

# TB

## GROWN UPS

By

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# TB

CLOSE ON

A group of YOUNG BOYS AND GIRLS playing in the AUTUMN LEAVES.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

We're watching the kids play through a WINDOW in a

DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM

RUSS NEWLANDER, 20's, sits on a couch next to the window. A nearby sign reads, "RIDER FERTILITY SPECIALISTS."

TITLE APPEARS: "13 years ago..."

The door to the waiting room opens. Russ looks up, hopeful.

JOANNE "JO" NEWLANDER, 20's, stands in the doorway. She shakes her head - NO. Russ gets up. Puts his arm around her. They walk out of the office and we...

PAN OVER TO:

THE WINDOW

It's WINTER now. The same kids play in the snow.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Russ is once again sitting in the waiting room. He looks more weary this time. The door opens and Jo steps through. Again, she shakes her head NO. Russ gets up, hugs her.

PAN OVER TO:

THE WINDOW

SPRING has arrived. The snow has melted and the BOYS AND GIRLS play on a swing set in the bright sunlight.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Russ on the couch - head in his hands, expecting the worst.

The door opens. Russ looks up. Jo enters, crying. She can't keep it together. Russ goes to comfort his wife.

JO

(hysterical)

We're... we're...

RUSS

(holding her)

It's okay...

JO  
We're pregnant!

Russ looks at her. Jo beams through her tears. It's true.

JO (cont'd)  
The doctor said it's a miracle.

They embrace, triumphant.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL LABOR ROOM - DAY

Jo is in the last moments of labor. She gives one last push and OLIVER IS BORN. The doctor holds him up.

Russ and Jo hug, overwhelmed. This is the most joyous day of their lives. Until...

The doctor turns the baby upside down and SPANKS his bottom. The baby wails. Russ and Jo are horrified.

JO  
Oliver...!

Russ protectively snatches the baby from the doctor, pushing the doctor backwards. Russ hands his son to Jo, stands defensively in front of his wife and child.

Jo cradles their new infant. Russ and Jo coo to him.

RUSS AND JO  
It's okay... Mommy and Daddy have you now.  
We'll never let you go...

WIPE TO:

BEGIN OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE - MUSIC UP AND UNDER

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON - One year old Oliver playing with Jo.

TITLE APPEARS: "12 years ago..."

REVEAL - This room is baby-proofed floor to ceiling. Every piece of furniture is padded. There are safety gates in every door. The fireplace is covered with bubble wrap. Oliver happily bounces off the pads and cushions like a pinball.

Russ is finishing screwing the last safety cover on an electrical outlet. He smiles at his wife and child playing.

ZAP!!! A burst of electricity knocks Russ backwards. Russ TRIPS OVER THE SAFETY GATE in the basement door. Falls violently down the stairs.

Oliver and Jo peer over the gate. Russ waves back to them. "Daddy's okay." Then he winces from the pain.

WIPE TO:

EXT. PARK - KID'S PLAYGROUND - DAY

Oliver is 5 YEARS OLD now. He's playing in a sandbox with Jo.

TITLE APPEARS: "8 years ago..."

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Russ stands over a sandbox, arms crossed, dark sunglasses on - looking like A SECRET SERVICE AGENT. He scans the park for potential threats.

Notices some 9 YEAR OLD BOYS with SUPER-SOAKER water guns heading towards the sandbox. One of the kids aims his super-soaker at Oliver. Russ' eyes widen. Jo sees the kid too.

In SLOW MOTION Russ dives in front of his son.

RUSS  
(slo-mo speech)  
Nooooo...

Jo covers Oliver up. In mid-air, Russ "takes the bullet" for Oliver, falling into the sand. Weirdered out, the kids run away.

WIPE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - PORCH - LATE DAY

CLOSE ON OLIVER'S FACE - It's HALLOWEEN, and Oliver, now 9 years old, is wearing a pretty neat BATMAN MASK.

TITLE APPEARS: "4 years ago..."

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - His top of the line BATMAN costume is covered in BRIGHT NEON REFLECTIVE TAPE. He's miserable.

Russ and Jo are with him, trick or treating. The door opens just as a bunch of kids with AWESOME, INTACT costumes step up behind Oliver. They laugh at his outfit.

The neighbor hands out candy to everybody. Before Oliver can see his candy, Jo grabs it out of his bag.

She smashes the candy bar with a Mallet. The neighbor watches, offended. Jo examines the candy thoroughly. Okay, it's safe.

She hands the FLATTENED CANDY BAR to her son. Off Oliver...

END OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE - MUSIC UP AND OUT

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. NEW ENGLAND BEACH - DAY

CLOSE ON - SUNTAN LOTION being squirted into Jo's hand.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Jo is putting suntan lotion on Oliver.  
RUSS AND JO ARE IN THEIR THIRTIES now.

Oliver, now 13 YEARS OLD, is literally DRIPPING in lotion.  
He's iridescent. And very self-conscious.

TITLE APPEARS: "NOW"

Behind them, Russ sets up A LARGE REFLECTIVE UMBRELLA to  
shield Oliver. The other beach-goers are blinded by it.

Oliver looks longingly around at other kids, unencumbered by  
hovering parents.

OLIVER  
Can we just go home?

RUSS  
What? But it's your birthday.

JO  
You love the beach, honey.

RUSS  
Go on... Have fun!

Have fun? Oliver sighs. Starts for the water. Just then,  
Russ watches a KID get wiped out by a wave. His eyes widen.

RUSS (cont'd)  
Whoa, whoa! Hang on there!

Oliver stops. Here it comes.

OLIVER  
What?

RUSS  
(can't help himself)  
It's looking a little choppy out there.

Russ looks at Jo. She nods, backing him up.

Russ pulls out a pair of bright orange INFLATABLE WATER WINGS. Starts blowing them up.

OLIVER

No. No way.

RUSS

I'm sorry, Oliver. But I don't like the idea of you in that surf. It's too dangerous.

JO

You're not up for that, buddy.

(to Russ)

Maybe I should just go in with him.

Oh God, that's worse!

OLIVER

Alright, alright, I'll wear them.

He puts the water wings on his arms, embarrassed. A gaggle of nearby 7-YEAR-OLDS laugh at him. Oliver tries to cover the water wings with his hands.

He races down to the water, anything to escape his parents.

IN THE WATER - Oliver hunkers down in the surf, trying to keep the water wings submerged so no one can see.

ON RUSS AND JO - They sit up straight - focused - watching Oliver in the water with BINOCULARS now. Some suntan lotion drips into Russ's eyes. It burns.

RUSS

Ahh... Can you hand me a towel?

Russ and Jo take their eyes off Oliver for the moment as Jo searches their beach bag for a clean towel.

ANGLE ON OLIVER - He's beginning to enjoy the water. Jumps backwards into a swell. When the surf clears he notices

A PRETTY GIRL, around his age, swimming next to him. She smiles. Oliver ducks down into the water, hiding the water wings.

PRETTY GIRL

Hi.

Oliver looks stricken. She spoke to him. He struggles to keep the water wings submerged - their buoyancy causing him to bob up. He squeaks out...

OLIVER

Hey...

PRETTY GIRL

Watch out!

A wave slaps Oliver in the head. The girl jumps it.

Oliver spits out salt water. Shakes his head. Musters some confidence and turns back to the pretty girl.

OLIVER

(spitting out salt water)

I saw that. Too small for me to body surf though.

A BIGGER WAVE knocks Oliver off his feet. He surfaces, spitting out more salt water.

OLIVER (cont'd)

That was the one.

The pretty girl laughs. Oliver smiles. The pretty girl swims backwards, away from Oliver, looking at him the whole time.

Oliver looks at the beach. Screw it. He pulls the water wings off. Swims over to the pretty girl. The water wings float on the waves behind him.

The Pretty Girl ducks under the water. Oliver follows.

UNDER WATER - The two smile at each other. A sweet, romantic, aquatic teen moment. However...

ON THE BEACH - Russ and Jo look through their binoculars again. Neither of them can find Oliver. They're starting to freak.

JO

Where is he?! Where is he?!

RUSS' POV - Scanning the empty surf. Stopping on - THE FLOATING WATER WINGS. Russ stands up. Horrified.

RUSS

Oh... my... God!

He pulls A WHISTLE out from under his shirt. BLOWS IT LOUDLY. That gets EVERYBODY'S attention.

Russ runs towards the water, blowing the whistle and waving his arms. Jo is right behind him.

A sense of panic quickly overtakes the crowd.

## NERVOUS BEACH-GOER

Shark!

Chaos ensues as people flood out of the water. Lifeguards try to maintain control but to no avail.

Russ and Jo run against the throngs into the surf.

UNDER THE WATER - Oliver is still having his moment with the pretty girl. That is, until he becomes aware of whistles and screaming coming from the surface. Oh no...

Oliver surfaces just to his nose. Takes in the panicked crowd racing out of the water. His parents push past them, searching the crashing waves.

RUSS AND JO

Oliver!

Oliver closes his eyes. Utterly humiliated. The pretty girl surfaces next to him.

PRETTY GIRL

Who are those freaks?

Oliver sinks back under the water.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEWLANDER HOME - LATE DAY

This suburban two story home is nestled on a quiet street in this small NEW ENGLAND TOWN.

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - OLIVER'S ROOM - LATE DAY

CLOSE ON - A half-finished, 'ZINE-styled cartoon depiction of Oliver's crazed parents causing chaos on the beach.

Oliver is furiously sketching this in a notebook, EMINEM's music blaring an accompaniment. This is how he vents his emotions. Oliver has real, edgy artistic talent.

ON THE SHELF above him are stacks of filled notebooks. There's a gentle knock at his door.

RUSS (O.S.)

Oliver...? You okay in there?

INTERCUT WITH RUSS AND JO IN THE HALLWAY

They stand outside his room, feeling terrible. Russ is holding a birthday cake.



RUSS (cont'd)  
Come on birthday boy, we got cake...

No response. Oliver turns off EMINEM. Hides the CD so his parents won't find it. Closes the notebook which is titled "MOM AND DAD". HIDES THE NOTEBOOK in his desk as well.

JO  
I know you think we overreacted, but  
better safe than sorry, right honey?

OLIVER  
You CLEARED THE BEACH!

Russ and Jo look at each other, guilty.

RUSS  
Well, you gave us quite a scare, son. We  
worry because we love you.

JO  
Don't you know how special you are? Come  
on, talk to us...

Russ tries the door. It's locked.

RUSS  
No, no, no...

Oliver mouths/mimics Russ's next line.

RUSS (cont'd)  
...I do not like the idea of this. We  
don't do locked doors in this house.

OLIVER  
You don't like the idea of anything.

JO  
That's not true. We just don't want  
anything to happen to you.

OLIVER  
Nothing's going to happen!  
(muttering to himself)  
Nothing EVER happens...

HONK! The moment is broken by a CAR HORN. Oliver looks out his window and sees a CONVERTIBLE in front of the house.

AN OLDER MAN, late 70s, sits in the front seat, flanked by a pair of "SEXY" GERIATRIC LADIES.

Oliver's eyes light up.

OLIVER (cont'd)

Poppy!

Oliver's door opens. He runs past his parents.

RUSS

(to Jo)

Did you know he was coming?

JO

(she didn't)

He's your father.

EXT. NEWLANDER HOME - LATE DAY

Oliver comes charging out of the house to greet his grandfather. POPPY'S got a bag on his shoulder that reads "Carnival Cruises". A bird cage with two white DOVES sits on the ground. He blows a kiss goodbye to his lady friends.

POPPY

Thanks for the ride!

HEAVILY MADE-UP LADY FRIEND

(suggestive)

Our pleasure. Can't wait to see what you pull out of your hat on the Panama cruise!

They drive off. POPPY IS ALL ENERGY. Gives Oliver a big hug.

POPPY

Look at you. What are you, twenty one now?

Russ and Jo join them.

RUSS

Hi Dad...

POPPY

Thought I wouldn't find you, didn't you?

RUSS

We moved here three months ago. Didn't you get our card?

POPPY

(waving him off)

Ah, I don't read my mail.

(looking around)

That must be some new job, though. Bought you a lot of house.

RUSS

Yeah, the job's good... I don't think the "hard hats" like me that much, but what else is new.

OLIVER

(to Poppy)

So are you staying? Can you stay?

POPPY

(big/considering)

Am I staying? Can I stay?

Poppy looks to Russ for the answer.

RUSS

You're always welcome.

POPPY

I'm always welcome...

He gives Russ a wet kiss on the cheek.

POPPY (cont'd)

That's what I like to hear.

He hands Oliver the birdcage, grabs his bags and heads for the house. Russ and Jo share a look.

EXT. THE GARAGE - NIGHT

A porch light illuminates a staircase that leads to the GUEST ROOM OVER THE GARAGE.

POPPY (O.S.)

...And here's your dollar, completely intact...

INT. POPPY'S ROOM OVER THE GARAGE - NIGHT

The FULL MOON peeks through an open window. The BIRDCAGE sits on a counter in the background.

Poppy is finishing a magic trick for Oliver. Shows Oliver the dollar bill with his name on it.

OLIVER

That's because you never tore it. You ripped up this one.

Oliver reaches into Poppy's shirt pocket and takes out a torn-up dollar bill. He smiles broad.

POPPY

All right, don't get too proud of yourself there, boy genius. You know that trick kills on the Lido deck.

(beat)

Here, I got something for ya... Happy birthday.

He tosses him a present, wrapped in straw and bamboo. Oliver opens it, revealing a handmade LEATHER NOTEBOOK.

OLIVER

Whoa...

POPPY

That's real Incan leather... Just like mine. I put all my tricks in here.

Poppy holds up his own tattered LEATHER NOTEBOOK. Every page has scribbles top to bottom.

OLIVER

Cool. Thanks.

POPPY

Ah, I figured, new school, new town... Start with a clean page, right?

OLIVER

(tensing up)

Right.

Oliver walks over to the bird cage. Takes out Penelope.

OLIVER (cont'd)

(blows her kisses)

Hello Penelope...

POPPY

You're nervous about this new school, huh.

OLIVER

(a brave face)

No, no...

(beat)

Not as nervous as my parents, anyway.

POPPY

NO ONE is as nervous as your parents.

OLIVER

Tell me about it. Sometimes I wish I could just go away with you.

POPPY

(joking around)

Well, the ship leaves Boston Harbor at the end of the month.

Oliver doesn't say anything.

POPPY (cont'd)

But I gotta warn ya, you wouldn't have much fun. The median age on my cruises is sixty five.

He takes out a new novelty item - a small black "MAGIC BOX."

POPPY (cont'd)

Here, I got one more for you... You're going to love it. And I KNOW you're not going to figure this one out.

INT. NEWLANDER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Russ and Jo are cleaning up after dinner. A half-eaten birthday cake sits on the table. Jo looks at herself in her baggy, "Mom-ish" clothes.

JO

I shouldn't have had that cake. I'm starting to look fat...

She turns to Russ for reassurance. He shrugs, distracted.

RUSS

I don't like the idea of Oliver up there with those birds. They carry diseases, and our new health insurance hasn't kicked in yet.

JO

At least your father's making an effort.

RUSS

Yeah... I guess it skips a generation.

INT. ROOM OVER THE GARAGE - NIGHT

Poppy is in full magic regalia now - wearing his "magic cape", which is emblazoned with the CARNIVAL CRUISES LOGO.

POPPY

This is an ancient Mayan trick I learned from a tribal elder. Picked it up on a stopover in Mazatlan.

Poppy looks out the window. The FULL MOON shines through.

POPPY (cont'd)  
Okay, full moon. Great. You ready?

Oliver nods. With dramatic flair, Poppy shows Oliver the inside of the magic box. It's completely empty.

POPPY (cont'd)  
Come here, Penelope...

Poppy plucks a feather from Penelope. Then closes Oliver's hands around the bird so that it's hidden from view.

Poppy places the feather in the magic box and spins it. Shuts his eyes. Concentrating. Suddenly, THE LIGHTS IN THE DIM ROOM START TO BRIGHTEN. Oliver looks around. Weird.

Poppy opens his eyes. Stops the magic box from spinning.

POPPY (cont'd)  
Open your hands.

Oliver opens his hands, revealing an EGG.

OLIVER  
(freaked)  
Whoa! What did you do? Where's Penelope?

POPPY  
She's right there...

Suddenly, the egg starts to crack. To Oliver's amazement, a beak pops through the shell. A BABY DOVE emerges.

POPPY (cont'd)  
(pointing to the baby bird)  
HELLO Penelope...

Oliver looks at Poppy, stunned. Back at the baby dove.

OLIVER  
No, that's not Penelope. You did a switch or...

POPPY  
Nope. That's her.

OLIVER  
Then... then it's a mirror trick.

POPPY  
Nope. No mirrors. THAT'S Penelope. She just doesn't look like herself right now. At least not to us.

Oliver looks at Poppy. Stumped. Amazed.

OLIVER

How...? How did you do that?

POPPY

(the cheesy line from his act)  
Very well, my boy. Very well.

Off Oliver...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL BUS - MORNING

We move down the aisle. On either side, kids talk and laugh in anticipation of the first day of school. We get to the end of the bus and look out the back window, revealing

THE NEWLANDER VOLVO is following the bus. Russ and Jo are driving Oliver to school.

INT. NEWLANDER VOLVO

Russ drives while Jo looks over Russ' newly printed BOARD OF EDUCATION CAMPAIGN POSTER. It sports a picture of Russ giving a big THUMBS UP, with his campaign slogan underneath.

Oliver sits in the back, silent. He's dressed for school, but his clothes are a little outdated. Basically uncool. He doodles obsessively in his LEATHER NOTEBOOK.

JO

(reading the poster slogan)

"The architect of your child's future..."

That's great, honey. With your credentials...

She gestures confidently to her T-Shirt which has the logo M.O.M. emblazoned across it.

JO (cont'd)

...And an endorsement from the MOMS OF MASSACHUSETTS, you're going to be elected in a landslide.

RUSS

Hear that Ol? Once I'm on the School Board you're not going to have anything to worry about.

Oliver looks up. He's not the one who's worried.

THROUGH THE VOLVO'S WINDSHIELD he watches the kids horsing around in the back of the bus.

OLIVER

(pointed)

I want to take the bus home.

Russ and Jo share a look.

RUSS

Bad things happen on school buses. Trust me. It took me two years to grow my eyebrows back.

With that, they pull up in front of...

EMERSON JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL

Oliver looks at the kids getting off the bus.

OLIVER

Please, PLEASE let me take the bus home.  
I'll be careful. I promise.

Russ and Jo look at each other. Acquiesce.

JO

Okay.

In a flash, Oliver is out of the car. Jo grabs him by the arm.

JO (cont'd)

Wait, no hug?!

Oliver tugs to get free. Other kids watching. Jo loses her grip and Oliver hurries into the school. Russ calls after him.

RUSS

Be safe, son!

He's gone.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

"THE JEFFERSON", as it's called, is a partially completed four-story condominium complex.

Russ gets out of his car. Surveys the burly array of CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. Russ is clearly intimidated by them.

He approaches LANCE MOHL, the construction foreman. Lance is taller and thicker than Russ. He's in the middle of arm wrestling a co-worker. The guys around them JOKE, CHEER.



RUSS

Lance...

Lance doesn't seem to notice him. He's winning the match.

LANCE

(to co-worker)

You're going down, baby!

RUSS

Lance!

Lance looks up and the co-worker instantly pins him. Groans from the construction workers. Everybody stares at Russ.

RUSS (cont'd)

Uh, sorry. It's only 11 o'clock. Isn't it a little early for a lunch break?

Lance gets up, stares at Russ. Intimidating.

LANCE

We're not having lunch.

RUSS

Oh...

(beat/moving on)

Well, we need to talk about the windows.

LANCE

Yeah, can't do 'em. If I put that many windows across the front we're going to have to add more support beams, and that opens a whole can of worms...

RUSS

I sold Mr. Salomon on this design based on the windows. Trust me, it'll work.

LANCE

You design guys just LOVE making our jobs harder, don't you.

Lance shakes his head, turns back to the job.

RUSS

(to himself/sarcastic)

Yeah, wouldn't want to make you break a sweat.

Lance stops in his tracks. He heard that. Turns back to Russ.

RUSS (cont'd)  
(trying to laugh it off)  
Did I say that?

LANCE  
I heard something...

Lance gets in Russ' face. Russ backpedals both verbally and physically - backing away from the encroaching Lance.

RUSS  
It's just that we're already two weeks behind, Salomon's on my case and you and your crew are... Well, it's not that you're not working hard, it's more that you're not working, uh, very hard.

Lance's eyes narrow. Russ is making this worse.

RUSS (cont'd)  
I mean, I'm all for a little fun and games. Ask anybody. But maybe you could also pick up the pace? I am in charge...

With Lance in his face, Russ backs up into a PORT-O-POTTIE.

LANCE  
My crew works for ME.

Lance slams the door shut, gestures to the FORKLIFT OPERATOR.

The forklift gets the PORT-O-POTTIE between its two metal teeth, blocking the door. Russ is locked inside.

LANCE (cont'd)  
How's that for fun and games?

Lance and the others walk away, leaving Russ locked inside.  
HOLD ON the Port-O-Pottie.

RUSS (O.S.)  
(muffled)  
Lance... buddy...?

Just then, Russ' imposing BOSS steps into frame.

RUSS' BOSS  
Newlander...?

RUSS (O.S.)  
(oh shit)  
Mr. Salomon...?

INT. NEWLANDER HOUSE - DAY

Jo's at the kitchen table, multi-tasking. Her Dayrunner is open next to her, full of work appointments, M.O.M. meetings, etc. She's still wearing her M.O.M. T-shirt.

She sews her son's name tag into pairs of tightie-whitie underwear, while talking business into the hands-free headset mic of her cell phone.

In the background, DR. PHIL is on a small kitchen TV.

DR. PHIL (ON TV)

...you can't take care of your family, if  
you don't take care of yourself...!

JO

(into phone)

...Don't worry Mr. Blackburn, I'll have  
it sold by the end of the month. I'll  
start showing it immediately...

The doorbell rings.

JO (cont'd)

(into phone)

Hold on one sec, Mr. Blackburn.

She covers the cell phone mic with her hand. Opens the front door to REVEAL the M.O.M. GROUP MEMBERS, three of them - all judgmental housewives with WAY too much time on their hands.

M.O.M. MEMBERS

(sing-songy)

Heeee-lloooo!

Superficial pats and air kisses all around.

JO

(cheery)

Come on in, M.O.M.s...

ON TV - Dr. Phil is ranting at a beleaguered WORKING MOM.

DR. PHIL (ON TV)

You need to...

(getting the audience to chant)

MAKE SOME ME TIME. Again, MAKE SOME...

Jo mutes the TV. It's distracting her from the M.O.M. Members.

M.O.M. MEMBER #1

Thanks for having us over. New members  
don't usually offer to host...

She smiles. Holds up a finger to the M.O.M.'s. "One sec..."

JO

(into cell phone mic/Blackburn's  
getting impatient)

One more second, Mr. Blackburn... Trust  
me, the only thing on my mind right now  
is selling your house.

(back to M.O.M. Members)

I took the liberty of organizing our  
first Bake Sale for the P.T.A. I  
assigned everybody their own dessert.  
I'll be baking my SPECIAL brownies.

M.O.M. MEMBER #1

Oh, really... because we usually vote...

JO

...And I re-did the phone tree list.  
It's color-coded.

She hands them each a shiny new phone tree list.

M.O.M. MEMBER #2

(a thin smile)

And laminated... great...

JO

Anything I can do to help Oliver's new  
school...

INT. EMERSON JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Oliver stands at his locker in the bustling hallway. He  
looks overwhelmed, and combats his nervousness by sketching  
in the leather notebook Poppy gave him.

REVEAL - He's sketching NICOLE BOMMER, 14, a confident, tom-  
boyish girl who's talking with some friends across the hall.

Oliver doesn't realize it, but he's being watched. HANNIGAN,  
14, a big kid with a mess of freckles looms over his shoulder.

HANNIGAN

She's hot, huh...

Oliver is startled. He slams his notebook shut. Looks up at  
Hannigan, intimidated. Doesn't say anything.

HANNIGAN (cont'd)

Well, she's mine.

(leaning in closer/menacing)

I don't think I know you...

Oliver takes a step back, out of frame and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The clock on the wall reads - 4:30. It's raining outside.  
Russ and Jo sit on the couch, looking tense.

JO

I knew we should've picked him up.  
Where is he?

RUSS

Let's just try not to overreact.

Poppy walks in, energetic and cheerful as ever. He's holding  
the Newlanders' LARGE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM.

POPPY

Hey, Oliver home yet?

RUSS AND JO

(overreacting)

NO!

Poppy takes a step back. Beat.

POPPY

Okay, how late is he?

RUSS

Fifteen minutes! Another five and I'm  
calling the police.

POPPY

Fifteen minutes? FIFTEEN MINUTES! OH MY  
GOD! Your TEENAGE son is FIFTEEN MINUTES  
late?! Who ever HEARD of such a thing?!  
The worst MUST have happened! There  
couldn't possibly be any other explanation!

Russ and Jo aren't appreciating this performance.

POPPY (cont'd)

OR... Maybe he made some new friends and  
is having FUN.

Suddenly, the FRONT DOOR bursts open. Oliver charges in, hurrying up the stairs. His clothes are dripping wet.

OLIVER  
(as he goes)  
Sorry I'm late.

We FOLLOW OLIVER UP THE STAIRS TO HIS ROOM. He's hiding something under his shirt. He's visibly upset. He rushes

INSIDE HIS BEDROOM and closes the door. From under his shirt Oliver pulls out the REMAINS OF HIS NEW LEATHER NOTEBOOK. The notebook has been ripped in half - the drawings are torn.

He hears footsteps coming. Quickly HIDES THE TATTERED NOTEBOOK under his bed. Wipes away his tears and composes himself just as Russ and Jo open the door to his room.

Jo rushes over to him. Notices his shirt is ripped. Poppy stands in the doorway.

JO  
Oliver, are you okay? What happened?

OLIVER  
(pushing her off)  
Nothing. I'm fine.

RUSS  
(looking at his torn shirt)  
Did somebody do this to you?

OLIVER  
No.

JO  
Why didn't you take the bus?

OLIVER  
I missed it.

RUSS  
You missed it? How did you miss it?

OLIVER  
(getting upset)  
I just did, okay! Stop asking me questions!

JO  
Honey, just talk to us.

RUSS  
We want to help, Oliver.

OLIVER

(his voice cracking)  
Well you can't, okay, you can't help.  
You'll just make it worse.

Oliver pushes Russ and Jo out the door.

OLIVER (cont'd)

I have homework to do.

He closes the door behind them. Russ looks at Jo.

RUSS

Make WHAT worse?!

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Russ is on the phone. Jo and Poppy stand nearby. Poppy  
leafs through the Newlanders' LARGE FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM.

RUSS

(into phone/not pleased)  
...Uh huh, well let me tell you something  
Principal Wright, this kind of apathy is  
exactly the reason I joined the Board of  
Ed at Chenry. And I can promise you,  
when I'm elected there's going to be a  
lot of changes at this school of yours.

Russ hangs up the phone. Turns to Jo.

RUSS (cont'd)

(shaking his head)

Useless. They say there's nothing they can  
do if Oliver won't tell us what happened.

JO

Well WE have to do something then.

POPPY

(closing the photo album)  
Oliver's right. You can't really help him.

RUSS

So what, we should just throw him to the  
wolves? I'm sorry Dad, but unlike you,  
I'm INVOLVED in my kid's life.

POPPY

Wolves? What wolves? All I did was stay  
out of your way so you could figure  
things out for yourself.

RUSS

Yeah, that's ALL you did. And I refuse to let my son suffer through school the way I suffered.

JO

Oliver never used to be like this. Whatever happened to the little boy who came running to me whenever he needed help? He used to talk to us.

RUSS

Now he's hiding out in his room. He's locking his door. He's...

POPPY

(cutting him off)  
...He's thirteen.

JO

(that's so young)  
Yes! Exactly!

POPPY

He has to have SOME experiences on his own. You can't be with him all the time.

JO

Well I wish I could!  
(genuine)  
I wish I could march right into that school with him EVERY DAY of the week.

RUSS

Yeah, protect him. Keep him safe.

POPPY

You don't really mean that.

JO

(frazzled)  
Yes. I do.

RUSS

He needs us.

Poppy considers this. The wheels start turning.

POPPY

You know, maybe that's not such a bad idea...



Poppy suddenly plucks a hair from each of their heads. OWW!  
Russ and Jo look puzzled as Poppy leaves. What was that about?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POPPY'S ROOM OVER THE GARAGE - NIGHT

The FULL MOON hangs over Poppy's room on this still night.

The PORCH LAMP by Poppy's room is turned off. We can make out some shadowy movement coming from inside.

INSIDE POPPY'S ROOM - The BABY DOVE watches Poppy. Suddenly the lights in the room start growing brighter.

OUTSIDE THE ROOM - the PORCH LAMP also lights up. PUSH IN ON THE PORCH LAMP as it shines brighter... and brighter... until...

POP! SMASH! THE LIGHT EXPLODES, shattering the porch lamp.

REVEAL - The lights of Poppy's room have gone out. The entire house is dark, silent and mysterious, lit only by THE FULL MOON.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - HALLWAY - MORNING

Oliver hurries down the stairs, ready for school. No sign of Mom and Dad. He scribbles a note - "Mom, Dad, went to school. DON'T WORRY!" Grabs his bookbag and makes a clean getaway. The front door SLAMS behind him.

ANGLE ON RUSS AND JO IN BED - The door slamming wakes them.

RUSS  
(bolting up in bed)  
Oliver...!  
(looking at clock/to Jo)  
It's 8:30! We're late!

He shakes Jo awake. They both jump out of bed.

INT. SALOMON DESIGNS OFFICES - KITCHEN - MORNING

Russ hurries into the small kitchenette, some rolled-up designs under his arm and a travel mug in hand. A co-worker, MITCHELL (30), is pouring himself some coffee. Russ is talking on his cell phone.

RUSS  
(into cell phone)  
...This is wonderful.  
(MORE)

RUSS (cont'd)

An endorsement from the Superintendant  
will mean so much to my campaign. I  
won't let you down sir. Thank you.

Russ hangs up. Turns to Mitchell.

RUSS (cont'd)

Overslept. Salomon asking for me yet?

Mitchell looks around, bewildered.

MITCHELL

Uh... no...

Mr. Salomon walks into the kitchen. Grabs a cup of coffee.  
He's all business - a tough son of a bitch. He nods to  
Mitchell, but takes no notice of Russ. Russ shifts, awkward.

RUSS

Morning Mr. Salomon...

Salomon looks at Russ cock-eyed. Turns to Mitchell.

MR. SALOMON

Mitchell, unless I'm mistaken, it's not  
Bring Your Kid To Work Day.

MITCHELL

He's not mine.

Russ looks around, perplexed. Salomon gives him the once over.

MR. SALOMON

Just try to stay out of the way and let the  
grown ups do their work, okay little man?

RUSS

(confused)

Is this about yesterday?

But Salomon's gone.

INT. HOUSE FOR SALE - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

The bedroom door opens and Jo enters, giving a tour. This  
room, along with the rest of the house, is completely empty.

JO

(mid-conversation)

...brand new hardwood floors, new pipes...

REVEAL - A baffled couple, THE CAULS (30's), following Jo.

JO (cont'd)

...And just take in this bedroom. A vaulted ceiling, exposed beams. And the skylight at night is SO romantic.

(suggestive)

I know I could have a lot of fun in here.

She elbows Mr. Caul. Am I right? He looks horrified.

MRS. CAUL

(shocked)

Is your mother around?

JO

(perplexed)

Uh... no, she lives in Florida.

INT. SALOMON DESIGNS OFFICES - BULLPEN - MORNING

Russ exits the kitchen WITH A CUP OF COFFEE. Just as he takes a sip, the OFFICE SECRETARY, 60's, takes it from him.

OFFICE SECRETARY

Whoa, whoa... How 'bout we get you some chocolate milk.

She musses his hair. Russ pulls away, weirded out.

RUSS

What are you...?

He's distracted by HIS REFLECTION in the DARK PLASTIC of a CUBICLE WALL. Is he crazy or is that his own 13 YEAR OLD FACE?

RUSS (cont'd)

What the...?

OFFICE SECRETARY

Are you okay, hon?

Russ is reeling. He rushes into the MEN'S ROOM, right up to the MIRROR. Sure enough, there's his 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTION staring back at him. Russ YELLS in horror.

INT. HOUSE FOR SALE - HIS AND HER BATHROOM - MORNING

Jo continues the tour, stepping backwards into a MASTER BATHROOM with MIRRORS on three walls.

JO

...And then to top it off, you've got this adjoining his and her...

Jo turns and sees the REFLECTION OF HERSELF AT AGE 13 in the large mirror. She SCREAMS.

The Cauls jump, startled. Jo whips her head around, catching her 13 year old reflection in the different mirrors.

JO (cont'd)  
That's....! That's not....!

From the CAULS' POV - They watch 13 YEAR OLD JO freak out.

*NOTE: Throughout the story, Russ and Jo will appear as 13 YEAR OLDS ONLY when we are seeing them from ANOTHER CHARACTER'S POV or when they are looking at themselves IN A MIRROR. These instances will be SPECIFICALLY NOTED.*

*Otherwise, Russ and Jo will ALWAYS appear as their normal ADULT selves.*

13 YEAR OLD JO  
...What's happening?!

MRS. CAUL  
(out of patience)  
Uh, listen, thanks for the tour. Tell  
your Mom WE'LL CALL HER. Okay?

The Cauls walk out, fed up. Jo turns and stares at her 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTION. She can't believe her eyes.

She moves closer to the mirror till her nose touches the glass - her adult face nose to nose with her 13 year old reflection.

INT. SALOMON DESIGNS OFFICES - BULLPEN - MORNING

Russ steps out of the Men's Room, panicked. Heads for the exit. Through an open office door, he hears Salomon bellow.

MR. SALOMON  
Where the hell is Newlander?! I want to  
see my Jefferson revisions!

Russ looks at the rolled-up sketches he's holding. Bolts.

INT. POPPY'S ROOM - DAY

Poppy is asleep on the floor, still in his clothes from last night. The FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM lies open, two pictures missing.

Next to it is the CHEAP MAGIC BOX that Poppy used to perform his magic. The box lies on its side, two photos hanging out.

THE PHOTOS ARE OF RUSS AND JO at age 13. Poppy stirs.  
Notices the box on the floor. His eyes light up.

INT. RUSS AND JO'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Russ and Jo stare straight ahead, panicked and overwhelmed.

JO

This isn't possible...

REVEAL - They're looking at their 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTIONS in the large bedroom mirror.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS is short, a little pudgy, with tight curly hair. 13 YEAR OLD JO towers over him. She's gangly, awkward, but pretty. A definite catch by junior high standards.

RUSS

Maybe we're having some kind of weird tandem flashback... Remember on our honeymoon, when that Rasta guy sold us that stuff on the beach. This is just some kind of a...

POPPY (O.S.)

It's an illusion, my boy.

Russ and Jo turn to see Poppy.

FROM POPPY'S POV, he sees 13 YEAR OLD RUSS AND JO. Poppy looks at 13 year old Russ. Takes his young face in his hands.

POPPY (cont'd)

My boy...

Russ pulls away.

RUSS

Dad, what did you do?

POPPY

Impressive, huh? I've learned a lot in my travels.

RUSS

On CRUISE SHIPS! How could you do this?

POPPY

(coy)

Very well.

RUSS  
(he hates that line)  
Dad...

POPPY  
What? I granted you your wish.

JO  
What wish?

POPPY  
You wanted to be with Oliver all the  
time. Now you can. Both of you.

RUSS  
What are you talking about? Dad, you've  
got to turn us back.

POPPY  
Turn you back?

RUSS  
Yes. I DO NOT want to be thirteen again!

POPPY  
But you're not... not really. You're still  
adults. That's why you look the same to each  
other. But to the rest of the world...

He puts his arms around them. Turns them so they're facing  
their 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTIONS in the mirror.

POPPY (cont'd)  
(a mischievous smile)  
...to the rest of the world, you look,  
you sound, you ARE 13 year old kids in  
every way.

JO  
(overwhelmed)  
Russ is right, you have to undo this.

POPPY  
(beat/how to say this)  
I can't. The spell lasts until the next  
full moon.

JO  
What?!

Poppy holds up his leather notebook. Points to his notes.

POPPY

"From full moon to full moon..."

(beat)

It's just a few weeks. That's all.  
It'll be like a vacation.

JO

I don't have time for a vacation!

RUSS

I have a new job, Dad. Remember?! I  
have a crew I'm supposedly in charge of.

POPPY

Isn't that why you have a foreman?  
Besides, a new job means you haven't used  
any of your sick days, right?

(to Jo)

And you do most of your work from your cell  
phone anyway. See, there, solved.

Russ and Jo look at each other. They can't believe this.

POPPY (cont'd)

This is a GIFT I've given you!

(getting more passionate)

Russell, Joanna, you have an opportunity  
that no other parent has ever had.  
Something the two of you have DREAMED ABOUT.

(building)

You're going to be able to protect your  
son! Find out what happened to him! Keep  
him safe! And without him ever knowing  
that it's you!

(pulls them in close)

You wanted to walk right into school with  
Oliver? Now you can!

(quiet/intense)

You're not ready to give that up so  
quickly, are you?

Off Russ and Jo...

INT. EMERSON JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

A SEA OF STUDENTS of all ages, 7th grade through 12th, make  
their way to their classes.

REVEAL RUSS AND JO

Towering over most of the students as they walk among them.

They're dressed like the 30-somethings they are - not exactly hip for the teen world. Each of them pulls a "wheelie" bookbag like Oliver's. They look awkward in their new environment.

The kids pay no attention to Russ and Jo, accepting them as two of their own. Russ and Jo exchange a look. Are we really getting away with this? They take in the VARIOUS CLIQUES AND STUDENT TYPES as they search the hall for Oliver. They pass by...

- A PAIR OF SENIOR JOCKS. They're in a good mood. They run and BUMP CHESTS, stopping the flow of traffic, including...

- A group of 8TH GRADE GIRLS wearing slight variations on the EXACT SAME OUTFIT - tank tops, low rider jeans and metal-studded belts.

- Jo pushes past A PAIR OF LORD OF THE RINGS GEEKS in the middle of a heated debate.

LORD OF THE RINGS GEEK  
...Duh! Ringwraiths do not speak  
Sindarin, Orc-brain. Geez, did you even  
read appendix F...?

The boys notice Jo walking by. Check her out. She looks hot. Russ frowns. Steps past...

- A PAIR OF PRETTY, 14 YEAR OLD BLONDES.

PRETTY BLONDE #1  
Did you IM him first, or did he IM you?

PRETTY BLONDE #2  
I IM'd him. Is that bad?

Just then, NICOLE BOMMER WAVES TO THE PRETTY BLONDES as she passes. This is the girl Oliver was drawing. Nicole is well-liked by everybody. She transcends cliques.

A demure SCHOOL SECRETARY, 50's, hands out PERMISSION SLIPS. She gives two to Russ and Jo.

JO  
(reading the slip)  
Eighth grade field trip to Boston...?

The Secretary stops and looks at Russ and Jo for a beat.

SECRETARY  
Do I know you two?

Russ and Jo look at each other. Don't panic.



JO

Uh... we're transfer students. I'm  
Joa... uh...

(searching for aliases)

Janet New... man... and this is Rich  
Land... o... Lakes...

Russ and the Secretary look at Jo. Land O'Lakes?

RUSS

It's Irish...

(beat)

We're cousins.

SECRETARY

(nods/re: the slips)

Make sure those are signed by your  
parents and turned in by Friday.

She moves on down the hall. Jo breathes a sigh of relief.  
Russ looks at the permission slip.

RUSS

A WEEKEND trip for eighth graders? I do  
not like the idea of that.

The moment is broken as A THREESOME OF TALL HIGH SCHOOL BURN-  
OUTS push past Russ and Jo. These SENIORS look like they've  
been left back a couple of times. Russ and Jo turn to see...

A WIMPY 8TH GRADE BOY is being carried like a knapsack over  
the shoulder of one of these older slackers. The burn-out is  
carrying him wedgie-style by his underwear.

WIMPY 8TH GRADE BOY

(imploring anybody)

Somebody help me, please! Is there no  
humanity in this school?

RUSS

Thank God that isn't Oliver...

Suddenly, a ruckus breaks out at the other end of the hall.  
A group of KIDS shout, "FIGHT, FIGHT!"

Russ and Jo investigate. As they get closer they spot  
HANNIGAN antagonizing someone we can't see.

Russ pushes through the group and spots his son on the ground.

RUSS (cont'd)

Oliver!

Hannigan holds Oliver down on the ground with one foot, while he dumps stuff out of his locker.

HANNIGAN

Thanks for giving up your locker, man. I really need the extra space.

A bunch of Hannigan's pals laugh at Oliver.

HANNIGAN (cont'd)

This is what you get for making eyes at my girlfriend.

A CHEERLEADER pipes up from the crowd.

CHEERLEADER

Nicole's not your girlfriend, Hannigan.

Hannigan ignores her.

HANNIGAN

(grabbing Oliver)

So what's your combo, Newloser?

Jo tries to inch her way through the kids, fiercely protective.

JO

Get off of him!

RUSS

Son!

Russ can't get through the circle to Oliver. Some of Hannigan's buddies toss him back into a locker as if he only weighs 30 pounds. WHAM!

HANNIGAN

(to Oliver)

Do I have to "keep you after school" again? Come on, Newloser, Mommy doesn't want you to miss your bus...

Russ and Jo's eyes narrow. It was him!

JO

Russ... er, Rich, do something!

What to do? Russ dashes down the hallway. He stops the first teacher he sees, COACH MCCUSKER, 40's, a buffed gym teacher with a lot of attitude.

RUSS  
(near panic)  
Excuse me, uh, you! There's a fight.

FROM MCCUSKER'S POV - He looks down on the stubby 13 YEAR OLD RUSS.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
Hurry! You have to break it up!

COACH MCCUSKER  
No. Actually, I HAVE to go to the teacher's lounge and smoke a cigarette.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
What? You're a teacher.

COACH MCCUSKER  
No. I'm a teacher with TENURE. Big difference.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
(pulling McCusker towards the fight)  
Let's go. My taxes aren't paying your salary so you can sit on your ass.

Off McCusker...

JUMP CUT TO:

#### THE FIGHT

The crowd around the fight is bigger. Hannigan has his ear up to Oliver's mouth.

HANNIGAN  
I can't hear you...

OLIVER  
10... 24...

Just then, McCusker apathetically pushes his way through the group, followed by Russ.

COACH MCCUSKER  
(dispassionate)  
That's enough. Break it up...

The fight continues. Russ glares at McCusker.

COACH MCCUSKER (cont'd)

Hey Hannigan, do you want to be benched  
for the first meet?

With that, Hannigan lets go of Oliver. Looks at McCusker  
innocently. Oliver stands up. His face is beet red.

COACH MCCUSKER (cont'd)

Save it for the mats, son.

The bell rings. The crowd breaks up and heads off to their  
classes. Russ turns to Jo.

RUSS

Thank God we were here.

Hannigan leans in to Oliver.

HANNIGAN

(in his ear)

Your little rat friend may have bailed  
you out this time Ollie, but we got a  
LONG year ahead of us.

With that, Hannigan and his buddies walk off, high-fiving.  
Oliver looks at Russ and Jo, suprised by these "new kids."

COACH MCCUSKER

(to Oliver)

Hey kid. Don't provoke Hannigan like that.

Oliver nods. Starts shoving his stuff back in his locker.  
McCusker turns to leave. Russ and Jo are apoplectic.

JO

Wait, that's it? No punishment? That's  
all you're going to do?

McCusker turns back.

COACH MCCUSKER

Pretty much, yeah.

JO

But they were beating up our...

(stops herself/points to Oliver)

...him. At the very least, don't you  
think you should monitor the situation  
and make sure it doesn't happen again.

Beat. McCusker looks at Russ and Jo.

COACH MCCUSKER

What's with you two? Were you home schooled or something? It's Lord Of The Flies here.

Jo confronts McCusker.

FROM MCCUSKER'S POV - He stares down at the little spitfire in his face - 13 YEAR OLD JO.

13 YEAR OLD JO

You're his TEACHER! I know that may not be as much fun as your "Pumping Iron" days - but since you've "fallen back" on teaching you've got a responsibility to look after these kids instead of sitting on your lazy, apathetic ass and doing nothing!

McCusker is stunned.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

I tried this already, honey.

Jo sees Oliver walking away down the hall.

JO

Oliver...!

She wants to catch up to him, but...

COACH MCCUSKER

You want me to do something? Fine!

He takes out a small pad.

COACH MCCUSKER (cont'd)

(to Jo)

Go see Spinelli. Room 206. Now!

He hands Jo a DETENTION SLIP. Turns to Russ.

COACH MCCUSKER (cont'd)

And you? Where are you supposed to be?

RUSS

Uh...

McCusker takes the schedule out of Russ' hand. Smiles.

COACH MCCUSKER

Gym. Good. You're mine...

Russ looks at Jo as McCusker grabs him by the arm.

Gym...? RUSS

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

A pair of nimble 8TH GRADERS scamper up THE ROPES.

REVEAL - Russ is next in line. Clad in gym shorts and knee socks, he looks ridiculous. He eyes the rope, daunted.

Oliver stands in line a few kids behind Russ. He looks equally intimidated by the rope climb.

The nimble 8th Grader climbs down. It's Russ's turn.

COACH MCCUSKER  
Let's go, Land O'Lakes.

The kids laugh. Russ sighs.

RUSS  
The thing is, my bursitis is acting up.  
If I could just...

COACH MCCUSKER  
Now.

OLIVER  
(interrupting Russ)  
Coach...!  
(nervous/making an excuse)  
Could... um... I use the bathroom?

McCusker waves him off to the locker room. Oliver smiles.  
Trots off.

RUSS  
I have to use the bathroom too!

McCusker blows the whistle in Russ's ear.

COACH MCCUSKER  
CLIMB! CLIMB! CLIMB!

RUSS  
Aaahhh!

Russ struggles up the rope.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

DETENTION is written in big letters on the blackboard.

Jo sits at a desk waiting out the period. A few OTHER KIDS are spread around the room so they can't talk. They're all busy working on an assignment.

Jo's cell phone goes off. She answers it.

JO

(into phone)

Hello? Mr. Blackburn, hi... Well, I've had a bit of a family emergency come up...

MR. SPINELLI, 50's, a spiteful-looking history teacher, looks up from his desk in front of the class. Spinelli loves to lord what little power he has, always in the name of one's education.

FROM SPINELLI'S POV - He sees 13 YEAR OLD JO gabbing on her cell phone. He walks over to her.

13 YEAR OLD JO

(into phone)

...Absolutely, if they can't put down twenty percent they're not serious buyers...

MR. SPINELLI

Excuse me young lady...

13 YEAR OLD JO

(holds up a finger)

One sec...

(back into phone)

And I'm going to INSIST on a short loan contingency period...

Spinelli grabs her phone. Hangs up. Jo's shocked.

MR. SPINELLI

Where exactly do you think you are?

JO

That's an \$800,000 deal I'm working.

MR. SPINELLI

Not in here you're not. Right now, you're WORKING on ten freedoms you enjoy as an American.

(looking at her paper)

I see so far you only enjoy two, and the...

(reading)

"...right to claim your leased car as a business deduction" does not count.

Spinelli crumples up the page she's been working on. He takes her phone and places it in the drawer of his desk.

MR. SPINELLI (cont'd)  
Keep this up young lady and there's going  
to be no trip to Boston for you.

A boy in the opposite corner watches Jo. This is PAUL, 13,  
possibly the coolest kid in school, spiked hair, on the  
shorter side, but modern day James Dean.

He wears a T-shirt that says, "I only like two kinds of girls  
- domestic and imported."

Paul smiles at Jo, seductively. She looks around - is he  
looking at her? He nods.

He scribbles something in his notepad. Holds it up for her  
to see. "New?"

She nods. He turns the page, scribbles something else. "Got  
a boyfriend?"

Jo flushes. This kid's flirting with me! She shakes her  
head, flustered, "No... I mean, yes... I mean..."

Paul smiles. Jo turns back to her assignment - she can't deal.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

CLOSE ON RUSS - Sweat drips down his face. His hands and  
cheeks are bright red. He inches up the rope, his ADULT BODY  
clinging to it precariously.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Russ has only moved about six inches up  
the rope. McCusker is still eyeball to eyeball with him.

COACH MCCUSKER  
Hey, "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!"  
Hand over hand! Let's go!

Russ picks up the pace. Grunts and groans as he makes his  
way up the rope, hand over hand.

ON OLIVER - He stands in the doorway of the locker room.  
Watches Russ struggle on the rope.

Russ is making progress now. He manages to get all the way  
to the top. Holds onto the metal ceiling beam with one hand.  
A sense of accomplishment.

RUSS  
I did it... I did it...!

ON THE MAT - HANNIGAN steps in and replaces the kid who was  
spotting Russ. Hannigan leers up at him.



HANNIGAN

Hey rat....! I got your tail!

Hannigan SWINGS THE ROPE with all his might. Russ clings desperately as the rope spins wildly.

RUSS

(terrified)

Hey....! Stop it! Coach McCusker....!

McCusker is oblivious, talking to another student. Hannigan swings the rope harder. Oliver cringes.

Russ loses his grip. He falls, screaming all the way.

SLAM! McCusker turns. Sees Russ lying on the mat.

MR. MCCUSKER

Hey Country Crock, what'd I say? This isn't nap time. Now get up that rope!

Hannigan smirks at Russ and walks away.

Russ looks up to discover Oliver standing over him. Oliver helps Russ up.

RUSS

Thanks...

OLIVER

I'm new here too.

Russ smiles.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Amidst the bustling students in between classes, Russ introduces Oliver to Jo.

RUSS

This is my cousin, Janet... Janet, this is Oliver...

Jo looks at her son, holding his hand out to her in friendship. Like she's his peer. As a mother, it's almost more than she can handle. She can barely speak.

JO

(shaking his hand)

Oliver...

(a squeak)

...cool...

OLIVER

(to both of them)

Thanks for sticking up for me. No one's ever done that before.

Russ and Jo share a look. God they love this kid.

RUSS

It's our life's mission.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Russ, Oliver and Jo stand in the food line with trays. The place is teeming with kids. They all survey the food choices.

OLIVER

(mid-conversation)

...You know Hannigan did the same thing to me yesterday. And I heard he's never even climbed the ropes himself. He's totally afraid of heights.

RUSS

I always hated guys like him... He's just like this guy from my old school... Chris Mullin...

(reliving the horrors of his youth)

He couldn't swim to save his life, but he used to come after me every time I went in the pool. One time he stripped off my bathing suit and hung it from the high dive. Half the school was there, all the girls. I had to climb the high dive to get it.

Oliver shudders at the thought.

OLIVER

Geez...

RUSS

Yeah, and it wasn't easy climbing that thing with one hand.

Russ selects a piece of square cafeteria pizza along with a side of fries. Jo gives him a disapproving look.

JO

Hey, that's not Atkins-friendly.

She takes the pizza and fries from him. Oliver looks at them, perplexed. So does the 40-something LUNCH LADY.

RUSS

Uh... my Mom doesn't want me eating a lot of carbs.

Jo hands the plate back, smiling sheepishly at the Lunch Lady.

Oliver grabs his tray and starts walking through the cafeteria. Russ and Jo follow him.

They walk down the aisle of tables, each of them crowded with the various cliques - the jock table, the stoner table, the popular table, etc. Oliver doesn't move to sit at any of them.

Jo watches her son in front of her. Looks at the other kids. How they're dressed. Oliver sports the buttoned-down "Sears" look, while the other kids all dress trendier.

JO

Did I really buy that shirt for him?  
What was I thinking?

RUSS

(not getting it)  
Why? What's wrong with it?

JO

Why doesn't he sit with any of these kids?

RUSS

He probably just doesn't know who to trust yet.

(wary)

And by the way, neither do we...

Jo rolls her eyes, turns and sees PAUL waving to her from a crowded table.

JO

Oh, hey...!

RUSS

Who's that?

JO

Just this guy I met in detention.

Russ looks at Paul, suspicious.

Jo sees where Oliver is headed - a lone, empty table at the back of the cafeteria. She catches up to him.

JO (cont'd)

Why don't we sit over there...

She points to Paul's rowdy table. Oliver takes a look. He sees who Paul is sitting with - NICOLE BOMMER, the cute girl Russ and Jo saw earlier in the hallway. She's wearing a CHEERLEADER UNIFORM, sitting with a trio of CHEERLEADER FRIENDS.

OLIVER  
(nervous)  
With Nicole Bommer?

Russ and Jo look at Nicole.

JO  
Yeah, why not?

OLIVER  
(are you crazy?)  
No way.

He takes a seat at the empty table. Russ and Jo join him.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
I can't talk to her...

Oliver looks at Nicole.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
She's... she's so...

She's so many wonderful things. Oliver blushes. It's all that Russ and Jo can take.

JO  
(to Russ)  
Oh my God, he has a crush!

FROM OLIVER'S POV - 13 year old Russ and Jo are gushing.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
Awww, that's so CUTE!

13 YEAR OLD JO  
I can't stand it!

They stare at their son, misty-eyed. Oliver looks self-conscious. Everyone's watching.

OLIVER  
(weirded out)  
Guys...

Russ and Jo snap out of it. Try to recover...

RUSS

Oh, sorry man. She's just really hot.

OLIVER

Yeah, well don't let Hannigan catch you looking at her. Besides, she'd never have anything to do with me anyway.

JO

Why not? You're a perfectly attractive young man.

Oliver GRIMACES at that description.

JO (cont'd)

(scrambling)

I just mean, what's not to like?

OLIVER

She'll think I'm a freak.

RUSS

Why would she think that?

OLIVER

(simply)

Everyone does.

RUSS

What?!

JO

Oliver, how could you say that?

Russ and Jo look at each other, pained.

OLIVER

They all thought I was a freak at my other school. Why should this place be any different?

RUSS

Because you're not a freak!

Russ and Jo look around at the other kids. Look back at their son. He is a misfit by comparison - his clothes, the way he carries himself, his incessant doodling.

JO

You are such an incredibly SPECIAL boy...

OLIVER  
(cutting them off)  
Uggh! That's EXACTLY what my parents  
always say.  
(sarcastic)  
"Oliver, you're so SPECIAL. Don't you  
know how special you are?"

With that, Oliver is hit in the side of the head with some  
pudding. Russ and Jo gasp. Hannigan and his buddies laugh  
from their table. One of them was the culprit.

HANNIGAN'S BUDDY  
Nice shirt, Newloser!

Oliver looks at Russ and Jo.

OLIVER  
See... Special is just another word for freak.  
Russ and Jo look at Oliver, stunned.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE FOR SALE - NIGHT

A WANING QUARTER MOON hangs in the sky.

Russ and Jo sneak up to the front of this dark house - the  
SAME HOUSE JO WAS TRYING TO SELL EARLIER. She unlocks the  
door, and they hurry in before anyone sees them.

INT. HOUSE FOR SALE - HIS AND HER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Russ and Jo are going through their bedtime routines in front  
of the bathroom mirror. In the bedroom behind them we can  
see an air mattress set up on the floor.

As they talk, Russ uses teeth whitening strips while Jo  
applies moisturizing cream to her face. It's absurd watching  
their 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTIONS performing these same ADULT  
bedtime rituals.

JO  
We are terrible parents.

RUSS  
No we're not.

Russ notices a zit on his cheek. Leans in to pop it. His 13  
YEAR OLD REFLECTION gets closer as he leans in. Splat! Got  
it. Jo looks grossed out.

JO

Yes we are. Our little boy has no self-esteem and it's our fault. He's not making friends, he's a walking target for bullies. He's not even comfortable in his own skin. He's...

Russ stares at his THIRTEEN YEAR OLD REFLECTION in the mirror.

RUSS

He's ME at thirteen. You're right. We ARE terrible parents!

JO

He never said anything when he was at Chenry. I didn't realize it was this bad.

Beat.

RUSS

If we could just show all those kids how great he is...

Jo thinks about that.

JO

Well why can't we? I was in the Gold Circle for sales last year. You design buildings for million dollar clients. Why can't we sell a bunch of thirteen-year-olds on our son?

They look at each other, inspired.

Beat. Russ looks at his watch. Puts on his shoes and a jacket. Grabs the rolled up sketches.

JO (cont'd)

Where are you going at this hour?

RUSS

The office.

(holding up revised sketches)

I want these in front of Salomon in the morning, and I can't have him seeing me like this.

Russ gestures to his 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTION.

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Oliver is going through his bedtime routine. He's in his pajamas, brushing his teeth. Poppy stands in the doorway.

OLIVER

(excited)

...This is awesome! I can't believe they just left like that.

POPPY

Yeah, well they couldn't believe it either.

Oliver spits out the toothpaste. Suddenly gets paranoid. Looks out the window into the dark backyard.

OLIVER

Wait, this isn't another one of their safety drills, is it? They're REALLY gone?

POPPY

Hey, would I do that to you? They just needed a vacation, that's all. They haven't taken one in some time.

OLIVER

Try ever!

Oliver grooves around the bathroom, celebratory. Yes!

POPPY

You know, with your folks out of your hair, you've got an opportunity, kiddo. Don't hold back. Have some fun.

Poppy produces a SIGNED PERMISSION SLIP for the Boston field trip. Hands it to Oliver. Oliver smiles.

OLIVER

Mom and Dad would freak...

INT. MR. SALOMON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The firm is dark and empty, but Salomon's desk lamp is on. Russ places the revised sketches on his boss' desk.

Suddenly, Russ hears a TOILET FLUSH. He's not alone. Salomon's working late!

Panicked, Russ looks around for a hiding place. He tries to wedge his body into the narrow leg space under Salomon's desk.

With pained effort he squeezes himself in, banging his head on the drawer above him.

MR. SALOMON enters the office. Something doesn't seem right. We follow his gaze as he leans down, looking under his desk.



FROM SALOMON'S POV - He sees 13 YEAR OLD RUSS crouching comfortably under the desk. They make eye contact.

MR. SALOMON

You? What are you doing here?

13 year old Russ crawls out from under the desk. Salomon looks down at him, no patience for children.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

Uh... uh...

He spots a janitor cleaning up outside Salomon's office.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS (cont'd)

I got locked in the janitor's closet.

MR. SALOMON

And what are you doing under my desk?

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

Playing? I was making believe it's a fort.

13 year old Russ ducks under the desk again. Pretends to shoot Mr. Salomon from under it, making the gun noises with his mouth. Pschew! Pschew!

MR. SALOMON

Get out of there! Who ARE you?

13 year old Russ stands back up.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

Russ Newlander... 's son. Russ Jr.

(spinning a story)

The truth is, my Dad's really sick. He can barely move a finger. But he knew getting you these revisions was more important than ANYTHING. At least that's what he said before he passed out.

MR. SALOMON

(not totally buying this)

Mm hmm... So Newlander's sick, huh?

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

Yeah, he's got shingles.

MR. SALOMON

(dubious)

Shingles...

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

Er... rickets. I think it's a combo of the two. But he'll be back in a couple of weeks.

(pushing it)

Come to think of it, he could really use that health insurance at this point. I mean, when he took this job, no one ever discussed a six month waiting period before it started up. It's really not fair.

MR. SALOMON

Uh huh... Look, I don't know what exactly is going on here. But you tell your "sick" Dad I don't appreciate employees who run away from their responsibilities. If he doesn't deal with his crew and get them back on schedule by the end of the month, he's not going to have a job to come back to.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

You're going to fire m... him?!

Salomon just looks at him. This conversation is over.

MR. SALOMON

Isn't it a school night?

Russ doesn't follow.

MR. SALOMON (cont'd)

(waves)

Bye bye.

Russ hurries out of the office.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

A bright, sunny day. Perfect time for CHEERLEADER TRY-OUTS.

We pan down a row of exuberant, hopeful GIRLS, cheering. Nicole is among them. Finally we pan over, and UP to find...

JO, dressed in a uniform, cheering more LOUDLY and EXUBERANTLY than any of these girls. As a grown woman she looks ridiculous. She's got her eye on Nicole.

Jo reaches the end of the cheer, collapses to the ground. The other cheerleaders look blown away by Jo.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Jo is getting changed with Nicole and her three cheerleader buddies. They're all bubbling over about Jo's performance.

JO  
I didn't know I could do that!

CHEERLEADER #1  
God, you have such great energy...!

JO  
Thanks Kate.

CHEERLEADER #1  
(pointing to her pal)  
No, I'm Katie. She's Kate. She's Caitlin.

CAITLIN  
With a C.  
(checking out Jo's body)  
Man, I wish I had your butt.

NICOLE  
You should get some low riders. They'd look great on you.

JO  
(surprised/flattered)  
Really?

The three Kates nod. Jo checks out her 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTION in the mirror.

JO (cont'd)  
(to herself)  
Man, my breasts were so perky.

The CHEERLEADING COACH gestures to the Kates. They grab their pom-poms and go to put them away, leaving Nicole and Jo alone.

JO (cont'd)  
(turning to Nicole)  
This was such a blast. I always regretted not going out for cheerleading, but that wasn't considered a "productive use of my time..."

NICOLE  
My parents are all about "diversifying my extra-curriculars..."  
(going down her list)  
(MORE)

NICOLE (cont'd)

...In the spring I'm on the tennis team and the diving team. And that's on top of cheerleading, Honors Society, yearbook and Mathletes.

JO

I was a Mathlete!

NICOLE

People think it's dorky, but it looks great on your college app.

JO

So, any boyfriends?

NICOLE

Please, the boys here are SO immature. All they care about is being COOL.

JO

Not all of them.

NICOLE

(cutting her off)

Oh I forgot one. I'm on the wrestling squad too.

Off Jo...

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Russ, Jo and Oliver are at their table.

OLIVER

(entertaining this)

The wrestling squad...

Oliver is swept away thinking about Nicole.

JO

What about Mathletes? I'm a Mathlete. I thought we could do that together.

RUSS

Or yearbook.

(overselling it)

Yearbook is awesome! But wrestling... you're talking pulled groins, torn... groins. Lots of groin injuries. Very dangerous, very dangerous...

Oliver's not listening to a word they're saying.

OLIVER  
How cool is it that she wrestles?

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

THUD! A WRESTLER is taken down and pinned violently.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Russ and Jo are standing a few feet away. Russ looks horrified.

RUSS  
Mother of mercy....!

He's dressed in a wrestling singlet (the unitards wrestlers wear). Wrestling try-outs are underway.

RUSS (cont'd)  
(to Jo)  
This just keeps getting worse.

OLIVER joins them, also dressed in a singlet.

OLIVER  
Thanks for signing up with me.

RUSS  
(acting brave)  
Yeah, yeah, no problem. I got your back.

OLIVER  
There she is...

They turn to see...

NICOLE BOMMER, emerging from the girls locker room.

She's stunning in her singlet. SLOW-MO as she tosses her hair, puts on her head gear. A special kind of angel...

OLIVER (cont'd)  
(totally smitten)  
Oh my God....!

Jo looks at her son. Smiles when she sees his eyes light up.

Oliver looks around at the other wrestlers. HANNIGAN is among them and he's the biggest of them all.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
(scared/overwhelmed)  
Oh my God...

ON HANNIGAN - He walks over to Nicole. Steps in front of her so she can't pass. Every time she tries to move, Hannigan moves in front of her. It's his immature, obnoxious attempt at flirting.

NICOLE

Hannigan, do you mind...

HANNIGAN

So, uh... what are you doing after school? Wanna lift home on my scooter?

NICOLE

I take the bus.

She moves to the left, faking him out and gets past him. Snubbed, Hannigan seethes.

ON OLIVER - He smiles as Nicole walks away from Hannigan. Hannigan sees Oliver smiling. They make eye contact. Oh shit!

Suddenly, COACH MCCUSKER'S WHISTLE pierces the gym.

COACH MCCUSKER

All right ladies, we got our first meet in a week and a half. Rookies, partner up with a wrestler and let's see what you can do.

He blows the whistle again. Hannigan makes a beeline for Oliver. Oliver takes a couple of nervous steps backwards.

Russ's protective instinct kicks in. He steps defensively in front of Oliver, taking on Hannigan.

RUSS

Back off, Hannigan.

HANNIGAN

Hey look, it's Dweeb and Dweeber...

RUSS

(to Oliver)

I'll handle this.

Russ, trying to maintain strength, stares down at the bratty 13 year old Hannigan.

REVERSE SHOT - HANNIGAN'S POV - From Hannigan's perspective, HE'S the one looking down at a pudgy, 13 year old Russ.

HANNIGAN

(to Russ)

All right Butterball, let's go.

Hannigan grabs Russ by the arm and pulls him over to a mat.

Oliver takes a breath. Walks over to Nicole. They're the only two left. Oliver is visibly nervous.

NICOLE

I guess that leaves us.

(looking at the other boys)

They're all afraid of me.

OLIVER

Even Hannigan?

NICOLE

(nods)

Nobody wants to get pinned by a girl.

Off Oliver...

JUMP CUT TO:

NICOLE SLAMS OLIVER VIOLENTLY TO THE MAT.

Oliver smiles big and broad. Heaven. Nicole looks at him.

NICOLE (cont'd)

You're smiling.

OLIVER

Sorry...

But he just keeps smiling. Nicole smiles back. He's kinda cute.

NICOLE

That's not much of a game face.

OLIVER

I know. I can't help it.

NICOLE

You've never wrestled before have you?

OLIVER

Uh... not really. But I'm a fast learner.

NICOLE

Oh yeah?

(playfully teaching him)

Well this is a half nelson...

SMACK! She pins him again. Oliver smiles once more.

ANGLE ON JO - She watches her son from the stands, smiling.  
PAUL sits down right next to her.

PAUL

Hey dude...

JO

(surprised)

Hey... dude...

Paul wears a new novelty T-shirt. This one says, "I'm busy now, I'll IGNORE you later."

PAUL

So I'm having a pre-Boston bash. Gonna get us all revved up for the trip. It's gonna be awesome. You gotta come. Everybody's gonna be there.

JO

Yeah... sure...

PAUL

(trying to impress her)

Cause you know we're all sneaking out of the hotel one night.

JO

(wary)

You are...?

PAUL

Yeah, it's like this school tradition.

(hitting on her)

You stick with me. I'll snow you the ropes around here...

Jo blushes.

JO

Cool...

Behind Paul, she suddenly notices the group of M.O.M. MEMBERS walking in the school hallway carrying various baked goods.

JO (cont'd)

Oh my God, the bake sale!

She hurries out of the gym. Paul looks after her, puzzled.

JUMP CUT TO:



INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

The LUNCH LADY is closing up as Jo scans the food racks to see what's left. All that's there is a LARGE PILE of rather stale-looking BROWNIES.

Jo piles them onto a tray. Hurries over to the cashier.

JO

You take credit cards, right?

Off the cashier...

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The M.O.M. MEMBERS are milling about. The meeting hasn't begun yet. Jo rushes in and sets her tray of brownies down on the table with the other baked goods.

JO

Uh, these are from Jo Newlander. She left them at the main office.

The judgemental M.O.M.s peer at the tray of decrepit brownies, which stick out like a sore thumb among the perfect, home-baked pies, cookies and cakes.

M.O.M. MEMBER #1

These don't look so *special* to me.

JO

(defensive)

Hey...!

FROM THE M.O.M. MEMBERS' POV - A brash 13 YEAR OLD JO glares at them.

13 YEAR OLD JO

...Lay off. She's a WORKING Mom. She's got a house in escrow, another on the block, PLUS she's been busy trying to get a jump on banners for the charity car wash. Trust me, she's more involved in this school than you know!

Jo marches out of the room. The M.O.M. MEMBERS watch her go.

M.O.M. MEMBER #2  
(disgusted/under her breath)  
We haven't even discussed the charity car wash.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Russ is on all fours on the mat, dripping sweat, overwhelmed. Hannigan's been putting him through the wringer. Hannigan has one arm around his waist, the other holding Russ' arm.

RUSS  
I'm surprised, Hannigan. Guys like you usually have a lot more tricks up your sleeve. Where's the singlet wedgie, the armpit in the face...?

Hannigan smiles - he hadn't thought of that one. In a flash, the wiry Hannigan flips Russ over on his back. He shoves his sweaty armpit in Russ' face.

HANNIGAN  
Armpit in the face... Good idea...

RUSS  
(being manhandled)  
You know, I don't blame you for this Hannigan. I'm sure you're a product of permissive, absentee parenting...  
(winces from the pain)  
In fact, if I'm elected to the Board...  
arghh... I'm going to institute a parental incentive program...

HANNIGAN  
Are you still talking?!

He picks Russ up, spinning him over his head WWF-style. The scrawny 13 year old completely overpowers the 35 year old Russ.

RUSS  
Aaahhhh!!!

Hannigan BODY SLAMS him into the ground. For Russ, it's like he's back in his old Junior High hell.

Russ looks up at Hannigan, who leers down at him. He cranes to look for Jo in the stands. She's not there.

He spots her entering the gym and waving to Paul, oblivious to his plight.

Hannigan grabs Russ by the foot. Russ claws at the mat as Hannigan drags him out of frame.

RUSS (cont'd)  
(whimpering)  
No more...! No more...!

EXT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY

Russ leans against the side of the building, next to Jo. He looks at his wife, still in pain from his match.

RUSS  
Well, at least I managed to take the heat off Oliver.  
(pointed)  
Not that you were watching.

JO  
I was watching... at the end there. What's that move called when he sits on you?

Russ looks at her. It's not a move.

Paul walks past them, out of the gym.

PAUL  
(to Jo)  
See ya at the party, dude.

JO  
(cheery)  
Okay, dude.

Russ tries to get in the mix.

RUSS  
Later, dude...!

Paul ignores him. Gives Jo a cool BACKHANDED NO LOOK WAVE as he walks away. Jo smiles. Russ looks at her.

RUSS (cont'd)  
(with an edge)  
You wouldn't have looked twice at me in junior high, would you?

JO  
Sure I would've...  
(distracted)  
Hey guys...!

Jo greets the Kates as they walk out of the gym.

KATE

Oh my God, Paul totally likes you!

JO

You think...?

KATIE

Big time.

CAITLIN

Don't underestimate yourself, Janet.  
You're way in his league.

KATE

You're like a total catch!

JO

(genuinely touched)

Oh... I love you guys. You're such good friends.

KATE, KATIE AND CAITLIN

Awwwww....!

They hug goodbye. Russ watches, mouth agape, as his wife gets swept away like a giddy school girl. The Kates release Jo and hurry off to their classes. Jo turns back to Russ.

JO

What? I'm just trying to blend in.

RUSS

Uh huh... Let's just try to remember why we're here.

JO

I know why we're here. I'm loving hanging with Oliver. Relax. You have to go with it a little.

RUSS

Easy for you to say. The girls have doors on the stalls in their bathroom.

JO

You're just jealous because I'm cool and you're not.

RUSS

What does THAT mean? I'm cool.

ON CUE, HANNIGAN walks by and gives Russ a "tittie-twister" as he passes.

RUSS (cont'd)

Gaaahhh!

Just then Oliver bursts out of the gym door. He's floating on air. Jo and Russ immediately focus on him.

OLIVER

Oh my God you guys, she's amazing. And she DIDN'T think I was a freak. She DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHO I WAS!

Oliver has a big dumb grin on his face. Russ and Jo haven't seen him this happy in a long time.

JO

That's great, honey...

Jo instinctively gives Oliver a big hug.

RUSS

(jumping in to save Jo)

HOMEY! My man, way to go!

He gives Oliver a high five. They walk out of frame.

REVEAL - On the wall where Russ was leaning is one of his campaign posters - "RUSS NEWLANDER - ARCHITECT OF YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE!"

MUSIC UP AND UNDER - An upbeat, fun pop song.

#### BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. NEWLANDER HOME - NIGHT

A WAXING HALF MOON shines down on the Newlander house.

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - OLIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Oliver sits at his desk drawing in one of his notebooks. It's a SKETCH OF NICOLE looking angelic in her wrestling gear. A POSTCARD sits on the desk next to it.

CLOSE ON THE POSTCARD - It's from Russ and Jo and has a picture of a beautiful Hawaiian sunset on it.

UNDER THESE SCENES, WE HEAR THE TEXT OF THE POSTCARD.

JO (V.O.)

Dear Oliver... Well we're here in sunny Hawaii...

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Oliver's table is no longer empty. He's having lunch with Jo, but they're also joined by the Kates, Paul and Nicole. Oliver's wearing a trendier shirt now.

JO (V.O.)

What an escape from reality! We really should have done this years ago...

Oliver says something that makes Jo laugh. They're having a great time together.

JO (V.O.) (cont'd)

...It's truly been an adventure.

Russ approaches the table with his tray. When he takes a seat, one of HANNIGAN'S BUDDIES slips a bowl of pudding under his butt. He sits in the pudding. Cringes.

RUSS (V.O.)

One neither of us is ever going to forget...

Hannigan's table laughs at Russ. Jo is oblivious.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

CLOSE ON JO - She's in the middle of an animated cheer, waving her pom poms.

JO (V.O.)

I just can't get enough of this place...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Jo is perched high atop a PYRAMID of 13 and 14 year old cheerleaders.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Oliver shows Jo and Russ his SKETCH OF NICOLE in her wrestling gear. Russ glances out the window as the school bus passes by his CONSTRUCTION SITE.

RUSS (V.O.)

And I'm so thankful for the time off from work...

Russ sees the workers sitting around playing cards. No one's working. He bangs on the bus window in vain.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Russ sneaks over to the TIME CLOCK. This is where the workers punch in and out of their work shifts.

Making sure no one's looking, Russ turns the hands of the clock BACK AN HOUR hoping to get an extra hour of work out of the crew. He turns to discover LANCE standing behind him.

RUSS (V.O.)

...I really needed to decompress.

FROM LANCE'S POV - 13 YEAR OLD RUSS looks up at him sheepishly.

Lance makes a move, scaring 13 year old Russ away.

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

The team's first WRESTLING MEET is underway.

OLIVER circles an opponent on the mat. Russ, Jo and the other kids cheer him on.

JO (V.O.)

How's school going for you? I'm sure  
you're doing great.

Oliver uses the HALF NELSON move Nicole taught him to take down his opponent. Pins him to the mat. One, two, three! Oliver jumps up. Victorious.

Returns to the bench to excited claps on the back from everybody EXCEPT HANNIGAN. Sits down next to Nicole.

JO (V.O.) (cont'd)

We can't wait to hear all your stories.

Russ and Jo couldn't look more proud. JO WATCHES AS NICOLE HUGS OLIVER. Oliver freezes - deer in the headlights.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Russ heads into the SENIOR BOYS BATHROOM.

RUSS (V.O.)

We've got a few doozies for you ourselves.

INT. BOYS BATHROOM - DAY

Russ walks in. He stops short.

RUSS (V.O.)

Let's just say we're really enjoying  
soaking up the local culture...

REVEAL - A group of BURN-OUT SENIORS are smoking and eyeing Russ. Russ has unwittingly walked into the Lion's Den. Russ makes some kind of NERVOUS COMMENT to the Burn-outs.

They exchange looks - Russ has given them an idea.

RUSS (V.O.) (cont'd)  
...and meeting all the natives.

The Burn-outs grab Russ and pull him out of frame.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. BOY'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Burn-outs hold Russ up by his legs, giving him a "swirly" - shoving his head into the toilet bowl.

They toss him aside, laughing. Russ stumbles up to one of the sinks. Looks at his dripping, miserable 13-year-old reflection.

RUSS (V.O.)  
Although I could really do without all  
this humidity.

EXT. BLEACHERS - DAY

We find JO hanging with Paul and some cool kids, including the Kates. Paul is PAINTING Jo's arm with a HENNA TATTOO. He's got one of his own, too.

JO (V.O.)  
Thanks for being such a good sport, Oliver.  
Your Dad and I really needed to do this.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - Russ is watching this, hair still dripping from his swirly. He looks bitter.

JO (V.O.) (cont'd)  
We think about you every day, honey.  
Aloha, sweetheart... Love, Mom and Dad.

END MONTAGE

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Russ, his hair and shirt still wet, walks through the hallway with Mr. Spinelli, pleading his case.

RUSS  
...But an F? Mr. Spinelli, The Teapot  
Dome Scandal will NEVER come up in adult  
conversation.

MR. SPINELLI  
You don't know that.



RUSS

YES I do!

They stop in front of their lockers. Jo is there getting books.

MR. SPINELLI

(referring to Jo)

You should study with your cousin Janet.  
She aced it.

Spinelli walks away, leaving Russ stewing. Oliver steps up behind him. He's looking a little sharper these days, carrying himself more confidently. He notices Russ' wet hair.

OLIVER

Dude, what happened to you?

RUSS

I foolishly used the word "swirly" in the senior bathroom.

OLIVER

You know, you really make things harder on yourself that way. I see what you do. You're your own worst enemy.

Russ is surprised by this insight from his son.

RUSS

(confessing)

I can't help it. I get nervous... I just start talking and eventually something stupid comes out. I've done it my whole life.

OLIVER

I think guys like us have to put ourselves out there more. Take action. Like... you know what I'm going to do? I heard on the field trip it's this tradition that somebody hangs the school flag from some crazy place in the middle of the night.

RUSS

Really?

OLIVER

This year I'M going to do it.

RUSS

(shaking his head)

No, no, no...

OLIVER

Yeah, I'm like the last guy in the whole school anybody would expect to do something like that.

RUSS

(back in full parental mode)

All right, first of all, it's against the law. Second, they have curfews for a reason. The last thing you should be doing is trekking all over Boston unsupervised. That's dangerous.

OLIVER

(shrugging it off)

Dude, you worry too much.

Jo joins them. Holds up a French quiz.

JO

(giddy)

Another A! I can't believe how quickly my French came back.

RUSS

Brain.

The school bell rings.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Russ, Jo and Oliver are eating lunch with the Kates and a few others. Paul slumps into a seat next to them. He's bumming.

OLIVER

What's the matter with you?

PAUL

The party's not happening. My Dad got laid off.

JO

Oh Paul, that's terrible.

PAUL

I know, that party was going to rule.

Beat. Oliver's eyes light up.

OLIVER

I'll have the party.

Russ and Jo turn to look at him. What? Oliver's brimming over with confidence.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
Yeah, it'll be awesome!  
(to Russ)  
I'm the last person anybody would expect to have a party, right?

Word quickly spreads around the table. "Oliver's having a party..." "Cool!" Russ looks at Jo, panicked.

RUSS  
(how does he quash this?)  
I don't know, would your parents really want you to do that while they're away?

OLIVER  
Duh! Of course not! If they were here my Dad would be all like...  
(doing a Russ impression)  
"I don't like the idea of you having a party, Oliver."  
(doing a Jo impression)  
"Yes honey, why don't we do something just the three of us."

Russ and Jo blanch at Oliver's impressions of them.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
No dudes, the PARTY is ON! Spread the word!

The table of kids cheer, including Jo. Oliver high fives with Paul. Gets up and walks away. He gives them a BACKHANDED NO LOOK WAVE. Russ gives Jo a disapproving look.

INT. STARBUCKS COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Russ, Jo and Poppy are in mid-conversation at a small table in this bustling Starbucks.

RUSS  
...I'm sorry, I do not like the idea of a party. Not when we still look like children.

POPPY  
Come on... Every kid needs to throw a party at some point. It's a rite of passage.  
(beat)  
Have some faith in your son. If you don't trust him, how is he ever going to trust himself?

RUSS

I have faith in him. It's the rest of the world I don't trust.

Russ looks to Jo for back up. She says nothing.

POPPY

Look how confident he's getting.

RUSS

There's a difference between being confident and being out of control.

(to Jo/making his point)

I mean, he's talking about sneaking out of hotels and running around Boston at all hours of the night with a flag.

JO

Yeah, I know about that.

RUSS

You knew about that and you didn't tell me?

JO

It's an Emerson tradition.

Russ turns back to Poppy.

RUSS

Do you see, this is what I'm talking about! She's losing her mind. I'm going to lose my job. Enough is enough. You have to change us back.

A couple of PATRONS sitting nearby take notice of Russ.

POPPY

I can't. You'll be changed back when the next full moon rises. "From full moon to..."

RUSS

(cutting him off)

I know, I know... There must be SOMETHING you can do NOW. Tonight!

JO

No. I'm not ready.

Russ is shocked by her reaction.

RUSS

What?

POPPY

(taking his cue)

You know, as much fun as this is I really should get home and meet the boy. See you tonight.

Poppy walks out, leaving Russ and Jo alone. Russ glares at Jo.

JO

(explaining)

I haven't been this close to Oliver since he was five. I mean, he thinks I'm cool.

RUSS

He thinks you're thirteen! He doesn't know who you are. We can't parent him if we're kids.

JO

That's not true. I'm helping him.

RUSS

Right, by hanging out with the COOL crowd. That's not what he needs.

JO

Oh, and you know what our son needs better than I do?

The nearby patrons look at Russ and Jo, perplexed. Son?!

RUSS

Yes, I do. Because I've lived it. I'm living it all over again!

JO

I think Oliver throwing a party, or for that matter going on a field trip to Boston, is not the end of the world. He seems HAPPY to me.

RUSS

Of course he SEEMS happy to you. Everybody SEEMS happy in the popular clique. But it never lasts. Sooner or later they're going to dump him.

JO

(defensive)

Hey, just because some kids did that to you doesn't mean these kids are going to do that to Oliver. They're not like that.

RUSS

Well, I'm glad you have so much faith in your little cheerleader friends.

JO

Do you know how long it's been since I've had girlfriends? ACTUAL girlfriends. Not women I work with. Not the MOTHERS OF MASSACHUSETTS. Just girlfriends who talk about... stupid girl stuff. I know YOU don't think it's important, but it's important to me.

(beat)

Besides, it's refreshing to be around people who are actually positive, who aren't constantly waiting for the other shoe to drop.

RUSS

(sarcastic/dismissive)

Really, because I thought all they talked about were shoes.

Jo turns to walk out. Stops in the doorway and turns back. By now, they've attracted everybody's attention.

JO

You know what, you were right. I wouldn't have looked twice at you in junior high.

RUSS

(sarcastic)

Oo, what does that mean? You're breaking up with me?

FROM THE PATRONS' POV - They see 13 YEAR OLD JO in the doorway.

13 YEAR OLD JO

I can't break up with you. We're not even GOING OUT!

She walks off in a huff. 13 year old Russ goes after her.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

(yelling from the doorway)

That's right. Because we're MARRIED!

Beat. Russ looks back. EVERYBODY IN STARBUCKS stares at him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEWLANDER HOME - NIGHT

Throngs of kids move in and out of the Newlander home. The dull thud of music emanates from inside the house. Oliver's party is in full swing, and it looks pretty wild.

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - NIGHT

In the LIVING ROOM there are kids dancing. The DINING ROOM table is covered with a mess of chips, dip and soda.

OLIVER is at the DJ table. He CRANKS the volume on the stereo. Everybody cheers, including JO who is dancing with the three Kates.

We find RUSS pushing through the crowded UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. He passes NICOLE talking to a couple of friends.

Russ opens the door to

HIS MASTER BEDROOM and discovers a GROUP OF KIDS SMOKING.

RUSS

Are you kidding me? In the bedroom?  
Let's go... Out. All of you...

NICOLE steps over to see what's going on.

From NICOLE'S POV - she sees 13 YEAR OLD RUSS grab the cigarettes one by one out of their mouths.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

...You don't need these to look cool.

He gestures to Nicole.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS (cont'd)

Look at Nicole. She's the coolest one in  
this whole house and she's not smoking.

Nicole smiles, embarrassed by Russ' compliment. Russ pats her on the shoulder - she's a good kid - as he exits.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Russ walks down the stairs to discover kids dancing on their beautiful furniture. He looks over at Poppy, reclining comfortably in an easy chair.

RUSS

Will you do something?

POPPY

Hey kids!

(beat)

Take your shoes off.

They oblige - but keep dancing. Russ shakes his head. Walks away looking for more trouble.

ON JO - She's dancing with the Kates. She watches Oliver playing DJ. He's staring nervously ACROSS THE ROOM AT NICOLE. She walks over to him.

JO

Why don't you go talk to her?

OLIVER

I can't talk to girls...

JO

You talk to me. I'm a girl.

OLIVER

But that's totally different.

JO

(surprised)

It is?

OLIVER

(simply)

Yeah. You're my friend.

(beat)

It's just different. I'm comfortable with you.

Jo's heart fills.

JO

Why don't you show her the picture you drew.

OLIVER

Yeah...?

JO

(nods)

Dude... yeah.

Oliver smiles. Jo watches him go over and talk to Nicole. They walk upstairs.



EXT. NEWLANDER HOME - NIGHT

Hannigan pulls into frame with a couple of his buds. They're all on motorized scooters. He looks at the Newlander home from a distance. Jealous.

HANNIGAN

That's Newloser's party?

HANNIGAN'S PAL

Yeah, let's check it out.

HANNIGAN

No way.

HANNIGAN'S PAL

You sure. Nicole's gonna be there.

HANNIGAN

(looking insecure)

The last place I want to be is that kid's party. I don't remember giving him permission to become popular.

(menacing)

I think we're going to have to do something about that.

HANNIGAN'S PAL

(tired of this)

Whatever...

Hannigan's pal walks into the party. Pissed, Hannigan rides off.

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - OLIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Oliver is showing Nicole his room. He looks nervous. She looks at a framed picture of Oliver with his parents.

NICOLE

So where are your folks?

OLIVER

(doesn't want to talk about them)

Hawaii. I uh... I wanted to show you something...

He opens his desk drawer. Inside is the SKETCH OF NICOLE WEARING HER WRESTLING GEAR. He looks back at Nicole.

NICOLE

What is it?

OLIVER

Uh...

(closes the drawer)

Actually, I was hoping you could show me that flip move.

This is safer, familiar territory for Oliver.

NICOLE

Okay...

(grabbing Oliver's arm)

You gotta grab your opponent's forearm, twist, pull...

She pulls Oliver close to her as she demonstrates.

NICOLE (cont'd)

Then just use your weight and momentum to take him down.

She does just that, flipping Oliver over, onto his back on the bed. She then jumps on him, pinning him by putting her leg over his body.

Oliver looks up at Nicole, desperate to kiss her. In fact, he might just make a move, until...

His bedroom door bursts open. It's Russ.

NICOLE (cont'd)

Rich...?

Russ sees Oliver and Nicole on Oliver's bed.

RUSS

No, no, no, not with the door closed. I do not like the idea of you two being together like this.

Nicole is surprised. That sounded like Russ was jealous.

Russ grabs Oliver by the arm. Pulls him up and out of the room.

OLIVER

Dude...!

RUSS

We have to have "the talk."

OLIVER

What talk?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Russ sits with Oliver on the edge of the bed. In the background we hear the thump-thump of the party music.

RUSS  
(full lecture mode)  
...Now, a good-quality condom has a failure rate of about two percent...

From OLIVER'S POV, 13 YEAR OLD RUSS is giving the lecture.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
...That's why it's important to use them with a spermicidal...

OLIVER  
(cutting him off)  
Rich, why are you telling me this?

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
I'm trying to inform you about the importance of birth control.

OLIVER  
I know about condoms.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
All right Mr. Know-it-all, were you aware that they make condoms for women?

OLIVER  
They do?

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
Uh huh. It's called a Vaginal Pouch.

Oliver is taken aback by the concept, but he rolls with it. This is his buddy he's talking to after all.

OLIVER  
Really?

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
Mm hmm...

Suddenly, the door opens. A 13 YEAR OLD BOY pops his head in.

13 YEAR OLD BOY  
Hey, what are you guys talking about?

INT. FAMILY ROOM

The three Kates push Jo towards a WALK-IN CLOSET, giggling.

JO

(laughing)

What are you doing?! You guys....!

Kate opens the closet door and pushes Jo in.

KATE

Seven minutes in heaven time!

INSIDE THE CLOSET

Jo turns to find PAUL with a lustful look in his eyes.

JO

Paul...

PAUL

You're the coolest girl I've ever met.

She's feeling trapped, backing into the closet.

JO

That's really nice, but I'm not...

Too late. Paul grabs her and kisses her flush on the lips.  
Jo pushes him off, upset.

JO (cont'd)

Paul! What are you doing?!

PAUL

Don't worry. I'm not ready to hook up  
either.

(lustful)

I just want to make out.

He moves towards her with outstretched arms. She grabs a big  
down parka and puts it backwards over his arms, covering his  
face with the hood.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

A large group of 13 YEAR OLD BOYS crowd around the bed.

FROM THE BOYS' POV - 13 YEAR OLD RUSS is in mid sex talk.  
The boys listen intently. They don't want to know and yet  
they can't turn away.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

...That's nothing. Did you know urinary tract infections can spread from person to person? And that means you're in for burning, incessant urinating... and sometimes even a discharge.

The boys all cringe. "Ewww...!"

13 YEAR OLD BOY

(horrified)

How do you know all this stuff?

Russ smiles.

RUSS

Wait. It gets worse...

INT. FAMILY ROOM - INSIDE THE CLOSET

Paul's sitting down now. He's still got the coat on backwards but the hood is hanging down, revealing his face. He looks confused and vulnerable.

PAUL

But I thought... I thought you liked me.

JO

I do. I am so, so flattered. Trust me, if I were twenty years younger I'd be all over this.

That throws Paul. Jo thinks - how to put this?

JO (cont'd)

But we're star crossed lovers, Paul. Romeo and Juliet... Harold and Maude.

(he doesn't get the references)  
Bennifer. We're not meant to be.

PAUL

You're so romantic...

INT. HALLWAY

The sex talk breaks up. The boys file out of the bedroom, traumatized. Russ, on the other hand, is quite pleased with himself.

He walks past the hall closet. Sees movement underneath the door. Smiles like a cop about to make a collar.

Opens the door.

RUSS

All right kids, playtime's ov...

Jo looks up at him. She's sitting on the floor with Paul. Russ' jaw drops. This is the last straw.

JO

It's not what you think...

RUSS

Uh huh. I think your seven minutes are up, HONEY.

He can hear rap music coming from downstairs. EMINEM. He turns to go.

JO

Where are you going?

RUSS

One of us has to be the parent.

Russ walks away. Jo follows him.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Everybody's dancing to Eminem. Russ walks over to the DJ table. Oliver is playing DJ again. That is, until...

RUSS PULLS THE PLUG ON THE EQUIPMENT.

The Eminem song spins down and stops. A COLLECTIVE GROAN from the kids. Nicole walks into the room with a Coke.

RUSS

I'm sorry, I don't think ANY of your parents would want you to be exposed to that man's "music."

OLIVER

Are you nuts? Eminem is AWESOME.

From NICOLE'S POV - She sees a confident 13 year old Russ take a stand on Eminem.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

No, he's not "AWESOME". He's a no-talent opportunist taking advantage of the fact that kids misinterpret foul language, violence and misogyny as "controversial."

Oliver and the other kids look at each other in stunned silence. Jo shakes her head, embarrassed.

RUSS

You guys wanna hear some awesome music?  
I'll play you some.

He pulls out a bunch of his OLD ALBUMS from a wall unit.  
Puts a record on the turntable.

The TALKING HEADS' "Once In A Lifetime" suddenly blares  
through the speakers. Russ starts doing his best David Byrne  
impression.

He's got all the STOP MAKING SENSE moves down pat - the  
karate chop on the arm, the exaggerated running-in-place, the  
big suit-jacket shoulder move, etc.

Russ thinks he looks cool, but the crowd of kids look at him  
like he's retarded. Including Oliver and Jo.

FROM OLIVER'S POV - We see 13 YEAR OLD RUSS slapping his  
forehead with his palm a la David Byrne.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS

(singing along)

"Same as it ever was! Same as it ever  
was..."

NICOLE, however, is taken with Russ' off the wall  
performance. She looks smitten. Turns to one of the Kates.

NICOLE

Isn't Rich amazing? He's so fearless.  
He SO doesn't care what other people  
think.

KATE

Yeah, I guess...

NICOLE

I think he likes me.

Kate grimaces. The rest of the kids agree with her. "Boo....!  
BOOO...!" Russ is suddenly pelted with food and drinks.  
Oliver comes to his rescue. Turns off the record and puts on  
some more hip-hop.

At the end of his rope, Russ walks out of the room, right past  
Nicole. Her head turns.

INT. THE GARAGE

Russ sits in the back seat of his BMW, sulking. The garage  
door opens. Nicole walks in.

FROM NICOLE'S POV - 13 YEAR OLD RUSS is sitting in the back of the Beemer. She opens the car door, surprising him.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
What are you...?

NICOLE  
I was hoping I'd find you here.

Nicole gets into the back seat with him. POWER LOCKS the doors.

INSIDE THE BMW - Nicole comes on strong. Russ looks nervous.

NICOLE (cont'd)  
You're so much more grown up than any of the other boys I know.

Russ shrinks into the corner from the seductive teen.

RUSS  
(panicking)  
No I'm not. I'm totally immature. All I care about is video games and Japanese animé and Lord of the Rings! I've never kissed a girl before!

NICOLE  
There's a first time for everything.

She moves towards him, he dives into the front seat.

RUSS  
Why don't we go back to the party.

NICOLE  
The party's right here!

Russ lands on the keyless remote, the CAR ALARM goes off. She tries to climb after him. Russ fumbles with the alarm remote. Accidentally hits the garage door opener.

RUSS  
(fending off Nicole)  
Stop! I haven't even gone through puberty yet!

That stops her. Really?

ANGLE ON OLIVER - He's in the driveway with a couple of kids.

FROM OLIVER'S POV - He sees Nicole on top of 13-year-old Russ in the Volvo. Oliver looks betrayed.



ON RUSS - He sees Oliver. Finally turns off the alarm.  
Clambers out of the car. Stops him on the front lawn.

RUSS (cont'd)  
Oliver, it's not what you think.

OLIVER  
Right. All night long you've just been  
trying to distract me so you could move in!

Kids from the party gather. Nicole climbs out of the car.

Oliver PUSHES Russ backwards. He's pissed. Word spreads  
quickly among the kids. FIGHT!

RUSS  
No, Oliver, that's not true. I didn't do  
anything.

A crowd has gathered around Russ and Oliver. Some of the  
boys egg on Oliver, "Hit him!"

OLIVER  
Oh yeah? What are you doing in the car  
with her then?!

Oliver takes a swing at Russ. Russ ducks. Jo runs up next  
to Nicole.

JO  
Oliver, stop it!

Oliver chases after Russ, taking swings at him. Russ ducks  
them, not fighting back.

FROM OLIVER'S POV - 13 YEAR OLD RUSS looks like he's in over  
his head.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
I'm not going to fight you Oliver.

OLIVER  
Why not? Afraid I'll kick your ass?!

Russ stops. Serious.

13 YEAR OLD RUSS  
If I hit you, I'll scar you for life.

THWACK! Oliver punches Russ. The crowd of kids cheer.

ON RUSS - Lying on the grass holding his nose.

RUSS  
(to himself)  
Nice jab.

Nicole yells to Oliver.

NICOLE  
(worried for Russ)  
Oliver leave him alone. He hasn't even  
gone through puberty yet!

Everybody looks at Russ, "Oh really?!"

ON FRONT DOOR - Poppy steps out and sees what's going on.

POPPY  
Good lord...!

Oliver sits on top of Russ, arm cocked. Poised to deliver  
the killer blow.

OLIVER  
I was the one who told you about her.  
I've liked Nicole for... for...  
forever...!

RUSS  
Oliver, I'm sorry...

Oliver looks down at Russ. Looks over to see NICOLE WALKING  
AWAY, shaking her head.

Oliver gets up off of Russ. Runs away, pushing past Jo.

Suddenly, a POLICE SIREN blazes. Two COP CARS pull up.  
Instantly, everybody runs for the hills.

INT. POPPY'S ROOM OVER THE GARAGE

The door opens and Oliver rushes into the room. He's shaken  
up from the fight. He sits down on Poppy's couch. Catches  
his breath. Regains his composure.

Looks down and notices the FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM sitting next to  
him. Oliver looks at the family photos. It's been a while  
now since he's seen his parents, and he's feeling alone.

He notices TWO PICTURES MISSING from a page. Odd.

Looks up and sees the pictures sticking out of the MAGIC BOX  
on Poppy's shelf. Oliver pulls out the pictures.

They're the PICTURES OF 13 YEAR OLD RUSS AND JO - the ones Poppy used to perform the magic. Oliver looks at the faces in the pictures. His eyes widen.

OLIVER STARTS PROCESSING... Looks at the BABY DOVE. Walks to the window. Looks down on the scene in his driveway.

FROM HIS POV - He sees 13 YEAR OLD RUSS AND JO arguing in the driveway. The same kids that are in the pictures!

OLIVER  
(shaking his head)  
No way. No way!

EXT. DRIVEWAY

The party is officially breaking up. A POLICE OFFICER hands Poppy a ticket.

POPPY  
Thank you officer. I'll make sure my son pays this as soon as he gets back.

Russ rolls his eyes. Great. The police car pulls away, leaving Russ and Jo in the driveway with Poppy.

RUSS  
I told you I didn't like the idea of a party. Now do you see why?

JO  
It's over now. Just relax... Where's Oliver?

INT. POPPY'S ROOM OVER THE GARAGE

Oliver looks at the pictures of Russ and Jo at thirteen, stunned and overwhelmed. The door opens. It's Poppy.

POPPY  
There you are... What are you doing up here all alone?

Oliver shoves the pictures in Poppy's face.

OLIVER  
They're my parents! MY PARENTS!

POPPY  
I guess you figured out my best trick, huh?

OLIVER

TRICK?! I can't believe this?! How could you?

POPPY

(explaining)

Your folks wanted to be with you all the time, so I figured I'd show them exactly what that would mean.

OLIVER

And you didn't think that maybe I'D have a problem with that?!

POPPY

I was thinking big picture.

OLIVER

I thought you were on my side. You think I need them looking after me all the time?

POPPY

No, of course not. Oliver this isn't about you. It's about your Mom and Dad.

Oliver shakes his head. It's really sinking in.

OLIVER

All this time they've been going to school with me...!

(freaking out)

Oh my God! Oh my God!

POPPY

Oliver, everything will be back to normal tomorrow night. I promise.

OLIVER

(still freaking)

I can't go back there. I can't go back to that school.

POPPY

What are you talking about? Of course you can. You're doing great there. You've got all these new friends.

OLIVER

Yeah, friends my PARENTS made for me!

POPPY

That's not true.

OLIVER

How do you know?

POPPY

Because I know YOU. Do you think Nicole and Paul and all those kids are stupid? They're not. Like I said, don't hold back. You just keep being YOU and see what happens.

Oliver's not buying it. He's too upset.

OLIVER

They're never going to change.

POPPY

You don't know that, kiddo.

OLIVER

Yeah, I do. And I can't take it anymore.

The moment is broken by Russ, yelling from the foot of the stairs.

RUSS (O.S.)

Yo Oliver... you up there, dude?

Oliver grits his teeth at the word "dude". Looks at Poppy with newfound determination.

OLIVER

They're like this till tomorrow night?

POPPY

When the full moon rises.

OLIVER

(scheming)

Good. Don't tell them I know yet.

Poppy smiles. That's my boy.

INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Oliver packs a bunch of clothes into a large duffel bag. Walks over to his desk and grabs ALL OF HIS SKETCHBOOKS. Packs them as well. He looks resigned.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EMERSON JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL - EARLY MORNING

The sun hasn't fully risen yet. A JANITOR unlocks the front door of the school. Oliver is there, waiting to be let in.

He walks past the Janitor, giving him a NO LOOK BACKHANDED WAVE. A man with a plan.

JUMP CUT TO:

A ROW OF LOCKERS IN THE EMPTY HALLWAY

CLOSE ON - HANDS popping the combination dial off one of the locker doors and busting it open.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALL - LATER

Kids arrive with their parents. They've got overnight bags, backpacks. It's the day of the big field trip and parents are here to see off their kids.

Russ and Jo enter, carrying overnight bags.

Coach McCusker and Mr. Spinelli, the field trip chaperones, try to organize everybody.

COACH MCCUSKER

...If we don't have a permission slip,  
you're not getting on the bus.

(singling out Russ)

That means you, Blue Bonnet.

Russ gets in McCusker's face. He's had enough.

RUSS

Land O'Lakes! The name is Richard Land  
O'Lakes!

He and Jo walk to their side by side lockers. They open them and suddenly the school ALARM SOUNDS startling everybody.

SECURITY OFFICER (O.S.)

(through a bullhorn/menacing)

Step away from the lockers.

Russ and Jo turn to find SECURITY GUARDS AND LOCAL POLICE OFFICERS filling the halls, surrounding them. Parents and kids watch in shock and horror as the guards and officers zero in on Russ and Jo.

RUSS

Wait...

JO

What's going on?

The Security officer has his bullhorn in their face.

SECURITY OFFICER  
(more bullhorn)  
Step away from the lockers.

They do so, instinctively putting their hands in the air.  
The officer moves in tactically and pops open the lockers.

REVEAL - Both lockers are full of BEER and CIGARETTES.  
There's an audible gasp from EVERYONE. Russ and Jo are shocked.

SECURITY OFFICER (cont'd)  
(into his walkie-talkie)  
That's an affirmative on the contraband.  
(to Russ and Jo)  
Let's go.

He starts muscling them down the hall. McCusker is amused.

RUSS  
But that's not our...

SECURITY OFFICER  
Save it for the Principal!

As they pass, parents pull their kids protectively away from them, as if their delinquency could rub off. The M.O.M. Members gossip.

M.O.M. MEMBER #1  
(whispering to Mom #2)  
They're TRANSFER students...

They pass the Kates, who flash judgemental looks at Jo.

JO  
This is a mix-up... That stuff's not mine!

KATE  
How could you?

KATIE  
(disapproving)  
We're ROLE MODELS, Janet.

JO  
I'm a role model, I am!

CAITLIN  
(shaking her head)  
WE get high on EMERSON High.

The security guards pull Jo away from them.

JO  
(calling back)  
Kate... Katie... Caitlin!

PAUL watches all of this from his locker as well, feeling for his friend "Janet."

The guards move Russ and Jo down the hall and into

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Russ and Jo enter to find Oliver sitting with the Principal.  
The door is ajar.

RUSS AND JO  
Oliver...?!

Oliver looks up at them oh so earnestly.

OLIVER  
I'm sorry guys. I was morally obligated.

The Principal pats his hand - he's doing the right thing.

PRINCIPAL  
(to Russ and Jo)  
I hope you realize how serious this  
offense is.

RUSS  
There's been a complete misunderstanding.  
Somebody put that stuff in our lockers.

PRINCIPAL  
Oh really... Who?

Russ and Jo look at Oliver. He doesn't bat an eye.

JO  
I don't know.

From the outer office, M.O.M. MEMBER #3 eavesdrops as she Xeroxes packets for the field trip.

OLIVER  
(to Russ and Jo)  
I think we should just tell the truth...



They look at their son - what is he talking about? Oliver takes a breath.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
(confessing)  
My parents bought it for them.

Russ and Jo's eyes widen.

RUSS  
What? No! That's not true!

JO  
(desperate)  
They would NEVER... not for minors...

Principal Wright looks at Oliver in disbelief.

OLIVER  
That's right...  
(pointed)  
Russ and Jo Newlander.

Oliver looks right at Russ and Jo when he says their names. The jig is up. He knows who they are.

JO  
Oliver, we...

RUSS  
Don't do this...

Jo looks over and spots M.O.M. Member #3 standing outside the office. She's overheard the damning news. Jo shakes her head, it's not true.

The mom takes out a laminated card, dials her phone and gossips away.

JO  
Good God, not the phone tree!

OLIVER  
(acting)  
You don't have to cover for them.  
(to the Principal)  
Mom and Dad do things like this all the time.

PRINCIPAL  
Well let's call the Newlanders in and see what they have to say.

OLIVER  
(casual)  
Oh they're out of town...

PRINCIPAL  
Out of town? They left you?

RUSS  
Hold on a minute...

JO  
They didn't LEAVE him.

OLIVER  
(cutting them off)  
I think they're in Hawaii this time.

PRINCIPAL  
This time?

OLIVER  
They're very adventurous. Hawaii is  
their biggest ADVENTURE yet.

JO  
Oliver's in the care of a very  
responsible family member!

RUSS  
Principal Wright, the Newlanders are  
upstanding parents and citizens! Russ  
served on the Chenry Board of Education  
for the last five years.

PRINCIPAL  
(relishing this)  
Well, he's not going to be serving on the  
EMERSON Board, that's for sure.

Just then the Principal's secretary buzzes him.

SECRETARY (O.S.)  
The Superintendent is on line one...

PRINCIPAL  
Speak of the devil.

Russ' eyes widen - his endorsement!

SECRETARY (O.S.)  
...He wants to hear the details about the  
drug bust.

RUSS

It wasn't a drug bust. It was cigarettes  
and booze!

Not the best defense.

PRINCIPAL

(with a big smile)

Excuse me, I HAVE to take this.

Russ sinks back in his seat. Not the Board! The Principal  
exits, closing the door behind him to take the call outside.

RUSS

Oliver... I know you're upset...

OLIVER

No. Don't talk to me.

JO

Let us explain...

OLIVER

There's nothing to explain. You totally  
messed up my life, now I'm totally  
messing up yours. See how you like it.

Principal Wright returns, interrupting them.

PRINCIPAL

(entering)

Oliver, in light of your honesty I've  
decided to let you go on the field trip.  
The bus is waiting.

OLIVER

Thanks Principal Wright.

Oliver scoots out with a satisfied glare for Russ and Jo.  
Turns back to them from the doorway.

OLIVER (cont'd)

Hey Rich, Janet... Nice knowing you.

Oliver leaves. Russ and Jo share a look - what did THAT mean?  
Russ gets up to go after him.

PRINCIPAL.

Hold on there Mister! Where do you think  
you're going?

Principal Wright gestures for him to take a seat. Russ sits  
back down.

PRINCIPAL

You two can forget about the field trip.  
You're suspended. And permanently barred  
from the wrestling team and the  
cheerleading squad.

BOOM! The door bursts open. It's Paul.

PAUL

Principal Wright, it was all my fault!  
(valiant)  
She was hiding the beer and cigarettes  
for me! Janet is innocent. Innocent...  
and beautiful...  
(looking at Russ)  
Oh, and what's-his-name didn't do  
anything either.

RUSS

Rich!

JO

Paul, that's so, so sweet. Go to Boston.  
Forget about me. I'm not the girl you  
think I am.

RUSS

THAT'S for sure.

PRINCIPAL

(dismissing Paul)  
Thank you Paul. Nice try.

Paul leaves, disappointed. Principal Wright turns to Russ  
and Jo.

PRINCIPAL (cont'd)

Now... who can I call?

EXT. SCHOOL

A tour bus idles. Kids say good-bye to their parents, climb  
aboard.

INSIDE THE BUS - COACH MCCUSKER and MR. SPINELLI, the  
chaperones, are pairing up roommates and going over the rules  
of the trip.

COACH MCCUSKER

(mid-speech)

...Kate and Katie, you'll be sharing a  
room...

Oliver climbs on, dragging a HUGE duffel bag behind him.

COACH MCCUSKER (cont'd)  
Newlander, you call that a carry-on?  
You'll be rooming with Paul...

Oliver nods. Finds a seat, stowing the duffel bag underneath his feet.

SPINELLI  
And listen up people, I want to make one thing perfectly clear. We are going on this trip to discover the wonders of the Freedom Trail, not to discover the hotel game room, bar or indoor swimming pool.

Excited chatter among the kids - a pool!

Oliver spots Nicole, the Kates and some other kids sitting in the back of the bus. Paul is the last one on the bus. He sits down next to Oliver.

As the bus pulls away, parents wave good-bye. Among them we overhear two M.O.M. Members mid-gossip. The news is clearly spreading fast.

M.O.M. MEMBER #1  
...I wonder if that's what she meant by "special" brownies.

M.O.M. Member #2 laughs.

INSIDE THE BUS

Oliver smiles as the bus drives away from the school.

OLIVER  
Bye bye Emerson...

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

Russ and Jo are still here, but Poppy is with them now. Poppy and the principal are mid-conversation.

POPPY  
...Don't you worry Principal Wright, as their grandfather I'm going to make sure these two are punished accordingly.  
(scolding Russ)  
No Atari for you, young man.

Russ is hating this.

RUSS  
(antsy)  
Are we done?

POPPY  
(enjoying this)  
Not quite. What do you two have to say  
for yourself?

Russ and Jo look at each other. This is humiliating.

RUSS AND JO  
Sorry Principal Wright.

Poppy puts an arm around each of them, ushers them out.

POPPY  
(aside to the principal)  
He always was a problem child.

INT. NEWLANDER HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Russ, Jo and Poppy enter the house together. Jo goes  
upstairs. Russ and Poppy head into the KITCHEN.

RUSS  
It's ironic, when I actually was a kid,  
you never came down to the school.

POPPY  
I didn't?

Russ shakes his head. No, you didn't.

RUSS  
How is it that you can be so involved in  
Oliver's life when you were never  
involved in mine?

Beat.

POPPY  
(confessing)  
I'm involved in Oliver's life BECAUSE I  
wasn't involved in yours.

Russ takes that in. Suddenly...

JO (O.S.)  
(yelling from upstairs)  
Russ...! Come here!

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM

Russ and Poppy enter to find Jo looking panicked.

JO  
I think Oliver's running away.

RUSS  
What?

JO  
That's why he said 'nice knowing you.'  
His room's half empty...

RUSS  
Yeah, but...

JO  
And I found this.

Jo hands a computer print-out to Russ. It's a CONFIRMATION E-MAIL for a ticket purchase from CARNIVAL CRUISES.

RUSS  
Oh my God.

Russ glares at Poppy. Hands him the e-mail.

RUSS (cont'd)  
(accusatory)  
Was this part of your plan?

POPPY  
No. Of course not.

Russ and Jo push past him, rush out of the room.

EXT. NEWLANDER HOME

Russ and Jo burst out of the house, hurrying to their Volvo.  
Poppy calls after them.

POPPY  
Wait...! Think about what you're doing!  
This is all going to be over tonight!  
From full moon to full moon!

RUSS  
Stay out of this Dad. You've done  
enough!

They hop into the car and peel out of the driveway. Poppy  
watches them speed away.

EXT. HIGHWAY 90 - DAY

Russ and Jo's car swerves in and out of the busy freeway traffic, racing towards Boston.

INT. RUSS AND JO'S VOLVO

Russ is driving, Jo in the passenger seat. She's looking at the weather section of the newspaper.

JO

...says here sunset is at 7:52 PM, moon  
rise is at 8:31.

Russ nods - 8:30.

JO (cont'd)

(guilty)

This is all our fault. We drove him  
away.

RUSS

Not if I can help it.

He cuts into the faster moving left lane.

JO

Russ, we're trying to keep some semblance  
of a low profile here.

INTERCUT WITH - HIGHWAY PATROL CAR

The patrol car pulls up alongside Russ and Jo.

FROM THE POLICEMAN'S POV - He sees 13 year old Russ driving  
13 year old Jo. The Volvo swerves into another lane.

POLICEMAN

Holy mother...!

He hits his lights and sirens.

Russ tenses up. Pulls the car over. The cop walks up and  
taps at the window.

POLICEMAN (cont'd)

Let's go... out of the car.

RUSS

(to Jo)

Let me handle this...

Russ and Jo get out of the car.



RUSS (cont'd)  
Officer, this isn't what it looks like.  
Uh...

(beat)  
You see, my Dad cast this magic spell on  
us...

Jo rolls her eyes.

POLICEMAN  
All right, that's enough Speed Racer.  
Stay by the car.

The cop walks back to his patrol car. Radios in the license plate information. Russ and Jo look around. What are they going to do?

They notice a large wooded area along the side of the freeway. And the cop isn't looking...

JO  
Come on...

They tear off into the woods. The cop looks up, but it's too late.

POLICEMAN  
Hey...!

They're gone.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Oliver and Paul sit next to each other. Hannigan and a couple of his buddies are in the seat behind them.

Paul is leafing through one of Oliver's sketchbooks. Drawings of kids from school, including the one of Nicole in her wrestling gear.

PAUL  
Dude, these are cool. You should publish a 'zine.

OLIVER  
Thanks.

Paul flips to a drawing of Poppy.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
That's my Grandfather. I'm going to live with him on a cruise ship.

PAUL

Sweet.

(beat/wistful)

Man, I wish Janet was here.

OLIVER

(grossed out)

Ugh, no you don't. Trust me.

Beat. Oliver overhears HANNIGAN and his BUDDIES conspiring in the seat behind him.

HANNIGAN

(mid-conversation)

...So after lights out, we wait a half hour, and then meet up in the alley outside the hotel.

Oliver looks at the SCHOOL FLAG hanging on the back wall of the bus. Hannigan notices Oliver eavesdropping. He shoves him in the back of the head.

HANNIGAN (cont'd)

Mind your own business, Newloser!

(to his buddies)

I'll get the flag off the bus.

(looking at Nicole)

This'll change her mind about me.

The bus comes to a halt in front of the BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIP. Mr. Spinelli looks more excited than anybody.

SPINELLI

Okay, sons and daughters of Liberty.

Who's ready for a "Tea Party"?!

Crickets. Spinelli fidgets.

COACH MCCUSKER

Move it!

The kids get up on command.

OUTSIDE THE BUS

The two-masted Colonial ship where the Boston Tea Party took place looms nearby.

Oliver steps off the bus behind Hannigan and his pals.

HANNIGAN'S BUDDY

So where are you going to hang the flag from?

HANNIGAN

I'm working on it.

Oliver looks up at the tall center mast towering over the ship. There's a CROW'S NEST at the top.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DAY

It's raining. Hard. Russ and Jo slog their way through the woods. No trail. No telling where they're going. Forging their own path through the thick brush. Miserable.

JO

(mocking him)

"My Dad cast a magic spell on us..."

RUSS

(sarcastic)

I'm sure Paul would have come up with something really clever.

JO

Hey, at least HE'S hit puberty.

RUSS

I'm a LATE BLOOMER!

Suddenly, Russ and Jo hear a train whistle. They step out of the woods onto a set of train tracks. Up ahead they see a TRAIN STATION. And a train is approaching. They're saved!

JO

Thank God.

Russ and Jo run to the station.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BOSTON HOTEL - DUSK

The rain has stopped as the sun sets behind this luxury downtown hotel.

INT. HOTEL BAR

Mr. Spinelli and Coach McCusker are trying to pick up a pair of 20-something HONEYS. Actually, it's McCusker making most of the effort.

COACH MCCUSKER

(mid war story)

...so I'm lying there with four hundred pounds of bench press on top of me, no spotter in sight, and I say to myself, McCusker... nobody's gettin' you out of this but you. Know what I did?

Honey #1 shakes her head No.

COACH MCCUSKER (cont'd)

I used my abs.

(has Honey #1 feel his six pack)

200 crunches a day finally paid off.

The girls are impressed. Spinelli just rolls his eyes and downs his drink.

HONEY #2

So what do you guys do for a living?

COACH MCCUSKER

Professional bodybuilder.

(referring to Spinelli)

This is my trainer.

SPINELLI

We're high school teachers on a field trip.

McCusker deflates. Looks at Spinelli - You're killing me!

IN THE BACKGROUND - We can see RUSS AND JO sneak past them as they enter the hotel. They walk over to the FRONT DESK.

HONEY #1

So where are your students?

COACH MCCUSKER

(trying the sensitive tack)

My kids? They're already getting their rest for the big day tomorrow. Tucked each and every one of them in myself, bless their innocent hearts.

Neither Honey is impressed.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - INDOOR SWIMMING POOL

It looks like half the eighth grade has overtaken the pool. Hannigan and his buddies are in a corner.

A group of ADULTS are lounging in a nearby hot tub, trying to ignore all the kids splashing and yelling.

Oliver, Nicole, Paul, the Kates and a few other kids are goofing around in the pool. Everybody's having a great time, chaperone-free.

Oliver and Nicole make eye contact. Nicole smiles at him. Oliver swims over to her.

OLIVER

(awkward)

Hey...

NICOLE

Hey...

(beat)

I had a great time at your party last night. No one's ever gotten into a fight over me before.

Oliver smiles.

ON HANNIGAN - He watches Oliver and Nicole talking. Jealous.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Russ and Jo stand outside Oliver's hotel room. Russ is about to knock.

JO

Wait. Maybe we shouldn't be doing this.  
I don't want to make things worse.

RUSS

(looks at his watch)

It's only 7:55. No one's going to see Oliver's parents talking to him. Just his "friends."

Jo nods. Russ knocks on the door.

RUSS (cont'd)

Oliver...

No answer. Russ uses the key-card and opens the door.

INSIDE OLIVER'S HOTEL ROOM

There's no sign of Oliver. Russ and Jo look around. Jo spots a SKETCHBOOK sitting on Oliver's bed. It's labeled "MOM AND DAD."

JO

Russ...

Slowly Jo leafs through the book. Russ leans over to see. They're both taken aback by the contents.

REVEAL - Page after page of 'Zine-ish comic book sketches of Russ and Jo at different stages of Oliver's life. The theme is the same in each -- overprotective parents overreacting to various life situations.

WE SEE A FEW SKETCHES AS RUSS TURNS THE PAGES -

- RUSS AND JO CAUSING A RIOT AND CLEARING THE BEACH (from the beginning of the movie). Their characters are drawn twice as big as any one else on the beach. They look imposing, and well, crazy.

- THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL - In this drawing, Oliver is racing from the car as Russ and Jo's OCTOPUS-LIKE ARMS stretch out of the car after him. The words, "What about our hug?!!!" are in a bubble coming from the car. Other kids laugh and point.

- 13 YEAR OLD RUSS AND JO EATING LUNCH WITH OLIVER - Oliver laughs with 13 year old Russ and Jo as they share a table in the cafeteria. However, looming behind 13 year old Russ and Jo are their crazed ADULT SELVES, reaching out towards their unsuspecting son.

Russ and Jo stare at Oliver's exaggerated drawings of them.

RUSS

I can't believe that's what we look like to him...

JO

I don't know... I think it's a pretty good likeness.

INT. HOTEL - INDOOR SWIMMING POOL

Hannigan swims over to Oliver and Nicole and grabs Oliver from behind.

HANNIGAN

Hey Nicole, is this loser bothering you?

NICOLE

Leave him alone, Hannigan.

HANNIGAN

I just want to show you he isn't as cool as he thinks he is.

NICOLE

I'm not into you, Hannigan. Okay? Get over it. Grow up already.

HANNIGAN

(ignoring her/to Oliver)

I heard you can't even swim. How 'bout we find out.

With that he dunks Oliver under the water. Oliver comes up sputtering.

HANNIGAN (cont'd)

What's that? You trying to say something? I can't hear you.

Hannigan dunks Oliver again.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Russ and Jo wait in front of the elevator. The doors open, revealing a MIRROR against the back wall of the elevator. They see their 13 YEAR OLD REFLECTIONS.

Russ and Jo get in the elevator, turning their backs to the mirror. The doors close on them.

EXT. POPPY'S ROOM OVER THE GARAGE - DUSK

Poppy stands on the stoop. Watching the SUNSET.

He cups the baby dove in his hand.

POPPY

Almost time, Penelope...

The sun finally DISAPPEARS below the horizon. Poppy looks back at the bird in his hand. IT'S BACK TO NORMAL. Poppy is shocked.

POPPY (cont'd)

What?! No, it's too soon!

Poppy runs into his room. Puts the bird in the cage. Finds his leather notebook and flips through it. Finds the trick. Reads aloud from the bottom of the page.

POPPY (cont'd)

"From full moon to full moon..."

There it is. In his notes. Beat. Poppy turns the page. Reads aloud from the top.

POPPY (cont'd)  
"...BUT...ENDING upon the SUNSET."  
(looking up/a horrible  
realization)  
Oh no...

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY OUTSIDE SWIMMING POOL

The elevator doors open to REVEAL Russ and Jo. Behind them, we see their ADULT REFLECTIONS in the elevator mirror. No more 13 year old reflections. The spell has worn off.

They get off the elevator. The doors close before they can see what has happened.

THEY'RE BACK TO THEIR ADULT SELVES BUT THEY DON'T REALIZE IT YET.

They walk over to a plate-glass window that looks into the pool area.

They peer through the window and discover Hannigan attacking Oliver.

Hannigan is still dunking Oliver. The other kids yell, even try to intervene, but Hannigan's buddies keep them at bay.

Jo is horrified. Russ glares. The pent up fury of his youth boiling over.

RUSS  
HANNIGAN...!

That's it. Russ springs into action.

JO  
What are you doing?

JUMP CUT TO:

A TRAIL OF RUSS' CLOTHES leading into the pool area. Like Superman, he strips as he moves towards the pool down to his tightie-whiteys.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL - INDOOR SWIMMING POOL

Oliver does a spin move in the water and suddenly pins Hannigan's arm behind his back. Hannigan looks shocked.

OLIVER  
This is for tearing up my sketchbook.



Oliver is about to punch him, when...

RUSS (O.S.)  
CANNON-BAAAAALLL....!

Oliver and Hannigan freeze in the water at the sound of Russ' voice. They look up to see...

RUSS, IN ALL HIS 35 YEAR OLD TIGHTIE-WHITIED GLORY, DOING A CANNONBALL INTO THE POOL. He descends in SLOW MOTION, coming down practically right on top of Hannigan and Oliver.

OLIVER  
Nooo!

All the kids look shocked. Even the ADULTS IN THE HOT TUB notice what's going on.

Hannigan desperately tries to get out of the way of the crazed ADULT RUSS.

SPLASH! Russ hits the water right next to Hannigan, sending Oliver under for a second.

Russ jumps up, grabs Hannigan before he can get away.

RUSS  
Where are you going, Hannigan?  
(menacing)  
I've got something for you...

Russ grabs the back of Hannigan's suit and HOISTS him out of the water.

RUSS (cont'd)  
Wedgie....!

Hannigan flails, completely freaked out.

HANNIGAN  
Aaahhh! Let me go! Let me go!

Oliver surfaces at the edge of the pool, coughing up water. He tries to yell to his father, but he can't get the words out.

RUSS  
Let you go? Okay....!

With that, he dunks Hannigan under the water over and over.

RUSS (cont'd)  
(punctuating each dunk)  
This isn't... (DUNK) how we... (DUNK)  
impress girls!

Paul, Nicole and the other kids look horrified. Jo stands on the edge of the pool, cheering Russ on.

JO  
Woo....! Get him Rich!

The Adults in the hot tub look at Jo like she's crazy.

ON RUSS - He HANGS HANNIGAN FROM THE DIVING BOARD wedgie-style from his swim trunks. He holds his arms up, victorious.

RUSS  
Yeah!

Oliver finally clears the water out of his lungs.

OLIVER  
DAD! STOP!

Russ and Jo freeze. A sudden realization.

They turn and see their ADULT REFLECTIONS in the GLASS WINDOW that lines the pool area. They're back to normal.

Russ and Jo turn to OLIVER, guilt-ridden.

OLIVER (cont'd)  
What are you doing?!

The kids start to laugh. Oliver flushes.

RUSS  
Oliver... I didn't realize... We  
thought...

He looks to Jo for help. She doesn't know what to say.

Oliver doesn't stick around to hear. He jumps out of the pool and races out of there.

JO  
Oliver...!

Russ and Jo hurry out of the pool after him, leaving a traumatized Hannigan hanging from the diving board. Russ drapes a towel around himself as he exits.

They catch up with Oliver in the HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE POOL.

JO (cont'd)  
Oliver stop...

Oliver wheels on them. Very emotional.

OLIVER  
No! You stop! YOU stop! Stop following me! Stop worrying about me all the time! Stop being so scared of EVERYTHING!

RUSS  
Ol, we didn't mean to...

OLIVER  
You never mean to do anything! I thought it was getting better for me at school. Like this time it might actually be different. I thought I had friends. Real friends. And then they turned out to be YOU!

Russ and Jo look at each other - finally realizing just how much they've hurt their son.

JO  
Oliver... we're so sorry...

OLIVER  
What are you even DOING here?

Russ and Jo look at each other.

JO  
We thought you were going to run away.

Beat. Oliver doesn't deny it.

OLIVER  
Can you blame me? You don't know what it's like.

JO  
(ironic)  
Actually, we have a better idea now.  
(beat)  
Oliver, everything we do, everything we've done is because we love you.

RUSS  
I don't know what we'd do if we ever lost you, Ol. Give us another chance.

Russ and Jo's words resonate with Oliver. Beat.

OLIVER

Just go home. Please. Go home.

Oliver walks off down the hall. Exits through a stairwell door. Russ and Jo watch him go.

One of the 14 year old students walks up behind them.

14 YEAR OLD BOY

Hey Mr. and Mrs. Newlander, I heard you could you score us some beer...

Off Russ and Jo...

INT. SCHOOL TOUR BUS - NIGHT

Oliver climbs on board the empty bus, seeking refuge from his parents. He slumps down in a seat, frustrated and angry.

He sits here for a minute - not sure what to do, where to go. Looks up at the SCHOOL FLAG which hangs on the back wall of the bus.

He stands up and pulls it down. An idea. Oliver looks determined.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Spinelli and McCusker are still sitting in the adjoining HOTEL BAR. By now, McCusker has passed out in his bowl of peanuts. Spinelli sits there, nursing a drink.

A SEXY FEMALE BARTENDER in her early 40's stands nearby, reading a newspaper.

SEXY BARTENDER

God, the way this administration is selling off our federally protected lands. It's total cronyism. Very Teapot Dome, don't you think...?

Spinelli looks up. Turns to the bartender. Has he finally met a woman who speaks his language?

SPINELLI

Yes, it is... What was your name again?

The Sexy Bartender smiles.

IN THE BACKGROUND, we see Paul, Nicole and the other kids sneak past Spinelli and OUT OF THE HOTEL.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE HOTEL - NIGHT

Paul, Nicole and a other 8th graders are gathered. There's confusion. "Where's Oliver?" "What are we doing here?"

OLIVER (O.S.)

Hey guys...

Everyone turns to see Oliver.

PAUL

Oliver, what's going on?

Oliver unfurls the SCHOOL FLAG.

OLIVER

I'M hanging the flag this year.

NERDY BOY

Dude, what about Hannigan?

WIMPY BOY

That was going to be his thing.

OLIVER

Not anymore.

Oliver holds the flag confidently. Nicole looks more surprised than anybody. Oliver starts walking away. The other kids exchange looks and then follow him.

HANNIGAN enters the frame. Ominously watches the group.

EXT. BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIP - NIGHT

Oliver and the kids hop the fence, one by one, that leads to the pier where the Tea Party ship is docked. The kids climb onto the

DECK OF THE SHIP. They look around. Cool.

Suddenly, HANNIGAN jumps out from behind the mast. He grabs the flag out of Oliver's hands.

HANNIGAN

I'll take that, Newloser.

(getting in Oliver's face)

Unless you're going to get Daddy to take it back.

Oliver looks Hannigan in the eyes. Everybody backs off.

Beat. Oliver backs away too. Hannigan smiles. Tips his head to Nicole. She glares back, disgusted. Hannigan turns to go.

OLIVER

Where are you going to hang it, Hannigan?

HANNIGAN

Not here, that's for sure.

OLIVER

I always knew you were a coward.

Hannigan freezes. Turns around slowly.

HANNIGAN

What'd you call me?

OLIVER

If you had any guts you'd hang it from the spot I picked.

Oliver points confidently up... Up the mast of the ship... All the way up to the CROW'S NEST. It's a lot higher than those ropes in the gym.

OLIVER (cont'd)

From there.

The kids look up in awe, daunted. Hannigan's eyes widen - uh oh.

OLIVER (cont'd)

But like I said... BIG - WUSSY - COWARD.

Hannigan pushes Oliver out of the way. Looks up at the crow's nest. At all the kids looking at him. He gulps. Starts climbing. Gets a couple of feet up. Stops. He looks nauseous and scared.

Hannigan drops back down to the deck.

HANNIGAN

I don't have to prove anything to you.

Oliver takes the flag out of Hannigan's hands. Grabs hold of the mast and starts climbing.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Russ and Jo are in the back of the cab, headed for the train station. They're quiet.

Russ turns. Looks at Jo.

RUSS

I can't believe he's a teenager. How did that happen?

JO

I know. I feel like I'm going to blink and he'll be gone.

Russ nods.

RUSS

(sweet)

Well you'll always have me.

Jo looks at her husband.

RUSS (cont'd)

You know I never told you... You were a pretty cute cheerleader.

Jo smiles.

RUSS (cont'd)

Seriously, we should get you one of those outfits.

JO

(teasing)

Well, I wish I could say the same about you as a wrestler.

RUSS

(laughs)

No, I have no business being on that mat. Oliver on the other hand... He knows what he's doing.

The moment is broken when Russ notices something out the window.

RUSS (cont'd)

Hey, is that...?!

REVEAL - They're driving right past the BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIP. Russ can see OLIVER CLIMBING UP THE SHIP'S MAST. He's got the school flag in his hand.

RUSS (cont'd)

(to the driver)

Pull over!

The taxi quickly pulls to a stop.

EXT. BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIP - NIGHT

ON OLIVER - He's halfway up the mast. The wind whistles off the sails. He looks down at the kids below. Big mistake.

He clings to the mast, the fear taking over him. In his head he hears his parents' voices...

RUSS (V.O.)  
It's too dangerous...

JO (V.O.)  
You're not up for that, buddy...

ON RUSS AND JO - They're standing next to the cab, looking up at Oliver.

JO (cont'd)  
(instinctive)  
Oh my God... Oliver...

She takes a step towards the ship. Russ stops her.

RUSS  
No. Let him do this.

Jo looks at Russ. Backs off. They both look up at Oliver.

ON OLIVER - He breathes in, gathering his resolve. Climbs on. Up... Up... till he crawls up into the Crow's Nest. A SHIP'S BELL is mounted here, as well as a flag pole.

Oliver ties the flag to the flag pole and RAISES IT HIGH OVER THE SHIP.

He rings the bell over and over. From the deck below, the KIDS CHEER.

OLIVER  
Woooo!!!

Oliver is over the moon. He did it!

Russ and Jo beam. Get back in the cab before he sees them. Letting Oliver have his moment for himself.

RUSS  
(to the cab driver)  
South station, please.

The cab pulls away.

Oliver climbs down the mast, an easier task than going up.



When he drops to the deck, he's surrounded by Paul, Nicole and the other kids. They pat him on the back. "Dude, insane!" "Way to go!"

Hannigan's buddies desert him. They congratulate Oliver too.

Hannigan fumes, looking crazed.

HANNIGAN

Hey, Newloser!

Ever the sore loser, Hannigan charges Oliver.

Using the move that Nicole taught him, Oliver quickly grabs Hannigan's arm. Pulls it forward and flips Hannigan.

Hannigan goes flying OVERBOARD. SPLASH! He lands in the water. The rest of the gang laughs at him.

Nicole hands Oliver a mocked-up crate of tea. It's tied to the ship with a long rope. Oliver tosses it down to Hannigan as a life preserver. Hannigan clings to it.

Game, set, match Oliver. Hannigan watches Oliver put an arm around Nicole as they walk away.

OLIVER

Thanks for teaching me that flip.

Nicole smiles at Oliver, smitten once again.

NICOLE

Any time.

One of the kids takes a picture of the school flag flying atop the Tea Party ship. They all walk down the gangplank.

OLIVER

Sorry about my folks, by the way. They can be a little... intense.

NICOLE

(all is forgiven)

Are you kidding, you should meet MY parents.

Oliver, Nicole and the gang head back to the hotel.

OLIVER

Oh, I've got something for you.

Oliver pulls a piece of paper out of his back pocket. Unfolds it to REVEAL his sketch of Nicole in her wrestling gear. He hands it to her.

Nicole blushes. Cool.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Oliver, Paul and the other kids quietly sneak back to their rooms. Wave good night to each other. Oliver stops Paul.

OLIVER

Hang on a sec...

Oliver enters the room expecting to find his parents waiting.

OLIVER (cont'd)

Mom...? Dad...?

The room is empty. Oliver's relieved.

OLIVER (cont'd)

(to Paul)

The coast's clear.

Paul walks in. On his pillow, a gift and note from Janet.

PAUL

(reading the note)

Janet's moving to Hawaii...

The last line of the note reads, "I won't forget you. Janet."

PAUL (cont'd)

I can't believe she followed me here.

Oliver smiles at the irony. Paul opens the gift. It's a T-shirt from the gift shop. The T-shirt reads, "One if by land, Two if by sea, THREE IF YOU'RE A HOTTIE!"

PAUL (cont'd)

(smiling)

Cool.

ON OLIVER - He's found a note on his pillow as well.

The note reads: "DEAR OLIVER... ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR TRIP. SEE YOU WHEN YOU GET HOME. LOVE YOU, MOM & DAD."

Oliver smiles. Freedom.

EXT. SOUTH STREET TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Russ and Jo get out of their cab and head into the train station. Bound for home.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Jo is on her cell phone, waiting to pick up her coffee order. A THIRTYSOMETHING WOMAN stands nearby, noticing the trendy, youthful clothes Jo is wearing.

JO

(into phone)

...what can I tell you, I'm not a magician. You hope it'll sell right out of the gate, but you've got an aggressive asking price. It might take TWO months, or more...

(listens, then)

...Well maybe you SHOULD get another agent if that's how you feel. Hello...?

The client has hung up. Jo puts her cellphone back in her purse. Catches the WOMAN looking at her.

JO (cont'd)

(re: the phone call)

Some people need to get a life.

The Woman smiles.

COFFEE ATTENDANT

Grande vanilla latte!

Jo and the Woman both reach for it. They smile at each other, embarrassed.

JO

You go ahead...

The woman takes the drink. Thanks.

WOMAN

That's a great blouse.

JO

(blushes)

Really? I thought it was a little young.

WOMAN

No, it totally works.

Jo smiles, appreciative. The woman finds a seat.

Jo notices two of the M.O.M. MEMBERS sitting nearby. They're clearly gossiping about Jo.

Jo gets her drink. Walks over to the snarky M.O.M. Members.  
She pulls out her PHONE TREE card and hands it to them.

JO

The Mothers of Massachusetts can find  
somebody else to judge.

Jo walks away. Looks for an open table, but they're all  
taken. The woman she was talking to earlier notices.  
Gestures for Jo to join her.

JO (cont'd)

Thanks.

She sits down.

JO (cont'd)

I'm Jo. Nice to meet you.

WOMAN

Kathy...

Jo smiles.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

As usual, Lance and the construction workers are sitting  
around, playing a game of poker. Lance wins the hand.  
Reaches out to collect his chips when...

Behind them, a FRONT LOADER/BACKHOE, its front bucket filled  
to the brim with a payload of dirt, rumbles up.

REVEAL - RUSS IS DRIVING THE FRONT LOADER. He DUMPS THE  
PAYLOAD OF DIRT on top of Lance and the crew, burying them.

Their heads pop out of the pile and they spit out dirt. Russ  
hops down from the front loader.

RUSS

Didn't expect that, huh! Did I get your  
attention?

Lance pulls himself out of the dirt pile, flustered and furious.

LANCE

What the hell do you think you're doing?

RUSS

Taking my son's advice.

Russ marches up to Lance. Gets right in his face.

RUSS (cont'd)

Here's the deal, Lance. This is your crew, that's fine. But if we're not back on schedule by Friday, I'm docking everyone's pay. With one exception. YOURS.

Lance backs up as Russ encroaches on him. Now Russ is the one who's intimidating.

RUSS (cont'd)

Then you can explain to "YOUR CREW" why they're getting screwed and you're not. If I'm going down, I'm taking you with me.

Lance trips, falls backwards and lands in a trough of WET CEMENT. His filthy crew steps up behind Russ. Lance looks up at them, suddenly feeling very small.

LANCE

(to construction crew)

What are you looking at? You heard the man. Get back to work! I want this facade done by the end of the day.

Russ smiles, victorious.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL - MR. SALOMON, standing nearby. He's watched everything. Russ walks up to him confidently.

RUSS

How's that for taking responsibility?  
Now give me my health insurance.

MR. SALOMON

You got it.

Russ smiles. Off Lance trying to extricate himself from the sticky cement...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EMERSON JR./SR. HIGH SCHOOL - LATE DAY

A bevy of parents wait outside the school for their kids to return from the Boston trip. RUSS, JO AND POPPY are all looking at Russ' BOARD OF EDUCATION CAMPAIGN POSTER.

REVEAL - Someone has defaced the picture of Russ by adding a cigarette to his mouth and a bottle of liquor to his "thumbs-up" hand. Poppy puts an arm around Russ.

POPPY

Kids... No respect, huh.

Russ smiles. The tour bus rolls up. The kids start piling off. Russ and Jo hold their breath, look for Oliver among the kids. Where is he? Where is he...? There, stepping off the bus.

JO  
(waving)  
Oliver...

Oliver waves back. Joins them. Russ and Jo give him a hug.

RUSS  
Hey bud... How was Boston?

OLIVER  
It was awesome.

JO  
It's amazing how much fun you can have when your parents aren't all up in your hood, huh.

OLIVER  
(shakes his head/amused)  
Your grill, Mom. Up in your grill.

Jo smiles, gives him a squeeze. Russ pats him on the back. Poppy steps in. Gives Oliver a bear hug.

POPPY  
Hey kiddo...

Oliver looks down. Sees Poppy's bags on the ground.

OLIVER  
You're going?

POPPY  
Not without saying goodbye to you first.  
Here... I got one last one for ya.

He holds out two closed fists to Oliver. Opens them to show they're empty. Then cups his two hands together, concentrating.

Beat. Poppy opens his hands to REVEAL Penelope, the dove. He hands her over to Oliver.

POPPY (cont'd)  
I thought you might want to take care of her while I'm gone. You two have a lot in common. She was never meant for a life at sea.

He nudges Oliver playfully.

OLIVER

Thanks Poppy.

Poppy pulls out the cage from behind him. Oliver puts the dove into it. Poppy picks up his bags. Russ turns to him.

RUSS

(genuine/emotional)

Thank you Dad... I don't know what to say.

POPPY

He's a good kid.

Russ nods.

POPPY (cont'd)

And so are you.

Poppy gives him a hug. Jo too. He starts walking towards a waiting car. REVEAL - It's the same convertible with the pair of geriatric LADY FRIENDS.

POPPY (cont'd)

(turning back/playful)

Hey Ol, don't do anything I wouldn't do.

OLIVER

(smiles)

You got it.

They watch him get in the car and drive off with a wave.

Paul walks over to them. He's wearing the T-shirt "Janet" gave him.

PAUL

Hey Oliver, are you coming?

OLIVER

(turns to his parents)

Can I sleep over at Paul's tonight?

(making his case)

He's having a bunch of kids over and his parents'll be there...

Russ and Jo look at each other. Smile.

RUSS

Sure...

(beat)

We trust you, Oliver.

Oliver smiles. Meanwhile, Jo catches Paul's eye.

JO

Cool shirt, Paul.

Paul looks at her. By pronouncing his T-shirt cool, Oliver's Mom has now made it officially un-cool.

PAUL

(whatever)

Yeah... thanks.

He walks away. Oliver runs after him. Like any boy his age, not even thinking about saying goodbye to his parents.

Russ and Jo exchange a look.

RUSS

And there he goes...

They watch him walk away. Beat. Oliver gives them a BACKHAND NO LOOK WAVE.

They melt. He loves them. Beat. Jo turns to Russ.

JO

Guess it's just you and me tonight.

Russ checks out the designer jeans she's wearing.

RUSS

Dude, those jeans are sweet...

JO

(coy)

Oh yeah? You trying to hook up with me?

Russ kisses Jo. Big.

They walk away, arm in arm, towards their car. Carrying the bird cage with them. PULL BACK AND...

FADE OUT.