

A DYING ART

Written by

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INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A VCR sits on top of a twenty year old television. A regular at your local thrift shop.

A HAND enters frame and pushes a VHS into the VCR. We close in on the television as an image spreads: HOME VIDEOS from days gone. In the corner- 9/15/94.

Mid wedding ceremony. The BRIDE (20's) and GROOM (20's) kiss. Smile like little kids. The small crowd CHEERS. A dance floor swirling with wedding SONGS and drunk dancing. The Groom is the alpha male here. The Bride waltzes with her DAD while a smiley woman in her 50's takes pictures, the MOM.

The group now circle a PINATA and a blindfolded Bride wielding a BAT. The Groom spins her. She sways the bat as she inches closer to the pinata, guided by TAUNTING and LAUGHTER.

BRIDE

Who's awful idea was this?

GROOM

This would be my awful idea.

BRIDE

I don't want to marry you anymore.

GROOM

Too late now, honey.

BRIDE

What does it even have to do with the wedding?

GROOM

It's symbolic.

BRIDE

Of what--

The bat grazes the pinata.

BRIDE (CONT'D)

Oh!

The bat strikes. A pinata dies. Candy spills and CHILDREN lunge. The Groom wraps his arms around Bride as she lifts up her blind fold.

BRIDE (CONT'D)

Did I get it?

GROOM

The love of my life! My warrior
queen!

He kisses her and the crowd ERUPTS. You want to be part of
this sweet couple.

Begin CREDITS.

Delicate MUSIC plays over the coming scenes until the Title
card.

The DATES in the corner count up as the HOME VIDEOS play out
the couple's life. Pool party with friends. Lost on a road
trip. Touring a new home. Running around in said home.
Birthday party for Groom. He opens a set of WALKIE TALKIES.
These are scenes we'd have in our own home videos. Intimate
and tender. Moments we smile about.

The date of this memory reads- 9/30/00. The Bride mid birth.
Groom poses by a BABY GIRL and Bride. 10/8/00. The Groom
films the Bride play with the baby in fallen leaves. He
playfully tumbles beside them. We see fluttering colored
leaves, a laughing couple and then the sky. A WHITE takes
the screen.

TITLE: "A DYING ART"

MUSIC ENDS.

The white holds the screen. A moment of quiet and then--

BRETT (V.O.)

A new tide is rolling in and it's
going to wash all the things we
used to know, away.

INT. KENTWOOD GYMNASIUM - PRESENT DAY

We fall out of the light. A PROJECTOR shooting a power point
onto a screen. The room is dark. We're in the gym of
KENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL.

A MAN holds the gaze of a crowd of TEACHERS. We see the
back of the man and a TABLET he holds reflecting his face.

This man is BRETT, 30's. He's the new tech savvy principal.
He looks like he'd try to sell you protein powder in a mall.

BRETT

This new curriculum that utilizes state of the art technology begins with us, teachers. We are the new beginning. The catalyst.

We begin to move into the AUDIENCE.

BRETT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The old has been haunting these halls for too long and now the future is here to put it to rest.

The hunt zeros in on a recognizable worn out couple--

The groom, TERRY, now 46. He glances back and forth. Total disconnect. A tender happy still lingers in his eyes. He's the poster child for a father in his 40's. Lame and happy.

The bride, GWEN, now 45. She stares forward with an intense gaze, connected. Her simple pretty remains, but her youthful glow is gone, along with her smile.

BRET (O.S.)

Say it with me. The old is--

The whole crowd, sans Terry, turns into Brett's choir. This means more to Gwen than anybody else.

TEACHERS

Dead!

BRETT

Time to let go and get swept into the ocean that is change.

An eruption of APPLAUSE.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gwen and Terry move with a group of fellow TEACHERS to their car. Terry laughs along, while Gwen stares off.

We hear the scattered CHATTER of the teachers. All buzzing about Brett. We focus in on these two lovelies--

CHRIS, a wirey man with a weak moustache.

CHRIS

The district got him from LA. He used to work at Pixar.

DELORES, a chubby thing and the nicest lady you'll ever meet.

DELORES

Why would he leave Pixar to be a high school principal?

CHRIS

You always do this, Delores! You question my personal integrity and frankly-- it's rubbing me in all the wrong ways.

Delores hangs her head, dejected. Terry pipes up.

TERRY

In our personal opinion he's a little bit of a teenage dirtbag with a chip on his shoulder. Wouldn't you say, Gwen?

Nothing. Gwen's interest level is at zero. While Chris' ticked off level is off the charts. He whispers violently to Delores--

CHRIS

I swear to Christ. You're playing with fire, bitch...

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Terry spits and rinses as Gwen stares into the mirror. Their daughter, MARGIE, 15, sits on the counter facing them.

She has a mature bravado about her, tangled with an air of naïvety. The type of girl boys write songs about.

MARGIE

I'm going to repeat the rules one more time. Are you listening, dad?

TERRY

Fire away.

MARGIE

First. Tell no one I am your daughter. Second. No talking to me... you may, however, say supportive things in passing--

TERRY

(laughing)
Are you being real right now?

MARGIE

Don't laugh! It's bad enough I'm starting high school. But you two teach there. And on top of that I have no friends. It's a sad tornado waiting to strike down.

TERRY

What about Sarah?

MARGIE

She stopped being my friend when she met older, cooler kids.

TERRY

Well... your mom and I have always been your cool older friends.

(beat)

Ride or die.

He reaches to BUMP knuckles. Margie recoils.

MARGIE

Please don't make this more miserable than it has to be.

TERRY

Don't worry, Margie. Mom and I have been doing this for 13 years. We'll take care of you.

He looks to Gwen for a line of support. Unresponsive.

MARGIE

Mom! You aren't even listening!
I'll repeat the rules one more time-

Gwen continues her trance with her reflection, drowning out her daughter's demands.

INT. BURKES BEDROOM - DAY

Gwen's reflection in the bedroom window. She's dressed ready for work. Her natural pretty buried beneath a snooze fest of an outfit.

An ALARM rings out and quickly STOPS. Terry rolls out of bed in all white briefs everything.

TERRY

First day of school!

And so begins the hype parade through the Burkes' home. He gallivants behind Gwen and out the room. We stay with Gwen as she stares out onto the suburban landscape.

TERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Margie. Wake up. School awaits.

MARGIE (O.S.)
No! No! NO!... STOP! That was
your scrotum!!! Oh God!

Terry re-enters and struts into the BATHROOM, leaving the door open. The SHOWER turns on and the BRIEFS come off. Gwen glances over to catch Terry's rear end ducking into the shower.

TERRY (O.S.)
Come hop in, Gwen! Hot water
conservation.

She lets out a SIGH and closes the blinds.

INT. MARGIE'S ROOM - DAY

Margie SINGS to herself as she readies in front of a mirror. Her voice is lovely and her style quietly her own. Gwen steps into the doorway.

MARGIE
I'm not ready yet.

GWEN
I'm leaving your father. Go wait
in the car.

Margie flips around to face her mom.

MARGIE
Define leaving.

INT. BURKES BEDROOM -MORNING

Gwen KNOCKS on the bathroom door.

GWEN
Terry?

Listens. The sound of CRASHING.

TERRY (O.S.)
For crying out corn flakes.

She opens the door.

Terry lies on the floor toppled in TOILETRIES. He angrily pulls at his pants, which are caught on his knees.

He looks up at her like a child caught in the act.

TERRY (CONT'D)

I told you not to buy these, I don't do modern fashion. It's all too snug!

GWEN

(takes a breath)

Terry... I'm leaving you. Don't talk to me at school. We'll sort it out this afternoon.

TERRY

Do I look like I am in any shape to be left behind?

She departs.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Gwen!

INT. HALL - DAY

Terry, pants still stuck, hobbles past walls decorated with happy FAMILY PICTURES. This moment wouldn't make the cut.

TERRY

Would you wait up a second--

He takes a step down the stairs and trips, tumbling down.

INT. CAR - DAY

Gwen backs the car out of the drive way. Margie chews her nails in shotgun.

GWEN

I talked to grandma. I'm going to move my things to her house and stay there for a while. She lives so close you can walk--

MARGIE

And what happens after that?

GWEN

I don't know.

(beat)

Things might get real messy,
sweetie. I'm sorry.

Marige peeks in the rear view and sees -- TERRY spill down
the front steps and limps across the lawn.

MARGIE

Might?

EXT. FRONT LAWN - DAY

Terry reaches the end of the drive way, watching as the car
turns the corner and out of sight.

TERRY

For crying out corn flakes!

A small truck with "GONZALES LANDSCAPING" printed on the side
pulls up front.

PACO, a little moustached Mexican, hops out.

PACO

Hola!

Terry makes a half hearted effort to cover up.

TERRY

Hey... Paco. I need a favor... two
favors from you, amigo.

CUT TO:

Paco intrusively yanks Terry's khakis up on the lawn.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Not so rough! Not so rough!

EXT. KENTWOOD HIGH - DAY

Terry sits amongst lawn equipment in the bed of the truck.
They pull into KENTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL.

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY - DAY

Margie nervously navigates a bustling high school hallway,
eyes nervously glued to a schedule in her hands.

Two TRENDY GIRLS move towards her. One of them, a SENIOR, and the other a sophomore, SARAH. Margie glances up and sees her old friend-- brightens up. Something familiar.

SENIOR

You just binge then purge. Binge.
Purge. Binge. Purge--

MARGIE

Sarah! I'm so glad I found you
This place is like a maze.

Sarah stops and looks at Margie like a stranger.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

It's me. Margie. Your friend.

Sarah turns to the Senior.

SARAH

(whispering)
I don't know her--

MARGIE

(upset)
You had your first period in your
grandma's jacuzzi. I was there...
the water turned a frothy
crimson...

SARAH

You're a freak.

The two broads move past Margie, who watches, slightly proud, mostly hurt. Another lost friend. Her eyes follow the girls until they land on--

Terry rounding the corner and coming in hot, chatting with the STUDENTS as he travels. This man loves his job.

Margie lunges against a wall of lockers and burrows her head. OSCAR approaches from behind.

Oscar is a senior and Japanese. Glasses. Casio wrist watch. Long Duk Dong minus the fun attitude and spontaneity.

He taps her shoulder.

MARGIE

(hissing)
Not now.

Terry passes. She peeks out and sees her dad go by. She detaches from the wall.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
Okay. How can I help you?

He points to the locker behind her.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
Sorry.

She steps aside. He opens up the locker and rummages.
Margie lingers.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
Could you help me? I'm looking for
Mr. Reynolds...

Oscar closes the locker and gives her a blank stare.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
You... don't speak English?

No answer. She takes a PAPER from a note book and writes--
"My name is Marjorie. What's yours?"

He takes the paper, looks at it and joins the teenage
traffic. Margie follows him with her eyes like a zoologist
seeing a new species of orangutan for the first time.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Terry marches towards an open classroom. Gwen's VOICE floats
out.

GWEN (O.S.)
I'll shut the door real quick and
we'll get started.

Terry reaches the doorway right as Gwen steps into it.

TERRY
You know what I had to do because
of you...

GWEN
I made my feelings very clear this
morning--

TERRY
Catch a ride with Paco... who is a
Mexican. Probably illegal...

GWEN
I am going to divorce you.

TERRY

Real funny. I forgive you.

He moves in for a kiss. She pushes his face away. He reacts violently, as if he were slapped.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Next time warn me before you turn a joke slap stick...

GWEN

Don't make a scene.

She closes the door. Terry peers through the window at his future ex-wife. He taps on the glass.

TERRY

The joke didn't land, Gwen. Time to take it back.

The BELL rings and the PA kicks to life with Brett's voice--

BRETT (O.C.)

And so it begins! Welcome back, students. We have a year full of fun and changes coming our way, so buckle up those seat belts and prepare for wild times.

INT. TERRY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

A neat and orderly classroom. Terry sits at his desk in contemplation, while the "Get to Know You Routine" unfolds.

JASPER, a junior, has the floor. He wears his insecurities and wealthy up bringing on his sleeve.

JASPER

It was a strange summer in the Holley household. Went to Milan... fifth time...

He does an exaggerated joke YAWN. Terry speaks up, to just himself, or so he thinks.

TERRY

She's bluffing.

JASPER

(deeply offended)
I am not lying! And I'm not a she!

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Margie eats lunch in a stall. The bathroom door SLAMS open and BOY voices float in. Her eyes go like saucers.

BOY (O.S.)
I don't believe you, dude.

A person takes a seat in the stall beside her.

BOY IN STALL (O.S.)
I grew six inches over the summer.
Swear to God, dude.

A symphony of BODILY FUNCTIONS and SPLASHING takes place. She closes her eyes and tucks her legs up beneath her.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Terry sits at a lunch table. Beside him- a sack lunch labeled "Gwen".

Margie cuts across the room and takes a seat beside him. Terry offers up the sack lunch. She pulls out a banana and peels it.

MARGIE
You have my permission to break the rules and tell me things are going to be okay.

TERRY
First days are always hard. Don't worry.

He wraps his arm around his worried daughter.

TERRY (CONT'D)
And don't worry about mom. She's bluffing.

Margie lays her head on his shoulder and bites into the banana.

EXT. BURKES HOME - DAY

Terry stands beside a car full of belongings, his wife and daughter. He leans into the open driver side window, looking at Gwen.

TERRY
 (overly chipper)
 I'll see you when your done
 bluffing.

GWEN
 This isn't a bluff, Terr--

TERRY
 Sure it is. Off you go!

He taps the hood of the car and the car backs out.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 WAIT!

The car stops. Terry runs up to the driver side. Gwen looks up to him.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 So what's the plan with the car?
 Should I take the bus until you
 come back?... Or we could carpool!

The window rolls up and she drives away... around the corner. She pulls into a darling house with a top notch garden out front. It's within throwing distance.

TERRY (CONT'D)
 (yelling)
 Have a great night! See you soon!

He waves at the girls as they hurry to the house.

INT. BURKES BEDROOM - DAY

Terry stands in the center of a gutted room. Drawers pulled out. Scattered boxes and clothes. He lets out a sigh.

INT. GWEN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gwen sits on a twin bed in a room of her preserved childhood. She soaks up the bits of her younger days-- toys, trophies, costumes.

By her feet, a BOX of her grown up things.

LYNETTE, 73, the mom from the home videos, enters the doorway.

She has the beauty of an aged starlet and carries herself like she was raised on a farm. Beautiful and tough.

LYNETTE

So divorce was the key to getting you to make the one block trek over here?

Gwen notices her. A sort of uneasiness takes her over.

GWEN

This isn't going to be long, I promise--

LYNETTE

Honey, I don't care how long you stay. It's good to just see you.

Long pause. Lynette moves in and sits beside Gwen. Lynette is more comfortable in their relationship than Gwen.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

Marriage is hard, honey. And you did it for...

GWEN

Twenty one years.

LYNETTE

See that's something. It's like I said when New York didn't work for you. It's the failures--

GWEN

I know what I'm doing, mom.

LYNETTE

Still doing this tough girl routine, huh? I'll tell you. Life's a lot easier if you let people care about you--

Gwen quickly stands and grabs a LAPTOP from the box.

GWEN

I have a lot to work on. With writing the play and unpacking...

Lynette waits for any sort of giving in. There's none.

LYNETTE

(giving up)
Alright.

She moves to the door way and stops.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

I would wait before sleeping on that bed. Your father and I had sex on it many many times and you know me, I'm not much of a cleaner.

She closes the door.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margie sits on the edge of a twin bed. A KNOCK. Gwen pokes her head in.

LYNETTE

How is everything over here?

She takes a seat beside her. Their body language lets you in on a little secret-- they haven't been around each other much.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

How was your first day of high school?

MARGIE

It was okay.

LYNETTE

I've never heard a bigger lie.

They make eye contact and Margie darts her eyes away. Lynne holds her in her sights for a beat.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

Let's be real with each other. What do you say?

Margie looks at her.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

I haven't seen you since you were a little one. So... we don't know each other so well. But times like these we need friends, honey.

She takes Margie's hand like only grandmas can. Margie looks into her grandma's eyes. She's exactly what she needs.

MARGIE

(warming up)

If we're friends... do I have to drive you around on errands?

LYNETTE

That's was actually the only reason
I said that.

MARGIE

Well, I can't drive.

LYNETTE

Rats. I'll find another use for
you.

(beat)

You could be my singing partner.
Do you still sing?

MARGIE

Yes.

LYNETTE

Did you know I sang in theater once
upon a time?

MARGIE

You did?

LYNETTE

I did. Your grandfather and I. He
wrote the plays and the music. I
sang and acted.

(beat)

Do you remember Howard?

MARGIE

I remember singing with him one
time, but that's all.

LYNETTE

He loved you something awful. He
was a wonder.

Lynne smiles, thinking back.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

Would you like to hear one of our
songs?

INT. LYNETTE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lynette pulls a box of CASSETTE TAPES out from under a bed
and puts a tape in a TAPE PLAYER.

LYNETTE

Howard used to sing me to sleep
with this. It put me out like a
light. We called it Caged Birds.

She presses play. A pretty PIANO number and a SWEET VOICE
fades in. It's slow and simply beautiful. Lynne mouths
along to the tape--

LYNETTE'S OLD VOICE

(singing)

Caged birds, you and I. We're just
here singing through the wire, for
a while. The sky's outside our
windowsill, but I'll stay here and
sing with you.

INT. GWEN'S CHILDHOOD ROOM - NIGHT

Gwen TYPES at a bright lap top. Through the open door, we
see across the hall and into Lynne's room. Lynne and Margie
waltz hand in hand.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Terry waits outside Gwen's class room. The plaque beside the
door now reads, "MISS PATTERSON."

Gwen appears and moves to the class. Terry opens the door
for her.

TERRY

After you, my lady.

GWEN

Stop it.

TERRY

Is there something wrong with
opening the door for a woman who's
aged beautifully?

She moves past him and into her class. We follow her. The
classroom is full and stirring with a fun energy.

Gwen stands beside her TA, ISSAC, 20's, front and center.

GWEN

Issac is going to lead us in some
warm up exercises! Everyone loosen
up.

Issac is a wispy kid. He wears a black turtleneck and tight khakis. He LOVES theater and he might be gay--

ISSAC
(flamboyant)
Acting is pain. Get vulnerable or
get out.

Yup. He's gay.

INT. TERRY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

The class is a live wire. Written on the board in big strokes-- HOW TO MAKE SOMEONE LIKE YOU. Terry frantically writes a list beneath it as the STUDENTS shout out.

NERD
Breakfast in bed! Mix cd!

GOTH
Love letters!

SHY BOOK WORM
Try different positions. Push your
body to the limits with him... or
her.

Terry quickly cuts her off.

TERRY
Going to ask you to pump the breaks
on that one.

BECKY, a cheerleader pipes up.

BECKY
Homecoming's coming up, Mr. Burkes.

TERRY
(stops in his tracks)
Babe with brains alert, everybody!

He leads a round of applause. Becky gives a "it was no big deal, really" shrug.

CLARKE, the scruffy janitor, enters with a dolly of boxes. The students stop the cheers and give him their attention.

TERRY (CONT'D)
We had a synergy going on and you
just ruined it, you big ass idiot.

CLARKE

This the new teaching equipment.

TERRY

I don't want that junk!

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Oscar sits silent in front of Brett.

BRETT

This is serious, Oscar.

Terry pokes his head in. Brett switches from "serious mode" to "please like me mode".

BRETT (CONT'D)

Terry! Come sit in. We're just wrapping up.

Terry enters, holding one of the boxes, and stands by the door. Brett goes back to "serious mode".

BRETT (CONT'D)

I'm looking at the transcript Grandview High sent us and if you're aiming to graduate you're missing the target, my friend. This is a new start for you. You don't have to be the slacker here at Kentwood.

(beat)

What's something you want to have? Something you love.

OSCAR

A Deering banjo.

BRETT

What's that?

OSCAR

The best brand of banjo.

BRETT

Perfect! Look at graduation as a Deering banjo. You want it... so aim higher.

Oscar nods.

BRETT (CONT'D)
 Okay. I'll see you at the assembly
 later. Break a leg.

Oscar moves past Terry and out the door.

BRETT (CONT'D)
 ("am I right?")
 Asian American teens...

Terry moves over and drops the box on his desk.

BRETT (CONT'D)
 Oh! You got the equipment. Pretty
 exciting.

TERRY
 Not really. Where should I put it?

BRETT
 In your classroom.

TERRY
 I think I'll be fine.

BRETT
 If you're overwhelmed with the
 change, don't worry. I'm having my
 buddy Ozzie come out and teach us.
 Guy's a genius. Did audio visual
 work for Knotts Berry Farm--

TERRY
 I really don't want it.

He slides the box to Brett who slides it right back.

BRETT
 This isn't about what you want
 anymore, Terry.

They have a quiet duel of the eyes as an angry tension grows.
 A moment of silence and then--

TERRY
 (hates this dude)
 Okay.

Terry stands to leave.

BRETT
 By the way. Gwen had us change her
 last name back to her maiden name.
 Is everything okay between you two?

TERRY
I have it under control.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A full auditorium. We move through the rows of seats and find Terry at one end of a row, looking at GWEN on the other side.

Brett stands center stage with his wife, JENNIFER, a tan California dream boat. They look more like brother and sister.

BRETT
Hello students. I'm Mr. Knowles.
Nice to meet you. I thought it
would be a good idea to get to know
each other. How does that sound?

The crowd CHEERS.

BRETT (CONT'D)
This lovely lady beside me is my
wife, Jennifer.

Jennifer playfully models and reaches for the mic.

JENNIFER
Hello kids--

Brett yanks the microphone back and takes center stage.

BRETT
Who wants to see a secret talent of
mine?

The kids CHEER. Two SENIORS, the kind live off MTN. Dew and pornography, wheel out a set up for a DJ. Turn tables and all.

Brett spins the discs as loud BASS music blares. His love for himself is pretty much visible. He aggressively fist pumps. Jennifer stands off to the side, visibly neglected.

BRETT (CONT'D)
(in the mic)
Found some tutorials online. It
was love at first sight.

The music stops. He catches his breath.

BRETT (CONT'D)
 Okay, students. Top that.

JUMP CUTS:

Teens showcasing talents. Bad stand up comedy. Hula hoop.
 A boy and a trained dog.

We move to the crowd. Terry finishes folding a note and
 points Gwen out to the boy beside him. The note makes a trek
 to Gwen. She gets it and opens it.

INSERT: A pair of "DELUXE BELLA LUNA SPA RETREAT" passes.

She looks down the row to Terry. He waves. She gives him an
 angry glare and heads to the back. Terry follows.

Center stage-- Oscar takes the floor and begins playing the
 BANJO. It's actually great, but no one is interested.

Terry approaches Gwen in the back of the room. Gwen greets
 him with an icy stare.

TERRY
 (overjoyed)
 I know. I shouldn't have. But I
 think things have been a little
 tense--

GWEN
 It's too little too late, Terry.

TERRY
 Too little? Did you not see the
 passes? Deluxe Passes. Dee. Lux.
 They're for next month, so...

GWEN
 It's not going to work.

They share heavy eye contact for a moment.

TERRY
 Let me love you, dammit.

GWEN
 I can't.

TERRY
 Why not?

She struggles for words.

BRETT (O.S.)
Let's hear it for Oscar!

We move focus to the stage. A weak APPLAUSE plays Oscar off stage. A JERK throws an open SODA on him as he departs. It soaks him, but he keeps moving.

BRETT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Up next is our cheer squad!

Becky and the girls bound out on stage.

BECKY (O.S.)
Miss Patterson! Come down here.

The kids look around. Gwen breaks away from Terry and to the stage.

BECKY (CONT'D)
Someone has something to ask you.

The squad LEAP and FLIP around as club MUSIC comes in. They begin to spell out "Homecoming?" With their pom poms.

Everyone waits in giddy anticipation. Gwen takes the mic--

GWEN
Absolutely not.

Margie slinks down in her seat and her dad ducks out the exit.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Terry moves down the empty hall. Oscar exits the bathroom in front of him. He's in a change of ill fitting lost and found clothes. They share a quiet look.

TERRY
You were great out there...

Trails off, searching for his name.

OSCAR
Oscar. And thanks.

Oscar begins to walk away.

TERRY
Headed home.

OSCAR
Yeah.

TERRY
Mind if I get a lift?

Oscar gives him a concerned look.

TERRY (CONT'D)
To a music store... not your house.

OSCAR
Okay. But it'll be uncomfortable.

TERRY
Not as uncomfortable as sticking
around here.

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

It's a lot more uncomfortable. A small motor bike. Terry is squeezed up right behind Oscar. Banjo balancing on his lap. They move quickly through a residential street.

TERRY
A big chopper guy, huh?

OSCAR
My parents thought I'd like it more
than a car... They were wrong.

TERRY
Well, what do you like?

OSCAR
I know I'd like to never spend
another day in that wasteland.

They zip around a corner.

INT. GRAYWHALE - DAY

An independent music store. Terry approaches the college aged CLERK.

TERRY
Excuse me. I'm looking for some
sad music... like a Seattle Coffee
Shop vibe meets Schindler's List...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A SAD OPERA plays while Terry sorts through family mementos, placing them into boxes. He sets a pair of WALKIE TALKIES on the coffee table.

Lynette and Margie enter. He turns to see them.

LYNETTE

I'm sorry. We were looking for the
Burkes' residence... not a tomb.

Terry slams on the STEREO and the music stops. Wish they hadn't seen that.

TERRY

Lynette!

He hops up and hugs Lynne. It's almost a mom and son dynamic. For whatever reason, they connect.

MARGIE

She wasn't bluffing.

Gwen enters the doorway. Terry looks over.

GWEN

(robotic)

Terry. Would you like to get some
food with me?

TERRY

(instant)

One hundred percent.

Gwen exits. Terry whispers to Margie as he's follows--

TERRY (CONT'D)

This sounds like a date...

Terry exits.

LYNETTE

Poor guy. He loves her.

INT. CAR - DAY

Terry chats beside a pensive Gwen.

TERRY

(giddy)

I was gathering up things that
reminded me of you.

(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

I was going to throw it all in
Buess Pond. Can you believe that,
babe?

(beat)

Is it still a no to homecoming?

INT. BILL HORN'S OFFICE - DAY

A plaque reads, "Top Divorce Lawyer of 2009" on a large desk.
Behind said plaque sits a shady man, BILL HORN.

Across from him, Terry and Gwen. Terry's face is blank.

Bill pushes paper work across to them and offers up a pen.

BILL

I drew it up just as you asked,
Gwen. No assets split and you each
get your daughter every other week.

Gwen quickly signs it and hands the pen to Terry. Long pause.

TERRY

You tricked me into thinking I was
coming on a Baskin Robins ice cream
date, in which our love would reach
new heights, so this charlatan
family ruiner could serve me
divorce papers?

BILL

(pointing to plaque)
Kent County's Top Divorce Lawyer of
2009.

GWEN

You wouldn't have come otherwise.

TERRY

You are taking things out of hand.

GWEN

I'm taking things where they need
to go.

TERRY

False. This is the last place it
needs to go! We were in the
Hamptons and now you're taking us
to... Cherynobyl!

GWEN

This marriage is not the Hamptons!

TERRY
Okay! Then Malibu.

GWEN
It used to be happy. But now it's suffocating and quiet.

TERRY
Why the hell didn't think to discuss this with me before hopping right into the devil's den?

GWEN
I've tried many times, Terry.

TERRY
Baloney!

GWEN
Just this past summer! After dinner with Ted and Gina, I told you they're marriage seemed perfect and ours was doing us harm and you stuck your head out the window the whole way home and said nothing more about it.

TERRY
I don't like talking about the love of my life leaving me! I'm sorry!

An 80's hair metal RING TONE. Of course it's Bill's.

BILL
(answering the phone)
No. I'm not busy.

Bill turns away and begins a conversation we can't hear.

GWEN
You used to... write me love notes... I used to dance with you... we used to do things! Now we're just around each other.

TERRY
Those are all generics! Give me something specific!

GWEN
Something specific?! Okay. I'm having an affair?! Is that what you want?

TERRY

Don't say that.

GWEN

I was! Lots of guys. Young ones too. I slept around. Now would let it go and sign the papers?

TERRY

Only if it's true. Is it?

GWEN

You know I only said that--

TERRY

Give me an answer! Yes or no? Is that why you're doing this?

GWEN

(defeated)

What does it matter?

TERRY

You're the only thing on this earth that I truly love. That's sincere. The ground could fall beneath my feet and as long as I had your hand and Margie's in mine I would be as happy as a clam. Okay? That's what it matters! And I'm not going to let that go for some stupid silly reason--

GWEN

I want more than you.

A blow to Terry. He looks at her a long while. Grasping for something and then-- he snatches up the papers and takes off out the door.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Terry!

Out the window, we see Terry sprinting down the street.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Can he do that?!

Bill motions to the phone.

BILL

(mouths)

On the phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The sad opera music plays loud as Lynne and Margie dramatically lip synch. They stand on the couch as if it's a Viking ship. These two are glorious together.

Margie abruptly stops and stares out the window.

MARGIE

Oh boy.

Out the front window-- Terry sprints across the yard while Gwen zooms into the drive way.

Terry bursts in and slams the door shut. Lynne stops the music.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

Are you divorced now?

He waves the papers around. Lynette does the ol' face palm.

TERRY

(to Margie)

Until I find out why she's doing this, a war is in progress.

GWEN appears outside the window and knocks aggressively.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Who's side are you on?

Margie looks between the Terry and Gwen.

MARGIE

I'll be with Grandma until you two idiots sort this out.

Margie leads the way out. Lynne follows, stopping by Terry.

LYNETTE

Find a friend, Terry. You won't want to be alone when the denial wears off.

Margie opens the door and moves down the steps with Lynne.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

Avert your eyes.

The once happily married couple share an intense stare down.

GWEN

If you close that door, there is nothing but bad between you and I.

TERRY

I'm going to get to the bottom of this wreck you've created.

He slams the door and lays against it. He notices the WALKIE TALKIE on the table.

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY - DAY

Transition period. Oscar opens his locker. A WALKIE TALKIE falls out. He picks it up. It chirps alive--

TERRY (O.C.)

I have a mission for you, Oscar Childs. Room 216... ten seconds.

Oscar looks around, confused.

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - DAY

Cleaning supplies and other unsafe chemicals surround an anxiously pacing Terry. Oscar slips in.

TERRY

You're twelve seconds late.

OSCAR

Mr. Burkes?

TERRY

From this point I am no longer Mr. Burkes. You are no longer Oscar Childs. I am Hawkeye and you are Queen Kong...

OSCAR

I feel astronomically uncomfortable right now... and I'm leaving.

TERRY

Stop. I am offering you a chance for automatic graduation.

He stops.

OSCAR

Really?

TERRY
Real as the sun, baby.

OSCAR
Don't call me baby. What is it?

TERRY
Do you know who Miss Patterson is?

OSCAR
The drama teacher? She's married
to another teacher or something--

TERRY
She's not married, but that's her.

OSCAR
I heard she was--

TERRY
Listen! I could've offered this
chance to anybody, but I chose you.
Trust me. She's not married.

Oscar nods.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Okay. This is super top secret.
It stays between just you and me.
The school district has reason to
believe Miss Patterson is having an
affair with either a teacher or
student at this school and I've
been assigned to catch her.

OSCAR
No. No. No. No.

Oscar starts to open the door. Terry blocks it.

TERRY
Stop! I need a partner... an
inside man. I need you.

OSCAR
Way too weird--

TERRY
You graduate and never look back at
this wasteland.

OSCAR

(pause)

You promise I graduate?

Terry spits on his hand and offers it. Long pause then--
Oscar spits on his hand and they shake.

Terry pulls out a comically large stack of papers and hands them to Oscar.

TERRY

Here is her schedule. Here is her home address and phone number. Places she likes to shop. And--

Pulls out a last paper and hands it over.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Here's a chart of her menstrual cycle.

OSCAR

Why would I need this?

TERRY

Track her moods. You don't do anything after school, do you?

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Terry moves through a playground full of kids. Oscar tags behind like it's a guided tour.

TERRY

This mission is very delicate. So a couple of rules--

Oscar pulls out a note pad as they move under the monkey bars.

TERRY (CONT'D)

You talk to me and only me.

OSCAR

Who are you superiors?

TERRY

Doesn't matter. This needs to stay super top secret. You tell me everywhere you go and I approve. This is a bond of trust we're forming. So don't break it.

OSCAR

Okay--

Terry takes off in a sprint.

TERRY

Training starts now!

JUMP CUTS:

-Terry somersaults along distance. Oscar trails behind.

-They patrol with BINOCULARS.

-Oscar hands out printed pictures of Gwen's face that have been fashioned into masks.

OSCAR

Take one and pass it down.

-The kids put them on. Terry and Oscar practice their stalking skills on the little faux Gwens.

-Oscar's wedged between a wall and a chain linked fence.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I'm telling you. I feel like I'm returning to the womb!

TERRY

You're going to need to slip through a lot smaller crevices if you want to be a spy!

-Terry finishes a sprint.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(out of gas)

Go! Go! Go!

-Oscar doesn't make it far. He busts out the INHALER several yards away. Meanwhile Terry throws up on the side lines. Stray kids stop and scream.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Look away! Look away!

-Terry and Oscar sit on a bench.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Hell of a performance, Oscar.

Oscar gives a smile of pride. He's good at something.

OSCAR
Where did you learn all of this?

TERRY
(struggling for a lie)
Desert Storm. Five tours.

OSCAR
Where were you?

TERRY
The desert...

MAN (O.S.)
Hey.

A well built MAN stands in front of them along side his little GIRL. Gwen mask in her hand.

MAN (CONT'D)
My daughter says you chased her
around with this mask on?

TERRY
A mask? Pardon my language, but
what the heck are you--

Terry leaps up and Oscar follows. Oscar- fast. Terry- not so fast. The man catches up to and tackles Terry.

INT. SUPER STORE - NIGHT

We follow behind Terry through sliding glass doors and into the glory of florescent lighting and things you don't need.

He moves to a YOUNG CASHIER. The boy looks up. Now we see Terry's face... black eye, bloody lip. Real rough shape.

TERRY
Your neck braces. What aisle?

A span of aisles. Terry moves past. Lynne and Margie pop out of aisle 8 just as he passes, moving the opposite way. We begin following the ladies.

Lynne nonchalantly grabs toilet bowl cleaner from a display and tosses it into the cart full of food that Margie pushes.

MARGIE
(laughing)
That is not--

LYNETTE

What? This is for dinner.

MARGIE

That's toilet cleaner, grandma.

Lynne takes it back out and holds it close to her face.

LYNETTE

Oh! Is that what this is?

Margie laughs at Lynne's antics and then Lynne stops, looks around.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

Your mom's been kidnapped.

Back down aisle 5. Gwen stands in front of an stretch of make up products. The beauty tools beckon to her-- welcome back.

She takes a tube of mascara, opens it, and paints one set of lashes. She blinks her eye into a display mirror. Her face answers the beckoning-- I missed you.

LYNETTE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Gwen! We thought a pervert had snatched you up.

Trance broken. She looks to her right. Lynne and Margie approach. She paints the other eye and tosses the mascara in the shopping cart. Margie picks it up and investigates.

MARGIE

Mascara? You don't do make up.

GWEN

I do now.

LYNETTE

Your mom was an actress, honey. She knows how to paint a face.

MARGIE

An actress?

Margie gives her mother the look of a toddler finding out her parents' job for the first time.

They move out of the aisle and to the check out line.

LYNETTE

(to Margie)

She's done it all.

(MORE)

LYNETTE (CONT'D)
 First an actress. Then a
 playwright. And then a wife--

GWEN
 Thanks for the history lesson, but
 I think we're good.

They begin to empty the cart on the check out counter.
 Behind them, Terry reaches the CASHIER.

MARGIE
 I'm interested! When did you do
 all of this?

TERRY steps up the cashier right beside them.

LYNETTE
 When she was about 19. She was so
 ambitious--

GWEN
 Enough, mom.

Terry spots them. He quickly grabs the neck brace and a
 GOSSIP MAGAZINE. Covering his face with the magazine, he
 walks past them, to the exit.

CLERK
 Sir! You need to pay for those!

The ladies take their bags and walk towards the exit just as
 Terry slips out.

INT. OSCAR'S HOME - NIGHT

Oscar sits with his parents, STAN and LINDA, at a set dinner
 table. They're pure bred wealthy honkies. Their home is
 Martha Stewart approved and it's real quiet.

STAN
 Made any new friends, son?

OSCAR
 Yeah.

Looks of genuine surprise.

LINDA
 That's a first.

STAN

I'd say. Your brother had a whole gang of fellas he'd go perusing with back in his hay day. You can be like him!

LINDA

You would make a wonderful dentist. Your hands are the perfect size.

OSCAR

I'm just looking forward to this year. I think it's going to be fun.

Oscar smiles as he plays with the lasagna on his plate. The quiet rolls back in and then-

LINDA

I think's hotter than it was yesterday.

STAN

I think it's the heat.

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY- DAY

Gwen moves out of the room and into the crowded hall. Her hair is pulled up into a bun. A well fitting dress and a stylish cardigan. A pretty painted face.

Behind her, we see Oscar's head bob up and down in the teen sea, trying to catch a peek of Gwen.

INT. SHOP CLASS - DAY

Oscar watches while the other students operate a saw.

OSCAR

I have a couple questions...

The saw is too loud to be heard... so he turns it off. The students stop and look at him.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I said. Who would you say has the loosest morals in this school?

He prepares to write notes. They turn the saw back on, drowning him out.

He turns away and looks out the window. He sees REESE, a senior wearing a shirt for a band you don't know, smoking against a wall with group of hip FRIENDS.

He writes in a small note pad -"MYSTERY COOL KID?". He flips it shut.

INT. COPY ROOM - DAY

Terry, neck brace on, enters with a worksheet in hand. He freezes.

Gwen collects a large stack of PAPER from the copier. Terry looks her up and down, resulting in a mild level of horny.

She turns and looks Terry up and down.

GWEN
You look like hell.

He quickly rips the brace off and tosses it.

TERRY
(instant)
Well you look like shit...

A major struggle of words ensues. Like someone caught on To Catch A Predator or a fish dying on land.

TERRY (CONT'D)
I mean. No. Not that... thing.
Shit... poor word choice. You've
looked... prettier you have... oh
how time... changes us... all.

GWEN
Thanks Terry.

She tries to move past him.

TERRY
(motioning to his face)
It was a street war, fyi. I won.

She stops.

GWEN
Street war, huh? Fun. I just
finished writing an original play.

TERRY
Oh yeah, a play?

GWEN

Yeah! There's actually a character you'd relate to. His name's Cyrus Caldwell and he steals babies and other things that don't belong to him.

TERRY

You're comparing me to a baby thief... with the worst name since Jon Bon Jovi?

One of those drawn out and dramatic--

TERRY (CONT'D)

Wow.

GWEN

It's set in colonial times, idiot... and I was just being facetious.

Gwen looks at him a beat. She's done being mean.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Margie's auditioning, if you want to come and watch.

She moves past him and down the hall. Taking in a breath, she lets her front slip for a moment and fights back tears.

Back to Terry. He watches her and then a smile spreads.

GWEN (O.C) (CONT'D)

Oscar Childs!

INT. AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Gwen and Issac sit in front of a stage. Issac's noticeably tanner than when we first saw him.

Oscar moves to center stage, blocks the lights with his hands.

OSCAR

Where should I start?

ISSAC

(taking notes)

This is auditions for a play not a rubix cube race. Get it together.

GWEN
Ignore him. Wherever you want.

OSCAR
Okay... so I'll start here.

He lays down on the ground.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Scar. Brother.... and then...
Nooooo! And then he falls...

He gets on all fours and crawls.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Somebody. Anybody. Help.
Mufasa's body is supposed to be
there... okay.

He rolls on to his back.

GWEN
That's good, Oscar.

He quickly stands up. A lone CLAP from the audience.

OSCAR
I was going to do another scene
from Hustle and Flow...

ISSAC
One was enough.

GWEN
Thank you. We'll let you know.

He heads down the stage and heads for the exit. Terry
emerges from the shadows and moves beside him.

TERRY
You're a shoe in.

GWEN (O.S.)
Margie!

They stop and watch. Margie stands center stage and sings
CAGED BIRDS. Stops mid song.

GWEN (CONT'D)
We'll let you know.

The two "spies" applaud and make a hasty exit.

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY - DAY

A LIST posted outside the Gwen's class. Drama nerds circle around. Oscar navigates to the front, beside Margie. Margie scans the list and sees her name-- ENSEMBLE.

MARGIE

(bummed)

I'm better than ensemble...

She turns and notices Oscar, which cheers her up.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

You again! What's your name? I'll help... wait... you don't speak--

OSCAR

Oscar.

MARGIE

(gasp)

English! You lied!

OSCAR

You assumed.

MARGIE

Well now I feel like a grade a bafoon!

OSCAR

Who's fault is that?

Margie considers that. Embarrassed. She joins him in the hunt for his name and finds it. ENSEMBLE as well.

MARGIE

Well, Oscar the deceiver. Looks like we're in this together. Maybe we can turn this friendship around.

OSCAR

I'm not looking to make friends.
I'm looking to catch a predator...

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

A junky car you wouldn't want to be seen in, parked outside of a dark home.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Oscar and Terry sit low in said junk mobile peering out of binoculars. They're on hour two and Oscar's bored.

OSCAR
Can we play the question game?

TERRY
Okay... but keep it vague and shallow.

OSCAR
What's your favorite movie?

TERRY
(instant)
I Still Know What You Did Last Summer.

A little car salesman reveals himself in the back seat. His name tag reads LESLIE.

LESLIE
(whispering)
Two hundred thousand miles, the breaks give out occasionally, but again the car is fully functional..

TERRY
Dammit Leslie. I said head down.

LESLIE
We need to get the car back soon...

TERRY
I'm still on the fence.

LESLIE
You've been on the fence for 2 hours now-

TERRY
Okay! If it's the cheapest you have, I'll take it.

LESLIE
I told you it was at the dealership. You could've told me then. I had a date with my wife that I cancelled for this..

A light in the house flips on.

OSCAR
He's immersed.

Terry pushes Leslie's head down.

They look in the binoculars. A bedroom window. A bear of a man, MR. REYNOLDS, walks into the room wearing a bath robe, which soon falls to the floor.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Don't do that. Don't do that.

LESLIE
What's happening?

TERRY
Hell on earth.

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

The car zips away.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The first play practice. Gwen holds a circle of students' attention.

GWEN
Thanks for coming out everybody.
I'm so excited. This is my first
original work and you're all a part
of it. Let's go to work!

CUT TO:

Gwen reads over lines with the leads, MARCY and RYAN. Marcy warms up her voice. She sucks. A FLASH of a camera.

Oscar takes a picture with a disposable camera amidst a flamboyant dance rehearsal to the tune of I DREAMED A DREAM. Everyone's dressed in COLONIST COSTUMES, i.e. tall hats and buckles. Issac patrols the dancers.

ISSAC
Sell your sex, kids. This isn't a
nunnery.

A struggling DANCER waves down Issac.

DANCER
Is this really the song we're
dancing to?

ISSAC

Miss Patterson didn't write music,
so we're using popular show tunes.

Issac notices the awful dancer that is Oscar.

His secret attempts to take pictures combined with God not
creating him to dance, make him the worst in the bunch.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

Oscar!

The dance falls still. Oscar stops and acts normal.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

Are you taking pictures?

OSCAR

I... scrapbook.

ISSAC

Take a seat. We'll find a better
place for you.

Oscar takes a seat in the rows behind an older woman. He
snaps a picture. The lady turns-- Lynne. He hides his
camera.

LYNETTE

Don't be embarrassed. You can take
all the pictures you want of me.
If you want some skin, I will only
do bosom. No below the belt.

Oscar looks away.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

A joke.

OSCAR

Oh.

LYNETTE

You don't laugh much, do you?

OSCAR

I guess not.

LYNETTE

Learn to. Life's more fun if you
do.

(beat)

Do you see that girl up there?

Points to Margie. She's practicing the dance.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)
That's my granddaughter.

OSCAR
Margie's your grand daughter?

LYNETTE
You know her?

OSCAR
We're friends.

LYNETTE
Lucky you.

She looks proudly at her grand daughter again.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)
She's a wonder. Hold her close.

Oscar nods. Lynette checks her watch and readies to leave.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)
Well, kind sir, I have a doctor's appointment to be late to. Don't listen to that bucket ass. You moved beautifully in you're own way...

OSCAR
Oscar.

LYNETTE
Oscar? You look more like a Li.

She walks up the aisle. Oscar snaps a last picture.

On stage. Oscar tags along behind the two seniors who helped Brett with his DJ gig. MARCUS and LIONEL. They're love for porn is more apparent close up.

MARCUS
I'm Marcus. This is Lionel.
Welcome to stage crew.

The tour leads them backstage. Oscar, however keeps his eyes on Gwen, who monitors the dance rehearsal.

Lionel holds a set of lavalier MICROPHONES.

LIONEL

These are microphones. We use them
to mic people and record the audio.

Lionel speaks into the microphone as Marcus listens with
HEADPHONES. Oscar snaps a picture.

MARCUS

Eyes over here, doofus!

INT. LYETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

Gwen and Margie have at it around a set kitchen table.

MARGIE

It's too much gyrating.

GWEN

You wouldn't be saying that if you
were lead.

MARGIE

Because that's where I belong!

GWEN

Do you really think that would be
fair? Giving my daughter lead?

MARGIE

If said daughter were qualified,
then yes! Plus no one even know
you're my mom.

Lynne enters with a stark face.

GWEN

Where have you been?

Lynne moves right to Gwen and tightly hugs her.

LYNETTE

I know we haven't been close for a
while, Gwenny, but know that I
haven't stopped loving you and that
I'm proud of you always.

GWEN

Thanks, mom.

Lynne pulls away, greeted by confused looks.

LYNETTE

I know you loved your dad more than me, but you could've tried coming over.

Lynne looks to Margie.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

You. Come with me.

Lynne takes Margie's wrist and pulls her down the hall.

INT. LYNETTE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lynne puts a cassette in a tape player. An 80'S SYNTH POP song.

LYNETTE

Dance.

MARGIE

What?

She grabs Margie's hands and pulls her around.

LYNETTE

Just move your bones, girl.

Margie does some half hearted bobs.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

What are you one hundred years old? Here. Watch me.

Lynne releases Margie and closes her eyes. She begins to sway and move in a quiet graceful way.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

Get lost with me, Margie. You need it. We all need it sometimes.

Margie breaks loose and gets into it.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

There you go! That's who you really are! Not those timid bobs.

Gwen enters the door way.

GWEN

What's going on here?

LYNETTE

It's called shaking out problems.
Join us.

Lynne leads Gwen in by the hand and twirls her. Gwen stands for a moment of discomfort and then-- release. Each one of them dances as if they're the only one in the room.

We pull out the window and onto the street. The house lit by that one room.

INT. KENTWOOD LIBRARY - DAY

It's a tight squeeze in the non fiction aisle. Terry sorts through a stack of PHOTOGRAPHS as Oscar "reads" a book.

TERRY

This is good. This is really good.

He pulls out a picture of Issac talking to Gwen.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Who's this kid?

OSCAR

That's Issac. Her assistant.

TERRY

Assistant, huh?

The crotchety LIBRARIAN emerges at the end of the aisle.

LIBRARIAN

Would you be quiet, please?

The two try to escape, awkwardly tangling bodies.

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY - DAY

We follow Issac. His skin continues it's descent into tan. Oscar sneaks behind Issac as he goes into a BATHROOM.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Issac relieves himself at a urinal. Oscar enters and goes to the one right beside him. He looks over to him.

OSCAR

Issac. So good to see you.

ISSAC

Yeah.

OSCAR

The guys and I are going out
tonight after practice... if you
want in.

Issac finishes up and moves to wash his hands.

ISSAC

No thank you.

Oscar leaps after him to the adjacent sink.

OSCAR

Why? Doing something better?

ISSAC

I have a date.

Looks down at his zipped pants.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

You didn't pee.

OSCAR

Didn't feel right. What are you
doing? For the date, I mean.

ISSAC

Going to the movies... please leave
me alone.

He departs.

The corner stall door swings open, revealing Margie with a
tray of food. Oscar looks at her.

MARGIE

I don't know how this happens...

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Oscar and Margie eat and laugh alone in the bleachers.

OSCAR

I pointed to my locker! Dead give
away. This kid understands English.

MARGIE

Maybe there was an attacker behind me and you were letting me know, "hey, you're about to be attacked."

OSCAR

An attacker, huh? That's the lie you're going to tell yourself?

The laughter builds and Margie catches her breath.

MARGIE

The real problem here is that you didn't just talk to me.

OSCAR

Listen. The majority of conversations I have are ones I don't want to have. So, what's the problem? I don't want to talk, I shouldn't have to.

MARGIE

Is this that teenage angst I've heard so much about?

OSCAR

You'll see. You lose friends. Pretend to be things. Do weird things to not be bored. It gets... strange.

A moment of contemplation for them both and then--

OSCAR (CONT'D)

So you thought I couldn't speak English, but I could read it?

MARGIE

Okay! Would you stop flogging this dead horse?!

OSCAR

You just said flogging. You're a million years old.

We pull away and see just them laughing and bickering in the long bleachers.

INT. CINEPOINTE 6 - NIGHT

Issac hurries past a large CARDBOARD cut out for a movie, which Terry and Oscar stumble out from behind.

INT. CINEPOINTE 6/THEATER 2 - NIGHT

Oscar and Terry slouch in their seats wearing 3-D glasses and uncomfortable faces. In front of them-- Issac and Ryan kiss passionately.

Oscar flips his note pad open. "ISSAC" joins the list of scratched out names.

INT. PLAY PRACTICE - AFTERNOON

Lionel and Marcus paint a giant cornucopia as Oscar stands by watching Gwen across the way.

She monitors Issac as he leads a very sexual dance to the song, "YOU'LL BE IN MY HEART." Noticing Oscar, Margie stops dancing and makes a funny face to him. He laughs.

LIONEL (O.S.)
You're missing the cornucopia

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Gwen climbs in her car and drives away. Oscar rolls his bike out from the shadows and kicks it to life.

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

Oscar putts behind Gwen. The car pulls into the drive way. Oscar stops across the street. He readies his camera.

Camera POV-- Margie climbs out the passenger side and walks quickly inside.

OSCAR
Margie... not you.

He snaps a picture and cruises away.

INT. ROOM 216 - DAY

Terry nervously bustles around in the tight quarters. Listening intently to Oscar.

OSCAR
She went home with a student last night.

TERRY
Who was it?

OSCAR
I'll show you.

He holds up the PICTURE taken from across the street of Margie entering the house. Terry looks closer.

TERRY
Is that...

Oscar flips to a photo of a smiley Margie.

OSCAR
Marjorie... Miss Patterson's lover.
I don't know her last name.

TERRY
Stop.

OSCAR
I didn't want it to be her either,
but the pictures don't lie. They
might have been doing sex things...

TERRY
You need to stop talking or else
I'm going to throw up.

OSCAR
It's 2014. Lesbians aren't gross
anymore. She's our harlot.

TERRY
Promise me you won't investigate
her or follow her. None of that.

OSCAR
(hesitant)
Alright...

The INTERCOM comes to life--

BRETT (O.C)
(super excited)
Teachers. We are having the
Curriculum seminar... Ozzie's here!

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Teachers take their seats. Terry stands in the back. Gwen moves past him.

Terry watches his beautiful wife move away and take a seat with a handsome teacher up front. He takes a seat, alone in the back.

Brett and OZZIE, a real LA douche, give a classic seminar experience up front. Fake excitement and LAUGHS.

They have all the equipment set out on a table.

BRETT

Listen up, gang! We're in the presence of greatness!

Ozzie has the floor. He smugly bows.

OZZIE

I'm going to make you each versed scholars in the art of modern day teaching. Watch out!

He holds a TABLET like a rifle, pretending to fire it into the crowd.

BRETT

Questions! Ideas! This is a brain storm, people

MR. ZIEGLER, a stylish English teacher puts in his two cents.

MR. ZIEGLER

My family owns and operates a glass business. And our sales have gone way up since dipping into social media. I think if we get the kids involved--

Brett tries writing down on a tablet connected to the projector but the connection falls apart.

BRETT

What's going on here, Oz?

The two bafoons frantically try and fix it. No avail.

OZZIE

We're still working out some bugs...

Terry looks at Gwen longingly.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Terry stares at himself in the mirror for a moment. He puts his head in his hands and cries.

EXT. LYNETTE'S HOME - DAY

Terry waits by the door. Composed, but his face doesn't lie. Lynette answers on the phone.

LYNETTE

No. I just need them cancelled. I will not be here to pay. Thank you.

She hangs up.

TERRY

Hi Lynne.

She looks at his sad eyes.

LYNETTE

Let's walk.

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

Terry walks arm in arm with Lynne down a sidewalk.

TERRY

I'm doing it out of love.

LYNETTE

Spying on your wife out of love?

TERRY

Yes.

LYNETTE

You're the craziest son of a bitch...

TERRY

She said she was--

LYNETTE

She said that in the heat of the moment. She's a lot of things, but infidelity is not one of them and you know that.

TERRY

I just want a reason--.

LYNETTE

She's let go. That's your reason
And what you're doing, with the
spying and all of that, is just a
way to deny what you already know,
which is your marriage is kaputt.

Terry responds with a heavy sigh. Lynne gives him a
compassionate look.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

I was married forty nine years and
then my husband was taken from me.
He sang me to sleep one night and
in the morning he was silent. He
was the best I ever knew and then
he was gone. So I did what you're
doing, which is deny. Deny the
unhappiness. Deny the change.
Deny what I knew. And then I found
a tape of one of our songs and
Howard sang to me again.

Lynne begins to sweetly sing this.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

"Just birds, caged or free, I'll
have you and you'll have me. Maybe
that's all we ever need."

She stops. Letting the last melody linger, like a breath of
fresh air.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)

After hearing that again, I stopped
wanting more than he had given me
and instead kept what he had given
me closer. I was able to let go and
it made me stronger.

TERRY

I don't want to let go, Lynne.

LYNETTE

Life's a short trip, my friend.
All these little stops, these
memories, they're all a dying art.
They're beautiful in their time and
then they are gone. Hold tight to
the magic when it's here and let it
leave when it needs be.

Her step falters and Terry holds her up from falling.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)
Just the heart of an old woman.

She regains her stance and looks to the broken man. He's not ready to let his wife go.

LYNETTE (CONT'D)
I'll tell you what. I'm going to be out of the house tonight. Why don't you take it for the night?

TERRY
Really?

LYNETTE
You're a damn sweet man, Terry. If nothing else. Remind her.

INT. PLAY PRACTICE - NIGHT

End of practice. KIDS filter out. Oscar spies from behind a curtain. His view-- Margie helping Gwen gather her things. Next to him, Ryan and a way too dark Issac argue.

RYAN
I read the texts, Issac! They were from "Big Man".

ISSAC
Don't you do that to me. I sit in a box of white hot light everyday, for hours. For you.

RYAN
I never asked you to!

The walkie talkie CHIRPS--

TERRY (O.C.)
No investigating tonight... I have a date.

Oscar gazes at Margie and Gwen another time.

RYAN (O.S.)
Is it your black friend you tan with?

ISSAC (O.S.)
His name is Blaze He's not black. He's just 3 shades darker than me. And no. Those texts aren't from him.

TERRY (O.C.)
Are you there?

OSCAR
I'm going to be busy too. Over.

Oscar lets the curtain fall in front of his face.

INT. LYNETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

Terry finishes setting the dining table with wine and food. He scans the romantic date set up. Lights candles.

Out a window behind him, we see OSCAR hop over the back fence and move through the back yard. Terry grabs a suit coat from the back of a chair and moves down the hall.

Oscar slips in through the back door and pulls a ski mask down. He somersaults his way into the dining room. He investigates the date set up.

OSCAR
Candles? Food? Cutlery?

HUMMING floats in from down the hall. He moves towards it.

INT. BATHROOM

Terry hums as he assesses himself in the mirror. From the waist up he looks dapper. From the waist down, he's not wearing pants.

Oscar tries to sneak a peek, but Terry turns to exit. Oscar moves down the hall to Lynne's bedroom as Terry walks towards the kitchen... and then stops.

TERRY
My pants...

He turns back around and into Lynne's bedroom. Oscar hides in the closet behind a row of CLOTHES.

Terry reaches for his pants on the bed and drops them. He bends down and spots Oscar's FEET in the closet. He stops.

Oscar's POV-- Terry slowly rises, still can't make him out. Oscar closes his eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

GWEN enters and shuts the door.

INT. LYNETTE'S ROOM

Terry looks back towards the hall. Oscar peeks and sees the opportunity. He runs and leaps out the WINDOW.

Terry moves to the shattered window and sees Oscar running through the back yard.

TERRY

A man?

GWEN (O.S.)

Who's there?!

He stirs for a bit and then steals Oscar's move.

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

Oscar mounts his bike and zips away. Just behind him, Terry tumbles over the fence and frantically runs down the street in his underwear.

INT. LYNETTE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gwen stares out the window. Margie walks in behind her.

MARGIE

Does grandma have a secret lover?

INT. TERRY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Terry prepares his classroom. Bed head. Tired eyes. Oscar enters, equally as disheveled.

OSCAR

I had a revelation last night.

TERRY

Shut up!

Terry quickly moves to the door and closes it.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Listen up. I'm tired of chasing ghosts. We're closing in on this bastard and we are going to finish this--

The door slips open and MARGIE peeks her head in. Oscar and Terry look over. Oscar dives under a desk.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Marjorie!

Terry goes outside with Margie and closes the door.

MARGIE

No talk law off. How do you know Oscar?

TERRY

Student. He's a piece of work.

Oscar's head rises in the door window.

MARGIE

Okay... Well. Could you give me a ride home from practice? Mom said she had a meeting and I--

TERRY

What kind of meeting?! And where?! And with whom?!

MARGIE

All I know is that she said it's at the mall.

TERRY

This is very interesting...

MARGIE

So can you do it or not?

TERRY

Yes.

MARGIE

No talk law back on.

She departs. The door opens. Oscar stands in the doorway.

OSCAR

What was that about?

TERRY

An informant. It's go time, baby.

OSCAR

Don't call me baby.

INT. AUDIO VISUAL STORAGE ROOM- DAY

A cluttered room of electronics. Lionel finishes a game of DDR in the corner. Marcus taps in. Aggressive stomps begin. Oscar enters.

OSCAR
You two. Come with me.

They look back at him.

DDR GAME VOICE
You fail!

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Lionel holds a CASE marked, "MICS", as Oscar opens the door of Terry's car. They look in. Terry sits driver side wearing a SKI MASK.

TERRY
No questions.

INT. CAR/DRIVING - DAY

All three kids sit in the back. Real tight squeeze. Lionel and Marcus try to tape a microphone to a shirtless Oscar.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR/PARKED - DAY

Outside the mall. Terry and Lionel and Marcus all wear large head phones.

We hear the loud sound of a SUCKING STRAW.

INT. MALL - DAY

Oscar looks around as he sips on an Orange Julius. He sees Gwen seated at a food court table by herself. He pulls his hood on and sits at a table beside her.

OSCAR
(into mic)
Target...

INT. CAR - DAY

OSCAR (O.C.)
Acquired.

Terry listens intently as the two teens sit uncomfortable in the back.

MARCUS
We're spying on a drug cartel, huh?

TERRY
I said no questions.

MARCUS
Are you nervous that they might cut his head off?

LIONEL
Yeah! They do that. Cut people's heads off.

TERRY
Enough! No more beheading talk.

MARCUS
If Lionel were in there? I'd be pissing my jeans.

LIONEL
(means a whole lot)
Thank you, Marcus.

TERRY
Don't compare Oscar and I to you two.

MARCUS
You're wingmen, aren't you?

TERRY
Yeah... but... we're not so... heavy.

LIONEL
That is BULLSHIT! We are chubby at the maximum!

MARCUS
You'd be lucky to be us.

TERRY
That's a stretch.

OSCAR (O.C.)
Man approaching.

Terry's attention turns back to the headphones.

GWEN (O.C.)
Thanks for coming...

MAN'S VOICE
No problem. Here, let me buy you
some food before we get to
business.

INT. MALL - DAY

Gwen and a MAN, we see just the back of, sit at the table by Oscar. Oscar pokes his chest out, getting the mic as close as he can to the action. Gwen's phone RINGS.

GWEN
One second, Vance.

She answers. Her voice grows panicked.

GWEN (CONT'D)
Hello... this is Gwen... for how
long... and she's okay?

Oscar recoils his chest, turns his head away and talks into the MIC.

OSCAR
Did you hear that name?

INT. TERRY'S CAR - DAY

Terry scans down his list of crossed out teacher names. At the bottom-- Vance Ziegler.

TERRY
Vance Ziegler.

He lets it sink in for a moment and then-- SLAP. Lionel retracts his hand. Terry looks back. The force twisted his mask. The holes are in all the wrong places.

MARCUS
That's for calling us heavy.

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

Margie walks beneath the lights in Colonial garb, pissed.

An El Camino pulls up from behind and rolls beside her.
Reese, the "mysterious cool kid", is the driver.

REESE

Miss the Mayflower, huh?

Margie glances over. She registers the handsome boy and puts her walls up.

MARGIE

No. My ride forgot me.

REESE

Bummer.

(beat)

I've seen you around Kentwood.
You're pretty.

Margie tucks her hair behind her ear.

REESE (CONT'D)

I'd offer you a ride, but I'm very
much intoxicated right now.

He holds a FLASK up and shakes it.

MARGIE

That's okay. It's just a few more
blocks.

He reaches out the window and offers a FLYER.

REESE

Here. Take this.

She takes it.

REESE (CONT'D)

It's a rock and roll concert. I
want you there.

MARGIE

Thanks.

He gives her a last smile and drives off.

EXT. VANCE'S HOME - NIGHT

The two "spies" dressed in all black, ski masks included, duck behind a sturdy oak in front of a dimly lit home. Ziegler Family Glass truck out front.

OSCAR
I forgot to ask...

Terry lifts up Oscar's shirt. A MICROPHONE running into a DEVICE duct taped to his chest.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
How was your date the other night?

TERRY
It... was okay.

Terry hits the record button.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Giddy up.

They run in a hunch across the lawn. Oscar somersaults across the lawn and perches beneath the window. They peek up. No action going on inside.

They crouch to the side gate. Oscar awkwardly climbs up and over the gate.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Oscar stands up to see lit patio with a table full of people. A barbecue. Once pleasant. Now crashed. The FAMILY cranes their heads to the intruders. Vance among them.

Vance stands up from his seat and moves towards them as Terry tumbles over. Oscar watches stunned.

TERRY
To the window.

He notices the impending man.

TERRY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Abort. Abort.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Terry and Oscar sit opposite Brett. The microphone equipment in front of him. The rest of the night play out via SPEAKERS.

TERRY'S VOICE
Leap, Oscar! Leap!

All we HEAR is heavy breathing and muttered curse words.

TERRY'S VOICE (CONT'D)
He's got my haunches!... Ow! It hurts! It hurts!

The tape stops. Brett looks at them like murderers.

TERRY
First off. It was not a home invasion. We were simply in the neighborhood and jumped over his fence.

BRETT
Vance said you were wearing ski masks.

TERRY
The evening air cooled our faces down a little more than we'd like. Are you going to hang us on the cross for wearing socks too?

BRETT
This is not a game, Terry! Vance could've pressed charges.

TERRY
Which he didn't. So I don't see why your panties are all in a knot.

BRETT
I have to take actions.

OSCAR
Listen superior. This is just a trail gone cold--

Terry snatches a PAPER off the table and shields his face from Brett's.

TERRY
(violent whisper)
Hush up, Oscar. Hush your mouth.

Brett swats the paper down.

BRETT
What are you talking about, Oscar?

OSCAR
Operation Harlot.

TERRY
Hush up, you.

BRETT
Operation Harlot?

OSCAR
The covert mission to find out who
is knocking boots with Miss
Patterson.

Brett turns to Terry who tosses an "I don't know what this kid's talking about" face right back.

BRETT
You can leave, Oscar.

Oscar exits. He stands outside the window gazing in. Brett reaches over and closes the blinds.

BRETT (CONT'D)
You were having a student spy on
your ex wife?!!

TERRY
(long pause)
Yes. I asked if Oscar would assist
me in spying on my wife and yes I
have zero regrets--

BRETT
Okay. Here is what's going to
happen. First I am going to put
you on an unpaid leave of absence..

TERRY
What! No! Don't do that.

BRETT
Next you're going to tell that boy
the truth. Then you're going to
tell Gwen before I do.

TERRY
Please Brett. I'll never see her.

BRETT
Take you're things and leave.

EXT. KENTWOOD HIGH - DAY

Terry walks down the front steps with a BOX of his things. Oscar follows behind as they move through the parking lot.

TERRY
It's done!

OSCAR
The mission?

TERRY
The mission. Me. It's all done.

OSCAR
Come on. I have nothing else going on. Let's keep it alive.

TERRY
Listen, Oscar. I have to tell you the truth--

OSCAR
What?

He looks into Oscar's eyes. Can't do it.

TERRY
I'll see you around.

He climbs in his car and leaves Oscar in the dust.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Margie sits alone in the bleachers, crying. Across the way, she sees Oscar walking to his bike.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Margie reaches Oscar just as he angrily kicks the bike to life.

MARGIE
Hi Oscar.

OSCAR
I'm a lit fuse right now, Margie.

He looks over at her, noticing the tears.

MARGIE

I have a lot I don't want to think
about and I don't want to be alone.

He hands her a helmet and they ride away.

EXT. SUBURBS - AFTERNOON

They maneuver residential streets. We can only hear the
sound of WIND. Margie holds her head back on the bike.
Closing her eyes.

They keep driving as the sun sets and the street lights flip
on. Just the sound of the WIND... and then it stops.

She sits back up and reality sets back in.

MARGIE

Take me to the hospital.

OSCAR

Why?

MARGIE

My grandma was dying.

INT. BURKES HOME - NIGHT

Terry looks through his box of school things. He picks up
the SPA PASSES. The phone RINGS. He drops them.

GWEN (O.S.)

(crying)

Terry.

TERRY

Gwen.

GWEN (O.S.)

My mom. She's gone.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Terry sits on a bench next to Gwen. Margie stands aside
chewing her nails. A no nonsense DOCTOR talks to them.

DOCTOR

Her heart was just on it's way out.
We couldn't do anything. I'm very
sorry.

Gwen lays her head on Terry's shoulder and Margie walks away.

INT. LYNETTE'S ROOM - DAY

Margie runs her hands through her grandmothers things.
Jewelry. Clothes. Pictures. Record collection.

Margie pulls the box of CASSETTE TAPES and out from under the
bed and pulls out a PORTABLE TAPE PLAYER

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A tall cathedral. Stained glass windows and a sparse crowd.

Terry, Gwen and Margie sit in the front bench listening to a
PREACHER run his gums at the pulpit. Margie holds her TAPE
PLAYER and HEADPHONES.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

The family stands by the casket. Now alone. Gwen puts her
hand on the coffin and begins to cry. She walks away. Terry
follows after.

Margie watches her parents comfort each other. Looks down at
the grave. Puts on her head phones and walks away.

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

Margie walks past houses in a sort of daze. We hear the song
leaking out of the headphones -- Caged Birds.

Oscar rounds the corner on his bike, dressed for a funeral.
Comes to a stop in front of her. Margie takes her headphones
off.

OSCAR

I knew I was late.

He offers up a picture frame.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

An offering of my condolences.

She takes the gift. A picture of Lynette sweetly watching Margie at play practice. She hugs him deeply.

MARGIE
Thank you, Oscar.

OSCAR
Where are you going?

MARGIE
To shake out my problems.

OSCAR
Do you want a ride?

INT. THE BASEMENT - NIGHT

A venue that wouldn't pass any safety or sanitary laws. Oscar and Margie enter the open stage area and claim a spot. Oscar takes her TAPE PLAYER and HEAD PHONES. And puts them in his BACK PACK.

OSCAR
Just let me know when you want to head home--

MARGIE
I do not want to be home. Right now, I just need to fu-- freak everything and get lost.

OSCAR
You almost cursed.

MARGIE
(laughing)
It wasn't very convincing, was it?

OSCAR
No. You gotta work on that.

Feedback from a microphone. Reese stands front and center. Sound check. Margie and Oscar give him their attention.

REESE
That's a hot mic.

Oscar recognizes him. A "Dear God." look. He quickly pulls out his note pad and circles, "MYSTERY COOL KID".

CUT TO:

It's really bad LO-FI MUSIC. Reese sings. THOM plays bass. MILES on drums. PAUL on guitar. All Sonic Youth wannabes. The packed crowd eats it up though. Namely Margie.

She dances in the thick of it, eyes closed. She doesn't have to think and she's content. Oscar gets knocked around as he takes notes.

CUT TO:

After the show. Margie and Oscar head for the exit. Reese runs up behind them.

REESE (CONT'D)
Mayflower.

Margie turns to him.

REESE (CONT'D)
I thought I saw you out there.

MARGIE
Oh yeah.

OSCAR
(yelling)
Great guitar solos! Super loud!

REESE
Thanks...
(to Margie)
Are you going to stick around?
We're having a party.

OSCAR
(louder yelling)
9:30 curfew!

REESE
That's a shame.

He looks Margie up and down.

REESE (CONT'D)
We're skipping school after first
period. If you want to get into
some trouble come find us.

MARGIE
Okay.

Reese departs. Oscar thinking he's talking to himself.

OSCAR
(still yelling)
That's my perp!

MARGIE
Take it down by about twelve
hundred decibels.

INT. BURKES HOME- NIGHT

Dark living room. Terry and Gwen dance to an old JAZZY RECORD picked from Lynne's record collection. Empty wine bottles. Drunk as skunks.

Margie enters and follows the MUSIC and LAUGHTER.

TERRY
She said that?!

MARGIE
Yes! She called you Fairy Terry
for years before we were married!

Margie flips the lights on. The parents turn to face her.

GWEN
Where have you been? We were so
worried!

Gwen moves for her daughter. Margie moves past her to the records.

MARGIE
These are grandma's.

She picks up the box and moves to her room.

GWEN
Honey, wait!

Gwen goes to follow her, stumbles. The two parents laugh.

TERRY
Okay. Serious. This is serious.

They compose themselves and move to Margie's closed room. They KNOCK.

GWEN
Baby... we know it's hard. We're
all having hard times.

No answer.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Your father and I took a week of work off.

TERRY

It was my choice. I chose to.

GWEN

I checked you out for next week too. We're going to clean up Grandma's together...

Margie throws the door open.

MARGIE

I'm going to school.

GWEN

We're going to spend some time as a family...

MARGIE

Stop it. You broke the family unit. You can't take it back.

GWEN

We're just trying to help...

MARGIE

Bullshit! You're just trying to help yourselves!

TERRY

Whoa. What demon kidnapped my daughter's mouth?

GWEN

Don't be mean! There are a lot of ways to cope and shutting people out is just about the worst way.

MARGIE

I'll try getting drunk with my ex husband and rifling through my dead mother's things. That seems to be working for you.

She slams the door. Her parents linger, helpless.

GWEN

This is where she goes bad on us.

TERRY
 We weren't rifling. It was
 perusing at most.

A laugh leaks out of Gwen. The two go back to laughing.

INT. HEALTH CLASS - DAY

Margie sits uninterested as Mr. Reynolds sits on his desk up front. Pants riding up hard on the crotch.

MR. REYNOLDS
 I had a Brazilian lady, mid to late
 twenties, tell me the largest
 muscle she had ever seen were my
 genitals. So... take that for what
 it's worth.

The bell rings. Margie's off like a rocket.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Reese stands by an EL CAMINO out front of the school. Oscar and Margie bound out the front door and to the car.

MARGIE
 Hi.

REESE
 I didn't think you'd show.

The two nerds go to hop in the back.

REESE (CONT'D)
 Before you get in. Just know.
 This is a big mean freight train
 headed for nothing good and
 everything bad. Ask yourself. Do I
 want on?

MARGIE AND OSCAR
 Yes.

REESE
 All aboard.

They hop in the bed with THOM, PAUL and MILES, the other part of the BLOODS. Paul hands them a flask.

OSCAR
 What is this? A forty ounce?

They tear off.

Fade in MUSIC -- the kind you drive at night to. A montage begins. A weeks worth of teenage ruckus and middle age rekindling unfolds. We go between the young and the old.

-The teens drive through the suburbs. Skateboard in a mall parking lot. Crash in shopping carts. Oscar takes notes as he watches Reese.

-Terry and Gwen playfully clean out Lynne's garage. On the front lawn. Terry notices the broken window.

TERRY

Broken window, huh?

GWEN

Yeah. I talked to Vance about fixing it. He said his business could give me a deal.

TERRY

Is that right??

-Teens cruise by in the El Camino. We tag along. The teens run up a hill at night. Reese plays the guitar. Oscar watches Margie watching Reese, both smitten.

-Oscar sits in his bedroom listening to Margie's tape player. Playing along on the banjo.

-We see various shots of Margie slipping into her upstairs bedroom window as her parents dance, eat dinner, laugh down stairs. Margie around her parents. The dynamic has shifted. Margie grows despondent watching her parents be together.

-The teens spray paint in a train yard. Oscar runs up to Thom.

OSCAR

So what's the craziest thing you've ever seen Reese do? Like say... sleep with a teacher... or?

-Night time driving. The teens hold on to the Bloods hold onto the back of the El Camino on skate boards. At a house show. The teens bounce in the audience. Oscar watches Reese move closer to Margie. Takes notes.

MUSIC stops. Montage ends. The CRASHING of pins.

INT. CRAZY PINS - NIGHT

Margie and company are the obnoxious kids at the bowling alley. Margie rolls poorly on purpose. Gutter. She takes a seat beside Reese as Oscar goes to roll.

REESE

I want you to join the band.

MARGIE

Really?

REESE

Yeah. You're one of our kind.

MARGIE

I'd love to... Can Oscar be in too?

Behind them. Oscar rolls the rock in an effort to do well. Launches lanes over. Margie turns to see. Her eyes land on Terry and Gwen several lanes over. Lovey dovey and date mode engaged.

REESE (O.S.)

Maybe. Thom's gay, so I guess Oscar could be a groupie...

MARGIE

I have to go.

She gathers her things. Oscar notices and moves over.

REESE

What? We have five more frames...

MARGIE

I'll walk.

OSCAR

Are you leaving?

MARGIE

Yes.

OSCAR

I'll walk with you.

They rush away. Miles holds up a BACK PACK.

MILES

He forgot his back pack...

Margie ducks behind Oscar as they move past her parents. We move and join, as they begin to slip off their shoes.

GWEN

You are still as bad as you were 15 years ago.

TERRY

I don't play with skill. I play with heart.

GWEN

Oh yeah?

TERRY

Yes. And if my heart is too weak for you, then so be it--

GWEN

You need to give your heart a pep talk, because 37 pins in a game of bowling is a real tragedy.

Terry looks at her, lovingly, for a moment.

TERRY

You know? I found these the other day.

He reaches into this pocket and pulls out the SPA PASSES.

TERRY (CONT'D)

They're for this coming weekend...

GWEN

That could be nice.

TERRY

Could be...

They smile at each other.

EXT. BURKES HOME - NIGHT

Margie finishes an ascension to the roof and slips in her bedroom window just as Terry's car pulls into the drive way.

INT. MARGIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margie climbs under the covers just before Terry enters the room in a giddy fashion. He lays across the bed.

TERRY

Can I rant? I'm going to rant. We just went on a date! And mom asked me. SHE. ASKED. ME.

MARGIE

I'm really tired, dad.

TERRY

We went bowling. I was three strikes away from a turkey.

(sighs)

Things are getting better, Margie.

Margie pulls the covers over her head. We slip under too, putting Terry out of sight. His CELL PHONE rings.

TERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hi Brett... no, it's not too late.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Terry sits across from Brett.

TERRY

He hit her?

BRETT

It was more of a graze, but Delores swears he slugged her throat...

He pulls the blinds open and peers out. In the main office, Delores chats with WENDY, the receptionist. Delores wears a neck brace, which Wendy admires.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I know she found that neck brace in the lost and found... but contact or no contact, I had to let Chris go.

He closes the blinds.

TERRY

So that means...

BRETT

I need you back. I can't do without two math teachers.

Terry, in an excited fit, does the Catholic body cross gesture and throws deuces up to Heaven.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I talked to Gwen and she said everything is square with you two. So if that's the case, I'd love to have you back on board.

TERRY

Yeah! Everything is back on track. I'm ready to get back to it.

BRETT

Perfect. I also talked to Gwen about chaperoning Homecoming this weekend. I need one more...

TERRY

I'll do it.

BRETT

I knew you would.

He gives him the look a coach gives a red shirt player.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Go get em', Burkes.

Terry hops out of the chair and moves to the door.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Oh! One last thing. Everything is settled between you and Oscar Childs, yes?

TERRY

(forgot about it)
One hundred percent.

EXT. KENTWOOD HIGH - DAY

Margie, Oscar and the Bloods smoke against a wall. Through a window, Oscar sees Terry happily bounding through the school halls. He chokes on the smoke. They pat his back.

OSCAR

(recovering)
I'm good. I'm good.

He throws up.

INT. TERRY'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Terry walks in. His room has been revamped. New equipment. No white board. A room of the future.

TERRY
This better be a joke.

CUT TO:

Terry sloppily tries to teach the class. He fumbles the pads and remote. Can't get the screen to work.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Let's turn to page 117.

GEEK
Is this on our tablets?

TERRY
Uhh.... now a tablet is what?...
Does anyone else need fresh air?
It feels humid...

The bell rings.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Thank God.

He rushes out to the door before any of the kids. Oscar steps in his way.

OSCAR
You're back.

EXT. KENTWOOD HIGH - DAY

Oscar follows Terry out the front steps.

OSCAR
It wasn't Ziegler. I'm 97 percent
sure it's a student. Reese. A
real trouble maker. Loose morals.

TERRY
I said the case was on hiatus.

OSCAR
Hiatus is just a word. Snooping
never sleeps.

TERRY

Listen, Oscar. I have to tell
you... it wasn't real--

REESE (O.S.)

Oscar!

In the parking lot, Reese hangs out the driver side of the El Camino. The crew in the back.

OSCAR

There's my perp. I'll brief you
later.

Oscar departs.

INT. PRACTICE SPACE - DAY

A typical dirty practice space. Practice is in LOUD full swing. Margie nervously sings alongside the rough band. Oscar stands off to the side.

CUT TO:

The Bloods sit in sunken couches drinking brews. Reese cozies up beside Margie. Oscar hops over the back of the couch and parts them like a sea.

OSCAR

Tight squeeze...

Reese retracts.

MARGIE

How did I sound?

REESE

You just need to learn the words.

Reese hands her a pair of head phones.

REESE (CONT'D)

Put those on. This is a demo.

MARGIE

Okay! That would help.

She puts them on and Reese presses play. The rest of the Bloods and Oscar sit in quiet. Oscar's never been without Margie with these goons. They aren't real friends.

OSCAR

You're sure you don't want to try
and fit that banjo in there?

REESE

I think we're set on the banjos.

OSCAR

Your selling yourself short. I'm
telling you--

REESE

You forgot this last night.

Reese reaches behind the couch and hands him his back pack.

OSCAR

(worried)

Oh yeah...

REESE

We saw those papers... about Miss
Patterson.

OSCAR

What papers?

REESE

The schedules... phone numbers....

MILES

When she was on the rag.

OSCAR

(adjusts himself)

Is that right?!

REESE

Don't worry. I won't tell anybody.
We think it's pretty bad ass.

They all nod. Oscar starts to warm up.

THOM

Congratulations.

OSCAR

Thanks. It's a super top secret
operation.

(beat)

So Reese. You're not sexing her?

REESE

No.

Oscar flips open his note pad and scratches out "REESE".

REESE (CONT'D)

You think I'd have sex with the
same woman as you?

Oscar flips the pad shut.

OSCAR

You think I knocked Miss
Patterson's boots?!

REESE

You just said you did.

Oscar looks into their prying eyes and then to Margie.
Mouthing the words. He likes her a lot.

OSCAR

Duh! We did sex. A lot.

MILES

Right on.

Oscar takes a drink of beer.

REESE

Do you know if Margie's a virgin?

Oscar spits up said beer.

THOM

She's a sophomore, Reese.

REESE

I don't give a shit. She's a
pretty flower.

Margie takes her headphones off.

MARGIE

I should be able to learn the
words.

Oscar quickly stands up.

OSCAR

I think I'm going to go. Do you
want to go for a ride, Margie?

EXT. SUBURBS - AFTERNOON

They cruise past kids playing in the street as the sun sets. Banjo slung across Margie's back.

EXT. BUESS POND - NIGHT

A hill by the a quiet pond. They run up the hill. At the top. The night lights ignite.

MARGIE

Shall we practice our swears?

The two begin shouting out profanities into the dark.

Later:

Margie tosses stones into the pond while Oscar plays the banjo. He begins to play a familiar melody. Caged Birds.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

That's my grandma's song. Caged Birds!

OSCAR

I know. You left your tape player with me and I learned it.

She quietly sings along. It's a tender moment between them. He stops.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Are you tired of this?

MARGIE

No! I love that song. We should try and play it live.

OSCAR

Not the song. The whole tough crowd thing.

MARGIE

Tired of it?

OSCAR

Yeah. The acting rowdy facade isn't old yet?

MARGIE

They aren't acting.

OSCAR

Yes they are! Those suckers live for the show. Especially Reese.

MARGIE

Who are you to call out anybody, Oscar! Look at you.

(mocking him)

"I'm lonely. I don't have friends. I see how things really are. All people are stupid and phony."

OSCAR

You think that's me?

MARGIE

I know it's not who you are! But that's the person you put on for people. Everybody's faking something! You're not different.

(beat)

Where is this even coming from? I thought you liked them.

OSCAR

I just want to know why you hang around them! Is it Reese?

MARGIE

No!

OSCAR

Then why do it?

Margie's anger fizzles and her gaze sinks to the grass.

MARGIE

It keeps me from being sad. It helps me not think about how much I miss my grandma and how stupid my parents are being and how bored I am and how alone I feel...

It's heavy for Oscar. The tension releases and they're back to caring friends.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

What's in it for you

OSCAR

Being honest. I was spying on Reese, but now... I just like being around you.

MARGIE

Why were you spying on Reese?

OSCAR

It's silly, really.

(beat)

For the past month I've been spying on Miss Patterson with Mr. Burkes. The school district thinks she's sleeping around or something... I'd follow her home. I even thought it was you for a while--

She gives him a horrified look.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

What?

MARGIE

You two are psychopaths.

She gets up and runs up the hill.

OSCAR

Margie!

She reaches the top and disappears.

INT. BURKES HOME - NIGHT

Terry and Gwen tag team setting the table. Dinner for three.

TERRY

So corsage or no corsage?

GWEN

(laughing)

I can't believe we're doing this. We're too old to be going to homecoming.

TERRY

Look at us. We have King and Queen written all over us.

Margie barges through the door and into the kitchen. Face to face with Terry.

GWEN

Hi Margie.

TERRY

You're just in time for dinner!

CUT TO:

Mid dinner. The parents eat. The daughter stares madly at the father. It's quiet.

GWEN

So... Issac said you haven't been to practice in over a week.

MARGIE

I quit the play.

GWEN

Why?

MARGIE

I'm in a band now.

GWEN

Well that's fun I guess.

MARGIE

Yeah. It is.

TERRY

Your mother and I have something fun going on too. We're going on a... Deluxe Spa Get Away this weekend. We're pretty excited.

He reaches and grabs Gwen's hand. Margie scopes it out with disdain.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Maybe you can sleep at one of your new band fellow's while we're away--

MARGIE

(looking at Terry)

I know what you've been doing... with Oscar Childs.

TERRY

I beg your pardon?!!

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Terry tugs Margie through the dark garage and into the car.

MARGIE

Let go of me, pervert.

He shuts the doors. Dark.

TERRY

What do you know?

MARGIE

You and Oscar Childs spied on mom.

TERRY

It's done. It's over!

MARGIE

Does she know?

TERRY

No! And she isn't going to know.

MARGIE

False. I am going to tell her post haste.

TERRY

No! Your mother and I are the happiest we've been... in years. It's all coming together again. Please don't ruin this. This is good for us.

Margie looks at her pleading dad.

MARGIE

Okay, but there is a no talk law in affect in this house now.

TERRY

Thank you. Thank you.

A TAP at the window. Terry rolls the window down. Gwen stands outside the door.

GWEN

What is going on?

TERRY

Night time driving lessons.

He turns the windshield wipers on.

TERRY (CONT'D)

And that... is how you see in a snow storm.

Margie gets out of the car and goes in the house in silence.

INT. KENTWOOD HIGH - DAY

Margie and the Bloods move through the hall passing out flyers.

MARGIE
House show. My house.

Oscar rounds the corner and runs up to her.

OSCAR
Margie! I'm sorry. I didn't mean
to get upset...

MARGIE
We're not talking, Oscar.

She moves past, leaving Oscar behind.

A KID holding a poster moves by Oscar. Oscar takes it from him.

INSERT: A wannabe 90's punk poster. The Bloods. Live. House Show! Friday.

Oscar slinks away as the PA pipes up-

BRETT (O.C.)
The rumors are true students. DJ
Licious will be DJ'ing at
Homecoming tonight.

INT. BURKES BEDROOM - NIGHT

Terry pulls a SUITCASE out from the closet and throws it on the bed. Opens it. His old wedding tux.

EXT. LYNETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

Terry waits at the door with a bouquet of flowers. His suit is uncomfortably tight. Gwen answers the door. She's dressed like a homecoming queen.

TERRY
(offering the flowers)
I couldn't afford a corsage.

Gwen takes them with a smile.

GWEN

Good Lord. Is that your tuxedo
from our wedding?

TERRY

You look beautiful too.

They walk arm in arm towards the car.

GWEN

That's not a limo...

EXT. PRACTICE SPACE - NIGHT

Oscar waits in the bushes. Loud MUSIC comes out of the garage and then it stops. Margie and the Bloods exit and move to the El Camino. They're all tipsy.

MARGIE

Who needs homecoming!

They start a drunken chant and pile into the El Camino.

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

Oscar tails the El Camino down a residential street.

INT. RICH KIDS PARTY - NIGHT

The home of Jasper Holley. Much too large for a family of three.

It's full of drinking teens and loud electronic MUSIC. Margie and the crew enter and immediately grab drinks.

Oscar enters shortly after and moves through the crowd.

INT. HOMECOMING - NIGHT

A sea of dressed up teens swaying to heavy HOUSE BEATS. The music doesn't distract that it's a high school gym.

DJ Licious/Brett is the most intense DJ you've ever seen. He's sweating like a marathon runner.

Terry moves through the dance floor carrying a brownie. He reaches Gwen on the outskirts.

TERRY

I had to swim through a lake of
suppressed sex, but I did it.

He hands her the brownie.

GWEN

Thank you.

They look out at spectacle that is a high school dance.

GWEN (CONT'D)

DJ Licious is on fire.

Terry looks at his wife like a teen to his crush.

TERRY

Want to dance?

She hesitates and then takes his hand. They slow dance among
the fist bumping teenagers.

INT. RICH KIDS PARTY - NIGHT

Margie and Reese dance in a dense crowd. Blurred lights and
moving bodies. Oscar moves through it all and spots Margie,
just in time to see-- Reese moves in and kiss her.

The crowd knocks Oscar back as his eyes hold on to the girl
he loves kissing another guy.

EXT. LYNETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

On the door step. Gwen unlocks the front door and opens it.

TERRY

So...

Gwen laughs.

GWEN

Yes, Terry. I am going to invite
you to come in.

TERRY

If you insist.

She leads the way and they enter the unlit home.

INT. LYNETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

Gwen moves to a light switch. Terry follows close behind. She flips on the light and turns around, startled by Terry.

Terry grabs her head and gives her a big smooch. She pulls back.

TERRY

I'm sorry... no I'm not. It felt right... so I did it.

She stares at him and then grabs his head. Smooches him hard. It catches Terry off guard, but he digs it... and then she stops. Another frustrated look.

GWEN

Dammit.

TERRY

You still don't like frenching?
Too much tongue?

GWEN

Okay.. Okay...

She kisses him again. She guides him to the living room, mid smooch, and they fall onto the couch. Gwen on top.

Gwen takes Terry's hands and gives him a handful of over the dress breast.

TERRY

We should of gone back to
homecoming years ago.

She opens her eyes and pulls away. Terry continues his grips on her breasts.

GWEN

Stop, Terry.

She peels his hands off his chest. They both sit up.

GWEN (CONT'D)

I'm trying but it's not there. I'm
not feeling anything.

TERRY

Not feeling anything? I have a
raging erection over here.

GWEN

I want to feel something, Terry...
I really do. We've been doing so
well--

TERRY

Exactly! We've been getting it
back! Don't stop now.

He goes in for another kiss, which she pushes away causing
him to fall off the couch.

GWEN

Listen Terry...

TERRY

No no. Don't say "listen Terry."
You're about to tell me something I
don't want to hear.

GWEN

You've helped me through mom being
gone and that... and... I don't
know. I wanted to fix us, but
we're different people now. Our
time for being lovers is up.

TERRY

Stop with the back and forth, Gwen.
You're jerking me around and it's
breaking me.

GWEN

We can be friends though. We
proved that.

TERRY

I don't want friends. I love you.

GWEN

We just both need to find something
worthwhile to do.

TERRY

You are my worthwhile.

Gwen averts her eyes and moves to the door and opens it.

GWEN

You should go.

Terry slowly moves towards the door and outside. He stops
and turns to face her.

TERRY

What about the spa retreat?!
Deluxe?

GWEN

Good night, Terry.

She shuts the door. Terry looms. We hold on Terry's dismal face.

INT. RICH KIDS PARTY - NIGHT

Now on Oscar's dismal face. He holds Margie in his sights, but the dancing teens close in and block her from view.

INT. BURKES BEDROOM - NIGHT

Terry finishes folding his tux pants. Behind him, we see across the hall into Margie's room. The window slides open and a tipsy Margie spills in.

She laughs to herself a moment and then notices her dad. She moves towards him, reaching him just as he zips the suitcase closed.

MARGIE

Packing for the big trip, huh?

TERRY

We're not--

MARGIE

(tipsy rambling)

We haven't been good at being a family, daddy. And I've been acting out, but it's only because I don't know what else to do. Grandma said you need to get lost sometimes. I think that's the part I'm in...

She slowly begins to cry. Terry quickly stands and hugs her. He's missed this neglected father and daughter bond. Margie pulls away.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

I forgot about the no talk law.

TERRY

We can talk! You can talk to me.

MARGIE

Have fun at the retreat. I'll see
you after the weekend.

She moves out of the room and into her room.

TERRY

Honey, we're not--

The door closes.

EXT. BURKES HOME - MORNING

Terry opens his car door. He looks over to the other block
and sees Gwen doing the same. They lock eyes for a moment
and then Gwen climbs in her car and drives away. Terry
follows suit.

We look up to Margie's window. Her head emerges just as the
cars zoom out of sight.

INT. KENTWOOD HIGH - DAY

Kids talk as Oscar moves through the hall. A BOY gives Oscar
a high five.

BOY

Mr. Patterson!

Oscar nods his head, confused.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Terry puts the SPA PASSES in Vance's mail box. He moves past
the Principal's office and the door opens. Gwen exits,
wiping tears.

GWEN

Hi Terry. Could you sign those
papers... the divorce papers...

TERRY

Okay.

GWEN

(tearing up)

I don't know what's next for me,
but I might go away for awhile.
I'm not sure. Thank you for
everything.

She ducks away. Brett walks out and puts his arm around Terry.

BRETT
Hey. You think you could talk at that parent curriculum seminar tonight?

TERRY
Sure.

Brett begins to bite his lip and nod his head.

BRETT
Sorry. Just thinking about last night.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Oscar takes a seat at by Marcus and Lionel.

OSCAR
Hey fellas.

LIONEL
This table's for stage crew and DDR club members only.

MARCUS
That means leave.

He obliges them.

LIONEL
(calling out)
Congratulations on Miss Patterson!

INT. ROOM 216 - DAY

Clarke and Terry sit on buckets chatting.

CLARKE
That was the first time I ever beheaded somebody...

Oscar breaks in. Terry whips around.

OSCAR
Oh sorry.

TERRY

Wait! Clarke. You know the way out.

Clarke slinks out and Oscar replaces him on the bucket.

TERRY (CONT'D)

I'm in a bad way, Oscar. I think I just lost the love of my life for good and I'm sick to my stomach.

OSCAR

I lost her before I ever had her.

Terry looks at him like an concerned older brother.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I mean... I never had a chance, really. There's a bit of an age difference. She likes somebody else... who has a car.

TERRY

Is she the best you know?

OSCAR

Yes.

TERRY

Then why would you let something like that slip away?

(beat)

Love is a beautiful, hurtful thing. Is it worth it?

The intercom comes in.

BRETT (O.C.)

Oscar Childs to the office. Now.

Oscar gets up to leave.

TERRY

Going to the office?

OSCAR

Nope.

He leaves Terry by his lonesome.

INT. KENTWOOD GYM - NIGHT

Brett walks back and forth to a crowd of parents. Terry sits in the back. Visibly disconnected.

Brett pulls a sheet off of an OVERHEAD PROJECTOR.

BRETT
Anybody remember that?

Reveals a DESK TOP MONITOR.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Or that?

The crowd LAUGHS.

BRETT (CONT'D)
You laugh, but we were using that up until this year! Isn't that something. This year we integrated a new teaching curriculum with new technology like this--

He holds up a tablet.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Now we're going to hear from Terry Burkes who is going to tell us about the impact this has had in his classroom.

Terry stares off as APPLAUSE builds.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Terry?

His attention returns and he moseys up front. A long quiet as he looks into the crowd.

TERRY
I'm like ten volcanoes of emotion packed in a Mini Cooper right now, so I'm not sure what is about to come out of me. I guess I'll start with, hi I'm Terry. My wife of 21 years is about to divorce me.

Brett goes to take the microphone. Terry avoids him... and continues to avoid him the whole time he speaks.

TERRY (CONT'D)

I built it to last! So now I'm asking myself is anything built to last anymore? And I'm looking at this mess of techno garbage you all gasped at and I just got my answer. No. Because in two years we will be yawning at it. In two years, this dick over here, will pull a sheet of it and you will laugh and say, "can you believe we used to use that?" It happens with everything and it wouldn't bother me if it wasn't happening so fast. What the hell happened? Is there something wrong being okay with something? I was okay with that equipment you laughed at earlier. For 13 years I was okay with it and I taught with it and I was great and the students learned things they never knew. Now you laugh at it as if it served no purpose? Well fuck you, you sophisticated shit heads... I apologize. That slipped.

He takes a last look into the crowd.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Stop and look at what you're losing and how quickly it's gone. Maybe you'll feel something. That's all I'm saying--

Brett moves in and whispers into his ear.

TERRY (CONT'D)

I guess I'm fired. Good luck, world.

Brett yanks the microphone from his hands.

BRETT

Let's go to our science teachers!

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY - NIGHT

Brett catches up to Terry.

BRETT

Are you happy with your sermon?
You get it all of your chest?

Terry keeps walking.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I gave you and your wife plenty of chances, but you can't stop a train wreck from looking pretty. I'm glad the two of you are gone.

Terry stops.

TERRY

You fired her?

BRETT

She resigned! There was a rumor going around that she was sleeping around with Oscar Childs.

TERRY

I beg your pardon?

BRETT

Next time, pick better friends and spouses.

Madness spreads across Terry's face. He sprints down the hall way.

EXT. CEMETARY - NIGHT

Gwen cries in her car in the parking lot. Headlights shining on the headstones.

She gets out and locates her mom and dad's grave. She sits down beside them in silence.

EXT. BURKES HOME - NIGHT

Oscar pulls his bike into the drive way. A dark house. He knocks on the door. Nothing.

He pulls out and down the street. He sees Lynne's house around the corner. Lit up. Drunk bros on the lawn. The El Camino parked out front.

INT. LYNETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

A confused Oscar enters the house. A real rager. Band equipment set up in the living room.

Oscar begins to recognize the house. He moves to a hall decorated with PICTURES. He takes one off the wall-- Lynne, Terry, Gwen and baby Margie.

Margie walks into the room, cup in hand, and sees Oscar.

MARGIE
I didn't invite you.

OSCAR
Who are these people?

He holds the picture up to her.

MARGIE
My parents and my grandma.

OSCAR
Holy mother of God.

Reese walks over and puts his arm around Margie.

REESE
What's with the banjo?

OSCAR
(in a daze)
I wanted to play a song with Margie.

REESE
Not going to happen. This is punk rock show. Not a Mumford and Sons gay parade.

MARGIE
(to Oscar)
You should go.

She joins the rest of the Bloods by the equipment. Reese sticks by Oscar, looking down to him.

REESE
She'd never like you, man. You're too weak.

Reese joins the band. The amps turn on and feed back kicks in.

REESE (CONT'D)
(into the mic)
We're the Bloods. Move your bodies.

Loud MUSIC erupts. The crowd bounces. Oscar looks around in a daze. His world is collapsing to the sound of phony teen angst... then the music stops abruptly and the crowd splits.

MARGIE
Why did we stop?

She looks to the doorway and finds the reason-- Terry.

MARGIE (CONT'D)
You're supposed to be at a spa!

The crowd shielding Oscar parts revealing the party pooper to Oscar. They lock eyes.

TERRY
Oscar!!

Terry advances towards Oscar.

OSCAR
I didn't know who she was!

Terry begins his pursuit and the chase begins. Oscar leaps over the amps and drums. Terry throws them over.

MARGIE
Stop! He's my friend!

TERRY
I thought he was mine!

He gets a hold of his BANJO and tears it from his back. He swings it against the wall of pictures, stopping Oscar.

Terry grabs Oscar and slams against the wall. The framed picture of the Burkes family slides broken down the wall. Margie ducks behind a couch in the bg.

TERRY (CONT'D)
She's the love of my life! How could you?!

OSCAR
The love of your life?

TERRY
You came to me for advice on how to sleep with my wife!

OSCAR
No! No! No! I was talking about Margie today! Not your wife!

Terry drops him. Oscar adjusts himself.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
It's Margie I love, you idiot.

TERRY
(deflating)
Margie? You were sleeping with my wife.

OSCAR
No! I spread that rumor so those phonies would like me... you didn't tell me I was spying on your wife!!

GWEN (O.S.)
What is going on?!

Terry looks over and sees GWEN in the door way. Margie leaps up from behind the couch.

MARGIE
Why is nobody at a Deluxe Spa Retreat?!

Gwen moves into the room of just Oscar, Terry, and Margie. A sad tornado has for surely struck down.

GWEN
You spied on me?

TERRY
I thought you were having an affair-

GWEN
I wasn't having an affair, Terry. I just, honest to God, don't love you anymore. Leave now before I call the police.

Terry lingers, but the angry looks from his loved ones force him out. Margie looks to Oscar.

OSCAR
I was going to tell you tonight...

MARGIE
That you spread a rumor you were having an affair with my mom?!

OSCAR
No... that I love you.

MARGIE

We're out of our depths, Oscar.
You need to leave me alone.

Oscar reaches for words, but nothing. He exits. The mom and daughter stand face to face in the mess.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, mom. I don't know
what I'm doing.

GWEN

I don't either, honey.

Gwen hugs her daughter deeply.

GWEN (CONT'D)

This isn't us, Margie. We are
going to get back on track. No
more of this.

Margie starts to cry.

MARGIE

I miss her, mom. I miss her a lot.

GWEN

I know you do, sweetie. I do too.

Gwen strokes Margie's hair as they each use the other's
shoulder to cry on.

EXT. LYNETTE'S HOME - NIGHT

Oscar kicks his bike to life. Terry runs up from behind.

TERRY

Oscar!

OSCAR

You tricked me!

TERRY

It was wrong. I know.

OSCAR

My automatic graduation...

TERRY

A lie. I knew you wouldn't do it
if I...

OSCAR

I haven't been to a full day of school in a month. You've ruined my future.

Terry looks for words.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You're the worst friend I could ever have.

(beat)

And you owe me a new banjo.

Oscar cruises away.

INT. MARGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Margie packs up her things into a box. Terry watches.

TERRY

You can come by whenever you want.

She moves past him quietly.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Margie moves towards Reese at a lunch table while Oscar watches from a distance. A JERK moves by and flips his tray up. Spilling spaghetti all down his shirt.

Margie sits down by the band. They give her mean looks.

MARGIE

Sorry about the house show--

REESE

I thought you'd be a good lay, but I don't do family problems.

The crew laughs. She walks away.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Margie sits in a stall eating lunch. On the other side... urinals. She blew it again.

A black FOOTBALL PLAYER washes his hands. Oscar enters and moves to a sink.

He splashes water on to his shirt and scrubs. He stops. In the mirror. He sees Margie's feet under the stall. Someone in as worse shape as he is.

OSCAR
(to Football Player)
Hey Trayvon.

Inside stall. Margie recognizes the voice and perks up. Thinks for a beat. Notices a crudely drawn PENIS on the stall.

MARGIE
(mouths to herself)
Every time.

FOOTBALL PLAYER (O.S.)
My name's Maurice, first off...

Outside the stall.

OSCAR
I needed you to know that I've always been lonely and then you found me and made me feel a part of something. I know you don't love me. I'm not sure if I love you either. You're just the best friend I've ever had and exactly what I needed. And I thank you for that.

Maurice stares at him like an alien fresh off the mother ship.

Inside the stall. Margie smiles wide.

MAURICE (O.S.)
I will kick your ass.

INT. PLAY PRACTICE - DAY

Terry sneaks down in the seats and watches Margie as she walks around on stage. Issac patrols.

ISSAC
Margie! Where are you?!

Right beside him.

MARGIE
Here.

ISSAC
You're lucky I let you back on the
play, so don't just stand around.

He hands her some quarters.

ISSAC (CONT'D)
Go get me a Coke. Diet.

As she moves for the exit. Terry follows behind, hidden in
the shadows.

INT. HALL - DAY

Margie retrieves the cans from the soda machine. Terry leaps
out.

TERRY
You looked great out there.

MARGIE
I said not to talk to me.

TERRY
Please... I just want to see you.

She stops and faces him.

MARGIE
You've dragged this out too long
and hurt too many people. Let it
go.

She leaves him behind.

INT. BURKES HOME - DAY

Terry looms the dissected living room. This isn't the same
house we saw in the beginning. It's gutted and nearly blank.

Now in front of the wall of family photos. He takes a last
look and then takes the framed memories down.

EXT. BUESS POND - AFTERNOON

Terry stands on the edge of the pond with a box of all the
old things he gathered. The WALKIE TALKIE on top.

He glances into it. On the top sits a PICTURE of Terry and
Gwen on their wedding day. They're so happy.

He flips it over. On the back. A love note- "The happiest day of my life. The best thing I know is your smile. I'll do all I can to never let it fade. My heart. Terry."

He flips it back over and looks at Gwen's strong smile then to his wide grin. He looks down into his reflection in the pond. A moment of thought and then a smile takes over.

TERRY

Dammit. She was right.

He hears YELLS behind him. Turns. His rickety vessel rolls from the parking lot, down a hill and into the water.

We see his reflection for a beat and then-- the keys splash into the water sending his reflection in waves.

EXT. STREETS - AFTERNOON

Terry runs in a sprint with the BOX.

EXT. MALL - AFTERNOON

He moves through the packed parking lot.

EXT. STREETS - DUSK

He runs with a box under one arm and a BANJO in his other hand.

INT. BURKES HOME - NIGHT

Terry frantically signs the divorce papers on the kitchen counter.

TERRY (O.S.)

Queen Kong!

EXT. SUBURBS - NIGHT

Back to the streets. The street lights pop on as he speeds by, banjo slung on his back. He talks into the device.

TERRY

Come in! Queen Kong. Come in.

INT. OSCAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Oscar lies in bed. The walkie talkie goes off in his back pack. He pulls it out.

TERRY (O.S.)
Queen Kong!

OSCAR
I said my over and outs.

A rock hits his window. He moves over and looks out. Terry stands on the lawn.

TERRY
(on the walkie talkie)
I got you this. It's a Deering.

Terry holds up the banjo. Oscar opens the window.

TERRY (CONT'D)
It's not a bribe, but I do need a friend.

OSCAR
You're not my friend.

TERRY
I was afraid of losing what I loved and to be alone. I needed a friend and thank God I found you.

Oscar's eyes switch from angry to understanding.

TERRY (CONT'D)
You're a good man and I'm an awful friend--

OSCAR
(to himself)
You're the second best friend I've ever had--
(calling out to Terry)
What's done is done.

TERRY
Does that mean I can get a lift?

OSCAR
Where to?

TERRY
The high school. I have some wrongs to right. Margie's there...

OSCAR

Okay.

Terry looks to the window in front of him.

TERRY

Could you hurry? Your parents are looking at me and I'm not sure, but I'm fairly certain they're calling the police.

Linda and Stan look out the front window at Terry with fear in their eyes. Stan's on the phone.

STAN

(very faint)

He's just out on the lawn... I think he might be black...

Oscar grabs Margie's TAPE PLAYER off his night stand.

INT. PLAY - NIGHT

Full house. People settle in. Gwen sits in the front row. Issac waltzes out to center stage.

ISSAC

Ladies and gentleman, I am your Master and Commander for the evening. You are now boarding a hot and steamy vessel brimming with drama and lost love and sex... lots of sex...

He PHONE vibrates. He checks it.

ISSAC (CONT'D)

I present the Colony!

He steps off to the side. The curtains open. A giant cornucopia stage right. A back drop painted with wooden homes. Kids in Colonist outfits prance around. A lanky NARRATOR calls out from the cornucopia.

NARRATOR

The man. Abner Calhoun. The woman. Constance Caldwell. The year-- 1678. Change is on the rise.

A flamboyant dance breaks out to MEMORY from Cats. Ryan moves front and center.

RYAN

Oh no! The Injuns!

Margie stands to the side with a marked script. Issac walks past Margie. She tries to hand him the script.

ISSAC

I have to go to the bathroom.

MARGIE

You're the director!

He ignores her and leaves. Margie sneaks out in the audience and ducks beside Gwen.

MARGIE (CONT'D)

We need you, mom. Issac just left.

GWEN

This is so awful. Was it like this when I was involved?

MARGIE

It's always been bad, mom.

GWEN

Dear God. I can't watch this.

Gwen begins to leave.

MARGIE

What? No!

We follow Gwen through the audience and out the doors to the hall. On the opposite side-- Oscar and Terry sneak past. We begin following them.

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY - NIGHT

They sneakily crouch. Banjo slung over Oscar's shoulder.

Oscar turns down a hallway. Terry keeps going straight. Oscar stops.

OSCAR

The play?

TERRY

I have business with you to finish.

INT. PRINCIPAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Oscar closes the door behind them. Terry takes a seat in front of the computer. The screen illuminates the room.

He starts typing. He leans in closer to the screen.

A window pulls up-- an administrative list of Oscar's current grades and attendance. Oscar moves behind him and watches as he changes grades and attendance.

The sound of the DOOR in the next room opening. Muffled VOICES.

OSCAR
Someone's here!

TERRY
Hot damn.

His TYPING gets faster. Two shadows move towards the room.

OSCAR
We need an escape route.

MAN (O.S.)
Is that a light on in my room?

TERRY
And.... Done!

Terry grabs a tablet off the table and hurls it at the window. It shatters. He hoists Oscar up and out in a swift motion.

He tosses the banjo down to him.

TERRY (CONT'D)
Meet me at the Colony!

Oscar nods and runs towards the dark.

The door throws open. Brett rushes in. His tie is messily pulled down. Terry turns to face him.

BRETT
Terry.

TERRY
(quickly)
I was watching online pornography
to give your computer viruses and
then I broke your window.
(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

It was an act of revenge. I'll
show myself out.

He turns to climb out the window. Brett runs over and grabs
him. Terry stops.

TERRY (CONT'D)

I'll break you like an old lady's
hip, Brett.

Brett tightens his grip and looks over to the computer
screen.

BRETT

That's not porn.

TERRY

I have a promise to keep.

Issac walks in the room, mid buttoning up of his shirt.

ISSAC

Do I need to call the police, Big
Man?

BRETT

I said to stay out there, dammit!

Terry looks back and forth between the two of them.

TERRY

That tan bastard, Brett?

BRETT

This is our secret.

TERRY

He graduates.

BRETT

Yes.

TERRY

Thank you. Now get your hands off
me.

He socks him in the nose and hops off the window ledge and
tears past Issac and out of the office.

ISSAC

(phone in hand)
So police or no police?

Brett nurses a bloody nose.

BRETT

Yes! Call the police.

He runs past him. Issac gives his toosh a pat as he moves out and dials the 911.

ISSAC

You're so cute when your mad... Yes hello. Police? No. That wasn't about you.

EXT. KENTWOOD HIGH - NIGHT

Oscar splits through the lawn. He passes Reese and the gang smoking against a wall. He turns back around and punches Reese in the face, leaving him to nurse his nose too.

INT. KENTWOOD HALLWAY - NIGHT

Terry sprints through the hall. Lockers passing him in a blur. Brett rounds the corner far behind him.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Terry crouches down the aisles.

TERRY

Oscar! Oscar!

Parents stare at him as he passes. He looks up and sees Oscar creeping up behind Margie back stage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Oscar reaches Margie.

MARGIE

Oscar!

OSCAR

I came to give you this.

He hands her the TAPE PLAYER and HEAD PHONES.

MARGIE

Thank you.

OSCAR

And to serenade you.

Terry comes out from behind the curtain.

TERRY

Look. We don't have much time.
Tell me where your mom is and then
come with me.

MARGIE

Get away from me.

TERRY

Quit the dramatics. I haven't been
much of a father, but I love you
more than you know. And I am
sorry.

(beat)

Where is Gwen Patterson?

MARGIE

She left to be alone.

TERRY

Thank you. That's all I needed.

MARGIE

You're not going to win her back.

TERRY

That goes without saying.

(beat)

You two come with me.

He grabs her and Oscar's hand and pulls them through the
curtain.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

The leads prance around, eyes locked. They hit the peak of
the DEFYING GRAVITY from Wicked.

MARCY

Abner Calhoun. Please set me free!

The terribly flat notes fade off as Terry lugs the two teens
out front. The play slowly falls apart as confusion spreads.

TERRY

Quick little intermission here.

Margie tries to wrangle out.

MARGIE

Don't do this to me.

TERRY

Honey, I'm doing this for you.

Margie stares on. Terry turns back to the crowd.

TERRY (CONT' (CONT'D)

My name's Terry. This is my daughter, Marjorie. She has a beautiful voice and she's going to let you hear it.

He puts his arm around Oscar.

TERRY (CONT'D)

And this here is Oscar. A banjo wizard some would say. They're going to play a song for us real quick. It's a pretty little diddy titled--

OSCAR

Caged Birds.

MARGIE

Are you serious?

TERRY

So give them your eyes and your ears and prepare for smiles.

He looks into Margie's eyes and whispers--

TERRY (CONT'D)

I am so proud of you.

Terry kisses her forehead, leaps off the stage and runs up the isles.

The cast lingers. Margie looks to Oscar, unsure. Oscar smiles.

OSCAR

Shake it out, Margie.

She puts her head phones on, presses play and starts to move.

MARGIE

(singing)

Caged birds. You and I. We're just here singing through the wire...

Oscar begins to strum along. The original version of CAGED BIRDS fades in over top of their rendition. It plays over the following scenes.

EXT./INT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Outside the school. We see a lone class lit, far right.

Inside. The hurried THUD of feet. The back of Terry running down the hall. Lights spring to life in front of him.

Outside. We see the class rooms begin to light up, closing in on the far right class.

INT. OLD CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Walls lined with now defunct teaching equipment. Gwen sits at a table staring at the ground.

The door bursts open and Terry's head enters. Gwen lifts her head and notices him. No words.

Terry moves to her and hops onto the table next to Gwen. He hands her the divorce papers, which she takes.

Sitting side by side, the two blend into the out dated equipment nicely. A long quiet.

CAGED BIRDS lingers beneath the dialogue.

TERRY

I neglected you and I let you slip
away and I'm sorry.

He takes her hand and holds it. They look at each other.

TERRY (CONT'D)

It may not have lasted forever,
Gwen, but we built something
beautiful for 21 years.

GWEN

(tearing up)
What happened to us?

TERRY

For better or for worse, we became
different people.

(beat)

Reflecting on our recent behavior I
would say for the worst, but I know
it was for the better.

The classic Gwen laugh and smile return as she wipes the tears.

GWEN

You had a teenager spy on me.

TERRY

Oh yeah. Big time. He followed you home. We wired him. It was a whole operation.

The laughter between them begins to grow.

GWEN

And me! I tried to write an edgy play for a high school... I used the word "injun!... the cornucopia was supposed to be a symbol of the pressures of marriage.

TERRY

Oh no. You used that word?

GWEN

I always wanted to write a play that pushed the envelope.

The laughter simmers down.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Just the biggest idiots, we are.

TERRY

You do wild things when you're in love. Strange how those things fade.

The two sit in silence for a moment.

GWEN

I guess we never truly expressed how we felt all that much, did we?

TERRY

Do you want to express your feelings right now? With me?

GWEN

What ever helps.

The song takes charge again over the whole scene. Just the music can be heard.

The white brick wall of the class.

Slow motion. A desktop monitor flies into view and smashes against the wall. Exploding. Shards of hardware and plastic erupt into the air.

We can't hear them, but we can see that they are hollering like animals.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME TIME

Oscar strums while Margie dances. It's both goofy and graceful. We can't hear her voice but we see she shouting the words at the top of her lungs.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Flashing police lights on the outside walls of the school. In the far right room, we see Terry and Gwen's destruction continue.

On the opposite end, Brett leads a squadron of police officers down the hallway towards them.

INT. OLD CLASSROOM - NIGHT

The police break into the room. It's a mess of tangled wire and busted hardware.

The police begin shouting orders. No response. An officer grabs Gwen. Terry leaps and clings to his back. Violent shaking. The other officers continue trying to subdue Gwen.

EXT. KENTWOOD HIGH - NIGHT

Through the windows we see the police push the, now handcuffed, ex spouses down the hall way. We move across the lawn and to the front doors. They burst open.

Terry and Gwen fight wildly as they are lead down the steps and into the back of police cars.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Terry is shoved into the back of the police car. He adjusts himself and looks out the window to the cop car adjacent to him, where Gwen is. The two make eye contact for a long while. They smile.

The police cars pull away.

We watch as the bright red and blue lights head off into the distance and begin to blur and disappear completely.

The original song fades out and now we hear just Margie and the banjo.

MARGIE (O.C.)
 Just birds, caged or free, I'll
 have you and you'll have me. Maybe
 that's all we ever need.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Oscar strums the last chord. Margie continues to shake it. A strong quiet. Oscar taps her shoulder. She slows down and stops. Takes the head phones off. A weak APPLAUSE. The two laugh and bow together.

OSCAR AND MARGIE
 Thank you! Thank you!

CUT TO:

The Television. A last glimpse of a HOME VIDEO. 5/20/06. Terry, in his 30's, gallops around with a little Margie on his shoulders. Gwen films and LAUGHS.

GWEN'S VOICE
 You're going to hurt yourself...

TERRY
 We know how this works. Don't we
 Margie? We're not ama--

He trips as he moves past the camera and tumbles towards it. The camera shakes and falls. All we see and hear is a sideways living room and a family LAUGHING.

TERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Is everybody okay?

Margie's little adorable LAUGHTER rises. The tape stops and the tv goes blue like tvs used to.

FADE TO BLACK.