QUE: House - Full, Stage & Podium - Preset

VISUAL QUE: After about 10 minutes Narrator calls group back together and facilitates discussion with large group for about 5 minutes.

QUE: Podium - 8

At end of discussion - House out. (Podium - 8, Stage - 1/4)

So you think _____ should be Pauline's successor? That sounds good, Hmmm. . . Let me think about that for a moment.

(walks up on stage. She is greeted by the family is offered a chair and sits down.)

You asked me for a recommendation. Our firm has known you for a long time.

So we'll get right to the bottom line. Based on what we know of your history our recommendation is that Pauline's successor be _____. (cast reacts quickly then FREEZE . Narrator walks off-stage to podium).

Well, folks, I don't have a crystal ball, but my guess is that given some time, energy and a whole lot of commitment, this family will survive the succession process.

Thank you for all of your help. Please join me in acknowledging the superb cast of _____. (Actors break freeze and line up for curtain call.