

NEVER TOO LATE

by

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

LUCAS MANNING, fit for 70, with a graying, 'flattop' 1960's haircut craftily hiding a growing bald spot, sleeps on his king sized bed as the CRASH of a BREAKING BOTTLE jolts him awake.

Leaps out of bed in boxers and T-shirt, wrenching his back in the process. Hobbles to the window to catch sight of A BOY, 15, escaping into the darkness on a bike.

LUCAS
Juvenile delinquent.

Runs his hand over the window glass, FEELING FOR CRACKS LONG AGO REPAIRED.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

A modest, working class house with a manicured lawn and THORN BUSH circling the front. At the curb, Lucas sweeps up a broken pop bottle near his circa 1970 CHERRY RED SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG with racing stripes.

LUCAS
Rotten kids.

Heads back inside with a glance at his second story bedroom window.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

A teapot shrieks high boil on the stove. Lucas hastens to remove it with an oven mitt. Pours hot water into a tea mug. Reads a DO LIST posted on the refrigerator.

LUCAS
Straighten fence, wax car, fix leak
in bathroom.
(nods decisively)
Straighten fence.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

Sporting a tool belt, Lucas heaves a wooden fence up straight against a plumb line. Clutches his back in pain.

LUCAS

Damn back.

Sinks the pointy end of a support post into the ground against the fence. Whacks the top with a sledgehammer, knocking it out of line.

LUCAS

Son of a - -

Catches sight of a pregnant woman laboring down the sidewalk. Nods respectfully.

LUCAS

Good morning.

As a FED-X truck pulls to the curb.

DRIVER

(to Lucas)

Does a Lucas Manning live here?

LUCAS

That's me.

DRIVER

Registered letter. From Calgary.

LUCAS

Calgary?

(suspicious)

Who from?

DRIVER

I just deliver them. Sign here.

Lucas dons his bifocals, signs the waiver. Slices the letter open with a knife from his tool belt. Starts reading.

ETHAN (V.O.)

"Hi Lucas. Long time."

LUCAS

No shit.

EXT. BIG SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

ETHAN MANNING, 45, well-groomed in an expensive suit, hammers a FOR SALE sign on the sprawling lawn of a suburban mansion.

ETHAN (V.O.)

"How everything in Winnipeg? Real estate market here is crazy hot and my wife Janice and I need some time away. Which brings me to the point. How would you like to spend the summer with your grandson Jason? Good chance to get to know him before it's too late."

Sizing up the property, Ethan marches off to his vintage BMW, immaculate but for a DENTED FENDER.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE. FRONT LAWN - DAY

Lucas pauses from reading the letter.

LUCAS

(mutters)

Too late indeed.

Resumes reading.

ETHAN (V.O.)

"Included is a picture of Jason with that baseball bat you sent him for his first birthday. He loves it. Started playing soon as he was big enough to lift it. Mom says you don't e-mail or have a cell phone so I thought I'd write. Need an answer asap. Please call: 403 684 6317. Ethan."

Lucas removes a snapshot from the envelop: a cute JASON MANNING, age 12, hoisting a huge baseball bat.

NANCY (O.S.)

Hey neighbor.

Snipping roses in a gypsy skirt and blouse, NANCY NIELSON, 65, waves from next door.

NANCY

How's the fence straightening going?

LUCAS

(snapping to)

What?

NANCY

The fence?

LUCAS
Oh. It's coming.

NANCY
I see you got a letter.

Lucas stuffs it in his tool belt.

LUCAS
Ya.

NANCY
Good news, I hope.

LUCAS
Why not come over, read it for
yourself?

NANCY
(laughing it off)
That an invitation?

LUCAS
Well, better get back to it.

Lucas takes a mighty swing at the post, knocking it askew.

LUCAS
Son of a - -

Gives the fence a frustrated kick. Stomps off.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucas picks up his land line phone. Dials out.

INT. BOOK STORE - DAY

A CELL PHONE CHIMES on a stack of books titled, A LIFETIME OF OPPRESSION beside which MARTHA DEL A ROCHE, 65 and looking fifty in designer clothes and a low cut top, signs copies of her book at a well-attended book launch.

Hands one to a PLAIN WOMAN.

PLAIN WOMAN
You don't know how much
"Oppression" means to me, Ms. Del a
Roche. Means to us all.

MARTHA
You deserve it, Sister.

Martha surveys her exclusively female readership, pleased with her position and place. Pick up the phone.

MARTHA

Lucas, darling, did you get my book
I sent you?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - MARTHA AND LUCAS

Lucas glowers at his copy of A LIFETIME OF OPPRESSION, relegated to the function of a doorstop.

LUCAS

Ya, I got it. Look, Martha, I'm in
a bit of a quandary.

MARTHA

You? Not possible.

LUCAS

Just listen, can't you? Ethan and
his wife - -

MARTHA

Janice.

LUCAS

Right, Janice, want me to baby-sit
their - -

MARTHA

Jason.

LUCAS

Yes, Jason. Because they need some
'time away.' Can you believe it?
Haven't heard from the son of a - -

MARTHA

He's your son, Lucas.

LUCAS

I know he's my son. He's your son,
too.

MARTHA

Tell me about it - I carried him in
my womb for nine months, thank you
very much.

LUCAS

Forty-five years ago, Martha - get
over it.

MARTHA

There you go, marginalizing my experiences again.

Lucas rolls his eyes.

LUCAS

Look, this is not why I called.

MARTHA

So why did you?

LUCAS

Well, what do you think?

MARTHA

About what?

LUCAS

About what I just told you for Christ's sake.

MARTHA

When was the last time you saw them, Lucas? Jason, Ethan, Janice - your family.

LUCAS

And whose fault is that? He pretty much kicked me out of his house last time.

MARTHA

Well you shouldn't have criticized his parenting skills.

LUCAS

All I said was don't baby the kid.

MARTHA

He was six months old, Lucas.

LUCAS

I was referring to his general approach to child-rearing. Everyone's so goddamn sensitive these days. Anyway, if I do say yes to this summer with Jason deal - and I'm not saying I will - how about splitting the duties here? Half the time you, half the time me. You know, spell each other off a bit.

Martha signs a book for an OLD WOMAN in a walker.

MARTHA

(to old Woman)

Never say die.

(into the phone)

Out of the question, Lucas. Like I told Ethan, I'm booked solid. Did I mention landing a spot on Tanya Talks?

LUCAS

Tanya what's?

MARTHA

Talks. Only the most famous daytime talk show host in the entire mid-West. A huge potential market. Isn't that wonderful?

LUCAS

Fantastic, Martha, I'm overwhelmingly happy for you. And who gave you the right to use our personal, private photographs in your tawdry, tell-all book anyway?

Martha waves off a TIMID WOMAN clutching her book.

MARTHA

Not now, Sweetie.

(into the phone)

Those pictures are as much a part of my life as yours, Ex-husband of mine. You can't disenfranchise me of that, too. Which reminds me, where's this month's cheque?

Lucas fights for self-control.

LUCAS

I had an extra expense.

MARTHA

Your car, no doubt.

LUCAS

My one thing.

MARTHA

High time you rid yourself of that peno-erotic symbol of male virility and bought a bus pass. I have expenses too, you know.

LUCAS
 More cosmetic surgery? What body
 part this time, Martha?

MARTHA
 Fuck yourself, Lucas.

LUCAS
 Nice language, Martha, very nice.
 So what's your answer to helping
 with Jason?

MARTHA
 My answer? This is my answer.

LUCAS
 Do not hang - -

Martha hangs up. Smiles brightly at the Timid Woman.

MARTHA
 And who shall I make it out to?

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - DAY - SAME

Lucas glares at the dead receiver.

LUCAS
 The bitch hung up.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Lucas' Mustang skids to a halt. Lucas wrenches himself out.
 Marches to THE FOAMY STEIN BAR AND GRILL.

INT. THE FOAMY STEIN - DAY

Retired, late sixties FRED, LARRY, and QASIM, a British
 private school educated Pakistani immigrant, commune over a
 pitcher of beer.

FRED
 (in mid-story)
 For thirty-eight years of marriage
 she's hairy as an ape. Then three
 months into the divorce, suddenly
 she starts shaving.

LARRY
 Shaving what?

FRED
What do you think?

LARRY
Oh, that.

QASIM
And how would you come to know such
at thing?

FRED
Stopped by the house to pick up my
golf clubs. Found a little pink
razor in the medicine cabinet,
covered in you-know-what hairs,
like a lollipop some kid dropped on
the carpet is how I come to know
such a thing.

The men burst into laughter.

QASIM
And why would that concern you, my
friend. That she has started
shaving?

FRED
Met the plumber on my way out. I
used to do all the plumbing. Why
not call me?

QASIM
Perhaps he does a better job.

FRED
Like Hell he does!
(then)
Here I am paying alimony and she's
spreading her legs for every Jack
on the street!

More laughter at Larry's expense. Lucas joins the group.

LUCAS
Hey fellas. What's so funny?

LARRY
Fred's wife.

QASIM
She has started shaving.

LUCAS
Shaving what?

FRED
All right, enough of this!
(to Lucas)
So, why the long face?

QASIM
Yes, my friend, what is the matter?

LUCAS
What isn't?

FRED
Sounds like you've been talking to
The Ex.

LUCAS
Don't get me started.

LARRY
(to Fred)
Get him started.

FRED
(to the barmaid)
Hey, Nurse! Swing over to our ward
with another pitcher.
(to Lucas)
Okay, get started.

Lucas heaves a sigh.

LUCAS
According to the settlement, my
darling wife got our sprawling,
five bedroom mansion in that
upscale suburb I spent 25 years
paying for.

LARRY
Typical.

LUCAS
She also took all, and I mean all,
our investments.

FRED
What were you thinking when you
signed?

LUCAS
I have no idea.

QASIM
Blame it on youth.

LUCAS

I blame it on her! And to top it off, she managed to squeeze me for a portion of all my future earnings, which, when I finally retired, included half my goddamn pension cheque!

FRED

Now that's excessive.

QASIM

Come Fredrick, how else could she continue living in a manner to which Lucas had forced her to grow accustomed.

LUCAS

Thanks for putting it in perspective, Qasim. Our entire relationship was predicated on the size and shape of her body and now I'm paying for the remodeling to boot. And what do I get in return?

FRED

Her lawyer's bill?

LUCAS

A signed copy of her best-selling, autobiographical, diary style scrapbook, complaining about our goddamn marriage is what I get!

LARRY

A slap in the face.

FRED

How about half the royalties?

LUCAS

No way, Jose. You see, she earned those without my help.

FRED

What about your job? She ever help you with that?

LUCAS

Don't get me started.

Career waitress and single mom, FRAN FREIZEN, 35, snug jeans and Foamy Stein T-shirt, arrives with a loaded tray.

FRAN

Hey Lucas.
 (serving up)
 A pitcher of Bud and an extra
 glass. Whose round?

Lucas slaps down a twenty.

LUCAS

Better take it while I still got
 it.

(then)

When do you get off work?

FRAN

When does your wife get home?

LUCAS

Never.

FRAN

It's a date.

Fred, Qasim, and Larry chuckle at the ritual joke.

LUCAS

Keep the change.

FRAN

Thanks.
 (a wink)
 Tonight, then.

Fran saunters off, drawing the men's eyes with her.

QASIM

Dream on my friends. How many women
 her age are interested in old men
 like us?

LUCAS

I'm only looking for one.

FRED & LARRY

(a toast)
 Here, here.

QASIM

Then again, you only live once.

LARRY

So live it well.

FRED
Damn right.

LUCAS
Okay, then, so what would you do if
your son who hasn't so much as
phoned in over a decade suddenly
asks you to look after his kid for
the summer so he can go on holiday
with his wife?

FRED
Baby sit? Forget it.

LARRY
Good-bye freedom, peace, and
contentment.

Lucas pulls out the picture of Jason. Shows it to his
friends.

LUCAS
That's him.

FRED
Your son?

LUCAS
Grandson, dumb-ass.

FRED
Cute kid.

LARRY
How old?

LUCAS
Don't exactly know. Got to be
twelve at least.

QASIM
Take him, Lucas. You will not
regret it. Children are a blessing.

LARRY
Til they break your heart.

FRED
Damn right.

Lost in thought, Lucas nods agreement.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucas' Mustang glides expertly into the drive. As the headlights extinguish, Lucas disgorges from the driver's side. Staggered drunkenly to his house.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucas lurches through the door, upsetting a glass vase which CRASHES to pieces on the floor.

LUCAS

Son of a - -

Peruses his sparse, orderly abode. A veritable Hotel 6 houses, not a home, and he knows it.

EXT. BIG SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Lucas mows the last row of an expansive lawn, sweating profusely. Slugs from a car cup containing a hair of the dog that bit him the night before.

Up on the porch in rockers, MARTIN CAULFIELD, 94, married 70 years to MAY CAULFIELD, 90, makes his painfully slow way down to where Lucas brushes off the mower blades.

MARTIN

Sure wish I could move around like you do. May and I really appreciate you coming to help since my strength give out. Don't know what we'd do without you.

LUCAS

Don't mention it.

Lucas and Martin gaze at a SUBURBAN MANSION across the road, with A LONE BOY, 12, tossing ball in the yard.

MARTIN

Swell place you had there, Lucas.

LUCAS

(mournful)

Ya.

MARTIN

Sure miss having you folks as neighbors.

LUCAS
Likewise, Martin.

MARTIN
So how's that son of yours doing?

LUCAS
Fine.

MARTIN
And Martha? How's she?

LUCAS
Fine.

MARTIN
Good. What about your grandson? Get
to see him much?

Lucas blurts out a face-saving half truth.

LUCAS
Actually, he's coming to visit for
the summer.

MARTIN
Well ain't that dandy. Glad to hear
it, Lucas.

Martin hands Lucas a ten dollar bill.

MARTIN
For you.

LUCAS
That's really not necessary.

MARTIN
I insist.

Lucas pockets the bill.

LUCAS
Call if you need anything.

MARTIN
Thanks.

Martin walks off. Lucas waves demonstratively towards the porch.

LUCAS
Bye, May!

May doesn't respond.

Lucas sucks back the dregs of his car cup. Hoists the mower into the trunk of his car.

MARTIN

Buy yourself something nice with
that ten dollars now!

Lucas reaches for a fresh beer, discovers a case full of empties. Calls back to Martin.

LUCAS

I know just the thing!

Martin smiles and waves.

EXT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lucas finishes a simple meal standing at the counter. Washes his plate and utensils. Sucks back the last of his beer. Rinses out the empty bottle. Retrieves a fifth of whiskey from the cupboard.

INT. LUCAS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lucas digs through a SHOEBOX full of photographs. Finds a faded photo of ETHAN, 10, and HIMSELF, middle aged, at a little league baseball game.

EXT. BALL PARK. DAY - FLASHBACK - THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

10 YEAR OLD ETHAN catches a pop fly to win a little league ball game. In the stands, MIDDLE AGED LUCAS goes ape cheering.

BACK TO PRESENT

Lucas grimaces at how things ended up. Digs into the box, pulls out a black and white shot of HIMSELF as a boy, and his own father, MR. MANNING SENIOR, an emaciated, sickly man of 50, at a ballpark, holding up an AUTOGRAPHED BASEBALL.

EXT. YANKEE STADIUM. DAY - FLASHBACK - SIXTY YEARS AGO

10 YEAR OLD LUCAS catches a pop fly in the bleachers. Ecstatic, he holds up the prize ball.

LATER

YOGI BERRA signs it.

BACK TO PRESENT

Lucas ponders the bitter-sweet memory. Slugs back his whiskey, picks up the phone, dials out.

INT. ETHAN MANNING'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Middle aged Ethan mixes highball number five in his basement man-cave. Behind him, a gallery of framed photos of JASON from birth to 12, including one of LUCAS, 55, cradling the baby Jason in his arms. Addresses an UNSEEN PERSON in the room.

ETHAN

It's a difficult time for your mom
and me. We just need some time
away. You're old enough to
understand that.

Waits for a reply. Gets none. His cell phone chimes.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clutching the receiver, Lucas freezes at the familiar voice.

ETHAN'S VOICE

You have reached the voice mail of
Ethan Manning - -

Registering panic, he hangs up.

INT. ETHAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ethan reads the Call Display on his cell. Addresses the unseen figure.

ETHAN

Any rate, if your grandfather
agrees, you're going, and that's
that.

Gulps down his highball, dials back.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucas stares at his ringing phone. No turning back, he picks it up.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - ETHAN AND LUCAS

ETHAN

Lucas?

Lucas swallows hard.

LUCAS

Ethan?

ETHAN

How you been?

LUCAS

Can't complain. You?

ETHAN

Busy.

LUCAS

Sure, who isn't? So what's wrong with your wife? Hasn't she got parents?

ETHAN

Of course she has parents.

LUCAS

So why don't they take him?

ETHAN

They can't.

LUCAS

You mean won't. And neither will your mother. So suddenly I'm useful again.

ETHAN

Look, I just thought you'd like to spend some quality time with your grandson, that's all. You're under no obligation - -

LUCAS

Cool your jets, Hot Shot. I'll take him.

ETHAN

You will?

LUCAS

So what is it, a second honeymoon?
Your wife and you? Time away and
all that.

ETHAN

Ya, sort of.

LUCAS

Nice. As I assume you're too busy
to drive him the one thousand three
hundred and twenty-nine kilometers
all the fuck way from Calgary to
Winnipeg, how you planning on
getting him here?

ETHAN

By plane.

LUCAS

Alone?

ETHAN

He's a big boy now.

Lucas glimpses the snapshot of 12 year old Jason.

LUCAS

You're right. Glad to hear you've
stopped wet-nursing him. Any rate,
I'll pick him up at the airport.

ETHAN

That's nice of you.

LUCAS

Think I'd let him walk? So when you
plan on sending him?

ETHAN

Friday, 11:54. Flight 132 from
Calgary International.

LUCAS

This Friday?

ETHAN

I bought the ticket.

Lucas rolls his eyes.

LUCAS

Haven't changed a bit, have you.
Okay, Friday.

ETHAN

Great.

LUCAS

So he still like baseball?

ETHAN

Sure, I guess.

LUCAS

You guess? Well he rides a bike at least?

ETHAN

Of course he rides a bike.

LUCAS

Good. Tell him to bring his mitt.

ETHAN

I will.

LUCAS

Okay then. Well, guess I'll be seeing him this Friday.

ETHAN

Great. And, thanks.

LUCAS

(awkward)

You're welcome.

Ethan signs off with a grin. Catches sight of his wife, JANICE MANNING, 40, a little tipsy, watching from the stairwell with a glass of wine.

JANICE

So he's taking him?

ETHAN

Looks like it.

Janice takes a huge gulp. Addresses the unseen person: JASON MANNING, age 15 (not 12), a large, surly teenager dressed in GRUNGE, with a red, early years of Punk Rock Mohawk and a gold earring, staring daggers at his parents.

JANICE

Have fun at Grandpa's.

Staggers back upstairs.

JASON
(sarcastic)
Thanks, Mom. Thanks, Dad.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucas sets the phone back in the cradle. Gazes at the photo of 12 YEAR OLD JASON. Succumbs to a tender smile.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

Lucas wrestles a boy's banana seat bicycle with chipped paint and flat tires from his car trunk.

NANCY (O.S.)
Taking up cycling?

Dressed in her nurse's uniform, Nancy returns from work with a load of groceries.

NANCY
Wear a helmet.

Lucas beams at her happily.

LUCAS
For my grandson. He's coming for
the summer.

NANCY
That's nice. How old is he?

LUCAS
Twelve.

NANCY
Oh. Too bad.

Lucas shakes his head at the odd reply.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Lucas rifles through a storage crate. Pulls out a baseball bat and glove from a bygone era. Grins at the sight of the old relics.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE. SPARE ROOM - DAY

Lucas hangs a WELCOME JASON banner over a cot with baseball insignia linen and pillow.

Beside it, the old bat and glove from the basement, a new baseball, and the banana seat bicycle, repaired and painted cherry red, with streamers dangling from the handlebars.

A final touch, he slips two baseball tickets under the photo of himself and his own father, Mister Manning Senior, at the ballpark in 1960, now framed under glass.

INT. AIRPORT ARRIVALS GATE - DAY

Fresh haircut and smartly dressed in casuals, Lucas watches for the first comers off the airplane: a GROUP OF BUSINESSMEN carrying duty free followed by JASON, his red Mohawk freshly spiked, lugging a duffel bag while pulling a suitcase on wheels, which he hands over to an elderly woman who tries to give him money.

JASON

No need for that, Ma'am. It was my pleasure.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Well thank you, young man. You're a true gentleman.

Noting the Mohawk, Lucas rolls his eyes heavenward.

LUCAS

Jesus.

Catches sight of a SMALL BOY in a ball cap. Rushes over.

LUCAS

Jason?! That you, boy?! It's me, granddad!

Is intercepted by the boy's MOTHER who whisks the frightened child away.

LUCAS

I'm Sorry, I ...

Jason watches the interaction with a smirk.

INT. AIRPORT ARRIVALS - DAY

Lucas waits at the abandoned gate. Checks the arrivals monitor one last time. Glumly wanders off.

INT. INFORMATION DESK - DAY

Lucas clears his throat at the grey-haired ATTENDANT absorbed in her computer monitor.

LUCAS
Hello, Mrs.?

ATTENDANT
That's Ms. I am under no obligation to reveal my marital status.

LUCAS
My mistake, sorry. I'm looking for a Jason Manning, purportedly on flight 132.

Lucas displays the photo of Jason.

LUCAS
He's a child.

ATTENDANT
Cute.

LUCAS
Would you check the list, please?
Ms.?

The attendant scrolls down her screen.

ATTENDANT
Manning, Jason. Flight 132.
Boarded in Calgary.

LUCAS
Are you sure?

The Attendant flashes a fake smile.

ATTENDANT
It's my job.

Points over Lucas' shoulder.

ATTENDANT
Time to update that photo.

Lucas turns, does a double take at the 15 YEAR OLD JASON and his MOHAWK looming large behind him.

LUCAS
What the ...

JASON
I've been waiting for like an hour.

LUCAS
Jason?

JASON
Who do you think?

LUCAS
But you're ...

JASON
What?

Lucas glances from Jason to his 12 year old boy photo and back, to his Mohawk.

LUCAS
Big.

INT. SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG - DAY

Motoring along, Lucas shoots glances at Jason, plugged into ear buds on his Iphone.

LUCAS
So you still like baseball? Jason?
Still play?!

Jason stares straight ahead.

JASON
Not.

LUCAS
Great.

JASON
What?

LUCAS
Think you can turn that radio down
a notch?

JASON
Iphone.

LUCAS
Okay, Eye phone. Would you turn it
down, please?

Jason lowers the volume.

LUCAS
So I take it you like music?

JASON
Helps me relax.

LUCAS
I hear you. So what are your
favorite bands? Spice girls?
Justin Bieber?

JASON
Don't make me puke.

LUCAS
Okay, so name a few songs you - -

Jason turns up the volume.

JASON
What?

LUCAS
I said - -

JASON
What?!

LUCAS
Forget it.

Lucas eyes Jason mouthing along to THE SEX PISTOLS.

LUCAS
(under his breath)
The hell happened to your hair?

JASON
(back at him)
The hell happened to yours?!

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

Lucas wrestles the duffel bag out of the car trunk as Jason
scans the house.

JASON
So this is the place. Not how I
imagined it.

LUCAS
Imagined what?

JASON

Where he grew up. My father? As a kid.

LUCAS

No. That was ... Another place.

JASON

Before you divorced grandma?

LUCAS

Actually, she divorced me. And the house you're referring to, she took it. That's where he grew up, your father, until your grandmother decided to move him to Calgary against my better judgment.

(re: duffel bag)

Give me a hand with this, will you?

Jason ignores the request. Saunters to the front door. Lucas shakes his head in disbelief, follows with the weighty bag.

Reaching the landing, thumps it down beside Jason.

LUCAS

So what else did your grandmother tell you?

JASON

Not much.

LUCAS

I'll bet.

Lucas unlocks the door, makes a big show of wiping his feet.

LUCAS

We take our shoes off in the house.

Jason barges in passed him.

JASON

So why bother wiping them?

Lucas follows him in, muttering.

INT. JASON'S ROOM - DAY

Jason enters, frowns at the welcome banner, bike, and baseball paraphernalia.

JASON

Like who do you think I am, Beaver
Cleaver?

Lucas heaves the bag on the cot.

LUCAS

I was off a few years.

Notices Jason eyeing the framed photo of himself and his own
father holding the AUTOGRAPHED BASEBALL.

LUCAS

That's me and my dad, your great
granddad, at the Yankees/Red Sox
game in New York City on my tenth
birthday. The Big Number Eight,
Yogi Berra himself, belted the
winning run into the stands. Guess
who caught the ball? Right in that
glove right there. Whole damn team
signed it. Best day of my life. My
dad's too, I'll bet. Just about the
last thing we did together before
he died.

JASON

Where's it now?

LUCAS

Where's what?

JASON

The ball the whole Yankee team
signed?

LUCAS

Oh. I gave it to your dad on his
tenth - -

JASON

Can I have a shower?

LUCAS

(finishing)
Birthday.
(then)
Excuse me?

JASON

A shower. Can I?

Lucas eyes Jason's Mohawk and pimples.

LUCAS
By all means.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Lucas reads the riot act.

LUCAS
Always scrub out the stall - no one likes little curly hairs. Always stand on the bath mat. And always make absolutely sure the shower curtain is on the inside of the tub. Otherwise the water runs down the curtain onto the floor and seeps through the kitchen ceiling. Got it?

JASON
I'm not stupid.

Lucas looks at him like he's stupid.

LUCAS
Never said you were.
(re: toiletries)
Soap, shampoo, towel, face cloth.
Anything else you need?

JASON
A little privacy.

LUCAS
Right.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Jason locks the door behind Lucas. Reaches into his pocket for something green rolled up in plastic.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lucas hears the shower blasting from up above. Rolls his eyes at the thought of who is under it. Sucks back half a beer in one pull.

LUCAS
Oh ya!

Starts laying the table for dinner. Freezes at the sight of water dripping from the ceiling.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Lucas hammers on the bathroom door.

LUCAS
Jason!

JASON (O.S.)
What?

LUCAS
The curtain! You're flooding the - -

JASON (O.S.)
What?!

Taking action, rams the door with his shoulder.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Lucas tumbles into the bathroom clutching his arm in pain. Wearing a plastic shower cap, his face covered in green acne soap, Jason pokes his head from behind the curtains.

JASON
The fuck you doing get out!

Lucas points to a puddle of water on the floor.

LUCAS
The curtain! It's outside the tub!

Pushes the curtain to the inside of the tub, exposing Jason's bare legs in the process.

JASON
The fuck?! Get out! Get out! Get out!

LUCAS
I'm out!

Stamps out of the bathroom.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jason and Lucas dine on hotdogs and fries served on plastic, superhero plates.

JASON
That was like totally perverted in the bathroom.

LUCAS
All right already.

JASON
(re: hotdog)
Know what this is?

Lucas sips his beer.

LUCAS
A hotdog.

JASON
Ground up animal. Twenty percent
unknown substances. Pig shit, for
all we know.

LUCAS
Is it necessary to swear so much?

JASON
All right, swine feces.

LUCAS
That's disgusting.

JASON
Exactly - pig shit. Got anything
fresh around here?

LUCAS
Haven't served anything rotten.

Jason examines a plastic cup of purple liquid with an
attached swirly straw.

JASON
Let me guess - Kool-Aid? Typical.
Can I have a beer?

LUCAS
How old are you?

JASON
Sixteen, almost.

LUCAS
I guess not then.

JASON
How about some ketchup?

Lucas points to the ketchup on the table. Jason doesn't budge. Lucas springs to his feet, sarcastically waiters over with the ketchup, squirts a huge wad on Jason's plate.

LUCAS
You're welcome.

JASON
So what's for dessert - Jell-O?
(off Lucas' look)
I'm right. It is Jell-O?
(delighted)
How perfect is that?

Lucas bites off a huge hunk of hotdog. Washes it down with a long pull of beer.

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jason lays on his cot, staring at the ceiling. Glances at the photo of Young Lucas and his father. Turns it face down on the night table.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lucas stares at the water stain on the kitchen ceiling. Curses to himself. Picks up the phone. Dials out, mentally preparing his diatribe as the line connects.

LUCAS
Hello?! Ethan?!

ETHAN'S VOICE
You have reached the voice mail - -

EXT. TROPICAL BEACH RESORT - NIGHT

Ethan and CODY MOORE, 30, earnest but still very much The College Girl, sip cocktails under palm trees and Tiki torches as the call clicks in:

LUCAS' VOICE
Nice move sending that cute, little
boy picture of Jason - -

Ethan cuts it off.

CODY
What? Who was - -

ETHAN

Nobody.

CODY

It was your father, wasn't it? He sounded upset.

ETHAN

He always sounds upset.

CODY

You said he was okay about taking Jason. Ethan, is everything ...

Ethan intercepts her with a kiss on the mouth.

ETHAN

Everything is fine. Now give us a smile.

Cody forces one out.

EXT. BALLPARK - DAY

Lucas and Jason find their seats in the crowded Bleachers.

JASON

Remind me again of why we're doing this.

LUCAS

For fun.

JASON

Right.

Lucas reaches into his jacket for his trusty old baseball glove.

LUCAS

In case there's a pop fly. Here, you wear it.

JASON

Gee-golly, can I?

LUCAS

Humor me.

JASON

Not.

Lucas stuffs the glove back in his jacket. Pulls out a can of beer covered in a sock. With a loud cough to cover, cracks it open.

JASON
They sell beer at the vendor's, you know.

LUCAS
At seven-fifty a can. Know what it's like living on a fixed income?

JASON
(re: beer)
Got one for me?

LUCAS
Not sixteen yet, sorry.

Lucas points to the field.

LUCAS
They're coming out. They're starting.

JASON
Can I have a hot dog at least?

Shoots Jason an incredulous look.

LUCAS
Come again?

JASON
A frankfurter? Can I?

LUCAS
What about the pig shit?

JASON
It's a ball game.

LUCAS
That it is.

Lucas pulls out his wallet, hands Jason a bank note.

LUCAS
Be sure to count the change.

Jason ignores the money.

LUCAS

What, you expect me to go get it,
too?

Jason feigns interest in the game. Lucas shakes his head in disbelief. Labors out of his seat.

EXT. BALLPARK - DAY

The game is in full swing as Lucas excuses his way back along the aisle with the hotdog. Hands it to Jason.

JASON

What, no toppings?

LUCAS

What, no 'thank you'?

Pulls mini condiment packs from his pocket. Hands them to Jason.

JASON

What about the drink?

LUCAS

You never said anything about a
drink.

JASON

How'm I supposed to eat a hotdog
without a drink?

LUCAS

Let's watch the game for a while.

JASON

I'm thirsty.

LUCAS

Later.

Jason thrusts the hotdog back at Lucas.

JASON

You eat it.

Lucas digs into his pocket, slaps some coins in Jason's hand.

LUCAS

Get your own drink.

Jason heads off, relieved to get the hell out of there. Lucas reaches under his seat for his beer. Lifts it to his mouth. It's empty. Glares at the departing boy.

LUCAS
Un-fucking-believable.

INT. TROPICAL RESORT - DAY

Ethan in bathing trunks scans the busy lobby for Cody. Pulls out his cell phone.

INT. SUBURBAN MANSION - DAY

Disheveled in her bathrobe, Janice pours out a glass of wine. Picks up the ringing phone.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - ETHAN AND JANICE

JANICE
What is it, Ethan?

ETHAN
Have you heard from Jason?

JANICE
Why, what's wrong?

ETHAN
Nothing, I hope. He got there all right. Just won't answer my calls or texts.

JANICE
Can you blame him? Try your father.

ETHAN
Lucas doesn't text, doesn't e-mail. Have to phone or write a goddamn letter to get a hold of that guy.

JANICE
Then phone.

ETHAN
No voice mail. Got to catch him standing right by the damn thing. Can you give it a try once in a while?

Janice slugs some wine.

JANICE

Fat chance, Lover Boy - your
arrangement, not mine, remember.
So, having fun?

As Cody approaches in fashion runway bathing attire.

ETHAN

Can't talk now. Give me a call if
you hear anything, will you,
please? We can only assume they're
getting along.

INT. SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG - DAY

Lucas and Jason motor home in icy silence.

LUCAS

So?

JASON

What?

LUCAS

What do you mean what?! I searched
the whole goddamn ball park - now
where'd you disappear to?!

JASON

I said already.

LUCAS

Doesn't take seven innings to buy a
drink.

JASON

Watching the game.

LUCAS

Where exactly, if you don't mind my
asking?

JASON

Behind the batter's box.

LUCAS

Wait now. You found free seats
behind the batter's box?

JASON

There a law against that?

LUCAS

Why didn't you come get me? Don't you think I would also have liked to watch the game from behind the batter's box?

JASON

No clue.

Jason inserts his ear buds.

LUCAS

I'm talking to you!

Jason rips the buds from his ears.

JASON

Look, wasn't my idea coming to some cheesy baseball game so next time you feel like taking a romp down memory lane include me out!

Reinserts the buds. Cranks the volume up on THE MISFITS. Starts banging out the beat on the dashboard.

JASON

(re: the car)

This shitbox go any faster?!
Probably as old as you!

Channeling his rage, Lucas stamps on the gas, jolting the car forward.

LUCAS

Fast enough for ya?!

Cranks the radio up on SILENCE IS GOLDEN by THE TREMELOES in mid-song.

JASON

What's that crap?

LUCAS

Music! Damn good music!
(singing along)
'And if I tried I know she'll say I
lied, mind your business, don't
hurt her, you f-o-o-l ...'

Jason shakes his head in disgust.

JASON

Pathetic.

EXT. SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG - DAY

The Mustang tears down the highway, dual mufflers BLARING, Jason madly DRUMMING, Lucas defiantly SINGING.

LUCAS
 'Silence is golden, but my eyes
 still see, silence is golden,
 golden ...'

INT. TROPICAL RESORT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cody and Ethan make love, with an edge of frustration, as if wrestling. Immediately after climaxing, Ethan reaches for his cigarettes. Cody turns her back on him.

INT. LUCAS' KITCHEN - DAY

Lucas pours milk over a bowl of Fruit Loops. Calls out.

LUCAS
 Jason! It's passed noon!

The thumping of feet precedes Jason's groggy appearance in the kitchen.

JASON
 Where's the fire?

LUCAS
 There's work to do.

JASON
 Work?

LUCAS
 Awesome new concept. And seeing as
 you're not into recreation I
 thought we'd - -

JASON
 My dad never said anything about
 work.

LUCAS
 Doesn't surprise me. Wouldn't lift
 a finger as a kid.

Jason glares at the Fruit Loops.

JASON
 Well I'm not eating those.

LUCAS
Then let's get to work.

Lucas stomps out of the room.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE. YARD - DAY

Sporting his tool belt, Lucas references the plumb line running the length of the listing fence.

LUCAS
The idea here is to hold the fence up against this plumb line, drive a support post in the ground, then hammer the post to the fence at an angle of precisely ninety degrees.

JASON
Marvelous.

LUCAS
Want to hold the fence or hammer the post?

JASON
Neither.

LUCAS
Then hammer the post.

JASON
I'll hold the fence.

LUCAS
Suit yourself.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Nancy and LINDSAY NIELSON, 16, with a trace of her grandmother's flair, peer out the window at Lucas and Jason working on the fence.

LINDSAY
Who's that?

NANCY
The boy?

LINDSAY
Of course.

NANCY

My neighbor's grandson, I assume.
Looks pretty big for twelve.

LINDSAY

I'll say.

NANCY

Want to meet him?

Lindsay shrugs. Clearly, she's interested.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE. YARD - DAY

Lucas delivers a final whack on the fence post with the sledge hammer. Whips out a regular hammer.

LUCAS

(to Jason)

Keep holding it.

Pounds in three nails, reeving the post to the fence. Discovers Jason leaning against the listing partition, thumb surfing his Iphone.

LUCAS

What the ...

JASON

What?

LUCAS

The fence.

JASON

What about it?

LUCAS

It's crooked as a corkscrew.

JASON

Is it?

LUCAS

You were supposed to hold it
against the plumb line.

JASON

Was I?

LUCAS

The hell do you think?

JASON
Fucked if I know.

LUCAS
Now we've got to yank the nails,
jimmy out the post, and - -

NANCY (O.S.)
Hi, neighbor!

Nancy ushers Lindsay to Lucas' side of the yard.

NANCY
I'd like you to meet my
granddaughter, Lindsay.

Lindsay smiles at Jason.

LINDSAY
Hi.

Jason drops his eyes.

NANCY
And this handsome young man must be
your grandson.

LUCAS
Jason.

NANCY
Pleased to meet you, Jason.

LUCAS
Say hi, Jason.

Jason stares at the ground.

JASON
Hi.

NANCY
Tell me, Jason, do you like organic
vegetarian food?

LUCAS
As long as it's fresh.

NANCY
Then why don't you and your
grandfather join me and Lindsay for
dinner tomorrow?

She's here for the weekend and I'm afraid I'm a bit of a disappointment entertainment-wise.

LINDSAY
No you're not.

NANCY
Oh yes I am.

LUCAS
We'll fix that, won't we Jason?

Lindsay flashes Jason an endearing smile.

LINDSAY
So you'll come?

LUCAS
What the hell, eh, Jason? Saves you from eating another one of my meals.

NANCY
Wonderful. How does six o'clock sound?

LUCAS
Sounds good. What do you say, Jason?

JASON
(to the women)
Excuse me.

LUCAS
What? Where are you going?

JASON
Bathroom.

LUCAS
Can't it wait?

JASON
No.

Jason lumbers off. Lucas smiles awkwardly at the women.

LUCAS
He'd be delighted.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE. YARD - DAY

Lucas wrenches nails out of the fence post. Glances up at a lit, second floor window of his house. Drops the hammer. Marches off.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Lucas raps on the bathroom door.

LUCAS
Jason? You in there?

Warily enters. Peers with disgust into the toilet bowl. Flushes it.

INT. LIVING-ROOM - DAY

Lucas wanders in to discover Jason watching TV on the couch.

LUCAS
I thought you came in to use the toilet.

JASON
I did.

LUCAS
I know.

JASON
What's for lunch?

LUCAS
Have you forgotten our little project?

JASON
What little project?

LUCAS
The fence.

JASON
It's done.

LUCAS
No, it's crooked. And until it's straightened, no lunch.

Jason springs off the couch, stamps off.

JASON
Goddamn Nazi work camp.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Wearing his ear buds, Jason tucks into a clubhouse sandwich. Across the table, Lucas glares out the window at the fence, now sagging in the opposite direction than before.

JASON
How long I got to stay here?

LUCAS
(re: ear buds)
Take the knobs out when you're talking to me.

JASON
They're not on.

LUCAS
Good. Til I tell you to leave, that's now long you've got to stay here.

JASON
Well I'm not going.

LUCAS
What?

JASON
To your neighbor's stupid dinner party.

LUCAS
What do you mean you're not going?

JASON
I'm not going.

LUCAS
That's no answer. Look, I don't know what grandma's got up her sleeve but I'm sure as hell not going alone. Besides, she likes you.

JASON
Who?

LUCAS

The girl, Dummy, or did you not pick up on that?

(off Jason's look)

So relax, act natural, use your words, stop slouching, and you'll do just fine.

(then)

And wash that red crap out of your hair. And comb it down.

(and then)

And lose that fucking earring!

EXT. TROPICAL RESORT - NIGHT

Ethan and Cody at a romantic table for two. Ethan eats with gusto. Cody picks at her meal.

ETHAN

Anything the matter?

CODY

You were a little rough with me last night.

ETHAN

Was I?

CODY

Yes. We can go back early, if you want.

ETHAN

Not a chance.

CODY

We've never spent this much time alone together. That's a lot of pressure, Ethan. And you keep phoning home.

ETHAN

No I don't. Wait now, you check my calls?

CODY

I don't have to. You sneak off twice a day to contact someone, and I assume you're not cheating on me, yet.

ETHAN

That wasn't a very nice thing to say, Cody.

CODY

I'm sorry, but you seem pre-occupied.

ETHAN

I'm not. Now we've got another two weeks of fun in the sun and I intend to enjoy every damn minute of it, with you, and just you, on my mind. Now eat your dinner.

Cody takes a small bite.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Well-appointed table, proper etiquette. Nancy, Lindsay, and Lucas reasonably at ease; Jason, his neatly combed brown hair betraying a trace of pink, not.

LUCAS

Nice place you got here.

NANCY

Thank you. Jack loved interior designing.

(re: food)

This is delicious, Lindsay. The spices, tenderness, everything, terrific.

LUCAS

Cooked to perfection.

LINDSAY

Thank you.

Lucas eyes Jason.

LUCAS

Jason?

JASON

(a grunt)

Great.

Jason drops his fork. Gropes under the table to retrieve it. Nancy covers for him.

NANCY

Lindsay is very concerned about Fair Trade and globally equitable food distribution, aren't you, Lindsay?

LINDSAY

It's a very important issue, grandma. We could eradicate world hunger if we all just ate vegetarian.

LUCAS

(eyeing Jason)
Is that a fact?

LINDSAY

Yes, the amount of arable land needed for animal feed to grow just one head of cattle for fast food hamburgers could, if used to grow soya, feed a family of ten for a year.

LUCAS

Hear that, Jason? Something to think about next time you tuck into a Big Mac.

Jason inserts food in his mouth, some of which dribbles into his lap.

LUCAS

Where'd you learn table manners, in a pig trough?

Shoots Lucas a murderous look.

LUCAS

Say something, for Christ's sake!

Swallows the mouthful in one gulp.

JASON

You want me to say something? Okay, I'll say something. My father buggered off to a beach resort for a three week orgy with his personal trainer so just to be difficult my mother refused to look after me so my father suckers you in to doing it.

That's why you and me are suddenly spending quality time together, get it? Anything else you'd like me to say?

Lucas stares at Jason, dumbfounded by the news. Jason bolts from the room.

LUCAS

Jason!

NANCY

(an order)

Let him go, Mister Manning.

LUCAS

What?

Lindsay jumps to her feet.

LINDSAY

I'll get him.

Follows after Jason.

EXT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Lindsay runs down the sidewalk.

LINDSAY

Jason, wait up!

Catches up to Jason. They continue walking together.

JASON

Sorry about your party but I just can't go back in there.

LINDSAY

No worries. Your grandfather's quite the character.

JASON

Understatement.

LINDSAY

I don't think I've never seen my grandma so angry.

JASON

He inspires that in people.

LINDSAY

It's been really tough on her since my Bubba died. Had to go back to nursing to pay off the house. Never complains, though. Just she gets lonely sometimes. But mostly I visit her to get away from my parents.

JASON

No shit?

Lindsay laughs, nudges him playfully.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucas picks at his food, conscious of Nancy's icy silence.

LUCAS

What?

NANCY

Was it necessary to humiliate him like that?

LUCAS

He just sits there.

NANCY

Maybe he's self-conscious?

LUCAS

It's the hair.

NANCY

You're a proud, self-absorbed, man, aren't you, Mr. Manning?

LUCAS

(rising)

Thank you for dinner, but this entire evening is getting just a little too - -

NANCY

Personal? Yes, perhaps it is. Sit down, please.

Lucas sits.

LUCAS

All right, I'm sitting.

NANCY
How long have we been neighbors,
Mr. Manning?

LUCAS
(shrugs)
I don't know, Twenty, twenty-five
years.

NANCY
Try thirty.

LUCAS
All right, thirty.

NANCY
A long time.

LUCAS
I'm with you on that.

NANCY
Yet when my husband died, you
didn't offer so much as a word of
condolence.

Lucas swallows hard.

LUCAS
Sorry.

NANCY
Three years too late, Mister.

Withers under her accusing glare.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucas enters.

LUCAS
Jason? Anybody home?

Picks up the phone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Sprawled out on the bed in a bathrobe, Martha flips through a
fashion magazine. Picks up her chiming phone.

MARTHA
(into phone)
What is it, Lucas?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - MARTHA AND LUCAS

LUCAS
Did you know Ethan is having an
extra-marital affair?

MARTHA
Of course I know. Janice isn't the
right woman for him.

LUCAS
Excuse me? Isn't that a departure
from your usual husband/wife
relations theme?

MARTHA
I don't have time for this, Lucas.

LUCAS
So why didn't you tell me?

MARTHA
I thought you knew.

LUCAS
How could I know if no one tells
me?! Ever since you moved Ethan all
the fuck way to Calgary - -

MARTHA
And whose fault is that?

LUCAS
Mine, I suppose?

MARTHA
Lucky guess, Lucas. So suddenly you
want to know about your son? What
sort of man he is? Why his marriage
is on the rocks? How he hardened
inside when his beloved father
abandoned him, broke up his home at
the tender age of fifteen to run
off with - -

LUCAS
You turned him against - -

MARTHA
Just ask him!

LUCAS

Don't you dare hang - -

Martha hangs up.

Governing his emotions, Lucas lays down the phone.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lucas constructs a Hero Sandwich. Scribbles a message on a note pad. Crumples it up. Writes another. Crumples that one up, too. Ponders a third missive. Painstakingly prints it out. Puts the note on the sandwich, the sandwich in the fridge, beside a bottle of Coke.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jason tears into the sandwich. Reads Lucas' note one more time.

LUCAS (V.O.)

"Sorry for being an asshole. Want to learn to drive a car?"

Smiles to himself.

INT. SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG - DAY

Lucas motors into an empty parking lot with Jason in the passenger seat.

LUCAS

The main thing about driving is - -

JASON

Rules, I know.

LUCAS

Wrong. The main thing about driving is awareness. You have to be aware. Of what's around you. Of other vehicles. Little kids running out from behind parked cars. And, of course, the cops. Always watch out for the cops. The rest is just gas, breaks, shifting gears. Technical stuff.

JASON

So when do I get to drive?

Lucas cuts the engine, holds out the keys as if passing the Olympic torch.

LUCAS
When ever you're ready.

Jason takes them.

JASON
Cool.

INT. SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG - DAY

Lucas in the passenger seat, Jason behind the wheel.

LUCAS
First, step on the clutch, move the stick into first, pull out the choke. That's this knob here. All cars back in the day had them. Provides a rich, air to gas mixture when the engine is cold.

JASON
But you just drove.

LUCAS
You want to take her out on your own some day? Okay, then pull the choke.
(as Jason does)
Just a hair. You don't want to flood her. Now turn the key and give her some gas.

Jason produces a massive ROAR from the engine.

JASON
Awesome.

LUCAS
Now put her into first, and slowly - and I mean slowly - ease off the clutch while - -

The car jolts forward and dies.

JASON
Holy shit!

Lucas grins knowingly.

LUCAS
Now that is what you call a bunny
hop.

JASON
Sorry.

LUCAS
Forget it. Happens all the time to
beginners. Now take it from the
top.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The Mustang jumps and kicks like a bronco bull.

LUCAS (O.S.)
Clutch! Into first! Give her some
gas. Breaks! Easy does it! Again!

The car glides smoothly forward.

LUCAS (O.S.)
All right, you're doing it!

JASON (O.S.)
Fucking 'A'!

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

Perched on a bench, Jason and Lucas gorge out on ice cream
Sundays. Behind them, a long cue at a popular ice cream
parlor.

LUCAS
A little smoother off the first
gear and you're ready for your
driver's test.

JASON
Got to be sixteen for that.

LUCAS
It'll happen sooner than you think.
(re: ice cream)
This is goddamn delicious.

JASON
Know what it's made of?

LUCAS
Don't tell me, pig shit?

JASON
Chemicals and plastic.

LUCAS
Well that's better. Anyway, they're great. Don't believe I've had one since your dad and I ...
(then)
It's not your fault, you know. Your mom and dad, I mean. Married people have problems which they have to work out for themselves. You can't let it affect you.
(off Jason's look)
I understand if you don't want to talk about it.

They eat a few spoonfuls in silence.

JASON
So what were the problems with you and grandma?

LUCAS
I don't want to talk about it.

JASON
I understand.

Another silent spoonful.

LUCAS
You're a good kid, Jason. Bit of an attitude, but a good kid.

JASON
You're not bad yourself. Bit of a grouch, but - -

LUCAS
All right - sorry I mentioned it.

Jason tosses his empty dish in the garbage.

JASON
Can I have another?

LUCAS
Ice cream?

JASON
Why, think I'm out of shape?

LUCAS
 (too quick)
 No.

JASON
 My dad does. Says I lack
 discipline.

LUCAS
 Does he now?

JASON
 Ya.

Suddenly - -

DIANA (O.S.)
 Lucas? Lucas Manning?

DIANA DECKER, 55, well-groomed, aerobically fit, accompanied
 by equally hale BERT DECKER, 60, stand above Lucas, licking
 ice cream cones.

DIANA
 I thought I recognized your car.
 How are you?

Lucas looks ready to flee.

LUCAS
 Diana. Hi. Fine. Yourself?

DIANA
 Couldn't be better. This is my
 husband, Bert. Bert, Lucas.

Bert gives Lucas a hearty handshake.

LUCAS
 (a grunt)
 Pleasure.

Diana eyes Jason.

DIANA
 Wait now, this can't be your - -

LUCAS
 Grandson. He's my grandson. Jason.

DIANA
 Of course.
 (to Jason)

You weren't even born yet back when I knew your granddad. Pleasure to meet you, Jason.

JASON

Likewise.

DIANA

Well I guess we'll be moving on.
Good to see you, Lucas.

Lucas watches the Deckers stroll off to their Mercedes-Benz with MD licence plates.

JASON

Who's she?

LUCAS

(snapping to)
Her? Nobody.

JASON

Didn't seem like nobody.

LUCAS

(diverting)
Want to prove him wrong?

JASON

Prove who wrong?

LUCAS

Your father. About having no discipline.

JASON

Well, ya, sure. You?

LUCAS

Love to.

JASON

How?

LUCAS

Weigh training.

JASON

You belong to a gym?

Lucas smiles.

LUCAS

Do I belong to a gym?

Ushers Jason back to the Shelby.

JASON
(re: Diana)
So, really, who was she?

LUCAS
I don't want to talk about it.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Lucas pulls a tarp off a fully equipped mini gym.

LUCAS
Feast your eyes on five hundred
pounds of tempered steel.

JASON
Sweet.

As Lucas sets up the barbells.

LUCAS
We'll start with the standard bench
press. Build up your chest and
shoulders. Then work the legs. Goal
here is balance, proportion. Not
like some goof on the beach, all
neck and arms and zero lower body
strength.

JASON
Right.

Lucas lays on the bench.

LUCAS
It's been a while since I've done
this so I'm going to start with a
hundred.

JASON
Pounds?

LUCAS
It's all about technique.

JASON
And muscles.

LUCAS
Those too. Spot me.
(off Jason's look)

Count off the times I lift the bar
and grab it from me when I say
okay.

JASON

Okay.

Lucas hoists the bar, lowers it to his chest with a deflating
grunt.

JASON

One.

Lucas strains to push it back up. Can't.

LUCAS

Okay.

JASON

What?

LUCAS

Spot me.
(in pain)
Lift the bar!

Jason heaves the bar onto the supports. Lucas labors off the
bench, rubbing his biceps.

LUCAS

We'll start you off with fifty.

JASON

Right.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Jason jogs down the sidewalk in shorts and T-shirt.

LUCAS (O.S.)

Lift those knees.

JASON

I'm lifting them!

On Lucas, coasting alongside in the Mustang, sipping from his
car cup.

LUCAS

Come on, I could walk faster.

JASON

Like to see you try!

EXT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Jason plows a push mower up and down the lawn.

LUCAS (O.S.)
 Feel those legs? Those are your
 hamstrings?

JASON
 Why don't you mow for a bit?

Deep in a lawn chair, Lucas sucks on a beer.

LUCAS
 I'm supervising.

JASON
 You mean sitting on your ass!

EXT. TROPICAL BEACH RESORT - DAY

A GOLF BALL and PUTTER HEAD on FAKE GRASS between TWO PETITE
 RUNNING SHOES.

ETHAN (O.S.)
 Now move the club head back and
 then slowly follow through with one
 smooth motion as if you're sweeping
 the kitchen floor.

CODY (O.S.)
 Thanks for the analogy.

ON CODY taking her shot. The ball verses off, hits a
 revolving windmill on a gaudy PIRATE'S COVE miniature golf
 course.

CODY
 I suck at this.

ETHAN
 No you don't. And who cares, we're
 having fun.

CODY
 Do we have to?

ETHAN
 You sound like my goddamn son, for
 Christ's sake.

CODY

Thanks, Ethan. Under the circumstances that makes me feel really good about myself.

Cody stamps off.

ETHAN

I didn't mean it that way!

Ethan takes a frustrated swing at his ball, ricochets it off a pirate's grinning face.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE. BASEMENT - DAY

Clad in athletic shorts and a muscle shirt, his dark brown hair cropped short and smart, Jason does bench presses. Spotting him, Lucas counts off.

LUCAS

Ten, eleven, twelve - that's a rep.
(as Jason continues)
Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen. Don't overdo it.

Jason pumps off three more, slams the bar down.

LUCAS

Okay, hit the showers.

JASON

Not til I work my ABS. Then you and me are straightening that fence. It's really beginning to bother me.

LUCAS

Yes, boss.

JASON

Sarcastic.

LUCAS

Runs in the family.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE. BACK YARD - DAY

Imitating Lucas, Jason straps on the tool belt.

JASON

The idea here is to line the fence up against the plumb line, drive a support post - -

LUCAS
Very funny.

JASON
Want to hold the fence or hammer
the post?

LUCAS
(as Jason)
Neither.

JASON
Then hold the fence. I'll handle
the sledge.

Wielding the giant hammer, Jason whacks the post square on
the top.

LUCAS
Good hit!

Smacks it again.

LUCAS
Bang on!

Jason peels off his shirt, lays into the post with zeal as
Lindsay's head and shoulders appear over the fence.

LUCAS
Looks like you've got an audience.

Jason drops the hammer, flashes Lindsay a smile.

JASON
You're back.

LINDSAY
(dreamily)
Mm-hum.

Removes her sweater on a pretty summer dress. Drapes it over
the fence.

LINDSAY
I'm headed to The Sev for a coke.

Lucas gives Jason a 'what are you waiting for?' look.

LUCAS
I can handle the rest of this
myself.

Hands Jason a bank note.

LUCAS
Drinks on me.

JASON
Thanks. Mind if I borrow the car?

LINDSAY
(impressed)
You drive?

JASON
Well, ya.

Lucas glances from Jason to Lindsay, their eyes sparkling.

LUCAS
What the hell, take it. Just look
out for the You-Know-Who.

JASON
The cops, right.
(to Lindsay)
Give me ten minutes to freshen up.

Jason saunters off. Lindsay follows, leaving Lucas with an endearing smile.

LINDSAY
Thanks for lending him, Mr.
Manning.

Lucas beams.

LUCAS
Sure thing.

INT. JASON'S ROOM - DAY

Wrapped in a towel from the shower, Jason admires his physique in the mirror beside the UPRIGHT PHOTO of Lucas and his father as his cell phone rings. Notes the CALLER I.D. under a row of UNANSWERED CALLS from the same number. Picks up anyway.

JASON
Hey, dad. You're back from your
trip? Nope, didn't get any of your
messages, sorry.
(then)
Guess what, Grandad is teaching me
weight lifting and I've lost ten - -
(darkening)
Ya, I'm listening.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Lucas hammers the last nail into the arrow-straight fence. Regards Lindsay's sweater still draped over it, a reminder of the girl who wore it. Breaks into a smile.

LUCAS
Why the hell not?

INT. SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG - DAY

Lindsay and Jason dig into banana splits at the ice cream parlor. Lindsay drops a Maraschino cherry on the seat between her legs.

LINDSAY
Sorry. Hope it doesn't stain the leather.

Jason reaches between her legs to pick it out. Pops it in his mouth.

JASON
What if it does?
(then)
Want to take a ride in the country?
This baby can really move when you open her up.

LINDSAY
What would your grandfather say?

Jason shrugs.

JASON
Let's find out.

With burgeoning grins, they finish their ice creams.

INT. THE FOAMY STEIN - DAY

All spruced up in his airport outfit, Lucas watches Fran the waitress approach with a tray of drinks.

FRAN
Hey, Lucas - looking sharp.

LUCAS
Likewise, as always.

FRAN
Thanks. Where are your friends?

LUCAS
You mean those old guys?

FRAN
Ya, right.

Sets down a mini glass of beer.

FRAN
Sampler of a new lager we're
featuring.

Lucas dips his lips. Savors the flavors.

LUCAS
Tastes like honey.

FRAN
That's what it's called - Spring
Honey. Straight from the bee. Like
it?

LUCAS
I'll say.

FRAN
Back in a flash for your order.

LUCAS
Sure thing.

Lucas admires her departure to a NEARBY TABLE where DOUG, 40,
laughs it up with two middle age friends. OVERHEARS the
repartee as Fran lays out their drinks.

DOUG
When do you get off work?

FRAN
When does your wife get home?

DOUG
Never. We split up five years ago.

FRAN
Then it's a date.

The men cackle at the sexy banter. Doug hands Fran a bank
note.

DOUG
Keep the change.

FRAN

Thanks.
(a wink)
Tonight then.

Lucas watches the young waitress return to the bar. Takes stock of himself, all gussied up in a beer ad mirror. Chuckles at his own expense. Slips a five dollar bill under his free sample. Ducks out of the bar.

EXT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucas strolls up the sidewalk in his fancy clothes. Espies the Shelby Cobra in the drive, besmirched with mud and dust. Closing in, beholds a PEBBLE CRACK in the windshield.

LUCAS

Goddamn kid.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucas enters.

LUCAS

Jason!? Where'd you go cruising, a gravel pit?

Hears LAUGHTER coming from upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS - DAY

Lucas follows the laughter to his closed bedroom door. Sniffs the air around it. Recognizes the aroma.

INT. LUCAS' BEDROOM - DAY

Lucas bursts in on Jason and Lindsay, sprawled on his bed in their underwear, sharing a joint; between them, Lucas' shoebox of photographs.

LUCAS

The hell is going on here?

JASON

Hey Gramps.

LINDSAY

Want a toke?

The youngsters dissolve into laughter. Jason holds up a photo of a YOUNG DIANA DECKER posing half naked on Lucas' bed.

JASON

She the one you left my dad and
grandma for?

Controlling his rage, Lucas addresses Lindsay.

LUCAS

You'd better leave now, young lady.

The girl scrambles out of the room with her clothes.

LINDSAY

(to Jason)
Call me.

Lucas looms over Jason.

LUCAS

How dare you snoop through my
personal belongings.

JASON

(re: photo)
Think I give a shit?

Lucas snatches the photo from Jason's hand.

LUCAS

Give me the car keys.

Jason tosses them over.

JASON

Your precious keys to your precious
car.

LUCAS

I think it's time you went home
now.

Jason leaps off the bed, hastily dressing as he talks.

JASON

And where would that be?

LUCAS

Back to your father, who raised you
to be a rude, disrespectful punk!

JASON

Not possible.

LUCAS

Like hell it's not. This was a temporary arrangement, conditional on my mood and your behavior, and you just crossed the line, big time.

JASON

He's sold the house.

Lucas takes a moment to register.

LUCAS

Who has?

JASON

The guy who raised me to be a rude, disrespectful punk. Took a whole minute from his busy day to lay out his plan.

(mimicking)

Hey Buddy, your mom's moving in with a friend, I'm shacking up with my mistress, and you're shipping off to a good, reputable school that's costing me a pile of money so you'd better appreciate it.

(back to normal)

So you see, Granddad, there's no home to send me back to.

As Jason storms from the room.

LUCAS

Jason, wait!

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

Rushing out, Lucas glimpses Jason racing off on his bike. Hastens to his car.

INT. SHELBY COBRA MUSTANG - DAY

Lucas races up a street, eyes peeled for Jason. Accelerates up another empty street. Turning a corner with a screech, spots May and Martin rocking on their porch. Stops, rolls down the window.

LUCAS

Hey, Martin. Happen to see a boy ride by on a bike?

MARTIN

Sure did.
 (pointing)
 Moving like the devil he was.

Lucas squints up the road. Spots BLUE/RED LIGHTS flashing ominously in the distance. Steps on the gas.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

The Shelby Cobra skids to a halt. A panicked Lucas leaps out. Elbows through a crowd circling an accident victim. Discovers a PARAMEDIC performing CPR on an OLD MAN lying on the sidewalk. Sighs relief.

LUCAS

(to himself)
 Thank you, God.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucas keeps vigil by the window. Throws himself on the suddenly ringing phone.

LUCAS

Hello, yes?! Nancy? Oh he is, is he? Well you can tell him he can come back when he's ready to respect my ...
 (then)
 Just tell him to come back when he's ready.
 (then)
 And Nancy. I really am sorry about Jack. He was a good man. And you're a damn good neighbor. Bye for now.

Lucas hangs up. On impulse, picks up the phone again. Dials out.

INT. CODY MOORE'S CONDO - NIGHT

Ethan smokes in bed, attentive not to wake Cody asleep beside him. His phone chimes. He snatches it up.

ETHAN

(a whisper)
 Hello?

LUCAS (V.O.)

Do you know your son smokes dope?

ETHAN

What?

Ethan slips out of bed, sneaks into THE BATHROOM with the phone.

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION - ETHAN AND LUCAS

LUCAS

Caught him red-handed.

ETHAN

Doing what?

LUCAS

Smoking dope!

Ethan drags on his cigarette.

ETHAN

Ya, so?

LUCAS

Your son uses an illegal substance that's unhealthy and makes you stupid and all you have to say is so?

ETHAN

No it doesn't.

LUCAS

Doesn't what?

ETHAN

Make you stupid.

LUCAS

Doesn't make you smart.

ETHAN

Every kid takes the odd puff. It's not like he's a crack head.

LUCAS

So you condone it?

ETHAN

I do not condone it. I just don't condemn it.

LUCAS

Then you condone it.

ETHAN

No more than you did with me.

LUCAS

I never condoned it.

ETHAN

You never knew about it!

LUCAS

How could I have?!

ETHAN

Good point - you weren't there!

Ethan flings his cigarette in the toilet.

ETHAN

So what is it, Lucas? You didn't call me up in the middle of the goddamn night to tell me Jason smoked a marijuana cigarette.

Lucas steels himself.

LUCAS

You're making a mistake, son.

Ethan grips the bathroom sink.

ETHAN

Is this really happening? Have you sincerely phoned to give me fatherly advice?

LUCAS

I wish I'd had someone to give it to me.

ETHAN

Ya, you had it tough - he died.

LUCAS

Let's not go there.

ETHAN

You just did.

LUCAS

Okay, I retract. Is it fixable is the question.

ETHAN

Is what fixable?

LUCAS
The problem.

ETHAN
What problem?

LUCAS
How should I know - with your wife!

ETHAN
Was yours with mom?

LUCAS
That was - -

ETHAN
Different?

LUCAS
A long time ago! Look, all I'm
saying - -

ETHAN
I don't give a fuck what you're
saying! Not now, Lucas! Not after
thirty years of nothing!

Knocked down, Lucas comes up meekly.

LUCAS
Jason's a good kid, Ethan. Don't - -

ETHAN
I will take care of my son.

LUCAS
What's that supposed to mean? I
supported you, didn't I?

ETHAN
Supported?

LUCAS
Food, clothes, tuition. You know,
supported.

ETHAN
Not how mom tells it.

LUCAS
What?! What did she - - Fuck that
bitch!

ETHAN

That's my mother you're referring to.

LUCAS

I paid, damn-it! Whether I had it or not I paid!

ETHAN

All right, so you paid! What do you want - gratitude, love, a Father's Day card?!

LUCAS

All right, Ethan. I guess I deserve that. Now back to Jason.

ETHAN

Not that it's any of your business, I'm sending him to Military College.

LUCAS

You're what?

ETHAN

He steals my car. Goes joy riding against my direct orders. Busts up the fender. Serves me right for buying an automatic, I guess, but he's got no respect. No discipline. Military college teaches that. Thought you'd approve.

LUCAS

Fuck discipline! He's got discipline. Got respect. What he needs is - -

ETHAN

What, Lucas? A father? You stepping to the plate? Picking up where you left off?

LUCAS

Let it go, can't you?

ETHAN

I have let it go! So spare me the benefit of your paternal wisdom, Old Man, cause I don't want it, don't need it, and it's too fucking late!

Ethan cuts off the call. Lucas bellows into the dead receiver.

LUCAS
Vindictive son of a bitch!

Defeated, old, Lucas sinks down on the couch.

INT. CODY MOORE'S CONDO. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ethan leans on the sink, drained from the fight with his father. The door opens on Cody, in tears.

CODY
Ethan? I'm sorry but I can't do this anymore.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lindsay steals down the stairs in the dark. Whispers to Jason, bedded down on the living room couch.

LINDSAY
Coast is clear. Come on up.

JASON
Your grandmother said I should sleep here on the couch.

LINDSAY
Ya, so?

JASON
I want to respect her rules.

LINDSAY
Okay.

Clever girl, she wedges in beside him on the couch.

LINDSAY
Jason sleeps on couch.

JASON
I don't think this is what she had in mind.

Lindsay places her hand on Jason's knee.

LINDSAY
How about this?

JASON
I very much doubt it.

Slides it up to his mid-section.

LINDSAY
This then?

JASON
I'm quite sure not.

Springs up from the couch. Glares at the steadfast boy.

LINDSAY
Rules!

Tramps back upstairs.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

Lucas watches TV, face locked in a mighty scowl.

ON SCREEN

Martha struts on stage of the TANYA TALKS SHOW in a corporate power suit with PUSH UP BRA. Thrusts out her book, A LIFETIME OF OPPRESSION, as if defending herself, to tremendous applause from the audience.

Takes her seat beside TANYA, 30's, ponytail, no-nonsense clothes.

TANYA
Well. That was quite the entrance, Ms. De la Roche. Tell us about your book.

MARTHA
Well, Tanya, A Lifetime of Oppression is a scrapbook of media constructs forced upon me by our sexist, male-dominated culture.

TANYA
Let's see some of these media constructs.

Flashing on screen, a studio photo of MARTHA, 20, stunning in a LOW CUT wedding gown beside LUCAS, 25, slim and dapper in a rented tux.

MARTHA (V.O.)

I call this one The Blushing Bride.
Note the emphasis on my breasts.

The screen switches to PREGNANT MARTHA in a frilly pink dress; beside her, LUCAS, sporting the beginnings of a beer gut, toasts us with a cold one.

MARTHA (V.O.)

This one's called Baby Time. Mark the humiliating outfit I was forced to wear in my role as Procreating Machine.

The screen flips to attractively chubby MOTHER MARTHA in a Marylyn Monroe bathing suit, gazing into the camera beside BABY ETHAN in a motel wading pool.

In the background, pot-bellied in too small swim trunks, LUCAS sucks on a beer.

LUCAS (O.S.)

Fuck, Martha.

MARTHA (V.O.)

And my personal favorite: The Dutiful Mother. Notice my breasts in their dual function of suppliers of milk and male fantasy, forced into oppressive little cups, the consummate symbol of my physical, mental, and psychosexual subjugation.

BACK TO TANYA TALKS STUDIO

Martha basks in the THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. Tanya cuts it short:

TANYA

So why wear them?

MARTHA

(off guard)
Excuse me, what?

TANYA

The oppressive little cups. Seems like a personal choice. I mean, who, precisely, was forcing you?

LUCAS (O.S.)

Good question, Martha - that lifeguard you were flirting with?

MARTHA

Why, Tanya, I always thought you
were one of us.

Tanya gives Martha a look, turns to the camera.

TANYA

We're going to take a short,
commercial break.

Holds up a pamphlet of an A WOMAN in traditional African
clothes, surrounded by smiling ORPHAN CHILDREN.

TANYA

When we return, Liberian public
health nurse and abortion rights
activist Sarifina Chibueze - -

MARTHA

(outraged)
Your generation just doesn't
understand!

The scene switches to a soap commercial.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE - SAME

Lucas clicks off the TV.

LUCAS

Oh they understand, Martha! You bet
your surgically enhanced ass they
understand!

Catches sight of Jason framed in the doorway.

JASON

You and Grandma looked pretty good
in that first shot.

Ashamed of his remark about the boy's grandmother.

LUCAS

Thanks.
(then)
You had me worried last night.

JASON

I slept at Lindsay's grandma's
place.
(then)
On the couch.

LUCAS
Okay. Had breakfast?

Jason shakes his head.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Lucas serves Jason a plate of natural foods.

JASON
Wow. Real fruit. Fresh bread.

LUCAS
Baked it myself.
(then)
Just kidding. Dig in.

Jason just stares at his plate.

LUCAS
You lack your usual gustatory zeal.

JASON
Just not hungry.

LUCAS
If it's because of yesterday, I'm
sorry, I've got a lousy temper.

JASON
You had every reason. I'll pay for
the windshield.

LUCAS
Forget it. It's just a car. So
what's the matter?

JASON
It's my birthday.

Lucas lowers his eyes.

LUCAS
Oh. I ... You should have said
something.
(then)
Did your father ...

JASON
The subject never came up.

Nods at the hurtful oversight, then - -

LUCAS
Why not invite Lindsay out?
Celebrate a bit. My treat.

JASON
What about you?

LUCAS
Three's a crowd, Bud, especially as
concerns women, believe me on that
one.

JASON
I mean just you. And me. Like for
dinner. In a restaurant, maybe.

Moved by the offer, Lucas throws in a twist.

LUCAS
How about a tavern?

JASON
I'm only turning sixteen.

LUCAS
Sixteen? Hell, I was a veteran bar
fly by sixteen. Besides, you could
pass for twenty now that you're
standing up straight.

Jason breaks a smile.

JASON
All right, then, a tavern.

LUCAS
But first we get you that driver's
license. Really give us something
to celebrate.

JASON
Okay, cool.

LUCAS
Now eat your breakfast.

Jason digs in.

INT. BMW - DAY

Ethan, disheveled and sleep-deprived, peers through his car
windshield at his home, blighted by a SOLD sign.

EXT. ETHAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Ethan opens the gate, wanders into the yard like a wary, prospective buyer. Perches forlornly on a bench under an ancient tree supporting a tire swing.

Janice exits the house with a bottle of wine and two glasses. Staggers over. Plunks down beside Ethan.

JANICE

What're you doing back here?
Something the matter?

ETHAN

You tell me.

Pours out the wine.

JANICE

Okay. Let's start with Jason.

EXT. LICENSE BUREAU - DAY

Lucas and Jason exit the building. Everything about them says Jason passed.

LUCAS

Let's see that mug shot again.

Jason whips out his license.

LUCAS

Looking good. Should've told them
you're eighteen - get into bars,
impress the girls.

JASON

You sort of have to prove that.

LUCAS

Whatever. Looks like you're driving
legal tonight.

JASON

Shouldn't we walk?

LUCAS

Walk?

JASON

Since we're going to a tavern and
all.

LUCAS
Walk. Right. Good thinking.

EXT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

The Cobra coasts into the drive. Jason exits driver's side, Lucas, passenger. Start down the sidewalk on foot. Jason tosses the keys to Lucas.

JASON
Don't forget your keys.

Lucas tosses them back to Jason.

LUCAS
You hang onto them.

INT. THE FOAMY STEIN - DAY

Lucas and Jason enter the crowded bar, scan for an empty table. Suddenly - -

LARRY (O.S.)
Hey Lucas!

LUCAS
Shit.

Lucas waves meekly to Larry, Fred, and Qasim, holding court at their usual table.

JASON
Friends of yours?

LUCAS
Drinking buddies. Look, we'll say a quick hello and move on. Whatever you do, do not sit down.

JASON
Right.

INT. LARRY, FRED AND QASIM'S TABLE - DAY

Sporting a fake smile, Lucas arrives with Jason in tow.

QASIM
Lucas, you old dog.

FRED
Thought you died.

Clearly, they've already had a few.

LUCAS
Hey, fellas. Not your usual time.

FRED
Thought we'd shake things up a bit.

LARRY
Get out of the rut.

QASIM
And who is your friend?

LUCAS
My grandson. Jason.

QASIM
The fellow in the photo?
(re: Jason)
Appears older than twelve to me.

LARRY
Ya, what's with that?

Lucas shrugs in way of explanation.

LARRY
(to Jason)
Hi, I'm Larry. This here is Qasim
and Fred.

JASON
Pleased to meet you.

LUCAS
Well, we really ought to ...

LARRY
Okay.

FRED
We get it.

QASIM
Embarrassed to know us.

As Lucas squirms:

JASON
Actually, we're out celebrating my
birthday.

QASIM
You don't say? How old?

JASON
Sixteen.

LARRY
Wow, sixteen.

QASIM
Now how good is that?

FRED
I remember when I was sixteen.

LARRY
No you don't.
(to Jason)
Allow me to buy you your first
drink.

FRED
Of the night, that is.
(an aside)
Like it's his first drink.

LUCAS
Look, fellas, we were just - -

LARRY
(to the bar)
Hey, Fran! Swing on over.

JASON
(to Lucas)
Just one drink. We don't want to be
rude.

FRED
Hey, manners.

QASIM
(re: Lucas)
Unlike someone we know.

LARRY
Damn sight better looking, too.
(to Jason)
Have a seat, Pal.

Fran arrives in her trademark jeans and Foamy Stein T-shirt
with make up value added.

FRAN

Hey Lucas. What happened to you the other day? I came back, you weren't there.

LUCAS

Well, I ...
(to the gawking men)
What?

QASIM

What indeed.

LARRY

We're dying to know.

LUCAS

Just put in the order.

LARRY

(to Fran)
A pitcher of beer and four clean glasses, please and thank you.
(to Lucas)
Will you be joining us?

LUCAS

Do I have a choice?

LARRY

(to Fran)
Make that five clean glasses.

FRAN

(to Jason)
You one of the five?

JASON

It's my birthday.

FRAN

Let me guess - eighteen?

JASON

I'm short for my age.

Fred, Qasim, and Larry guffaw at the unintentional innuendo.

LARRY

He must mean his Grandfather.

FRAN

Funny.

(to Jason)

You're just the right size, kid.

The three jokers emit an evocative WOOH sound.

LARRY

(to Jason)

Hear that? She thinks you're the right size.

FRAN

All right, knock it off boys.

(to Jason)

Eighteen, eh? Okay, I'll take your word for it - tonight. A pitcher and five clean glasses, coming right up.

(to Jason)

Watch they don't get too drunk.

QASIM

Yes, Mistress Fran.

FRED

Whoo-hoo!

LARRY

Marry me!

Fran rolls her eyes, heads for the bar.

FRED

Now there goes a great barmaid and one hell of a woman.

LARRY

She'll rip the cock right off you.

LUCAS

Lawrence - inappropriate.

LARRY

Ease up, man.

JASON

It's just in fun, Granddad.

LARRY

Right on, kid. What is it you youngsters say when someone's got a stick up his ass?

JASON
Chill out?

LARRY
That's it.
(to Lucas)
Chill out.

FRED
Ya, loosen up.

QASIM
Take a pill.

LUCAS
(to Jason)
That woman is too old for you and
too young for us, so let's just
forget it.

FRED
Since when?

LUCAS
Just keep it clean, gentlemen.

QASIM
Right.

FRED
Clean.

LARRY
Like a virgin's honey pot.

LUCAS
I'm warning you, Lawrence.

LARRY
(a shrug)
You wanted clean.
(to Jason)
Now, Waitress Fran there is what
you'd call a cougar.

JASON
What's a cougar?

Lucas throws up his arms in defeat.

LARRY

A cougar? Let me tell you. A cougar is a female of the two legged variety ranging some ten to fifteen and in some cases twenty or more years older than her young male prey.

(to Lucas)

Clean enough for you?

(to Jason)

Now given your relative ages, I'd say that works out pretty damn good, for the both of you, in case you're interested, know what I mean?

Jason gestures towards Fran, standing above them with a tray of drinks and an evil eye.

LARRY

(reddening)

Fran, hi. That was fast.

Fran bangs down the beer and glasses, and an additional six shots of whiskey. Picks one up herself.

FRAN

Shots are on the house.

(to Jason)

Happy birthday, kid, and don't believe a word these old buggers tell you.

FRED

Damn right.

LARRY

Ya, we're all divorced!

The men crack up. Even Lucas breaks a smile.

EVERYONE TOGETHER

Happy birthday!

All knock back their drinks, slam the empties on the table.

FRED

Another round - my shout!

LUCAS

No more for us.

(to Jason)

Beer is fine, in moderation, but go very easy on the hard stuff.

LARRY
Who is this guy?

FRED
Beats me.

QASIM
What a drip.

FRED
(to Fran)
All right, three more shots.
(re: Lucas)
Grandpa here's got to get to bed
early.
(then)
Did he really stand you up?

FRAN
Just drink your beer.

LUCAS
(to Jason)
Since you've chosen to drink
alcohol, it's advisable to coat
your stomach with protein and
carbs.

JASON
Keeps the blood sugar up, I know.

QASIM
See, he knows.

FRED
It's not his first drink.

LUCAS
(to Fran)
Bring my grandson here a Steak
House Platter, extra fries, and a
coke, please.

LARRY
And a pack of beer nuts for us.

FRED
Ya, the blood sugar type.

QASIM
Meanwhile, let us drink!

The men chug it back. By way of example, Lucas takes a small sip.

INT. FOAMY STEIN. PARTY TABLE - NIGHT

The remains of the food order litter the table. Gathered around Jason, the drunken men offer life advice over a fresh pitcher of beer.

LARRY

Fuck the rules.

FRED

Fuck what people think.

QASIM

Fuck middle class morality.

FRED

Three quarters sour grapes and jealousy.

LARRY

Fuck it.

QASIM

Just look after the other quarter: friends, family - things that matter.

LARRY

Meanwhile, get it while you can cause it goes by awful fast, kid, and then all you're left with are regrets, an empty wallet, and a body that don't work.

FRED

Damn right.

LARRY

Ya, I got regrets.

QASIM

I owe money.

LARRY

Fred here's got a limp dick.

The men crack up at Fred's expense. Lucas watches, proud of how Jason and his friends are getting on. A little off the mark, he jumps in.

LUCAS

Like them, sure. Want them, who doesn't? But never, ever love them.

Do that and you're dead in the water.

Repelled by the remark, Jason averts his eyes. Spots two UNDERCOVER MALL COPS scanning the premises.

JASON
(to the men)
Police.

LARRY
What?

QASIM
Where?

Spirits his beer glass under the table. Too late, they've spotted him.

JASON
Coming this way.

LUCAS
Shit.

Closing in, officers TATE, near retirement, and his rookie partner, MURPHY, pull out their badges.

OFFICER TATE
Officers Tate and Murphy - Mall security.
(to Jason)
Let's see some I.D. cut

Jason indicates his untouched soft drink.

JASON
I'm drinking coke.

LARRY
I'll vouch for that.

FRED
Ya, coke.

QASIM
Straight no chaser.

OFFICER TATE
What about the beer glass under the table?

JASON
Belongs to a friend of ours. He
went for a piss.

Larry, Qasim, and Fred grin at Tate.

LARRY
Leaky bladder.

QASIM
(chummy)
You know what it's like.

Seeing what they're up against, the cops give each other 'the
nod'.

OFFICER TATE
(to Jason)
Your I.D, son. Now.

JASON
I left it at home.

OFFICER TATE
Then we'll have to talk to the
waitress.

LUCAS
Leave her out of it. I bought him
the beer. From the bar. Waitress
had nothing to do with it.

LARRY
Ya, me too.

QASIM
I also bought a round.

FRED
We all did.

OFFICER TATE
Then you're all going to have to
leave the premises.

JASON
Can they at least finish their
beers?

The men burst into laughter.

LARRY
You got balls, kid.

OFFICER TATE

I mean now! Or I'm charging you all
with procuring alcohol for a minor!
That's a five thousand dollar fine,
each!

Qasim, Fred, and Larry jump to their feet.

QASIM

Time we were going.

FRED

(to Jason)

Great party, Jay.

LARRY

See you around, Luc.

The threesome scramble for the exit. Standing his ground,
Lucas sips his beer.

OFFICER TATE

(to Jason)

On your feet, boy.

LUCAS

Easy, man. Why so aggressive? Take
a double hit of Viagra this
morning?

Tate looks ready to burst a capillary.

OFFICER TATE

You two related?

LUCAS

He's my grandson.

Tate eyes Lucas with disgust.

OFFICER TATE

First rate role modeling.

Lucas swallows the remark, and the last of his beer.

LUCAS

(to Jason)

You about ready?

JASON

Sure. Don't much care for the
company.

Rising, Lucas and Jason mosey to the exit like a couple of Gary Coopers.

EXT. FOAMY STEIN - NIGHT

Emerging from the bar, Jason doubles over in laughter.

JASON

Shit, Granddad, that was sick! Did you see his face? Double hit of Viagra. You told him! Fuck did you tell him!

LUCAS

Dickweed had it coming. But careful about mouthing off to the law. Never know what they're apt to do.

JASON

Don't mouth off to the law, check. First rate role modeling there, Granddad.

Inserts his ear buds.

JASON

So where are your friends?

LUCAS

Forget them. What are you listening to now?

JASON

The Floyd.

LUCAS

The who?

JASON

No, The Pink. Early seventies. The Who's another group.

LUCAS

I know who Pink Floyd are. I just didn't know you did.

JASON

Check out my play list sometime.

LUCAS

Will you be able to hear over that?

JASON
Always have. Want to get wasted?

LUCAS
I'm sorry?

JASON
Stoned? Do you want to smoke a
joint?

Instinctively, Lucas scans for the cops.

LUCAS
Why the hell not?

EXT. BEHIND THE FOAMY STEIN - NIGHT

Under cover of a dumpster, Jason holds up a joint.

JASON
Know what this is?

LUCAS
Duh? Ma-ri-ju-a-na?

JASON
Funny. It's White Spider.
Hydroponic. Extremely potent.

Jason ignites the joint, takes a modest puff, hands it to Lucas.

JASON
Go easy, it creeps.

LUCAS
Thanks for the advice.

Lucas sticks the joint between the fingers of his cupped hands, forming a makeshift pipe.

LUCAS
I grew up in The Sixties don't
forget.

Vacuums in three drags back to back. Can't hold it. Splutters out a blue cloud from his mouth and nose.

LUCAS
(re: the joint)
Take it! Take it!

Jason relieves the elder of the joint.

JASON
Ya, I heard about The Sixties.

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mouthing the words to the SOUND SCORE of TIME by PINK FLOYD, zombie-like Lucas leads Jason towards us through the dimly lite parking lot.

LUCAS
And you run and you run to catch up
with the sun but it's sinking.
Racing away to come up behind you
again.

Each wears one of Jason's earbuds.

INT. MALL - NIGHT

Lucas leads Jason through THE FOOD COURT by the earbuds as TIME plays on.

LUCAS
The sun is the same in a relative
way but you're older. Shorter of
breath and one day closer to death.

JASON
(top volume)
Granddad?! Where you going?!

Stops at TIM HORTON'S. Shouts at the startled SERVER:

LUCAS
Two dozen Tim Bits!

SERVER
An assortment or would you like to
choose?

Deaf to all but PINK FLOYD's TIME, Lucas screams back:

LUCAS
What?!

JASON
(to the server)
An assortment, please.

Fumbling for his wallet, Lucas drops it. Jason picks it up. Enunciates to Lucas.

JASON
I am taking ten dollars. Do you
want to leave a tip?

Lucas stares at him uncomprehendingly.

LUCAS
Two dozen Tim Bits!

INT. FOOD COURT - LATER

Lucas and Jason wander through the food court, stuffing Tim Bits into their mouths. Are overtaken by a gang of SENIORS mall-walking in identical track suits.

LUCAS
(re: Seniors)
If you ever catch me doing that, do
me a favor - shoot me.

JASON
Got it.

Stop to observe a sullen couple and their pubescent son silently masticating pizza. Lucas releases a loud, unintentional FART.

Spots off duty Officers Tate and Murphy eating fast food hamburgers. Snaps to attention, salutes.

LUCAS
Officer stick-up-the-ass-
authoritarian-control-freak
requests permission to stuff his
fat face, sir!

Tate stares daggers at Lucas. Jason hastens him off by the elbow.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Jason guides Lucas home through their neighborhood.

JASON
Next time I say 'go easy', go easy.

LUCAS
(mimicking Tate)
And I mean now! Or I'm charging you
all with procuring alcohol for a
minor!

JASON

Tone it down, will you - the neighbors.

LUCAS

Fuck the neighbors! Bunch of working class bourgeois Yuppy wannabees.

(stops)

Wait now.

JASON

What?

Lucas stumbles off towards his house.

LUCAS

Follow me.

Jason does.

EXT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

In the middle of the street, Lucas brandishes the old wooden baseball bat in a make-believe batter's box.

LUCAS

Ninth inning, bases loaded. Yogi Berra steps to the mound.

Down the street, Jason stands ready with the mitt.

JASON

Sure this is a good idea?

LUCAS

And here comes the pitch.

Lucas tosses the ball, fans the air with a mighty swing.

JASON

Strike one.

Lucas chases down the roll-away ball. Hurries back to the mound.

LUCAS

Yogi taps his cleats, spits tobacco juice, assumes his classic stance. A hush falls over the crowd. The pitcher winds up, fires off a sizzling hardball.

Lucas tosses the ball, swings, connecting with a solid WHACK.

LUCAS

A hit!

(re: the ball)

And it's going, it's going, it's - -

A CRASH of shattering glass cuts off his play-by-play.

LUCAS

Gone. Shit.

(to Jason)

Get inside!

Neck and neck, they bolt to the house.

INT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucas and Jason pile into the house. Slam the door shut. Stuff the bat and mitt in the closet, flop down in laughter on the living-room couch.

JASON

We are in deep shit.

LUCAS

I don't think anyone saw us.

JASON

Who else would play baseball in the pitch dark in this neighborhood but a nutcase like you?

Lucas considers it.

LUCAS

You're right, we're in deep shit.

JASON

Knee deep.

Lucas slaps Jason on the back, hoists himself up.

LUCAS

Back in a jiffy.

Stumbles off, returning momentarily with two open beers.

JASON

I could've gotten them.

LUCAS

Next round.

Lucas flops back down, spilling some beer on the couch.

JASON

Oh no, beer stains on the couch!
Quick, get the Lysol!

Lucas cracks up at the bald impersonation. Spills another shot on purpose.

LUCAS

Missed a spot.

JASON

That's twenty cents worth of beer!

LUCAS

We'll cut back on fresh fruit.

As the hilarity subsides, Lucas sips his beer. Jason starts peeling the label off his bottle.

JASON

My dad doesn't give a shit about me.

LUCAS

That's not true.

JASON

You don't know my dad.
(then)
Okay, maybe you do.

LUCAS

He really that bad?

JASON

Not always. Actually, he was a good father.

LUCAS

And then he wasn't?

Jason nods.

JASON

Not like your dad, by the sounds of it.

LUCAS

Mine?

JASON

The guy in the photo. Seemed like a pretty great guy.

LUCAS

The truth be told, aside from that time at the ballpark before he died, he could be a real jerk, same as his dad before him.

JASON

I'm sorry.

LUCAS

Just how it goes.

JASON

So what was he like?

LUCAS

My dad?

JASON

No, mine. As a kid, I mean?

LUCAS

Yours? He was a good kid.

JASON

And then he wasn't?

Lucas slugs some beer, gathers his thoughts.

LUCAS

I made my mistakes. I'm not saying I didn't.

JASON

Is that why you two don't get along so good? Cause you have so much in common?

Takes another slug.

LUCAS

Guess you could see it that way. I figure we just never were that close. Anyway, doesn't much matter. He's a grown man now, with his own life, his own problems.

JASON

So how about me staying here with you for a while?

LUCAS
How's that?

JASON
I'm asking if I can live with you?
Til my dad works things out?

Despite himself, Lucas' heart hardens.

LUCAS
You mean screws around with his new
girlfriend. No obligations, no
worries. Free and easy. Well too
bad for him, Bud. You're his
responsibility. He's your father,
after all.

Jason recoils.

JASON
You're right. Thanks for the beers.

Bolts upstairs.

Lucas takes in the suddenly too quiet room. Shakes his head
in disgust with himself.

LUCAS
Idiot.

Reaches into a cabinet for a liquor bottle. Slugs back a
shot. Lowers the needle on a gone lonesome blues type HANK
WILLIAMS record. Slugs another shot.

INT. JASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

As the Hank Williams song drifts upstairs, Jason SLAMS the
photo of Lucas and his father face down on the bed table.
Retrieves his duffel bag from the closet. Yanks open the
clothes drawer. Starts pulling out his clothes.

INT. LUCAS' HOUSE - DAY

Lucas awakens on the couch with a groan. Winces at the sight
of the empty liquor bottle. Coaxes the last drops down his
throat. Stumbles off into - -

THE KITCHEN where Jason sits, sipping coffee. Affects a
casual air.

LUCAS
Morning.

Pours out a coffee. Eyes Jason's packed duffel bag.

LUCAS
Quite a night.

JASON
Ya.

Lucas takes a sip, scalding his lip.

LUCAS
Damn-it! When will I learn?
(looking for an 'in')
Want some breakfast?

Jason shakes his head.

LUCAS
I hear you. Wouldn't want to stare
down a plate of eggs myself this
morning.
(re: duffel bag)
Going somewhere?

JASON
Bus station.

LUCAS
Still plenty of time before school
starts.

JASON
What's the point?

A door is closing, and Lucas knows it.

LUCAS
Hope you're not leaving cause of
anything I said last night. Cause
if you're still interested - -

JASON
Thanks, but it all makes sense now:
you abandoning your family, my
father abandoning his.

Pride slams the door shut.

LUCAS
If that's how you feel, I'll drive
you to the station now. Just give
me a minute to freshen up. You warm
up the car. You've got the keys, if
memory serves.

Lucas walks off.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Lucas douses his face. Examines his haggard visage in the mirror.

LUCAS
Where to now, Lucas?

INT. JASON'S ROOM - DAY

Lucas peers into the abandoned room. Espies the photo of himself and his father laying face down on the bureau. Picks it up. Glass shards CRASH to the floor.

INT. LUCAS' BEDROOM - DAY

Buttoning up a clean shirt, Lucas hears the Shelby Cobra SPUTTER. Peers out the window at Jason in the driver's seat, cranking the ignition. Calls out:

LUCAS
Easy on the choke, you're flooding
it!

Jason grips the steering wheel. Slams his head against the horn, once, twice, three times.

LUCAS
(to himself)
Easy, kid.

Jason leaps from the car with the keys. Takes his stand under Lucas, framed in the upstairs bedroom window.

JASON
Fuck your instructions! Fuck your
car! And fuck you! I'll walk to the
fucking bus station!

Hurls the keys at Lucas, which hit the window, leaving a CRACK in the glass before falling into the bushes below. Lucas examines the damage to the window.

LUCAS
You'll pay for this one, Bud!

EXT. LUCAS'S HOUSE - DAY

Lucas storms out, oblivious to Nancy and Lindsay watching from behind a baseball-sized hole in her porch window. Addresses Jason, sitting on the curb with his back to him.

LUCAS
Get the keys, please.

JASON
Fuck you.

Summons his authority.

LUCAS
I mean now. Ethan!

JASON
That's Jason.

Covering his blunder, Lucas loses his cool.

LUCAS
Spiteful, disobedient, ungrateful punks - the both of you!

JASON
That's right, Grampa! Never, ever love them! Damn good advice you gave at the bar last night, thank you very much, sir!

Lindsay makes a move to intervene. Nancy lays a restraining hand on her arm.

NANCY
It's none of our business.

Lucas backs off from Jason's rage.

LUCAS
What about me?

Reaches under the bushes for the car keys. Espies SOMETHING ROUND buried halfway in the earth. Uses the key to exhume a moldy old BASEBALL. Shoots a look of comprehension at his CRACKED BEDROOM WINDOW above.

INT. LUCAS' BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - THIRTY YEARS AGO

MIDDLE AGED LUCAS and YOUNG DIANA DECKER make ardent love on Lucas' king sized bed. Lucas chokes out the words:

LUCAS

I love - -

As a speeding BASEBALL cracks the bedroom window glass, falls into the bushes below, putting an abrupt end to their love-making.

Lucas bounds to the window in time to see A BOY, 15, escaping into the darkness on a bike.

BACK TO PRESENT

Lucas gazes at the moldy old baseball, covered in the faded signatures of Yogi Berra and a host of long gone baseball stars; among the celebrity names, the words ETHAN and DAD etched in a child's large print.

Lucas' face contorts as he fights back the tears.

LUCAS

Stupid. Old. Man.

Studies Jason sitting with his back to him on the curb. Lumbers over to the car to retrieve the duffel bag. Lugs it over to Jason.

LUCAS

Coming in?

Jason looks up to behold Lucas with outstretched hand.

LUCAS

Forgive me. Please. And stay. For as long as you want.

JASON

You mean it?

LUCAS

Like I never meant anything before in my life. Now let's get inside before the whole goddamn neighborhood sees us.

Jason accepts Lucas' hand. Hoists himself up. Takes one end of the duffel bag. Lucas, the other. Together they carry it to the house.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

A FLIGHT ATTENDANT addresses a smart-looking ETHAN, last one to board the plane, gazing at his cell phone.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Your flight is about to leave, sir.

ON ETHAN'S PHONE SCREEN: a selfie of Lindsay, Jason, Nancy and Lucas smiling into the camera.

Ethan hands the attendant his ticket and passport. She checks him off the list.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Have a great trip, Mister Manning.

Ethan smiles.

ETHAN

Thank you.

Heads down the ramp.

Above him, the DEPARTURE MONITOR reads: 'Flight 132 - Calgary to Winnipeg. Departing 11:54.'

FADE OUT