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*Dramatic Publishing*

# **SUBURB**

A Musical in Two Acts

Book by David Javerbaum and Robert S. Cohen

Music by Robert S. Cohen

Lyrics by David Javerbaum

This excerpt contains strong language.

Producing Groups: if certain profanities in the script are considered objectionable, the authors give their permission to substitute language more acceptable in their place.



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Music by Robert S. Cohen  
Lyrics by David Javerbaum

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(SUBURB)

ISBN: 1-58342-335-1

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“*Suburb* was first produced by Alleyway Theatre, 1 Curtain Up Alley, Buffalo, New York, on September 14, 2000.”

“*Suburb* was produced off-Broadway by The York Theatre Company, James Morgan, Artistic Director, in association with Jennifer M. Sanchez and Robert Plutzik Baldwin.”

*Suburb* was first produced by Alleyway Theatre, Buffalo, New York, on September 14, 2000. The production was directed by Neal Radice, musical direction by Michael Hake, choreography by Lynne Kurdziel Formato, sets and lighting by Neal Radice and costumes by Joyce Stilson. The cast was as follows:

Alison . . . . . LORAIN O'DONNELL GRAY  
Stuart . . . . . PAUL MAISANO  
Tom . . . . . TOM OWEN  
Rhoda . . . . . PAMELA ROSE MANGUS  
Man 1 . . . . . WILLIAM LOVERN  
Woman 1 . . . . . STEPHANIE BAX FONTANELLA  
Man 2 . . . . . KEITH ERSING  
Woman 2 . . . . . MONICA STANKEWICZ

*Suburb* was subsequently performed at The York Theatre, New York City, in 2001. The production was directed by Jennifer Uphoff Gray with choreography by John Carrafa. The cast was as follows:

Alison . . . . . JACQUELYN PIRO  
Stuart . . . . . JAMES LUDWIG  
Tom . . . . . DENNIS KELLY  
Rhoda . . . . . ALIX KOREY  
Man 1 . . . . . JAMES SASSER  
Woman 1 . . . . . JENNIE EISENHOWER  
Man 2 . . . . . RON BUTLER  
Woman 2 . . . . . ADINAH ALEXANDER

# **SUBURB**

A Musical in Two Acts  
For 4m., 4w\*

## **CHARACTERS**

ALISON . . . . . late 20s, pregnant  
STUART . . . . . late 20s, her husband  
TOM . . . . . 60s, widower  
RHODA. . . . . late 40s, a real estate broker  
MAN 1  
MAN 2            a four-person chorus of Suburb citizenry  
WOMAN 1  
WOMAN 2

\*The four-person chorus may be doubled to 8, making a total of 6m., 6w.

Can be staged with minimal or elaborate sets; written to be independent of specific visual needs.

NOTE: If certain profanities in the script are considered objectionable, the authors give their permission to substitute language more acceptable in their place.

## MUSICAL NUMBERS

### ACT I

1. Prologue - Directions. . . . . CAST
2. Scene Change
3. Mow. . . . . STUART, CHORUS, ALISON (w/ RHODA)
4. Do It Yourself. . . . . TOM (w/ RHODA)
5. Suburb . . . . . CHORUS (w/ RHODA, STUART, ALISON)
6. Scene Change
7. Not Me. . . . . ALISON
8. Barbecue. . . . . CHORUS
9. Scene Change
10. The Girl Next Door . . . RHODA, MAN 1, MAN 2, STUART
11. Scene Change
12. Ready Or Not . . . . . STUART, TOM
13. Commute . . . . . CAST

### ACT II

14. Mall. . . . . CAST
15. Scene Change
16. Duet . . . . . ALISON, STUART
17. Scene Change
18. Handy . . . . . RHODA (w/ TOM)
19. Scene Change
20. Walkin' to School. . . . . CHORUS
21. Scene Change
22. Bagel-Shop Quartet. . . . . CHORUS
23. Trio for Four . . . . . TOM (RHODA), STUART, ALISON
24. Scene Change
25. Everything Must Go . . . . . CHORUS
26. Scene Change
27. Someday. . . . . ALISON, STUART, TOM, RHODA
28. Epilogue. . . . . MAN 1, CAST
29. Bows (Walkin' to School)

# ACT I

## SCENE 1

(MUSIC #1 - "Directions")

*(Lights up on a two-man, two-woman CHORUS.)*

CHORUS.  
**DIRECTIONS.**

MAN 1.  
**SOUTH FROM THE CITY.**

WOMAN 1.  
**I-67.**

WOMAN 2.  
**EXIT 11.**

MAN 2.  
**LEFT AT THE LIGHT.**

CHORUS *(spoken)*.  
**ONWARD!**

WOMAN 2.  
**STRAIGHT AHEAD HALF A MILE.**



MAN 2.

**PASS BY THE ELKS' CLUB.**

MAN 1.

**LOOK FOR THE FIREHOUSE.**

WOMAN 1.

**HANG A QUICK RIGHT.**

WOMAN 1 + WOMAN 2.

**SLOW DOWN.**

**WATCH FOR THE CHILDREN.**

**SCHOOL IS IN SESSION.**

MAN 1 + MAN 2.

**DOWNTOWN.**

**MODERN BUT COZY.**

**BIG AND YET SMALL.**

ALL FOUR.

**HOMETOWN.**

**MANICURED LAWNS**

**IN STATELY PROGRESSION.**

WOMAN 1.

**SUPERVISED PLAYGROUNDS.**

WOMAN 2.

**OLD-FASHIONED MAIN STREET.**

MAN 1 + MAN 2.

**NEW CITY HALL.**

WOMAN 1 + WOMAN 2.

**IT'S SAFE AND SECLUDED  
AND LESS THAN A MILE FROM THE MALL.**

CHORUS.

**DIRECTIONS...**

MAN 2. Ah, the suburbs. Conveniently located...just about everywhere. In many ways, they're the latest chapter in man's age-old quest for a better life.

WOMAN 2. It's a quest that led our ancestors on a long and arduous journey from the cave to the farm, from remote villages to teeming metropolises.

WOMAN 1. Today, there are many who regard the suburbs as the ideal choice for comfortable family living.

MAN 1. But there are also those who regard them with a bit more ambivalence.

*(ALISON and STUART, a young married couple, enter. ALISON is five months' pregnant.)*

ALISON.

**NO FUCKING WAY.  
NO FUCKING WAY ARE WE GOING THERE.**

STUART.

**ALI...**

ALISON.

**NO FUCKING WAY  
AM I MOVING TO THE UNDEAD LAND**

**OF THE DUMB AND BLAND  
TO BE MOM AND WIFE  
IN A SITCOM LIFE  
FULL OF “WHOLESONE FAM’LY HIJINKS.”  
NO FUCKING WAY.**

STUART.

**JUST TAKE A LOOK.  
JUST TAKE A LOOK AT SOME PROPERTIES.**

ALISON.

**STUART...**

STUART.

**JUST TAKE A LOOK  
AT SOME HOUSES WHERE THERE’S ROOM TO  
GROW  
AND A PATIO  
AND A YARD OUT BACK  
ON A CUL-DE-SAC  
WHERE THE KIDS AND I PLAY BASEBALL.  
WHAT DO YOU SAY?  
(Almost a whisper.) JUST FOR A DAY...**

WOMAN 2. But days become weeks, weeks become months, and months become years, and in time the dreams of youth ripen into the rich memories of a full and rewarding life.

*(TOM, 60ish, dignified, enters.)*

TOM.

**IN OUR HOME ON A PARCEL OF PARADISE,**

**WE HAD DREAMS OF THE LIFE WE WOULD  
BUILD.  
FORTY YEARS ON A PARCEL OF PARADISE:  
EACH DREAM FULFILLED.**

**THERE WERE MOMENTS OF STRUGGLE AND  
SACRIFICE.  
IT WAS HARD, BUT WE ALWAYS PULLED  
THROUGH.  
FROM THOSE MOMENTS OF STRUGGLE AND  
SACRIFICE  
CAME THE STRENGTH THAT WE NEEDED TO  
MAKE OUR DREAMS COME TRUE.**

WOMAN 1. Ready to move? The first step is meeting with one of the many fine professionals whose job it is to help you find your dream house.

*(RHODA, 50ish, chain-smoking, enters, armed with two cell phones, on one of which she speaks)*

RHODA.

**RHODA RAVITCH REALTY.  
THIS IS RHODA SPEAKING.  
SO YOU WANNA BUY A HOUSE?  
LUCKY YOU.  
I GOT SHITLOADS I CAN SHOW YOU.  
MAY I ASK WHAT YOU DO?  
'CAUSE I WANT TO GET TO KNOW YOU  
AND YOUR SPOUSE, AND YOUR KIDS,  
AND YOUR HOPES AND YOUR DREAMS  
AND YOUR GROSS ADJUSTED INCOME.**

*(The other phone rings; she picks it up.)*

**RHODA RAVITCH REALTY.  
RHODA RAVITCH SPEAKING.  
GOT A HOUSE YOU WANNA SELL?  
YOU'RE IN LUCK.  
I'VE GOT TONS OF EAGER BUYERS.  
YOU TRIED WHO? YEAH, THEY SUCK.  
ALL THE AGENTS THERE ARE LIARS  
OUT OF HELL.  
AIN'T THAT SWELL?**

*(The first phone rings; it is STUART. THE CAST now begin singing in canon.)*

<b>RHODA.</b>	<b>STUART.</b>	<b>CHORUS.</b>
<b>RHODA RAVITCH REALTY. THIS IS RHODA SPEAKING. STUART, COME IN FROM THE COLD. BUY A HOUSE. LET'S SET UP A CONSULTATION. FIRST, I NEED SOME INFORMATION. CAN YOU HOLD?</b>	<b>RHODA RAVITCH REALTY? THIS IS STUART CALLING. WE ARE LOOKING FOR A HOUSE. SOMETHING NICE. SOMETHING SAFE AND RESIDENTIAL. A GAZEBO IS ESSENTIAL.</b>	<b>DIRECTIONS...  DIRECTIONS...</b>

*(RHODA switches phones as ALISON grabs the phone from STUART.)*

*(Note: The following five groups of lyrics are sung simultaneously.)*

TOM.

**IN OUR HOME  
ON A PARCEL OF PARADISE,  
WE HAD DREAMS...  
WE HAD DREAMS...**

ALISON.

**RHODA RAVITCH REALTY?  
THIS IS ALI TALKING.  
IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE STRESS  
FROM THE START  
THAT WE'RE REALLY ONLY BROWSING,  
AND WE'RE HAPPY WITH OUR HOUSING,  
MORE OR LESS.**

RHODA.

**RHODA RAVITCH REALTY.  
THIS IS RHODA SPEAKING.  
THEY WERE OFFERING YOU WHAT?  
JESUS CHRIST!  
ARE THEY DUMB  
OR ARE THEY KIDDING?  
DID THEY THINK THAT THEY WERE BIDDING  
FOR A HUT?**

STUART.

**HONEY,  
JUST TAKE A LOOK AT SOME PROPERTIES.  
JUST TAKE A LOOK.  
JUST TAKE A LOOK**

**AT SOME HOUSES  
WHERE THERE'S ROOM TO GROW.**

CHORUS.

**DIRECTIONS...  
DIRECTIONS...**

*(Note: The following five groups of lyrics are sung simultaneously.)*

CHORUS.

**WHERE ARE WE GOING?  
WHEN ARE WE LEAVING?  
WHAT ARE WE TAKING?  
HOW DO WE GET THERE?  
WHERE ARE WE GOING?  
WHEN ARE WE LEAVING?  
WHAT ARE WE TAKING?  
HOW DO WE GET THERE?  
WHERE ARE WE GOING?  
WHEN ARE WE LEAVING?  
WHAT ARE WE TAKING?  
HOW DO WE GET THERE?  
WHERE ARE WE GOING?  
WHEN ARE WE LEAVING?  
WHAT ARE WE TAKING?**

STUART.

**WOULD IT BE OK  
IF WE SPENT THE DAY  
WHERE THE CHILDREN PLAY  
SINGING TRA LA LA LA?  
WOULD IT BE OK  
IF WE SPENT THE DAY**

**WHERE THE CHILDREN PLAY  
SINGING TRA LA LA LA?  
WOULD IT BE OK  
IF WE SPENT THE DAY  
WHERE THE CHILDREN PLAY  
SINGING...**

**TOM.**

**I HAVE LIVED IN, WORKED ON,  
RUN FROM, WALKED TO,  
STAYED AT, PLAYED NEAR,  
STRIVED FOR, DREAMT OF,  
LIVED IN, WORKED ON,  
RUN FROM, WALKED TO,  
STAYED AT, PLAYED NEAR,**

**RHODA.**

**IT'S A NEO-  
PROTO-ULTRA-  
MODERN-OLD-  
CONTEMPORARY-  
TUDOR-CENTER-  
HALL-COLONIAL  
AND**

**ALISON.**

**I WOULD  
RATHER IF  
WE DIDN'T  
GO BUT**

**THE CAST.**

**HOW DO WE GET THERE?!?**



MAN 2. Join us now for the story of four people pursuing happiness in a place called Suburb.

THE CAST

**DIRECTIONS:  
GO ALL THE WAY.  
PAST THE PLANTATION.  
PAST ELLIS ISLAND.  
PAST THE FRONTIER.  
DIRECTIONS.  
SEIZE OPPORTUNITY.  
CARVE OUT YOUR FUTURE.  
MEET EV'RY CHALLENGE.  
CONQUER YOUR FEAR.**

ALL WOMEN.  
**FORWARD,  
DRAWN BY A PROMISE  
ALWAYS IMPLICIT.**

ALL MEN.  
**FORWARD,  
LETTING THE PROMISE  
LIGHTEN THE LOAD.**

THE CAST.  
**FORWARD,  
DRAWN BY THE PROMISE.  
HOW CAN YOU MISS IT?  
THERE! IN THE DISTANCE!  
SING HALLELUJAH!  
GOD HAS BESTOWED**

ALISON.

**YOUR HOME ON A TYPICAL,**

STUART.

**PERFECT-FOR-BASKETBALL,**

TOM.

**SNOWPLOWED-EFFICIENTLY,**

RHODA.

**TASTEFULLY-MAPLE-TREED,**

MAN 1 + WOMAN 2.

**TRUCKS-ARE-PROHIBITED,**

MAN 2 + WOMAN 1.

**PAVED-SEVEN-WEEKS-AGO,**

THE CAST

**STRETCH OF AMERICAN  
ROAD.**

CHORUS.

**DIRECTIONS...**

*(MUSIC #2: Scene Change.)*

## SCENE 2

*(In relative darkness, a slide of an attractive suburban home with a "For Sale" sign in front is projected onto a small projection screen. After a few seconds, a second*

*slide, of a different home, is projected; then a third; then a fourth. ALISON and STUART are seated in front of RHODA's desk in her office.)*

RHODA. Now this is one of my favorites: An authentic turn-of-the-century Victorian, built in 1975. This beauty has four bedrooms, three baths, and an enormous fumed-oak walk-in closet. Feast for the nose, feast for the clothes. And the kitchen, uh! Absolutely colossal. You like to cook?

ALISON. No. We eat out. In restaurants.

RHODA. No problem. Lose a few cabinets, take down a wall, voilà! You've got yourself a cute little galley kitchen and a study.

STUART. I don't think so.

*(RHODA lights a cigarette.)*

ALISON. Would you mind not smoking? I'm pregnant.

RHODA *(reluctantly)*. Of course...let me just... *(The lit cigarette tip enlarges as RHODA takes a final enormous puff and exhales. She puts it in the ashtray.)* OK. *(The slide changes and another house appears.)* Now I know you're gonna love this one. It's a classic center-hall Colonial with four-and-a-half beds, three-and-a-half baths, and a two-and-a-half-car garage. Ali, you said you were in advertising? Account manager?

ALISON. No, that's Stuart. I'm in publishing. I'm an editor.

RHODA. Even better, 'cause that half-bedroom would make a great home office for you once the baby comes.

ALISON. Why would you assume that I would—

STUART (*cutting her off*). That issue is still under review.

But in any event, the property looks a little cramped.

RHODA. The photographer totally distorted it. He's a moron. It's actually a very generous plot, but can I be honest with you, Stuart? Too much land can be isolating. I just listed a house on an oversized lot, and I'm finding it attracts mainly mountain-hermit people.

STUART. Well, I guess it might be worth checking out.

RHODA. Good! So, we'll pay that one a visit. Now next up, I have a very unusual— (*Another slide appears. It is the Taj Mahal. A "For Sale by Rhoda Ravitch" sign has been crudely penciled in.*) Christ-o-matic. Wayne! (*She turns the lights on. RHODA goes to the slide projector and removes the slide.*) Sorry about that. The fellas threw me a little birthday party last night. Made up a whole presentation and such.

STUART (*looking at the slide; amiably*). I like it. It's got room to grow.

ALISON. You know, it was actually built as a tomb for his wife. Which is quite a coincidence because—

STUART (*sotto voce*). Alison, I thought we promised to give this a chance.

ALISON. I'm giving it a chance, sweetheart.

STUART. OK. Just checking.

ALISON. I love you.

STUART. I love you too.

RHODA (*awkwardly breaking the intimacy*). OK, shall we continue, heh heh heh? (*Returning to her seat.*) Anywho, assuming this is not the Washington Monument... (*She turns the lights off again. A slide of a large, distinctive house with an enormous lawn appears.*)

STUART (*in love at first sight*). Oh my God.