

Running Backwards

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

A quaint two-story house sits nestled in the midst of suburbia.

A purple convertible PT Cruiser is parked in front, its top down. NATALIE PACK (17) leans from the passenger's seat, HONKS the car horn three times.

NATALIE

Let's go dork wad! We ain't got all day!

INT. LIVING ROOM, HOUSE - EVENING

COREY WALKER (17) shifts his overweight frame uncomfortably on the yellow and pink flowered couch. His eyes wonder to the kitchen doorway.

INT. KITCHEN, HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

JACK WALKER (18), a handsome and muscular fellow wearing a red letterman's jacket, paces back and forth in a rage.

PRISCILLA WALKER (40s), sporting a light blue nightie and curlers in her hair, watches Jack with her arms crossed.

JACK

Mom, you can't be serious. I'm not taking that dweeb with us.

PRISCILLA

I don't want to hear another word. You are taking Corey with you and that's the end of it.

JACK

But you don't understand. We run with totally different crowds--

INT. LIVING ROOM, HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Corey listens patiently to the conversation in the kitchen.

JACK (O.S.)

--He just doesn't fit in with everyone else. Plus, I have a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JACK (O.S.) (cont'd)
reputation to uphold. Do you know
what that would do to me if I'm
even seen with him?

Corey reaches in his pants' pocket, pulls out a PSP and some headphones. He puts the headphones over his ears and plays his game.

INT. KITCHEN, HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

PRISCILLA
He is your cousin. He's family,
Jack. And he's going to the
football game. With you.

Priscilla turns and exits up a flight of stairs.

JACK
But he doesn't even like football!

Defeated, Jack walks out of the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Corey intently studies the screen of his PSP where two hulking figures are fighting. Jack's hand reaches in, knocks the PSP to the ground.

JACK
Let's go.

Jack walks to the front door, notices that Corey hasn't budged.

JACK
Do you want to go the game or not?

Corey grabs his PSP and bounces up.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

Natalie, with the passenger's seat leaned all the back and sunglasses over her eyes, hears the front door. She sits up and removes the glasses.

The driver's door opens. Corey half stumbles, half crawls into the back seat. Jack plops down in the driver's seat and cranks the car.

(CONTINUED)

Natalie just stares at Corey. Corey forces a smile and holds up his hand in a wave.

COREY
What's up, Natalie?

Natalie turns to Jack.

NATALIE
What the heck?

JACK
I know, I know. I didn't have a choice. Don't worry. We'll ditch him once we get there.

NATALIE
I don't freakin' believe this...

Jack puts the car in drive and pulls from the curb.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The PT Cruiser blazes around a sharp turn. Heavy metal music permeates from the car's stereo system.

INT. PT CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Natalie reaches over and turns the radio off.

NATALIE
I can't stand this god-awful music.

JACK
You've got to be joking. This music pumps me up for a big match.

NATALIE
And then you go out and roll on the ground with another dude for ten minutes.

Jack produces a sly grin.

JACK
You didn't complain when I put some of those wrestling moves on you.

NATALIE
Yeah, except that match only lasted about three minutes.

(CONTINUED)

Natalie bursts out laughing. Jack takes his hand off the wheel and playfully grabs at Natalie.

The car runs off the road. Corey screams.

Jack jerks the wheel, slides the car back on track.

Natalie smacks Jack's arm.

NATALIE

Jesus, Jack. You almost killed us.

She glances in the back seat at Corey, who is braced for dear life.

NATALIE

You scared the little piss ant too.

Jack chuckles to himself.

JACK

It's getting a little tense in here. Corey, hand me what's under the blanket.

Corey looks in the floor board where a random pile of blankets lay. He reaches under and produces a six-pack of beers. He hands them to Jack.

NATALIE

How did you get beer?

JACK

Why must you know all my secrets? Just enjoy it.

Natalie takes a beer. Jack tears one out for himself, then tosses one back to Corey.

JACK

Drink up, cuz. Time to become a man.

Everybody pops their tops and takes a sip. Jack holds his beer up and screams into the night air. Natalie takes a second sip, giggles.

Corey has to force himself to swallow. He makes a disgusted face and tosses the beer out the window.

EXT. WINDY ROAD - NIGHT

The heavy metal music once again permeates from the PT Cruiser. The car takes a turn to quickly, drifts into the other lane. An oncoming car has to swerve to miss them.

INT. PT CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Obviously drunk, Natalie and Jack laugh off the occurrence.

NATALIE

(screaming over music)

I'm starting to like this
music! As long as I scream it's
like I know all the words!

The car suddenly shudders and slows. Jack grabs the wheel and coasts to the shoulder. He turns the radio down.

COREY

What's happening?

JACK

I don't know. It just died.

Natalie leans over and looks at the dash.

NATALIE

We're out of gas, you idiot. Now
what are we going to do?

Jack pulls out his cell and holds it up.

JACK

There's no service out here. We're
going to have to walk and try to
find a gas station.

NATALIE

I'm not walking out there in the
dark.

JACK

Then stay in the car and wait until
we get back.

NATALIE

Definitely not happening.

EXT. PT CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Jack gets out of the car and pops the trunk, pulls out a gas container.

JACK

Then Corey can go for the gas and I'll stay behind.

NATALIE

Oh no. I'm not putting my life in butter ball's hands.

JACK

Then do whatever you want. I'm going to get gas. I'll be back in about an hour. Just stay in the car and lock the doors.

Defeated, Natalie crosses her arms and leans back in her seat.

NATALIE

Fine...

Jack turns and starts walking down the dark road.

INT. PT CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

NATALIE

I need another beer.

Natalie pulls out a fresh one, pops the top and downs it. Corey watches with wide-eyes.

INT. PT CRUISER - LATER

The radio is turned up loud. Natalie, still in her seat, sways back and forth to the music.

In the back, Corey is once again playing his PSP.

Natalie leans around her seat.

NATALIE

(screaming)

Do you dance?!

The music is just too loud to make out what she is saying.

(CONTINUED)

COREY
(screaming)
What?!

NATALIE
(screaming)
Do you dance?!

COREY
(screaming)
Turn down the radio!

Natalie turns it down.

NATALIE
I feel like dancing. Do you want
to dance with me?

Corey looks at their surroundings.

COREY
Out here?

NATALIE
Why not? Come on.

Natalie turns the car's high beams on to give them some light.

She turns the radio up loud, then steps from the car, spilling empty beer cans on the ground.

EXT. PT CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Corey forces himself from the back seat as Natalie stumbles to the front of the car. She drunkenly giggles to herself.

COREY
You're really drunk.

Natalie begins dancing as fast as she can. Her arms are flailing around. Her feet tap erratically on the group. There is no sense of rhyme or reason.

Stupified, Corey tries his best to keep up. Both laugh at this hilarious exchange.

Corey finally starts to loosen up. He grabs Natalie's arm and twirls her around.

The fast song on the radio comes to an end. The rock ballad "Running Backwards" fades in.

(CONTINUED)

NATALIE

Oh my god! I love this song! Slow
dance with me!

Corey takes a tentative step backwards.

COREY

I don't know...

NATALIE

Please! It will be fun!

They step close together and awkwardly grab each other. They sway left and right as the music picks up.

Natalie lays her head on Corey's chest. She closes her eyes and begins to sing with the song.

NATALIE

(singing)

*It's the way we move. It's the
world we live in. It's the way we
try to make ourselves as one...*

Corey is invigorated in the moment. He pulls Natalie close and closes his eyes.

NATALIE

(singing)

*Running backwards or running
forwards. It's never easy to try
and make yourselves as one...*

The music intensifies. Corey joins in the singing.

NATALIE AND COREY

(singing; with passion)

*Spinning round and round, don't
know which way is up or down. Just
try and get together, to make the
world a little better.*

Natalie leans up. Corey and Natalie stare deep into each other's eyes. A beat.

Natalie lunges at Corey. Plants a sloppy wet kiss on Corey's lips.

RADIO

(playing music)

*A little better. Just a little
better...*

(CONTINUED)

Corey braces, tries to fight the kiss. After a few seconds he gives in and kisses back.

RADIO
(playing music)
*Just try and get together, and make
ourselves as one...*

As the music continues to play, Natalie breaks the kiss. Her eyes grow huge. She turns and pukes all over the ground.

Once she's finished, Natalie stands up, wipes the excess vomit from her mouth with the sleeve of her shirt and leaps onto Corey.

The duo falls to the ground. Natalie climbs on top of Corey.

COREY
Oh god... Oh god...

It's a gruesome game as Corey tries to sit up and Natalie keeps forcing him back down.

JACK (O.S.)
What the hell...?

Natalie and Corey bolt upright. Jack stands five feet away from them holding the gas can.

COREY
It's not what it looks like. She's
really drunk.

JACK
You little bastard.

Jack pounces on to Corey, forces him back to the ground. Jack punches him in the face.

JACK
I'll kill you!

Natalie pulls Jack off of Corey.

NATALIE
It's not worth it, Jack. We were
just goofing around.

JACK
Goofing around? He was putting the
moves on you!

NATALIE

We got the gas. Let's just go. We can still make the game.

In a rage, Jack grunts and walks to the car. Natalie follows him.

Corey pushes himself off the ground, rubs the dust from his hair. He stands up, trudges off.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

The school campus is bustling with activity. The parking lots are overly congested.

INT. ENTRANCE GATE, FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

Natalie and Jack enter hand in hand.

A few steps behind is Corey, who has a hand to his purplish, swollen eye.

WALT (O.S.)

Yo, Corey.

Corey turns to see WALT (17), a skinny, four-eyed shadow of a man, saunter over.

WALT

What happened to your eye?

COREY

Long story...

WALT

Who did you come with?

COREY

Jack and Natalie.

WALT

Dude, that totally blows. I bet you had to sit there and watch those two suck each other's faces in.

Walt holds out two hands as if cradling another person. He closes his eyes and flicks his tongue around in an exaggerated pantomime of two people French kissing.

Corey laughs. He looks over to where Jack and Natalie stand watching the game.

(CONTINUED)

Natalie glances over at Corey and gives a small wink. She turns back and leans close to Jack.

COREY

Yeah, riding with them totally sucked. Let's go get some nachos.

Corey and Walt walk towards the concession stand. As they do, a huge grin forms on Corey's face.

"Running Backwards" fades in.

FADE OUT.