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Crossing the Tracks

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Suskie, Keaton, "Crossing the Tracks" (2015). *University Honors Theses*. Paper 143.

<https://doi.org/10.15760/honors.135>

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Crossing the Tracks

by

Keaton Suskie

An undergraduate honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts

in

University Honors

and

Film

Thesis Advisor

Karin Magaldi

Portland State University

2015

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Artist Statement	01	
Creative Process	05	
Crossing the Tracks	08	
Teaser	09	
Act 1	12	(04)
Act 2	25	(17)
Act 3	37	(29)
Act 4	49	(41)
Bibliography	62	

*(Parenthetical numbers) are script page numbers

Artist Statement

Substance abuse is a major issue all around the world. It is an issue that not only affects the abuser but also affects individuals and entire communities as well. Substance abuse is often glamorized in media and, though there are some cases where it is not, substance abuse is all too often misrepresented. In films like *Scarface* (Brian De Palma, 1983), *Pineapple Express* (David Green, 2008), or *The Wolf of Wall Street* (Martin Scorsese, 2013), substance abuse is portrayed as a good way to make money or a good way to spend money. Never in these films does substance abuse directly affect the abuser in a purely negative way. Jordan Belfort in *The Wolf of Wall Street* has a few instances where his drug abuse makes things difficult, such as when he is trying to get home from the golf club. In spite of the fact that Jordan Belfort is losing his motor skills almost completely, the scene is set up in a way that makes Jordan's overdose comical. Similarly, even though *Scarface* ends up paying with his life for his actions as a drug lord, he doesn't go down without a glorious battle and is represented as being essentially a mighty warrior. These scenes quite obviously give a false representation of what drug abuse is really like and refrain from showing any real negative effects that come directly from abusing drugs.

The issue of adolescent substance abuse is virtually ignored or, at the very least, is underrepresented in media. In a few cases where adolescent substance abuse does play a role in media, like in *Freaks and Geeks* (Paul Feig, 1999), *Friday Night Lights* (Peter Berg, 2006), or *Finding Carter* (Terri Minsky and Emily Silver, 2014), it is rarely the central issue. More often than not, the issue of adolescent substance abuse is a side concern, a subplot. I find this very interesting as often times adolescent substance abuse is a major

issue for families and communities. My family has been one of those affected by adolescent substance abuse. These experiences that my family endured as I was growing up is part of where I drew inspiration for *Crossing the Tracks*. By writing a story about adolescent substance abuse, I've tackling something that has not been completely dealt with and representing a group of people who aren't well represented in media..

Not only did I draw a lot of inspiration from my own life experiences and the experiences of people I know but I also drew a lot from *Breaking Bad* (Vince Gilligan, 2008). The character arcs of this series are precisely what I want to represent in *Crossing the Tracks* and I believe that it is these very character arcs that demonstrate the real effects of substance abuse. Though the changes of Walter White, the main character of *Breaking Bad*, are not necessarily caused by substance abuse, his changes are mostly driven by the decisions that he makes. Though the changes are not instant, and I don't think they should be, the characters slowly begin to see the world differently because of certain events. In *Breaking Bad*, Walter White is facing cancer, something that is completely out of his control. However, what ultimately brings the characters the most heartache are the decisions that the characters make or how they are affected by the decisions of others. This is what I aimed to portray in *Crossing the Tracks*. I want to show how adolescent substance abuse has both a direct effect on the abuser and how it indirectly affects those around the abuser.

I chose for the central issue behind *Crossing the Tracks* to be adolescent substance abuse because I believe that this issue deserves more attention, especially in media. It was my goal to create a show that would finally do this issue justice. Without glamorizing or

misrepresenting substance abuse, I wanted to create a show that told this universal story. I wanted to tackle this story from different angles, as not everyone's story is the same. I feel that far too often, groups of people are overgeneralized. The human race is a group of very complex creatures. To say that all substance abusers have the same issues and therefore the same overall story would be an extreme overgeneralization. This goes for the characters in my story as well. Each and every character in my story are complex people with a number of different wants, needs, and aspirations. Though the main issue of the series is adolescent substance abuse, adolescent substance abuse is only a small piece of each and every character in *Crossing the Tracks*. I feel that creating a world in this way is more representative of the world we live in. A community or family may be facing adolescent substance abuse but it's really only a small part of the abuser.

There is a scene in the script where the two main characters, Theodore and Dakota, find Theodore's brother, Sebastian, after he has overdosed on heroin. We see some of the many effects that substance abuse can have on people. The very death of Sebastian is a direct effect of using heroin. Because of this event, we will see Theodore spiral down a path that he otherwise wouldn't have gone down, had the death of Sebastian not taken place.. This is one of the indirect effects of adolescent substance abuse that I'm really trying to stress in this series. I want to show how the decisions of individuals have a strong effect on the people around them. In time, Theodore will find himself struggling with similar issues that his brother faced. The series will follow Theodore and Dakota after this experience, one that forced them to grow up too fast. The series will highlight not only their paths but also those of side characters as they cope with the realization that the world isn't exactly

what they thought it was. I believe that there comes a time in most people's lives when they begin to see things differently. The world suddenly becomes something completely different. It is this event that really begins to change the world for Theodore but it's not necessarily what keeps him going down this path. It's his very own decisions and the way that he chooses to cope with situations that affect him the most. I find that juxtaposing Theodore with Dakota will highlight that what matters most is how an individual deals with situations. Because Dakota and Theodore will have two drastically different paths, I believe that the series as a whole can be considered a commentary on coping and decision making of adolescents. Despite situations that an individual might have little to no control over, such as Walter having cancer or Theodore finding Sebastian dead, one can still maintain control over the majority of how their life plays out.

Crossing the Tracks is a story that nearly everyone can relate to in one way or another. Everybody has known someone who has abused substances. Whether it was someone who they loved dearly or just an acquaintance from high school, the issue of substance abuse has at least an indirect effect on nearly everyone at some point in their life. While maintaining the essential entertainment properties of a television series, *Crossing the Tracks* tells a story that hasn't been told in television, at least not to this extent, which is a proper representation of adolescent substance abuse.

Creative Process

The reason why I chose to create a television series is simple. It's a far too complex story. Originally, *Crossing the Tracks* started out as a short film. It essentially centered around what is now the third act of the pilot, where Sebastian is found after he has overdosed. It was a good work of art but the problem was that it was impossible to understand precisely why the characters were in their particular situation. After I decided that I wanted to offer more information about this world, I decided that *Crossing the Tracks* would work much better as a feature length film. While I was in the process of altering the story to fit the criteria of a full length movie, I realized that the best way to make these characters and the world they inhabit fully understood by an audience was to turn *Crossing the Tracks* into a television series. Making this change would allow me to open up many new doors and allow me to tell this story in much further detail. By writing the pilot of a television series I've barely scratched the surface of the world and characters of *Crossing the Tracks* and I've left room for so much more. I wouldn't be achieving the same understanding of my world or characters by writing a ten or even eighty minute film. Likewise, I wouldn't be offering the same understanding of the real people that I'm representing.

In order to make sure that the characters seemed like living, breathing people, I workshopped my script to great extent. When the script was still in the form of a short film, I had the opportunity to have the story presented to a group of people in the form of a cold reading. I was able to cast each character and though the group of people I had to choose

from was small, I was able to hear the script read aloud, something that helped immensely. Since then, and after I decided to turn *Crossing the Tracks* into a television series, I've had the opportunity to read the pilot in it's entirety with a full cast of talented actors from the school's Theater department. Not only did I have real actors to help with the process of workshopping my script but I also had a graduate student directing the actors along the way and a dramaturg to help check details about the world. During the rehearsal process, I had other writers from Portland State listen in on the rehearsals and give feedback on things that worked well. All of these rehearsals were done along with advising from Karin Magaldi, School Director and Theater program head, who has directed several productions and has numerous writing credits. Karin is also a professional dramaturg who has worked with a number of local theaters and is a member of Playwrights West. This whole rehearsal process really helped me nail down the pacing of the pilot as well as the voices of the characters. *Crossing the Tracks* has also been looked over by Thom Bray, who teaches Writing for Television classes at Portland State University. Before teaching, Thom was a writer/producer for network comedy and one hour dramatic television, as well as an actor for over 40 years in film, television, and on the stage. Thom really helped with figuring out the pacing and proper formatting of my script, while Karin really helped me to express myself through my art and allowed me to really tighten down the script so that the world made sense and that the characters felt like real people. I guess Thom helped mostly with making sure things were to industry standard while Karin helped to make sure that the story worked and that I was really expressing myself through *Crossing the Tracks*.

In the early stages of developing *Crossing the Tracks* into a pilot, I tried to do research that would help me have a better understanding of substance abuse and adolescent behavior. I looked at many psychological, sociological, and medical studies along the way but found that the most helpful information came from films and television shows, and recorded interviews with actual abusers. From films and television shows, I could see what had worked before and what hadn't worked before, such as the scenes that I've discussed from *Scarface* and *Wolf of Wallstreet*. Though these films and television shows were extremely successful and accomplish everything that they were supposed to, I could still take away from them things that I was able to do differently. Things that work in one piece don't necessarily work in another.

The whole process of rehearsing and workshopping my script was really what made the script what it is. I don't think that my vision for *Crossing the Tracks* would have been realized without those crucial procedures and the help of everyone involved.

Crossing the Tracks

By

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TEASER

INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

JASON drives his little pickup truck down a country road. THEODORE sits in the middle seat and SEBASTIAN sits in the passenger seat. Theodore is about 9 years old and Sebastian is about 13.

They drive in silence. It's peaceful and quiet. Nobody in the vehicle says a word. The country road is lined with trees and there is a creek down a hill that winds with the road.

Inside the car there are empty bags of chips and soda bottles on the floor. They've clearly been driving for a few hours. Jason concentrates on the road. Sebastian leans on his hand with his elbow resting on the truck door. Theodore watches closely as the world passes by, taking in every detail.

THEODORE
I spy with my little eye
something... green.

Theodore sits up, excited that Theodore has finally spied something.

JASON
Tree!

SEBASTIAN
Bushes!

THEODORE
Nope. Nope.

JASON
Grass!

A green car flies past them

SEBASTIAN
That car!

THEODORE
Nope.

JASON
Alright, I give up.

(CONTINUED)

SEBASTIAN
Soda bottle! Street sign

THEODORE
Nope.

SEBASTIAN
Alright, what is it?

Theodore turns around in his seat and points to the bed of the truck. There are three fishing poles and an old green tackle box.

THEODORE
Tackle box!

Sebastian turns around and throws his hands in the air.

JASON
Good one Theodore.

SEBASTIAN
Awe that's a load of crap. He
wasn't even looking that way.

Jason laughs silently to himself.

JASON
So?

SEBASTIAN
How can you spy something with your
little eye if you're not even
looking in the direction of the
thing your spying. That's against
the rules.

JASON
Maybe Theodore here's got eyes in
the back of his head... ever think
of that?

Jason smiles and rubs Theodore's head. Theodore looks up at his dad and smiles back. Sebastian goes back to resting his head on his hand.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Jason's truck drives on the dirt and rocks, just off the country road. They are now near the creek. The truck bobs up and down as it makes its way closer to the creek. Dust flies up from the ground and it makes a cloud behind the truck. Jason parks and all the boys get out.

(CONTINUED)

JASON

Alright, boys. Who's gonna be the first one to catch a fish

THEODORE AND SEBASTIAN

I am!

JASON

Alright!

The three of them make their way to the back of the truck. Jason lowers the tailgate and grabs his tackle box. He hands it to Sebastian. Jason grabs three fishing poles and hands one to Theodore.

The boys start walking towards the creek. There is a pathway down to the creek but they stop at a part where there's about a 10 foot drop off to the water. Jason opens his tackle box and attaches a lure to his pole.

JASON

Alright, boys. The key to fishing is to always be one step ahead of your prey. You've got to know where your prey is at all times. Depending on what your prey is, they'll be in all kinds of different places. Some fish like to hide in the shadows. Others don't mind the light of day. Some fish like to stay where the waters are calm. Others thrive in the chaos. The trick is knowing what your prey likes and where to find them. Then it's just waiting for them to make a mistake. If you're patient, know where your prey resides, and have the right bait... you'll have 'em hooked in no time.

Jason casts his lure into the waters below. It lands with a loud splash in the calm and shaded part of the creek. Jason hands the pole over to Theodore and begins to walk away. The bobber floats calmly in the water as Jason walks back to his truck. Sebastian sits on a rock on the cliff, attaching a lure to his pole.

ACT 1

INT. MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

AMY, Theodore, and Sebastian, who are now 13 and 17, sit in silence at a round table in the kitchen. The table is one of those that's able to separate in the middle to allow for more people to sit. The home has decor and wallpaper that looks as if it hasn't been updated since the mid 90's. Sebastian is sitting with his forehead on the table, sniffing. Theodore sits blank faced and stares at his mother. Amy's mascara is running, she pulls at her robe and wipes the black smears from her face. She looks at her now stained robe.

AMY
(Sniffling)
God damn it...

Amy stands up and refills her coffee mug from the pot that lies on the kitchen counter. She looks out the window the leaves on the trees outside are bare and the sky is grey. Amy takes a sip of her coffee, closes her eyes, and takes a deep breathe in an attempt to gather herself. She then returns to the table and sits down again.

AMY
Do you have any questions,
Theodore?

THEODORE
May I be excused?

Sebastian slams his fists on the table with a loud BANG and lifts his head. Wet streaks go from his eyes to his chin. Tears drip from his chin onto his pajama pants

SEBASTIAN
(Crying)
You don't even fucking care!

AMY
Sebastian!

SEBASTIAN
Do you?!

Sebastian waits for a response from Theodore. Once he realizes that there won't be one he stands up, sliding the chair across the linoleum floor, and storms out of the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

AMY
Don't talk to your brother like
that!

Sebastian can be heard stomping up the stairs. Theodore looks down at his hands, which lie folded on his lap.

AMY
Yes, you may be excused.

Theodore gets up, pushes in his chair, and exits the kitchen.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Theodore walks up the stairs and sees Sebastian standing above a hospital bed in one of the bedrooms. The sheets of the bed have been pulled over their grandfather's body. Sebastian looks through the pill bottles that sit on the nightstand next to the hospital bed. Sebastian picks up the pill bottle and starts to read the label. He opens the bottle and pops one of the pills. Theodore sees this but quickly heads towards his bedroom before Sebastian notices him.

INT. JONES HOUSE - DAKOTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

There is a knock at the bedroom door. DAKOTA sits in front of a tall mirror which sits on the floor and is propped up against her bedroom wall. She does her makeup and doesn't respond to the knocking.

The bedroom door opens and SUZANNE, Dakota's mother, pokes her head in.

SUZANNE
Dakota... your father's on the
other line... says he wanted to
talk to you.

DAKOTA
I'm getting ready for school.

SUZANNE
Do you want me to tell him you're
not available?

DAKOTA
That'll work.

Suzanne closes the door and Dakota continues to apply her makeup.

INT. JONES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Suzanne walks into the living room. Her hand hovers above the home phone, which lies on a end table next to the couch. Suzanne thinks about what she's going to say on the phone for a moment then picks up the phone, placing it to her ear. Her mouth lingers open as if she's going to speak and her eyes scan the room as if the words she's looking for will be written on the wall.

SUZANNE

Are you still there? Oops, you just missed her.

Dakota enters the hallway behind Suzanne. She can be seen near the front door, putting on her backpack, jacket, and shoes. Suzanne doesn't notice Dakota.

SUZANNE

No I'm not covering for her... Of course she wants to talk to you Frankie...

Dakota exits the front door, closing the door slowly so that it doesn't make a sound.

Well you know how teens are, always leaving the house without saying goodbye... I'll tell her you called.

Suzanne hangs up the phone and begins walking back towards Dakota's bedroom.

SUZANNE

Dakota! He's not on the phone anymore. I think you should really give him a chance though. He sounds like he misses you.

INT. JONES HOUSE - DAKOTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

There is a knock on the door. After a moment Suzanne pokes her head through.

SUZANNE

Dakota?

Suzanne waits for a response. When there is none she opens the door fully and steps into the room. She looks around the room for Dakota with a confused look on her face.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Amy walks from the kitchen to the bottom of the stairs. She puts her hand on the handrail and spins around it so that she's facing the upstairs.

AMY

Boys! Better hurry up. Let's try to not be late on your first day back!

Sebastian comes running down the stairs with his backpack hanging over one shoulder. Sebastian reaches the entryway and opens the front door.

AMY

Where do you think you're going?

SEBASTIAN

School...

AMY

(amused)

Not without Theodore you're not.

Sebastian rolls his eyes and leans on the doorway. Theodore starts walking down the stairs, backpack fully on.

AMY

Have a nice day boys.

Amy gives Theodore a kiss on the top of his head as he walks by.

AMY

Love you.

THEODORE AND SEBASTIAN

(unenthusiastic)

Love you too.

EXT. URBAN STREETS - DAY

Sebastian and Theodore walk down the cracked sidewalk of their neighborhood. The houses are extremely run down. A few houses look as if they've never been repainted and their lawns have never been mowed. There is even a house on the street that has boarded up windows.

Sebastian walks slightly ahead of Theodore. They walk for a while in silence. Sebastian walks looking straight ahead. He glances over his shoulder every now and again to see Theodore staring at his feet as they walk.

(CONTINUED)

SEBASTIAN
So Theodore...

Theodore looks up at the back of Sebastian's head but doesn't respond.

SEBASTIAN
You never answered that question I asked you the other day.

Theodore has a disgusted look on his face, and looks back down at his feet. Sebastian waits for a response, and looks back again to see if Theodore is paying attention. All he sees is Theodore still looking at his feet.

SEBASTIAN
Look Theodore, one of these days you're going to have to start pulling your own weight. I don't see you working on weekends to help mom pay the bills. Everybody has to do their part. And this... taking this test for me... that's your part.

Theodore doesn't respond. Theodore and Sebastian reach the high school. Sebastian turns towards the school and starts to walk away from Theodore. Theodore looks up slightly to see this.

THEODORE
Aren't you going to walk me the rest of the way?

Sebastian stops and turns around to look at Theodore.

SEBASTIAN
Aren't you going to take that test for me?

Theodore looks blankly at Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN
No? Then you better figure out how to get to school on your own. It's about time you grow up Theodore.

Sebastian turns and starts walking towards the high school. Theodore watches as his brother walks towards the high school and then continues walking down the sidewalk.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Theodore stands at his locker in the rundown hallway. He notices two boys, ANTOINE and ALEX, making hand gestures towards one another. The two boys are each standing at their lockers, about 15 feet on opposite sides of Theodore. Alex pulls a small bag of weed out from his locker and places it in the water bottle holder of another student's backpack. The student walks down the hallway and passes Antoine who grabs the bag. Antoine then does the same thing with money to a student walking the opposite direction. Alex and Antoine crack up laughing after the drug deal and walk their separate ways.

Two teachers, MR. RUSSO and MRS. CARR stand directly behind the boys, talking and laughing. Both teachers are too distracted to notice the transaction. Theodore looks at the teachers, waiting for them to intervene but they never do. After the two boys leave, Theodore closes his locker and walks away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

The classroom lights are off and there is an educational video on the reproductive system being projected. Sebastian and Giovanni sit next to each other in the back of the class. They both slouch and look extremely bored.

GIOVANNI

(Whispering)

What a stupid movie. What do they think we are? Children?

Sebastian ignores Giovanni

GIOVANNI

We already learned this shit in like 8th grade... Fuck man, enough with the STD movies.

The teacher shushes the boys.

GIOVANNI

So uh... "Seabass"... Taylor, you remember Taylor... the girl who used to sell me weed...

The teacher stands up.

HEALTH TEACHER

Mr. Giani!

Giovanni straightens up.

(CONTINUED)

HEALTH TEACHER

If you don't shut your trap, I'm going to have to send you to the office. [Beat] It's the first day back from winter break. Do we really want to start the new term out that way?

GIOVANNI

Yeah no, sorry!

The teacher sits back down and Giovanni begins to slouch again. Giovanni leans in closer to Sebastian, he whispers even more quietly this time.

GIOVANNI

Anyway, Taylor's got a cousin that works for the railroad and she told me that he told her that they're gonna be shipping a whole lot more H in. Says there's gonna be a whole lot more business-

SEBASTIAN

I've got my hands on a little bit of Oxy. Think you can sell it for me?

Giovanni gets excited and forgets that he's supposed to be quiet.

GIOVANNI

Yo man, you know I can sell that shit for you. I've moved on to some next level shit. Selling a little bit of-

The teacher stands up again.

HEALTH TEACHER

That's it! To the office Mr. Giani

GIOVANNI

Oh, come on! I was just telling "Seabass" here how interesting this movie on STD's is.

Snickering can be heard from a few of the students in the class. The teacher gives Giovanni a look -- ARE YOU STUPID?!

GIOVANNI

You know, cause this movie's bringing up some good points and all.

(CONTINUED)

HEALTH TEACHER

This is a video on the reproductive system, Mr. Giani. Get going.

Giovanni signs and begins to gather his notebooks. As he does so he points to his chest and then to Sebastian and mouths the words "I got you".

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Theodore sits down next to MICKEY and JACOB at a long table. All of the boys have lunch tray's in front of them. The food consists of Corn, Mashed Potatoes and Gravy, and Meatloaf.

MICKEY

What's up, Theo.

THEODORE

Hey guys.

Theodore's attention is drawn on Dakota, who stands in line to get lunch.

MICKEY

Can you believe this shit...
meatloaf... Merry flippin'
Christmas...

JACOB

Hey Theo, did you get everything
you wanted for Christmas?

Jacob punches Theodore in the arm. Theodore stays quiet.

JACOB

Don't play dumb. Hey Mick, you know
what I'm talking about. Don't you?

MICKEY

Aha! I heard Theodore was dreaming
of a White Christmas.

Mickey and Jacob laugh and high five

JACOB

Hey Mick. I bet Theodore had a lot
of silent nights this Christmas
break.

THEODORE

Okay give it a rest, guys.

(CONTINUED)

Mickey and Jacob go back to eating. Theodore looks at the lunch line but Dakota is no longer there. He notices Alex and Antoine at another table.

THEODORE

Did you guys by chance see Antoine and Alex in the hallway?

MICKEY

Dude, screw those guys.

THEODORE

I think they were selling weed.

MICKEY

Wouldn't surprise me. I freaking hate those guys.

THEODORE

Why?

MICKEY

Where are they?!

Mickey begins looking around the Cafeteria. He spots them in a large group of people sitting at a table.

MICKEY

Alright, here's a prime example. Take a look at their group.

THEODORE

Okay...

MICKEY

What do you see?

THEODORE

I see a bunch of people eating lunch.

MICKEY

What else?

Theodore continues to look at the group of people. He shrugs and looks back at Mickey. All the while, Jacob shovels large amounts of food into his mouth at an impossibly rapid pace.

MICKEY

Take a look at their shoes.

Theodore looks down at their shoes. Alex and Antoine are wearing brand new shoes. Everyone else has shitty shoes on.

(CONTINUED)

THEODORE
They're nice.

MICKY
Exactly! Screw those guys!

THEODORE
So let me get this straight...
you're upset because they got new
shoes for Christmas?

MICKY
No. What I'm upset about is that
they think they're better than
everyone else. The shoes are just
an example. Plus those two guys
have the audacity to sell weed for
more money...? Greedy!

Jacob has now finished all of his food.

JACOB
Audacity?

MICKY
Don't worry about it Jacob. Ugh
those guys disgust me.

Mickey pushes his tray forwards.

MICKY
I've lost my appetite. Hurry up and
finish eating, Theo. We'll be
outside playing ball.

Mickey and Jacob get up and exit the Cafeteria. Theodore
examines Alex and Antoine's shoes as he rolls his food
around with his fork.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - BLACKTOP - DAY

Dakota and ALISHA stand and talk while Mickey and Jacob play
basketball with a group of boys. Theodore comes out of the
school and heads towards the boys playing basketball. The
sounds of chains clinking can be heard every now and then
when someone makes a basket. Alisha notices Theodore and
starts poking Dakota in the arm.

ALISHA
There he is.

Theodore passes Dakota and Alisha without looking in their
direction.

(CONTINUED)

ALISHA
Why has he been ignoring you?

DAKOTA
I don't know.

ALISHA
He's probably embarrassed that
Mickey and Jacob always tease him
about you.

DAKOTA
Oh they do not.

ALISHA
Hey Theodore!

Theodore turns around and sees Dakota and Alisha. Alisha waves him over. He starts walking their way.

DAKOTA
What are you doing?!

ALISHA
I'm gonna ask him what his deal is.

DAKOTA
Alisha, I swear to god.

ALISHA
Calm down, calm down.

DAKOTA
If you say something stupid I'll
murder you.

Theodore reaches Alisha and Dakota.

ALISHA
Hey, Theodore.

THEODORE
What's up.

ALISHA
How was your winter break?

THEODORE
Uh... it was good.

ALISHA
That's good. Mine was good too.

(CONTINUED)

THEODORE

Hey, Dakota I've been meaning to talk to you about something. Do you think-

Mickey and Jacob run up behind Theodore and throw their arms around him. Mickey has a basketball under his arm.

MICKY

Sorry ladies. We're one man short for 5v5. You understand.

ALISHA

We most certainly don't.

JACOB

Doesn't matter. Come on Theo.

THEODORE

I'll talk to you about it later. It's no big deal anyway.

Theodore runs off with Mickey and Jacob. As they reach the basketball court, Mickey tries to dribble the ball between his legs but another kid swats it out of his hands.

ALISHA

Aha! So he's got something on his mind.

DAKOTA

I can't handle you Alisha... you're such a girl.

Dakota walks away from Alisha, who stands and watches the boys play basketball.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Two EMT's carry Amy's father's body down the stairs on a stretcher. Amy stands at the bottom of the stairs with another EMT.

EMT

So you woke up this morning and he had passed away overnight?

AMY

That's correct. We were expecting it to happen relatively soon.

(CONTINUED)

EMT

And just to clarify, those prescriptions on his nightstand were all his?

AMY

Yes, that's correct. Nobody else in this house is on any prescription.

EMT

Alright, well I think we have everything we need from you ma'am. Have a nice day.

The two EMT's carrying the stretcher exit the house. The EMT that was talking to Amy follows them, closing the front door.

AMY

Yeah... thanks...

Amy closes the front door. She leans against the door and takes a couple of deep breathes, closing her eyes in the process. She opens her eyes and fixes them on an open doorway upstairs. She walks upstairs.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - GRANDFATHERS BEDROOM - DAY

Amy stares at the now empty hospital bed. She sits down on it and picks up a picture frame that sits on the nightstand, next to a bunch of pill bottles. She looks at the pill bottles and starts to read the labels.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Amy opens a cabinet. There are a number of sticky notes on the cabinet door. The notes each say a number of different things. She drags her finger over the sticky notes and finds one that says Roger's doctor. She picks up the home phone and dials the number. She then closes the cabinet and leans on the kitchen counter.

AMY

Hello, This is Amy Marsh, Bill Williams' daughter... Yes, he passed away last night and... Well it's better this way... Thank you. The reason I really called is because I'm wondering what to do with all of his pills. He was on so many and, well... it just seems wrong to flush them... Take back programs? Great, thanks. I'll look into that.

Amy hangs up the phone, leans against the kitchen counter again and begins to rub her temples. She sighs a huge sigh.

ACT 2

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

The school bell rings. After a moment, a large group of students exit the school. Some kids are running and yelling while others walk silently. The crowd moves like a thick gas from out of the building as the crowd begins to thin out as the students move away from the doors. There are cars lined up in the parking lot, slowly moving forward and then stopping again as parents wait to pick up their children. Some of the students walk past the cars, off school grounds. Mickey and Jacob are among the large crowd. Theodore exits the school by himself and walks through the crowd. Jacob spots Theodore as he stands almost an entire foot above all of the other students. Jacob point to Theodore then leads Mickey through the crowd.

MICKEY

Hey, Theodore. Want to hangout with Jacob and I for a bit? Jacob's brother gave him a bunch of paint. We were thinking about heading over to the rail yard and spraying some of the trains.

THEODORE

I actually have to get home. I'm supposed to meet my brother anyway.

MICKEY

Really? You gotta meet up with your brother? For what?!

THEODORE

Maybe some other time, Mickey.

MICKEY

Whatever dude. Suit yourself.

Mickey and Jacob turn around and walk off. Theodore continues walking through the crowd.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Theodore walks up to the school. There is a large parking lot but only half of the parking spots are filled. There are a few students standing around the front of the school. A student stands in front of the entrance, smoking a cigarette. A teacher exits the school and walks past the

(CONTINUED)

student smoking. The teacher brushes their hand back and forth in front of their face, attempting to push the smoke away, and walks past the student without a word.

Theodore stands on the sidewalk, staring at the front doors of the school. Sebastian and Giovanni can be seen exiting the school. They walk across the parking lot towards Theodore but turn before they reach him, heading towards the street at a different angle. Theodore begins walking down the sidewalk to where their paths will cross.

THEODORE

Hey, Sebastian!

Sebastian looks at Theodore but continues walking with Giovanni. Theodore runs after him.

THEODORE

Hey, Sebastian. You're walking home with me right?

SEBASTIAN

You know how to get home.

Theodore stops walking. Sebastian and Giovanni continue.

SEBASTIAN

Where are you going?!

Sebastian doesn't respond. Theodore begins to follow them from a distance.

EXT. URBAN STREETS - DAY

Theodore is following Sebastian and Giovanni from a great distance down the sidewalk. Theodore is about one hundred yards behind the two.

SEBASTIAN

So how was the office?

GIOVANNI

Man, can you believe that bitch?
Sending me to the office?

SEBASTIAN

You did kind of throw yourself
under the bus, dude.

There is an alleyway between two run down buildings. one of the buildings has boarded up windows and seems to be abandoned or otherwise unoccupied. Sebastian and Giovanni enter the Alleyway. Theodore waits around the corner of the Alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Sebastian and Giovanni walk past a homeless man. The man sits on the ground, leaning up against the outside wall of a building. The homeless man is drinking out of a bottle in a paper bag. Theodore follows them into the alleyway, hiding behind dumpsters along the way.

GIOVANNI

How was I supposed to know the movie wasn't about STD's? I just automatically assume at this point that when a cartoon image of a vagina is on screen that we're watching a movie on STD's.

SEBASTIAN

Oh speaking of STD's, how's your girl Taylor?

GIOVANNI

Funny! What was I saying about her?

Giovanni grabs a piece of carpet off the ground and throws it on top of a chain link fence at the back of the alleyway. The homeless man notices Theodore behind the dumpster

HOMELESS MAN

(drunk)

What're you doing hiding behind that there dumpster. You know those two guys!?

Theodore looks at the homeless man and tucks behind the dumpster a little more in fear that Sebastian and Giovanni might hear the homeless man.

Sebastian and Giovanni climb over the fence. The two boys start to cross the rail yard that lies on the other side of the fence. Theodore runs up to the fence.

GIOVANNI

That's right. So yeah, my girl Taylor was telling me that they were starting to use the trains to move more H into the city. Says that they're gonna be shipping a whole hell of a lot more in. More H means more business, comprende?

Theodore stands in the alleyway, gripping the chain link fence. He watches as Sebastian and Giovanni cross the rail yard and enter an abandoned house. Theodore turns and walks back through the alleyway.

(CONTINUED)

HOMELESS MAN

Get out of here kid... you don't
know what you're getting yourself
into...

The homeless man raises his bottle as Theodore passes. The
homeless man is giving a toast.

HOMELESS MAN

To the ignorance of youth!

Theodore walks and looks down at the homeless man. The
homeless man passes out, leaning against the brick wall of
the building.

EXT. RAIL YARD - DAY

Mickey and Jacob walk through the rail yard. They approach
some box cars. A few of the box cars are tagged with
graffiti. The graffiti is all the same strange logo and in
the same bright yellow color.

MICKEY

Yo, Jacob. Get that paint out.

Jacob pulls a can of spray paint out of his backpack. He
shakes it up and tosses it to Mickey. Mickey walks along the
train, spraying a blue line continuously on all of the cars.

JACOB

Not cool man. Someone took a lot of
time practicing that logo. There's
a lot of blank cars you could have
sprayed.

MICKEY

Too bad, someone should have
practiced on a piece of paper at
home. Pretty chill of your brother
to just give you these cans of
spray paint.

JACOB

Ha, yeah...

MICKEY

He did give you this spray paint,
right?

JACOB

Yeah pretty much.

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY

What do you mean "pretty much"?

JACOB

I mean he didn't really "give" them to me. He didn't say I couldn't borrow them though.

MICKEY

Good point.

JACOB

Just as long as we don't use all of it. I'll put it back right where I found it and he'll never know. Right?

As Mickey continues to spray through all of the graffiti, the spray paint starts to sputter. The paint runs out just as Mickey is covering the last of the yellow logos.

JACOB

You did not just use the last of it...

MICKEY

Nah, man. Sometimes you gotta just give these things a good shake before it starts coming out.

Mickey starts to shake the can. He tries to spray it but nothing comes out.

JACOB

Oh you know all about giving things a good shake, don't you?

MICKEY

Sure do.

Mickey shakes the can some more and tries to spray it. Nothing comes out.

MICKEY

Well... at least we covered all this shitty art right...?

Mickey tosses the can over the train. It lands on one of the cars on another train. The sound rings out over the rail yard.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Theodore enters the house. Amy is putting on her coat.

AMY
Where's your brother?

THEODORE
I don't know.

AMY
Jesus! How many times do I have to
get on that boys ass about walking
you home? I don't like you walking
alone.

Theodore throws his backpack on the bottom step of the stairs and starts walking towards the kitchen. Amy is putting on her shoes.

AMY
There's leftover meatloaf in the
fridge Theodore. There's a head of
lettuce in the there too if you
want to make yourself a salad.
Please don't cut yourself this time
though.

Amy walks to the kitchen.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Theodore is looking in the fridge. The only things in there are milk, a pitcher of powder juice, leftover meatloaf, half of a head of lettuce, and store brand ketchup and ranch. Theodore stands there and stares at the food.

AMY
Alright, Theodore give mamma a
kiss.

Theodore closes the fridge and gives his mom a kiss on the cheek.

AMY
I'll be home by 5. I love you.

THEODORE
Love you too.

Amy grabs her purse and heads out the door. Theodore stands and stares out the window.

INT. JONES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Suzanne sits on the couch, watching the food network. She has a notebook in her hands and she is taking notes on what she sees. Dakota enters the house. Suzanne, without looking up from her notebook, addresses Dakota. Dakota is taking off her shoes and jacket.

SUZANNE
How was school?

DAKOTA
Fine.

SUZANNE
Your father called again...

DAKOTA
and..?

SUZANNE
He wants to have dinner with you tonight.

DAKOTA
and..?

SUZANNE
and I told him you'd be ready by six.

DAKOTA
Awesome...

Dakota starts dragging her feet towards her bedroom. Suzanne looks up only to look at the television.

INT. JONES HOUSE - DAKOTA'S ROOM - DAY

Dakota enters the room and grabs a book from her desk, which was lying in an open position. She flops down on her bed and begins to read. A phone can be heard from the other room. She scoots to the end of her bed and kicks the door closed without ever taking her eyes off of the book.

INT. JONES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Suzanne quickly finishes taking notes and answers the phone, which lies on an end table next to the living room couch.

SUZANNE
Jones residence...

(CONTINUED)

Suzanne looks over her shoulder towards Dakota's bedroom door.

SUZANNE

Yes she's here. Would you like me
to put her on the phone?

Suzanne smiles and begins to walk down the hallway.

INT. JONES HOUSE - DAKOTA'S ROOM - DAY

Dakota lies on her bed, reading. There is a knock on the door.

DAKOTA

What?

SUZANNE

(through the door)

There's someone on the phone for
you.

DAKOTA

What!?

Amy pokes head through the doorway. Dakota flips her book over, sets it on her bed, and turns her head towards the door.

SUZANNE

There's someone on the phone for
you.

DAKOTA

Ugh... tell Dad I'm busy.

SUZANNE

It's Theodore.

Dakota jumps off of the bed and runs to the door. She yanks the phone from her mother and belly flops onto the bed. Her book bounces onto the floor, closing in the process.

DAKOTA

Hello?

INT. MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Theodore stands and talks on the phone.

THEODORE

Hey Dakota. So I was wondering, did
you want to hangout tonight? I have
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

THEODORE (cont'd)
a few things I'd like to talk to
you about and something I'd like to
show you.

Theodore stares out the window while he talks on the phone.

EXT. JONES HOUSE - DAY

Theodore opens the gate of the white picket fence and approaches the house. Theodore knocks on the front door three times. There's a moment of silence as Theodore stands and stares at the door. Suzanne opens the door and stands in the doorway.

SUZANNE
Well hi there Theodore!

THEODORE
Hello Mrs. Jones.

Dakota squeezes between the wall and Suzanne, walking right under her arm. Dakota is dressed in full winter clothes and wearing a big scarf.

DAKOTA
Hey Theo. Mom, Theo and I are going
out.

Suzanne puts her hands together and brings them to her mouth. Her excitement forces her to make a squeaking sound.

DAKOTA
Not like that, Mom. We're going out
to hangout.

Dakota grabs Theodore by the hand and starts walking down the porch steps, pulling him with her.

SUZANNE
Okay sweetie. Remember to be back
by six. Nice to see you Theodore!

THEODORE
Nice to see you too Mrs. Jones.

Suzanne winks at Theodore and he grins and turns away. Dakota never turns around to see this. They walk out of the yard and onto the sidewalk. Theodore closes the gate and Dakota lets go of his hand. They walk side by side down the sidewalk.

EXT. URBAN STREETS - DAY

Theodore and Dakota walk down the sidewalk. Dakota's neighborhood is just as run down as Theodore's.

THEODORE
What's at six?

DAKOTA
I'm having dinner with my dad
[beat] douche bag.

THEODORE
What?

DAKOTA
Not you. He thinks he can just come by once every few weeks and take me to get pizza and that everything will be alright. Ugh... I'm sorry. You know all this shit already.

THEODORE
You still don't like going to see him?

DAKOTA
I don't know.

THEODORE
Well if you don't want to go then you shouldn't go.

DAKOTA
My mom makes me. She thinks it's good for me to see my father every now and then.

Theodore and Dakota approach the two buildings with the alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Theodore and Dakota walk into an alleyway between the two large buildings.

DAKOTA
She doesn't even realize that he's drunk every time he comes to pick me up. I swear my mom's blind as a bat.

(CONTINUED)

Dakota and Theodore step over the drunk homeless man who's lying in the middle of the alleyway. The homeless man is still passed out from before but now he has slid down the wall and lies flat on the ground.

THEODORE

What a drag.

DAKOTA

You're telling me. So what's new with you?

THEODORE

My grandpa died this morning

Dakota stops and grabs Theodore's hand. Theodore stops as well.

DAKOTA

Mom's dad?

THEODORE

That's the one

DAKOTA

Are you... upset about it?

THEODORE

Not really. He was kind of a jerk... Mom's pretty upset though.

DAKOTA

I'm sorry.

Theodore shrugs and they continue to walk again. Dakota lets go of Theodore's hand.

DAKOTA

...and how's your brother?

THEODORE

He asked me to take that piss test for him again.

DAKOTA

That's not what I meant but did you do it?

THEODORE

Oh. Sebastian's upset too. Mom says grandpa wasn't always such an asshole [BEAT] and no I didn't do it.

(CONTINUED)

DAKOTA

Good. It's not your responsibility
anyway.

THEODORE

Yeah well he seems to think so.

Theodore and Dakota reach the end of the alleyway and clasp the chain link fence that blocks the exit. On the other side of the fence is a rail yard. There are multiple rail cars along the tracks.

DAKOTA

Is that the house over there?

THEODORE

Yeah.

DAKOTA

How did you find it again?

THEODORE

I followed him from school one day.

DAKOTA

Oh.

THEODORE

You ready?

DAKOTA

Yeah.

Theodore throws his backpack over the fence. The piece of carpet that Sebastian and Giovanni threw on top of the fence is still there. Theodore gets down on one knee, in a position to help Dakota over the fence.

THEODORE

Alright, up and over we go.

Dakota steps onto Theodore's hand, getting ready to be vaulted over the fence.

EXT. RAIL YARD - DAY

Theodore lifts Dakota over the fence then jumps and pulls himself over. As he's coming down the other side, the metal from the fence breaks through the carpet and cuts Theodore's hand.

(CONTINUED)

THEODORE
(Whispering)
Ah, shit.

DAKOTA
What happened?

THEODORE
Oh nothing, I just cut my hand.

DAKOTA
Well let me see it.

THEODORE
It's fine.

DAKOTA
Let me see it Theodore!

Theodore looks at Dakota. He can tell she's serious. He gives her his hand.

DAKOTA
Damn dude. You got yourself good.

THEODORE
Ha, yeah. Thanks Doctor Jones.

Dakota unwraps her scarf and places one end in her mouth. She tears the scarf down the middle, length-wise. Dakota grabs Theodore's hand and wraps it up, tying a bow on the backside of his hand. She smiles and kisses the bow. All the while Theodore is staring straight at Dakota.

DAKOTA
Better?

THEODORE
Ha, yeah.

DAKOTA
Good!

Dakota grabs Theodore by the hand and pulls him along. She lets go and they walk side by side.

ACT 3

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Amy walks up to the pharmacist counter. She puts her purse on the counter and starts taking pill bottles out of her purse. A pharmacist walks up behind the counter.

PHARMACIST

Hello ma'am. How may I help you this afternoon?

AMY

Hello, these are my father's prescriptions and I heard about some drug take-back thing you're doing.

PHARMACIST

Yes, we can definitely take care of that for you.

The pharmacist grabs a clip board.

PHARMACIST

Let me just take a look at what you've got here.

The pharmacist picks up one of the pill bottles and examines the label. He starts writing the names of the pills on a form attached to the clip board.

That's a lot of pills. If you'd like ma'am you can take a seat and I'll call you back up when I've finished checking these through.

AMY

Great.

Amy starts heading towards a chair.

PHARMACIST

Ma'am..?

Amy turns back around.

PHARMACIST

Did you're father keep his pills in a weekly organizer?

AMY

No, why do you ask?

(CONTINUED)

PHARMACIST

Well I see here that this bottle says "Oxycodone" but these pills are most definitely not those. Maybe you mixed them up when putting them back in their bottles?

AMY

How can you tell?

PHARMACIST

I'm a pharmacist ma'am. I know what Oxycodone is supposed to look like.

AMY

Well what are they then?

PHARMACIST

That's hard to say. If you'd like we can send these off for lab testing.

AMY

Please.

Amy stands at the counter as the Pharmacist fills out some paperwork.

INT. CRAFT SUPPLY STORE - DAY

Mickey and Jacob stand in the back of the store and look at all of the spray paint. They are in a big section where all of the spray paint is different tints of blue.

MICKEY

What was the color again?

JACOB

Blue

MICKEY

No shit. What kind of blue? Ocean Spray Blue? Robin's Egg Blue? Blizzard Blue?

JACOB

How about Cornflower?

Jacob picks up a can of spray paint labeled "Cornflower" and hands it to Mickey.

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY

...I don't know man. This shit looks more like a Periwinkle than a dark blue. The paint we had was dark.

A store clerk comes walking up to the boys.

STORE CLERK

Can I help you boys?

MICKEY

No, we're just trying to remember what kind of blue paint we were using.

STORE CLERK

Oh. Do you guys have a parent in the store?

The two boys look at each other and back at the clerk.

STORE CLERK

Boys, you have to be 18 to buy spray paint. If you have a parent with you then I can sell it to them. If not then there isn't much of a point of trying to-

MICKEY

Oh, my grandma is with us.

Mickey waves to somebody at the end of the store. There's an older lady. She waves back, in a confused fashion. The store clerk looks back at the old lady. Mickey quickly grabs a bunch of blue spray paint cans and bolts for the door. Jacob follows him. The store clerk looks back just in time to see Jacob running out the door.

STORE CLERK

(whispering)

Son of a bitch...

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

Theodore and Dakota stand on the sidewalk outside the Abandoned house. The house has a dirt yard, chipped paint, broken windows, and graffiti all over.

DAKOTA

So this is it, huh?

(CONTINUED)

THEODORE

Yup.

DAKOTA

What a piece of shit.

THEODORE

What did you expect?

DAKOTA

Pretty much this.

A teenage girl, TAYLOR, who is extremely high, stumbles out of the house and down the porch stairs. She misses the bottom step and falls. Her cell phone falls out of her pocket. The girl looks at Theodore and Dakota.

TAYLOR

What are you looking at?

DAKOTA

You.

The girl gets up. Her coat is unzipped and she has her hands in the front pockets of the coat. She begins walking away from the house, flapping her coat like wings. She's laughing to herself and whistling like a bird.

DAKOTA

Whack-job.

Dakota notices that Taylor has dropped her phone.

DAKOTA

Check it out. Dumbass dropped her phone.

Theodore and Dakota walk to the bottom of the steps. Dakota picks up the phone and starts looking through the text messages.

DAKOTA

That's weird...

THEODORE

What?

DAKOTA

There are no saved numbers and only one text. It says " Hey it's Gio, Seabass and I are at the house if you wanna kick it." What kinds of names are those?

(CONTINUED)

THEODORE

No clue.

Dakota throws the phone into the rail yard. The phone hits one of the train cars and the sounds rings out.

THEODORE

(Whisper-yelling)

Jeez, Dakota.

DAKOTA

What?

THEODORE

I don't want them to know we're here.

DAKOTA

Oh, sorry. Well it doesn't matter now. We might as well go check it out.

THEODORE

Seriously?

DAKOTA

What?

THEODORE

I just brought you to see the house. I didn't actually want to go inside.

DAKOTA

Well what's the point of that?

THEODORE

I don't know... I-

DAKOTA

Oh come on!

Dakota grabs Theodore by the hand and pulls him up the stairs.

DAKOTA

Your brother probably already knows we're here by now anyway.

THEODORE

Yeah probably. He's gonna be pissed.

(CONTINUED)

DAKOTA

Look, if he gets made then we'll just leave. What's the worst that can happen? He's your brother. The worst he can do is punch you in the kidney until you piss blood or something... remember when he did that?

Dakota gently punches Theodore in the arm and winks at him.

THEODORE

Of course I remember. But hey, if he does that then I really can't take that piss test for him!

DAKOTA

So there's nothing to worry about. Come on.

Dakota opens the door and steps inside. Theodore follows closely.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

Sebastian is on a couch and has his head resting on the armrest. One of his arms is in his lap and the other is hanging on the other side of the armrest.

DAKOTA

Look... he's asleep.

Dakota and Theodore walk into the living room where Sebastian is.

DAKOTA

Sebastian... Sebastian... Hey Sebastian!

Dakota smacks Sebastian in the back of the head. Sebastian falls onto the floor. There's a needle sticking out of his arm.

DAKOTA

Oh my god.

Dakota turns and looks at Theodore. He's staring blankly at Sebastian's body.

DAKOTA

Theo, let's get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

Dakota grabs Theodore by the hand and attempts to pull him towards the exit. Theodore doesn't budge. Footsteps are heard from upstairs.

DAKOTA

Theo, there's somebody here.

The footsteps can be heard as they come down the stairs.

GIOVANNI (O.C.)

Hey "Seabass" I ordered a pizza.
Told them to just come in so we
don't have to [BEAT] What the
hell!?

Dakota grips Theodore's arm tightly. Theodore continues to stare at his older brother. Giovanni looks at Sebastian's body.

GIOVANNI

Awe shit!

Giovanni runs out the front door.

DAKOTA

Theodore...

Theodore continues to stare at his brother's body, now crying silently.

DAKOTA

Theodore, we should go.

Dakota grabs Theodore by the hand and attempts to pull him towards the door again. Theodore gives in this time and they exit the house hand in hand.

EXT. URBAN STREETS - DAY

Alex and Antoine walk down the sidewalk. Alex flips through a few handfuls of money, all different amounts.

ALEX

Dude, we've got all kinds of money
now. Today was good.

ANTOINE

Hell yeah it was. Do you have any
more?

ALEX

Just a gram.

(CONTINUED)

ANTOINE

Wanna smoke it?

ALEX

Hell no dude. We're selling this shit. My brother's expecting some money when I get back home.

ANTOINE

What, you didn't already pay him?

ALEX

No dude. It works like a loan. He lends me the weed and I pay him after I've sold it. He's cool that way. He makes other people pay up front.

ANTOINE

So you get the "family treatment"?

ALEX

Exactly.

ANTOINE

Where I come from "family treatment" is letting you smoke.

ALEX

Doesn't work that way, man. My brother's a small part of a bigger operation. We can't just go on smoking it all. That'd be unprofessional. You can buy it on your own time.

ANTOINE

Whatever man.

Jacob and Mickey are walking down the sidewalk, each with armfuls of spray paint cans.

ANTOINE

What about them? Hey guys! Wanna buy some weed!?

Alex punches Antoine in the arm.

ALEX

Shut up dude!

The two groups of boys stop once they're about 5 feet away from one another.

(CONTINUED)

ANTOINE

You guys wanna buy some weed?

MICKY

Unfortunately we just spent all of our money on spray paint.

ALEX

We actually have more important business to attend to that going around tagging cars. Have fun with that though. Try not to get any paint on your nice shoes.

Everyone looks down at Mickey's old and dirty shoes. Antoine laughs. Mickey turns beet red and clenches his fists. Then suddenly, he calms down and looks at Alex.

MICKY

Meh, these are your daddy's. Your Momma told me I could borrow them after we were done-

Antoine takes a step towards Mickey. Jacob drops the cans of spray paint and steps towards Antoine. Antoine takes a step back. The four boys stare at each other for a moment in silence.

MICKY

What was I saying...? Ah that's right. She told me it's about time somebody started filling the old mans shoes.

Alex is infuriated. He looks at Jacob's size and decides to not say anything. He clenches his fists and puffs his chest. Mickey stands there with a smirk on his face, knowing that he can't be touched.

MICKY

Let's go Jacob.

Jacob picks up the spray paint and the two groups of boys walk their separate ways.

INT. JONES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Suzanne sits on the couch, crocheting. There is a craft show on the television but she doesn't pay attention to it. She sits with a smile on her face and hums a little melody. Dakota enters the house and Suzanne immediately drops what she's doing and spins around on the couch.

(CONTINUED)

SUZANNE
Hello, sweetheart! How was...

Amy covers her mouth and giggles.

SUZANNE
...going out with Theodore?

Dakota ignores her mother and goes straight to her room, slamming the door in the process. With a concerned look on her face, Suzanne gets up and approaches the Dakota's bedroom. Crying can be heard from inside. Suzanne doesn't knock. She just enters the bedroom.

INT. JONES HOUSE - DAKOTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dakota lies on her bed with her head in her pillow, crying. The sound of her cries are muffled. Suzanne sits on the bed behind her and begins rubbing her back. Suzanne looks as if she's about to cry herself.

SUZANNE
I don't know what's going on,
sweetie. You don't have to tell me
either.

Suzanne continues to rub Dakota's back. Dakota continues to lie there and cry.

SUZANNE
I'm sorry you're upset. You know
you can always talk to me, right?
[beat] This isn't about going to
dinner with your father tonight...
is it?

Dakota shakes her head. Her crying turns into a whimper.

SUZANNE
Well... I'll leave you be. If you
want to talk to me I'll be just in
the other room. Your dad should be
here in about 20 minutes. I love
you, Dakota.

Dakota lifts her head from the pillow.

DAKOTA
I love you too.

Suzanne kisses Dakota on the top of the head and exits the room.

EXT. RAIL YARD - NIGHT

Mickey and Jacob run through the rail yard, checking the cars for graffiti.

MICKEY

Where the hell is that train?

JACOB

Dude... I don't remember. How many of these things are there?!

MICKEY

A shit ton. Do you think your brother has found out yet?

JACOB

Probably not. He doesn't usually get home until late.

MICKEY

Jacob, I think this is the one.

Mickey and Jacob approach one of the train cars.

JACOB

That's totally the one. See the line through the graffiti.

MICKEY

Alright lets figure out if any of these cans match.

Mickey drops all of his paint cans except for one. He shakes the can and starts spraying. It's too dark outside to differentiate the colors but it's clear that the can he has is too dark.

MICKEY

Not it. Toss me another one.

Jacob shakes another can and tosses it to Mickey. He catches it and begins spraying. It's the same shade as the paint from earlier that day.

MICKEY

This is it! This is the one! Let's go!

Mickey and Jacob pick up a bunch of paint cans and run into the darkness.

ACT 4

INT. PIZZERIA - NIGHT

FRANK JONES sits at a booth with a pint of beer. There is a coke glass across the booth from him. Dakota walks to the table, carrying a large meat-lovers pizza. She places the pizza down on the table and sits. Frank grabs a piece of pizza and places it on his plate. He covers the pizza in red peppers Dakota sits and stares at her father's pizza.

FRANK

Well...

DAKOTA

Well what?

FRANK

Aren't you going to eat anything?

DAKOTA

I'm a vegetarian.

FRANK

A vegetarian?! [pause] since when?

DAKOTA

About a month now.

FRANK

A month? You ate pizza with me last time-

DAKOTA

That was a month and a half ago.

FRANK

Well do you want a salad? I can buy you a salad.

DAKOTA

I'm not even hungry anyway.

A pizza delivery girl busts through the front door of the pizzeria. She's crying hysterically. Dakota turns around in her seat to see what's going on. One of her coworkers makes her way around the counter and holds her. They walk behind the counter.

FRANK

What was that all about?

Dakota continues to look at the delivery girl and her coworker as they walk around the corner.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Must have not been tipped very
well, huh?

Franks laughs and continues to eat his pizza. Dakota turns
back around and stares at her coke glass.

FRANK

Pretty pathetic. Girl's getting
paid close to \$10 an hour and she's
crying like a little bitch about
not getting a tip. When I was her
age I was making \$5.50 an hour to
do job that was twice as stressful
as delivering pizzas.

Dakota stands up and speed walks out the front door. As she
passes the counter, the delivery girl can be seen in the
back of the kitchen, still in tears, gesturing an injection
towards her arm. Dakota walks outside and passes the window
where her father sits. Frank watches Dakota as she passes
the window. He knocks on the window.

FRANK

Dakota!

Dakota continues to walk away. Frank stands up and runs out
of the restaurant.

EXT. PIZZERIA - NIGHT

Frank runs into the parking lot of the pizzeria, looking
around frantically.

FRANK

Dakota!

Frank stops running in the middle of the parking lot and
looks around some more.

FRANK

Dakota!

INT. BUREAU OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS - OFFICE - NIGHT

Amy enters the building, saying hello to a series of people
walking about the office. She walks to her desk and pulls on
her headset. She sets up her workspace.

AMY

911, what is your emergency?[pause]
and what is the location of your
emergency? [pause] Alright we have
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AMY (cont'd)
vehicles in route. Now can you
please give me your name and phone
number? [pause] Thank you, now tell
me exactly what happened.[pause]
You said there was a needle
sticking out of his arm? Was the
boy still alive when you got there?
[pause] That's alright, sweetheart.
Just please try and stay calm.

EXT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jacob and Mickey stand on the sidewalk outside of Jacob's
house. They stare at the house.

MICKEY
Is your brother home?

JACOB
I don't think so.

MICKEY
How do you know?

JACOB
I guess I don't. He usually doesn't
come home until really late... By
the way, which color was it?

Mickey looks down at the spray paint can and reads the
label.

MICKEY
Cornflower...

The two stand in silence for a moment.

MICKEY
Let's get this over with.

The two boys begin walking towards the house.

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jacob and Mickey open the front door slowly and walk inside.
The house is extremely quiet.

JACOB
(whisper)
Okay, let's go.

(CONTINUED)

The two boys tiptoe-run to Jacob's brothers bedroom. The door is open. Mickey hands the can to Jacob and he runs inside really quickly and returns without the can.

JACOB

Alright it's done. Can we go to your house? I don't want to be here when he comes home. You know... in case it isn't the right color.

MICKEY

It's the right color... We checked.

JACOB

Just... please let me come over. I don't really want to be here anyway.

MICKEY

Alright, fine. I wouldn't want to be here either if I were you.

EXT. DAKOTA'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank's truck speeds up to the house, skidding as it stops. Frank gets out of the truck and runs up to the front door. He knocks three times. Frank waits a few seconds and knocks again. Suzanne answers the door as Frank is knocking.

SUZANNE

Hey Frank, how was...

Suzanne looks around and notices that Dakota isn't there.

SUZANNE

Where's Dakota..?

FRANK

Christ... I was hoping she'd be here.

SUZANNE

What do you mean you were hoping she'd be here? She left with you Frank. Where the hell is she?

Frank rubs his face with his hands and sighs.

FRANK

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

SUZANNE
You don't know?

FRANK
I-

SUZANNE
You don't know?!

FRANK
Look, Suzanne, we were at dinner
and she just got up and left.

SUZANNE
What do you mean?

FRANK
She just got up and left. Stood up
in the middle of dinner and left
the restaurant.

SUZANNE
And you didn't follow her?

FRANK
What do you want me to say,
Suzanne? I followed her outside
once I saw that she was leaving and
I couldn't find her.

SUZANNE
Dakota is fourteen years old,
Frank! She can't be walking around
the city at night by herself!

FRANK
Yeah, I know! I'm gonna go find
her.

EXT. RAIL YARD - NIGHT

Dakota walks through the silent, dark railroad. There is a loud buzz that echoes across the rail yard. Dakota walks along one of the trains. The buzz gets louder and louder. She comes to a point where the buzz is extremely loud. Dakota climbs onto the top of one of the trains. Taylor's cell phone sits on top of the train next to a can of spray paint. Dakota picks the phone up. The screen is cracked but Dakota is able to press the screen, answering the call.

DAKOTA
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

GIOVANNI

(panicked)

Taylor, can you meet me behind the school in 30 minutes? I need to talk to you in person.

DAKOTA

What's going on?

GIOVANNI

It's about "Seabass"... look I'll explain everything after we meet.

DAKOTA

Behind the high school?

GIOVANNI

Yes.

DAKOTA

I'll be there.

Dakota hangs up the phone. Sirens can be heard in the distance. Dakota stands on top of the train, looking at the Abandoned house. Flashing emergency lights can be seen as emergency vehicles approach the abandoned house.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - THEODORE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Theodore lies in bed staring at a picture that sits in a frame on a bookshelf. It's an old family picture of Theodore, Amy, Jason, and Sebastian. Theodore gets out of bed and goes downstairs.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Theodore opens the fridge door. The light from the fridge is the only thing illuminating the room. Theodore pulls some meatloaf out of the fridge and throws it in the microwave. He sits down at the table and pokes at the meatloaf with his fork. He slowly begins to take really small bites.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Theodore stares at himself in the mirror. Theodore brushes his teeth and opens a vitamin bottle. He pops one of the vitamins without even looking at it then exits the bathroom.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - THEODORE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Theodore crawls back in bed. Theodore lies there for a moment with his eyes closed and then begins to look at the family picture once more.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Giovanni stands by the batting cages behind the high school. He stands under one light that hangs above the entrance to the batting cages. The place is quiet. He rubs his arms and hands nervously. Occasionally he looks around to see if anybody is approaching him from any angle. Giovanni pulls his phone out of his pocket and calls Taylor. The phone rings but it goes straight to voicemail.

GIOVANNI

God damn it...

Dakota walks from the shadows, behind Giovanni. Giovanni hears her footsteps and turns around. Giovanni looks at her or a moment.

GIOVANNI

Get out of here, kid. I'm meeting someone.

Giovanni sizes her up and then begins to look around some more, continuously rubbing his hands together in a nervous fashion. He then looks over his shoulder again. Dakota is still standing under the light, staring at him.

GIOVANNI

Look, kid. I don't wanna have to tell you again. I'm meeting someone here and it's probably best if you-

DAKOTA

You're meeting me.

Giovanni looks at Dakota and raises one of his eyebrows.

GIOVANNI

What?

DAKOTA

You were at the abandoned house earlier.

Giovanni's cool look starts to slowly drift away.

(CONTINUED)

DAKOTA

The abandoned house. You were there with Sebastian. I was one of the two people standing in the living room. I saw you there. Don't play dumb.

GIOVANNI

Look, kid. I don't know what you think you saw but I wasn't at no abandoned house earlier... and I sure as shit don't know nobody named Sebastian.

DAKOTA

Is that really how you treat a friend?

GIOVANNI

What?

DAKOTA

Pretending like you don't know him, hours after he has died.

GIOVANNI

Hey you better watch it-

DAKOTA

I know who you are, Giovanni. I know that girl who was at the house too. Taylor was her name?

Giovanni pauses and looks around nervously.

GIOVANNI

Listen, I don't know why you think you know me. I don't know who this "Taylor" is but I'm meeting someone here in a few minutes and they're not gonna be very happy if they see you here.

DAKOTA

Taylor's not coming. I answered the phone when you called earlier.

GIOVANNI

Alright you listen here-

DAKOTA

No you listen!

(CONTINUED)

Giovanni takes a step back. His tough act is completely gone at this point. He continues to look around, worried.

DAKOTA
My friend's brother! Theodore's
brother, Sebastian, is dead!

GIOVANNI
(whispering)
Stop yelling

DAKOTA
So far I can count two people who
might be responsible. It's either
you, Giovanni, or some girl named
Taylor. Now are you going to tell
me who gave Sebastian the drugs or
am I going to have to go to the
police!?

GIOVANNI
No! Don't call the police... what
do you want?

DAKOTA
I don't want anything other than
you and this Taylor to meet with
Theodore. I'll let him decide what
to do with you.

GIOVANNI
Taylor won't come. Besides,
apparently you have her phone.

DAKOTA
Her phone's in the rail yard. Don't
you know where she lives?

GIOVANNI
Ha! Yeah right.

DAKOTA
Then looks like it's just you.
You're going to meet with Theodore
and I tomorrow night.

GIOVANNI
If I don't come?

DAKOTA
Then I might as well call the cops
right now.

Giovanni snarls a bit and looks around some more.

(CONTINUED)

GIOVANNI

Fine... I'll meet with Theodore.

DAKOTA

Good. I'll see you here tomorrow at this exact time.

Dakota walks away and Giovanni stands under the light, pacing a little.

GIOVANNI

God damn it... SHIT!

Giovanni punches the metal wall and a loud bang rings out over the area. Giovanni then walks into the shadows, the opposite direction of Dakota.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - THEODORE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Theodore lies in bed, staring at an old family photo that sits on his desk. The picture whirls around the room. Everything is spinning. Theodore gets out of bed and starts walking towards the bathroom. He stumbles around as he makes his way.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Theodore throws up in the toilet, violently. He sits back and rests on the wall. He wipes his chin and takes a few deep breathes before leaning in again and throwing up. Theodore grabs the counter top as he pukes, knocking over the vitamin bottle in the process.

INT. MARSH HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Amy sits at the kitchen table with her coffee cup. She is still wearing her clothes from the night before. She is trying her best to cry silently, in an attempt to not wake Theodore. Amy sits at the table with her hands in her head as she cries. Her eyes are puffy and pink and her cheeks are a light grey color from her mascara being wiped away. She looks up to see Theodore standing in the kitchen doorway in his pajamas. There is a moment of silence as the two stare at one another.

AMY

(crying)

Theodore... There's...

Amy pauses as she struggles to find the words.

(CONTINUED)

AMY

There's something I need to tell
you Theodore... will you come here?

Theodore makes his way around the table to Amy. Amy places her hands on her lap, palms up. Theodore places his hands in them. Amy closes holds Theodore's hands tightly and her eyes begin to well up again.

AMY

It's your brother, Theodore.
Sebastian...

Tears fall from Amy's eyes as she barely makes out the words. Tears begin to fall from Theodore's eyes before the words escape Amy's mouth.

AMY

Sebastian's dead, Theodore...

Amy begins to ball. Amy drops her head into Theodore's hands. Tears drip through Theodore's fingers onto the floor. Tears run down Theodore's face but he cries in silence. Amy's cry can be heard, muffled, through Theodore's hands. Amy lifts her head to see Theodore, who sniffles silently as he tries his best to not cry hysterically.

AMY

I'm so sorry, Theodore. First your
father, then your grandfather, and
now your brother. I'm sorry I
couldn't protect them. I'm so
sorry-

THEODORE

(crying)

Mom... it's not your fault.

AMY

I'm supposed to protect you. I was
supposed to protect your father and
your brother and I wasn't there.
I'm so sorry Theodore.

THEODORE

It's not your fault Mamma... you
can't take the blame for this.
There's nothing you could have done
to-

AMY

I should have been there. Maybe if
I was there maybe I could have

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AMY (cont'd)
saved your father. Maybe I could
have saved your brother. I-

THEODORE
There's nothing you could have done
to save either of them.

Theodore gets down on her knees and pulls Amy's close. She tucks her head into Theodore's neck and he begins to stroke her head.

THEODORE
Everything's going to be okay,
Mamma. I promise.

There is a picture hanging on the wall behind Theodore. It's the same family photo from the frame on Theodore's desk. Through the reflection in the glass of the frame, the back of Theodore can be seen. Across the room, Theodore's eyes from the picture line up perfectly with the back of Theodore's head in the reflection.

JASON(V.O.)
Maybe Theodore here's got eyes in
the back of his head... ever think
of that?

INT. JASON'S CAR - DAY

Jason smiles and rubs Theodore's head. Theodore looks up at his dad and smiles back. Sebastian goes back to resting his head on his hand. As Sebastian looks out the window, we can see that he's upset. Sebastian's eyes stay fixed on the blur of the world that passes by. His lower lip is slightly tucked under his upper lip so that he has a bored and slightly sad look on his face.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

From a distance at the tree line, Jason's truck can be seen bobbing up and down along the rocks. Dust flies into the air. The boys get out of the truck.

They make their way to the tailgate, which Jason drops. Jason grabs a tackle box and hands it to Sebastian and the three poles, handing one to Theodore. They begin to walk towards the creek.

From across the creek, Jason can be seen on a cliff talking to the boys. As Jason speaks, he puts a lure on one of the poles. He stands there for a moment and after he has finished talking he casts his lure into the water then hands the pole to Theodore.

(CONTINUED)

The bobber floats calmly in the waters of the shadowy part of the creak. Jason begins walking towards his truck as Sebastian sits on a rock on the cliff, attaching a lure to his pole. Once Jason is some great distance away, Theodore's bobber goes under.

THEODORE

Dad! Dad! Dad! I caught one! I
caught one!

Jason can hear what Theodore is saying and begins jogging back towards the cliff.

JASON

Great job buddy! Go on and reel him
in! Careful though, some of these
suckers are strong!

Sebastian gets down from the rock and comes up behind Theodore. Sebastian looks over Theodore's shoulder over the cliff as Theodore reels the fish. Then, out of nowhere, Sebastian pushes Theodore. Theodore falls, pole in hand, off the cliff, into the waters below. As Jason reaches the top of the cliff he looks around, unaware that Sebastian had pushed him in.

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