

BIG DADDY
~~GUY GETS KID~~

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**FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY**

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OPEN ON:

BLACK

Sound of a phone ringing. Someone answers it.

SONNY O.C.

(sleepy)

Hello?

DAD O.C.

Sonny! It's your Dad. Were you asleep? *

SONNY O.C.

Uh, no, I was... reading.

DAD O.C.

Bullshit! You were sleeping!
It's three in the afternoon and
you were sleeping! *

SONNY O.C.

No, I was not.

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

SONNY KOUFAX, 32, is asleep in bed.

DAD O.C.

Thirty-two years old and he still
acts like he's six.

SONNY O.C.

Oh yeah, okay, Dad, I act like I'm
six...

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny is sitting on the couch, smoking a cigarette, eating
a bowl of Captain Crunch, watching a "Pepe LePew" cartoon.

SONNY O.C.

...You should wish I acted like I
was six, cause when I was six I
actually liked you.

DAD O.C.

Hey, smartass, don't make me fly up there and smack you through a wall.

SONNY O.C.

I'm sorry.

DAD O.C.

You better start doing the right thing with your life.

SONNY

I do the right thing, Dad...

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Sonny looks both ways then hops the turnstile.

DAD O.C.

(calming)

I know. Anyways, what you been up to? We tried to call last night around ten...

SONNY O.C.

Oh, yeah, I was at work.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST FOURTH STREET BASKETBALL COURTS - NIGHT

Sonny and some friends (KEVIN, TOMMY, PHIL and MIKE) play basketball.

DAD O.C.

How's that going? Are you working more than one day a week yet?

SONNY O.C.

Not officially, but I told my boss to call me anytime somebody else called in sick or something...

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin is holding the phone, gesturing that it's a call for Sonny. Sonny waves his hands frantically, in the universal "tell him I'm not home!" gesture.

DAD O.C.

I guess that's a start. You
trying to find something else?

SONNY O.C.

Been working a lot on my resume.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK SHEEP MEADOW - DAY

Sonny is asleep on the grass.

DAD O.C.

A resume don't pay the bills, kid.

SONNY O.C.

Look, I still have a lot of cash
left over from the cab accident.

DAD O.C.

Well don't blow it on stupid shit.

SONNY O.C.

I won't...

CUT TO:

EXT. THIRD AVENUE - DAY

Sonny walks down the street carrying a brand new surfboard.

DAD O.C.

How's things going with Vanessa?

SONNY O.C.

Good. We've been having fun,
hanging out...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKEFELLER CENTER - DAY

Sonny is sitting on the ledge overlooking the rink with
VANESSA VOIGHT; They are both staring straight ahead,
obviously in the middle of a fight.

DAD O.C.

Hanging out? Enough with the
hanging out! It's time to take
that bar exam, kid.

SONNY O.C.

Quit telling me what to do all the time! I've been busy, alright?

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Sonny is asleep in bed.

DAD O.C.

Well then do it for your mother. When you were at Syracuse Law, all she did was brag about you to everyone she saw. She hasn't said your name to anyone in three years!

SONNY O.C.

Well tell her to get over it, cause it ain't gonna happen. I got too much other shit going on in my life...

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

Sonny is asleep on the couch.

DAD O.C.

She's been waiting 32 years for her son to become a lawyer.

SONNY O.C.

I don't want to be a stinking lawyer. I like the job I've got.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROOKLYN TOLLBOOTH - NIGHT

Sonny is sitting inside a lonely tollbooth, eating Chinese food, listening sports radio on his Walkman. He's a toll collector at the Flatbush Avenue bridge. This bridge connects Brooklyn with Rockaway Beach, but since a chill October wind is blowing, nobody's going to the beach. There are two lanes: one exact change, and one manned.

A junky car pulls up to the exact change lane. Sonny glances over, then goes back to his Chinese food. The BURNOUT driving the car is fishing in his pockets for change and eating a big hamburger at the same time.

Suddenly he stops. He looks at the burger in his hand. He looks at the toll booth's coin basket.

The Burnout again looks at the burger, then the coin basket. He smiles. Sonny turns down the Walkman.

SONNY

(catching on)

Hey... don't you throw that--

Too late. The Burnout chucks the burger in the coin basket and peels out.

CLOSE UP on burger, wedged in the coin slot at the bottom of the basket.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOLLBOOTH - AN HOUR LATER

The burger is now almost completely covered with quarters.

PAN UP from the burger to see Sonny standing there looking at it with GEORGE CONCEPCION, 40, who is also wearing a toll collector's uniform.

GEORGE

Was it like, a new hamburger, or a half-eaten one?

SONNY

I think he had taken a few bites.

GEORGE

Well I ain't gettin' it.

SONNY

Me neither.

GEORGE

That hamburger reminds me of you: wedged into a little space where you really shouldn't be...

SONNY

(losing faith in his joke as he goes)

It reminds me of your mama: covered with ketchup and cheese and... ready to be... bitten into...

George is laughing way too hard.

SONNY

Why are you laughing like that?
Are you stoned?

George looks guilty.

SONNY

Aw, c'mon, man, how can you make
correct change if--

GEORGE

It's my wife! All she does is sit
around the house and smoke dope
all day! She made me do it with
her today. She said we should
have... you know...

SONNY

Common interests?

GEORGE

Yeah, that.

SONNY

Whatever. I'm gonna split.

GEORGE

See you next week.

(remembering)

Hey, you're coming to my niece's
first holy communion on Saturday,
right?

SONNY

Uh, yeah, I'm planning to, but I'm
not a hundred percent sure I can
make it yet...

GEORGE

Don't bullshit me. You don't feel
like putting a suit on and coming
all the way out to Queens.

A quiet beat. Sonny got nailed. Finally, George lets him
off the hook by smiling.

GEORGE

Your loss. Have a good one.

Sonny starts to leave.

SONNY

You hungry?

GEORGE

Starving.

SONNY

Well, I know where you can find a burger - and you don't even have to leave work.

GEORGE

You son of a bitch.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOLLBOOTH - LATER

George is standing next to the exact change basket, gobbling the burger, ashamed of himself, muttering.

GEORGE

What am I doing? Who am I?

EXT. SONNY'S BUILDING - NIGHT - EST.

A converted industrial building in Tribeca, in the shadow of the Twin Towers.

INT. SONNY'S BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sonny is fumbling with the lock. He's smoking a cigarette, and carrying a six pack of Heineken in one hand and a carton of Chinese food under his arm. He's humming the Notre Dame fight song. He unlocks the door.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sonny clicks the light on and...

MANY VOICES

Surprise!

There are about thirty well-dressed people in the apartment.

Sonny looks confused and unhappy. An attractive, high-strung woman named CORINNE MALONEY steps forward.

CORINNE

False alarm! False alarm! It's only Sonny! It's only Sonny!

SONNY

It's only me! It's only me!

People resume partying. Vanessa (also in a business suit) walks over to Sonny.

SONNY
(they kiss)
Hey, baby. What's going on?

VANESSA
Corinne's throwing a surprise going-away party for Kevin.

SONNY
How come she didn't tell me?

Corinne overhears this.

CORINNE
I figured you'd tell Kevin, and ruin the surprise--

KEVIN O.C.
What the hell is going on?

CUT TO Kevin, Sonny's friend and roommate, standing in the doorway in his suit, perplexed.

There's a smattering of un-coordinated "Surprises." Corinne looks mortified. She turns on Sonny.

CORINNE
(hissing)
You did ruin it. We wasted the good "surprise" on you!

She stomps off. Kevin, still perplexed, watches her go, looks at Sonny and takes off after her.

SONNY
What's she throwing a party on "Chinese Food and Basketball Night" for?

VANESSA
The rest of the world isn't attuned to your goofy schedule. Besides, every night is "Chinese Food Night" for you; the delivery guy is like your best friend.

SONNY
He's always there for me.

Sonny's friends Phil, Tommy and Mike come over.

TOMMY

Sonny! What's up?

SONNY

Same old shit. Where have you turkeys been?

TOMMY

The last three weeks have been crazy at work, man. I was in Denver, Dallas, San Francisco...

PHIL

I've been sleeping at the office; I've got a big case I'm working on. In fact, I wanted to ask you about it, Sonny...

SONNY

Shoot.

PHIL

My client, this old bag from Staten Island, got food poisoning on a flight from Texas to New York-

SONNY

--And you want to sue in Texas court? Can't do it. Just cause the food came from Texas doesn't give Texas jurisdiction. You're stuck with a New York judge, pal.

PHIL

Shit. Well thanks anyway. He's still the king of civil procedure, ain't he, Vanessa?

VANESSA

He's the king...

PHIL

Alright, I gotta go back to the office. See ya, Sonny...

Phil and Sonny shake hands.

PHIL

Vanessa, always a pleasure, Mikey...

Phil shake hands with Vanessa and Mike.

PHIL

...and I'll see you at home...

Phil gives Tommy a long, passionate kiss. As he does...

MIKE

(sotto voce, to Sonny)
I gotta admit, I'm still a little
weirded out when they kiss.

SONNY

Well get used to it. They're as
gay as it gets.

MIKE

I know, but they were like
brothers to us back in school.

SONNY

They're still like our brothers -
our very, very gay brothers.

Phil breaks the kiss and heads for the door. On the way
over, Kevin intercepts him.

KEVIN

Hang out for a second, Phil.

Then Kevin starts tapping his wine glass with a spoon.

KEVIN

Excuse me, everyone. Excuse me.
Thank you all for coming, or
should I say... dud xie ni hao?

The guests gather around Kevin. Sonny sits down on the
couch, unsure what's going on.

KEVIN

Tomorrow I'll be on my way to
China for six weeks to represent
the firm of McGill, Morton and
Mandel. Yeah, they picked me: the
same guy who once went down onto
the subway tracks to retrieve half
a bottle of Old Grand Dad that
someone had dropped down there.

The group laughs.

KEVIN

Anyway, I want to thank you all
for being here: my colleagues from
(MORE)

KEVIN (cont'd)
 work, my friends from law school,
 especially my roommate Sonny...

Sonny, hearing his name mentioned, looks up.

KEVIN
 ...who has been there for nearly
 every major event of my life, and
 for some of them, sober...

Laughter. Vanessa, standing a few feet from the couch,
 smiles at Sonny.

KEVIN
 ...And, of course, Corinne, who's
 got me on the straight and narrow.

CORINNE
 He's a good boy now! He is.

Corinne tousles Kevin's hair. Sonny sneers.

KEVIN
 The reason I'm so glad you're all
 here tonight is that I'm gonna do
 something I thought I would never
 want to do...

Kevin pulls a diamond ring out of his pocket.

KEVIN
 Corinne, will you--

CORINNE
 Yes!

Corinne grabs the ring and hugs Kevin. Everyone "awwwws",
 then applauds.

Sonny, slouched on the couch, has a gleam in his eye. When
 the applause dies down, he begins to speak.

SONNY
 Hey, everybody, I got a little
 something to say myself...

The smile on Corinne's face freezes, her eyes go wide with
 horror: she realizes Sonny is going to ruin her big moment.

SONNY
 Now y'all know I'm not much for
 fancy speechifying, but what Kevin
 said about...
 (forgetting her name)
 (MORE)

SONNY (cont'd)

...his girlfriend, got me thinking about the special lady in my own life...

Now it's Vanessa turn for frozen-smiled horror.

SONNY

We've been hanging out for a long time now, seven years or so, and it's been a great ride. She's the only one who really understands what makes me tick, and she's cool enough to let me be me. Sure, she's been kind of cranky lately--

Now Vanessa is really mortified.

SONNY

...but I think it's because she's not sure where she stands with me. So I'd like to clear that up right now. Vanessa, I don't have a ring or anything, but when I get one, and we're ready, will you marry me?

VANESSA

No.

Vanessa walks out, into the bathroom. Sonny, still slouched on the couch, shifts to damage control.

SONNY

Just kidding. That was like a little improvisational theater. Hope you enjoyed watching it as much as we did improv-ing it.

Sonny follows Vanessa into the bathroom.

INT. SONNY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sonny enters the bathroom and shuts the door.

VANESSA

What the hell was that in there? You embarassed me.

SONNY

Look, I got caught up in the moment. That's the way I am. You know that.

VANESSA

Believe me, I know, and it's not something to be proud of. I mean, come on, Sonny. You live in this rent-controlled apartment, you don't even have a checking account, you only work one day a week!

SONNY

You want me to be like my father, working his whole life at a job he hated? To hell with that.

VANESSA

I just want you to do something with your life.

SONNY

Look, just take it easy on me. This has been a rough patch in my life. I have medical problems.

VANESSA

Medical problems? A cab ran over your foot - two years ago. You spent one night in the hospital.

SONNY

A jury decided that that one night of pain was worth two hundred grand in compensatory damages.

VANESSA

Oh, yeah: your first and last legal victory. When are you going to take the bar exam, Sonny?

SONNY

(angry)

When are you going to stop trying to tell me what to do?

VANESSA

Sonny, you know how much I want to start a family. But how can I do that with you? I need someone who I can rely on. Not just a playmate.

SONNY

Sounds like you want a daddy, not a husband.

VANESSA

Look, I'm going to the Hamptons with my sister 'til Tuesday. I need some time to think.

Vanessa walks out. Sonny looks at himself in the mirror. After a beat, he gives himself thumbs down.

FADE TO:

EXT. ROOF - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sonny is sitting alone, in one of two beach chairs on the roof of the building. He's smoking a cigarette, nursing a Heineken, listening to the trucks dropping off newspapers for the new day that will begin in an hour or so.

Kevin comes out from the stairwell and plops down in the chair next to Sonny.

KEVIN

So we batted .500 on our wedding proposals. Not too bad.

SONNY

Congratulations. You and Big Boobs McGee will be very happy.

KEVIN

Please don't call her Big Boobs McGee.

SONNY

You used to call her that yourself.

KEVIN

Yeah, when she was our favorite waitress at "Hooters". Now she's a doctor and my fiancée, so knock it off.

A quiet beat.

SONNY

It's so weird. Me and Vanessa used to lie in bed all day, watch old movies, fool around, order in Chinese, nap. We were like the last two cool people our age. Then one day, she's got a new job and meetings and pantyhose and lists of things to do all over the

(MORE)

SONNY (cont'd)
place. Like "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" or something.

Sonny turns his chair to face Kevin.

SONNY
But I can't lose her, man. I can't.

Kevin thinks about this for a beat.

KEVIN
Look, we've been best friends, what, ten years?

SONNY
I've never liked you.

KEVIN
(ignoring that)
Let me tell you from experience: you got two choices: you can sit around, "keeping the faith", whining about anyone who does anything different than they did ten years ago, or, if you really love her, you can accept that she's changed and figure out how to appeal to her new priorities.

Another quiet beat.

SONNY
Do you really want to explain to your kids that you met their mother at "Hooters"?

KEVIN
Goodnight.

Kevin gets up and goes down the stairs. Sonny goes back to his Heineken.

The chair next to him remains empty.

FADE TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny emerges from his bedroom as Corinne whizzes by, trying to pack.

SONNY
Where's Kevin?

CORINNE

(not looking up)

He's already at the airport: there was a problem with his travel visa that he needed to take care of. Guess he forgot to say goodbye to you.

SONNY

Why are you here?

CORINNE

I'm finishing his packing for him. I'm meeting him at Kennedy.

SONNY

Then you got your Hooters reunion, right? Gonna sit around talking about chicken wings and whose ass hangs out of their shorts the most?

Corinne glares at Sonny then goes into Kevin's room. Sonny goes over to the refrigerator and pulls out a carton of old Chinese food. He opens it up and smells it.

The doorbell rings. Sonny opens the door.

It's two kids: TONY, 14, chewing gum, and LUKE, 5, who wears a big, red jacket and holds in front of him an overstuffed backpack.

TONY

I'm supposed to give you this.

He hands him a HANDWRITTEN NOTE.

SONNY

What's this, a subpoena?

Sonny unfolds the note. Tony runs away, up the hallway and down the stairs.

SONNY

Hey! Hey! Hang out--

Luke stands looking at him. Silent.

SONNY

Hi.

No response. He looks down at the little boy. He's scared. He grips his backpack tightly with both hands.

Sonny opens the letter. He reads a little. We can tell by his changing expression it's something serious.

He looks at Luke. Trembling. No idea what's going on.

Sonny rushes over to the phone. He looks at a phone list taped to the wall and finds the number for "KEVIN'S CEL."

INT. KENNEDY AIRPORT - DAY

Kevin is standing at a counter filling out paperwork when his cel phone rings. He opens it.

KEVIN

Kevin Gerrity.

INTERCUT SONNY'S LIVING ROOM/KENNEDY AIRPORT - DAY

Sonny is on the phone, pacing back and forth. Luke hasn't moved from the doorway.

SONNY

It's me. There's a kid here.

KEVIN

A kid? What kind of kid?

SONNY

Your kid, if this note is true.

KEVIN

What?

SONNY

(reading)

"Dear Kevin, this is Luke. I hope you can understand why I didn't tell you about him, given the circumstances of his conception. Raising him has been an incredible experience. However..."

At Kennedy, Kevin is aghast.

SONNY

"...it's your turn. He is your son..."

KEVIN

This is bullshit...

Luke is staring at his shoes as Sonny reads to Kevin.

SONNY

"... and he needs a father. I can't be a mother anymore..."

CORINNE

Who's this?

Corinne is standing there with Kevin's luggage, pointing at Luke. Sonny drops the phone from his ear; he looks at Luke.

SONNY

He's... my friend.

Corinne gives Sonny a funny look.

CORINNE

Is that Kevin on the phone?

SONNY

No... It's... my Uncle... Remus.

Corinne gives another funny look, then squats down to Luke's level, speaking real sugary sweet.

CORINNE

And what's your name?

Luke just stares at the ground.

CORINNE

(to Sonny)

Is he alright?

SONNY

Yes, he just doesn't like you.

Corinne sneers, stands up and walks out. Sonny puts the phone back to his ear.

SONNY

That was your girlfriend. She was acting really Hooterrific.

KEVIN

Thanks for covering for me. Look, who sent that note?

SONNY

(looking at note)

"Jane."

KEVIN

I don't know no Jane.

SONNY

You sure, man? You did alright with the ladies back in the day.

KEVIN

Well, I didn't do so alright that I can't remember all their names. Beside, I was very careful. I'm positive he's not mine.

SONNY

Then maybe someone's trying to set you up. Makes sense: you have a good job and stuff, and New York's child support laws really stick it to the father. Oh, and how come you didn't say goodbye to me?

KEVIN

What are you talking about? I'm getting on a plane to Beijing in twenty-five minutes. What are we gonna do with this kid?

SONNY

Well, in the note it gives a number for a guy at the city Social Services Bureau that she was in touch with. Arthur Brooks. Should I call him?

KEVIN

I feel terrible for the kid, but I don't know what else to do. Sorry to dump this on you, buddy. I owe you big. See you in six weeks.

SONNY

Alright. See you then.

Sonny hangs up. He's alone with the kid.

SONNY

Um, why don't you take off that backpack and relax while I make this call?

The kid doesn't move.

SONNY

Alright, just stand by the door,
then.

Sonny picks up the phone and dials 411.

SONNY

(into phone)
Social Services, please.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

An empty office. Sound of phone ringing. After a few rings, an answering machine picks up. We hear the voice of a vaguely hippie-ish, very gentle career civil servant, MR. BROOKS.

BROOKS (O.C.)

Hello, this is Arthur Brooks. I'm
sorry, but Social Services is
closed. We'll be open at 8 a.m.
on Monday morning. Have a
terrific weekend!

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny, on the phone, is aghast.

SONNY

Monday...

He slowly hangs up. The kid is still just standing there.

LUKE

I want my mommy.

Sonny goes over to him, squats down and gently grabs his
shoulders.

SONNY

Uh, no. She's, um, on vacation.
And everything's gonna get
straightened out on Monday. Can
you be strong, can you be a tough
little guy, until Monday?

LUKE

Okay.

SONNY
 (smiling big)
 Great. You can hang out with me.

The kid remains emotionless. After an awkward beat, Sonny stops smiling and stands up. He doesn't know what to do.

SONNY
 Uh, do I need to get you a bottle of formula or something?

Luke shakes his head "no".

SONNY
 Well, what do you eat?

LUKE
 Food.

SONNY
 Good. Well, what I usually do on Saturday afternoons is grab some Chinese, go up to Central Park and watch Rollerbladers fall down. You like Chinese?

Luke shrugs.

SONNY
 I'm gonna call that a yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Luke and Sonny are sitting on a bench near a sharp curve in the pavement, at the bottom of a steep hill. Sonny wolfs down fried rice as Luke nibbles suspiciously on a dumpling.

SONNY
 You like girls?

Luke shrugs. As he does, a Rollerblader comes around the corner too fast and nearly wipes out.

SONNY
 I wish I never started liking girls. It's brought so much disappointment to my life. I mean, I used to think making out was the greatest, until the first time I grabbed a boob...

Another Rollerblader comes flying around the curve and almost loses control.

SONNY

Then every time I made out, I had to grab the boob or else I felt like a failure. It's like pole vaulting: you reach one level and!...

(snaps finger)

...the bar gets higher...

Luke is fascinated by Sonny snapping his fingers, but Sonny doesn't notice his interest.

Another Rollerblader comes careening down the hill, goes up on one leg to steady himself, but does not fall down.

SONNY

I swear they usually fall down...

Sonny puts a stick in the road. A Rollerblader comes around the corner, spots the stick, jumps over it and loses control, leaping over the grass and into a pond.

Sonny laughs, and Luke does, too. It's the first time Sonny made Luke laugh, and he feels good about it.

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sonny and Luke are on the couch, watching TV, munching ice cream. Sonny hands Luke some Yodels.

SONNY

Anything else you want?

Luke shakes his head no. Sonny gets comfortable on the couch.

SONNY

This is gonna be great...

ON TV

JACK PERKINS (ON TV)

...so now, "Biography" presents the story of... Bob McAdoo.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

"Columbo" is on.

Sonny and Luke are still on the couch, wearing the same clothes. Luke isn't watching TV; he's trying to snap his fingers like Sonny did.

WIDEN to reveal the Chinese DELIVERY GUY sitting next to them.

DELIVERY GUY

This Columbo... He acts stupid, but he's really as sharp as a tack!

Sonny suddenly remembers something.

SONNY

Hey! What time is it?

DELIVERY GUY

12:45.

SONNY

Almost time for the Jet game.
(to Luke)
You like football?

LUKE

I don't know.

SONNY

I think you do. Let's go.
(to Delivery Guy)
You coming?

DELIVERY GUY

No, I got more deliveries. But thanks for the invite.

INT. BLARNEY STONE - DAY

Sonny and Luke are watching the Jet game on a small TV in a huge old bar. Sonny's wearing an Emerson Boozer jersey. They're the only people in there under 50.

SONNY

You having fun?

Luke, sipping a Coke through a straw, nods.

SONNY

Me too. It's weird, though. When we first got out of law school, all of us who came down to New York would meet here every Sunday to watch the Jets. Then after a while, it was just me and Kevin. Lately, it's just been me. Everyone's so busy with their bullshit...

*
*
*
*

An OLD MAN down at the end of the bar has overheard him.

OLD MAN

Like I'm not busy?

SONNY

Don't make me come down there and slap you around like last Sunday.

OLD MAN

Last Sunday was a fluke. Bring it on, bitch!

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sonny and Luke are at the kitchen table, eating cereal. Sonny is eating Count Chocula, Luke is eating Frankenberry. They're listening to the Bee Gees' "Night Fever."

SONNY

My milk is getting all chocolatey. Is yours getting all strawberryey?

Luke nods.

SONNY

Three more bites and then we trade.

Luke nods again.

FADE TO:

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kevin's room is tastefully decorated, except for all the Toronto Blue Jays posters and memorabilia. Luke is in bed. Sonny is standing at the door, talking.

SONNY

...So you don't wear a diaper?

LUKE

No.

SONNY

You go to the bathroom with no assistance whatsoever...

Luke nods.

SONNY

And you eat normal food, not baby formula... No breastfeeding... Can you read?

LUKE

No.

SONNY

That's okay. It's no big deal. Overrated.

Luke is fighting to keep his eyes open.

SONNY

(looking at clock)

Whoa, two-thirty. You must be bushed. Hey, I had fun this weekend. You?

Luke nods. Sonny smiles. He did have fun this weekend.

SONNY

Alright, have a good one.

Sonny turns to leave.

LUKE

Are you my Dad?

Sonny's floored.

SONNY

No, but, uh... all that Dad and Mom stuff is gonna get figured out tomorrow. Okay?

Luke nods, and puts his head on the pillow.

SONNY

Good night.

*
*

Sonny stands at the doorway looking at him for a long time.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DAY

Tommy and Phil are seated side by side on a cement wall, in business suits. Phil is eating a hot dog. Tommy hangs up his cel phone.

TOMMY

It's true. He's doing it.

PHIL

He is?

TOMMY

He said it's the only way to show Vanessa that he's responsible...

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Brooks answers a ringing phone.

BROOKS

Hello, Arthur Brooks speaking.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny is on the phone. Luke is in the background watching "Sanford and Son", oblivious.

SONNY

Yeah, this is Kevin Gerrity.

BROOKS O.C.

Terrific! I was told you might be giving me a buzz, Mr. Gerrity...

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DAY

Tommy and Phil are still talking. Tommy wipes a spot on Phil's mouth with a napkin.

PHIL

I know I've heard things before and said, "This is the most insane shit I've ever heard," but this

(MORE)

PHIL (cont'd)
 actually is the most insane shit
 I've ever heard.

TOMMY
 Well, you know Sonny. Sometimes
 he doesn't think things through a
 hundred percent. Tends to focus
 on solving today's problem...

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny's on the phone. Luke is watching Fred Sanford grasp
 his chest in pain.

SONNY
 Just wanted to let you know, I
 decided to keep the kid.

BROOKS O.C.
 (a concerned pause)
 You mean... Luke.

SONNY
 Right, that's the one. He's my
 kid and I want to keep him.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

Brooks is on the phone. Very happy.

BROOKS
 That's terrific. We're so happy
 when the natural parents are able
 to take responsibility.

SONNY O.C.
 No sweat.

BROOKS
 Now I gotta hit you up for some
 info for our files...

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DAY

Phil and Tommy.

TOMMY
 I guess he's thinking, you know,
 sometimes women get pregnant to
 try and fix a troubled
 (MORE)

TOMMY (cont'd)
relationship, so why can't a guy
adopt a kid to do the same?

PHIL
Cause that guy is Sonny!

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny, still on the phone, looks frustrated.

BROOKS O.C.
And is there some other cat we can
contact in an emergency?

SONNY
You asked me that already?

BROOKS O.C.
I did?

SONNY
(exploding)
Enough with the stupid questions,
alright? He's my kid and I'm
keeping him! There are no further
custodial issues in New York
State! Case closed! Got it?

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

Brooks is hurt and confused.

BROOKS
Message understood, man. Just
trying to do my job.

SONNY O.C.
Well, don't!

BROOKS
Fair enough. Have a good day,
man...

Brooks hangs up, hand trembling a little

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - EVENING

Sonny and Phil are strolling along behind Luke, who is
chasing after a squirrel.

SONNY

I'm having fun, he needs parents,
Vanessa wants kids - it all fits.

PHIL

Sonny, remember that time you went
with me to the pet store to buy
fish food, and you saw this cute
little puppy, and you wanted to
get it, and I reminded you about
feeding it and washing it and
toilet training it.

SONNY

Yeah, you talked me out of it.

PHIL

Well, this is like that, only with
a kid. I mean, I'm glad you had a
fun weekend, but this is big.

SONNY

I know it's big. That's just what
I needed to do to show Vanessa
that I'm more mature than she
thinks. Something big.

PHIL

Well I'm glad he'll be a useful
prop in your attempt to fix your
relationship. But what about
raising this kid?

SONNY

What's the big deal? He's not a
baby that she needs to be changing
his diaper and breast-feeding him
and what not. That's the beauty
of this: we get to skip over all
that shit.

PHIL

Please, do me a favor: think about
this before it's final.

SONNY

It is final...

Sonny looks over at Luke, who is clutching his chest,
feigning a heart attack like Fred Sanford.

LUKE

This is the big one, Elizabeth!

SONNY

(proudly)

We have a son.

Sonny sees a pay phone nearby.

SONNY

Hey, Phil, watch him for a second.
I'm gonna go call my mom and dad.

Sonny jogs over to the phone - then hesitates. He looks at the phone, then at Luke, then at the phone again.

SONNY

I'll do it later.

Sonny jogs back toward Phil and Luke.

EXT. NEW YORK SKYLINE - DAWN - EST.

The first light of a new day.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The first shards of light break through Sonny's blinds. Sonny adjusts in bed comfortably. But something is wrong. His eyes open. Standing two feet from his face at the edge of the bed is Luke. Staring at him.

SONNY

Hi.

LUKE

Hi.

SONNY

This is the midpoint of my main
sleep session. Go back to sleep.

Luke just stares at him.

SONNY

Well, I'm going back to sleep.
Nighty-night.

Sonny lays his head back on his pillow. Closes his eyes. After a moment, he peeks his eyes open. Luke's still there.

LUKE

I wet the bed.

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Luke leads Sonny in.

SONNY

(looking at bed)

Yikes. This type of thing is more
the "Mom" department, and...

Luke looks at Sonny unwaveringly; he needs help now

Sonny, perplexed, looks around the room. He picks up a
newspaper and spreads it on the bed.

SONNY

There you go, nice and dry.

Sonny leaves.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sonny is laying in bed, trying to fall asleep. But he
keeps hearing a loud crackling noise that's keeping him up.

CUT TO:

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

The noise is caused by Luke rolling around uncomfortably in
bed, on top of the newspapers.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sonny gives up and gets out of bed.

SONNY

(yelling so Luke can
hear)

I'm up! Let's have breakfast!

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny, still very sleepy, is at the kitchen table listening
to sports on the radio as Luke pours himself a bowl of
Cheerios. Sonny puts a cigarette in his mouth and flicks
his lighter.

Luke sees this and begins screaming.

SONNY

(very alarmed)

What's the matter? Are you
alright?

Luke points to the cigarette.

SONNY
Cigarettes? You don't like
smoking?

Luke shakes his head "no".

SONNY
Hey, I gotta have my wake-up
cigarette, man. I can't face the
day without...

Sonny trails off under the heartbreaking stare of his five-year old son. He takes the cigarette out of his mouth.

SONNY
Alright, then, no more smoking.
My bad.

Sonny gets up and looks out the window. He sees throngs of people in business attire marching down the street.

SONNY
So this is morning rush hour...
Phooey...

Luke is finally able to lift a full gallon of milk high enough to pour - but not enough to control it. It starts to spill over the side, and now, spooked, Luke drops the milk completely. It lands on the bowl, catapults the cereal and empties milk everywhere as it falls to the carpet.

Sonny looks over, shocked. Then he sees Luke about to cry.

SONNY
Hey, don't worry about it. Your
new mom will take care of it when
she gets home tonight.

Sonny looks around, not sure of what to do. Then he just lays some newspaper over the wet carpet.

SONNY
Let's eat out. Just let me go the
bathroom first...

INT. SONNY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Sonny is in the bathroom sitting on the tub. He puts a cigarette in his mouth and lights it. Luke pushes the door open, sees the cigarette and starts screaming. Sonny throws the cigarette in the toilet.

LUKE
No smoking! No smoking!

SONNY
I wasn't smoking, I was throwing
them away.

INT. DINER - DAY

Sonny is sitting in a booth; the place is packed. Luke is running around like mad. He makes airplane noises as he zooms around the diner.

SONNY
Hey, come on. Stop fooling
around.

Luke ignores him. Immersed in his own airplane game. He crashes into other tables, bumps off them and continue. People are looking at him and Sonny

SONNY
Luke, get over here or you ain't
eating.

Luke reluctantly returns to the table as the WAITRESS arrives.

WAITRESS
What'll you have, cutie pie?

LUKE
I don't know.

SONNY
You like eggs?

LUKE
Yuck.

SONNY
How about pancakes?

LUKE
No.

SONNY
You like oatmeal?

LUKE
Sometimes.

SONNY

Like when?

LUKE

When my mom makes it.

SONNY

How does your mom make it?

LUKE

With blueberries.

SONNY

(to waitress)

Can you make oatmeal with
blueberries?

LUKE

...and M & M's.

SONNY

(to waitress)

...blueberries and M & M's?

LUKE

...and cheese.

WAITRESS

What kind of cheese?

LUKE

Ummmmmm....

A beat.

SONNY

American?

LUKE

Monster.

WAITRESS

Muenster?

LUKE

No, with holes...

WAITRESS

Swiss?

LUKE

No...

WAITRESS

Cheddar?

SONNY

(exploding)

Just give him any cheese!

Luke looks startled for a second, then starts to cry. Loudly. People turn to look. One CRANKY OLD MAN eating an egg sandwich gives Sonny a dirty look.

CRANKY OLD MAN

Nice job. You're some lousy father.

Sonny grabs Luke and starts walking out. On his way, he takes the Old Man's egg sandwich and throws it on the floor.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Sonny is out on the sidewalk trying to comfort Luke, who's still crying.

SONNY

I'm sorry. I wasn't yelling at you. I was yelling at that stupid waitress. I'm sorry.

LUKE

I... want... my... Mommy...

SONNY

Your new Mommy will be home tonight...

LUKE

I don't want a new mommy.

Sonny thinks fast.

SONNY

Come on, what do I have to do to show you that I'm sorry? Let myself get hit by a car? Okay...

Sonny runs out into the street and pretends to get hit by a parked car. He very melodramatically rolls over the car and falls to the ground.

Finally, Luke laughs.

Even though Sonny's in pain, he smiles - he's achieved a small victory.

LUKE

Do it again.

SONNY

Naah, we better get going.

Luke starts crying again.

SONNY

Alright...

Sonny again pretends to get hit by the parked car, rolling off the top and falling to the ground.

LUKE

(laughing)

Again!

Sonny, in pain, does it once more.

LUKE

Do it again!

DRIVER

Don't do it again.

Sonny finally notices the car's DRIVER sitting in the car.

EXT. COLUMBUS AVENUE - DAY

Sonny and Luke are walking down the street. Luke is trying unsuccessfully to snap his fingers as Sonny prattles on.

SONNY

I guess I lead the life I lead because I hate that "Sunday night" feeling so much. That tightness in your stomach that hits about six or seven Sunday night, when you know you have a five days of misery hanging over your head...

Luke tugs on Sonny's shirt.

LUKE

I have to go to the bathroom.

Sonny looks around. Nothing but businesses and apartment buildings.

SONNY
We'll be home soon.

LUKE
I gotta go now!

Luke starts crying. Sonny thinks.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Sonny is talking to the OWNER.

SONNY
Hey, could this kid use your john
for a--

OWNER
Customers only!

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST SEVENTH THIRD STREET - DAY

Luke is facing a building. Sonny is looking the other way.

SONNY
Done?

LUKE
I can't do it.

SONNY
Why not?

LUKE
I'm scared.

SONNY
Well, I don't know what else I...

LUKE
Can you do it with me?

Sonny reluctantly stands next to Luke.

They both succeed.

SONNY
No more Coke for you.

They zip up and walk off. When they get to Columbus Avenue, Sonny waves at the Owner of the restaurant, which they just peed on.

SONNY

Thanks anyway!

The Owner waves back cheerfully, oblivious.

FADE TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sonny is watching a basketball game on TV. The sound is very low.

BASKETBALL ANNOUNCER O.C.

...only twelve seconds remain in this second overtime, Knicks down by three... Pippen inbounds - It's stolen by Ward! Ward to Houston, Houston puts it up... It's good! We're going to triple overtime!

*

Sonny jumps up and down on the couch with glee, then suddenly stops and looks nervously towards the other side of the couch.

REVEAL Luke is sleeping.

Sonny quietly, gingerly gets down from the couch and takes a sip of beer.

SONNY

(quietly, to himself)

This kid's great - as long as his eyes are closed and he doesn't move or speak...

*
*
*

Sonny watches the game for a bit, then checks Luke again.

He's gone.

Sonny looks around and sees Luke across the room, fishing around in his backpack.

SONNY

(one eye on TV)

Hey buddy, you sleepwalking? Boy, you look tired. Come on, right back to naptime, please, stop looking in that backpack, I'm begging you, please sleep...

Luke pulls out what he's looking for, walks over and hands it to Sonny. It's a cassette tape.

SONNY

What's this? Your tunes? Okay,
just give me ten minutes...

Luke frowns at Sonny.

SONNY

See, it's triple overtime, it's
one of the most exciting things in
all of sports and--

Luke's about to cry.

SONNY

Let's crank it up.

Sonny goes over to the stereo, pops the cassette in and presses play. It's a really awful children's song called "The Kangaroo Song." Sonny cringes.

SONNY

Alright, that's it. Get your coat
on. Time to meet Mommy.

EXT. EAST EIGHTY-THIRD STREET - NIGHT

Sonny and Luke are urinating in a cement wall.

LUKE

How come you're not going?

SONNY

I don't have to go! I'm just
keeping you company.

Luke finishes, and he and Sonny turn and walk towards Third Avenue.

LUKE

I'm scared.

SONNY

What are you scared of?

LUKE

My new Mommy.

They get to the avenue, and Sonny waves to the owner of the Indian restaurant they just peed on.

SONNY

Thanks anyway!

The owner waves back, oblivious. Sonny turns to Luke.

SONNY

Why would you be scared of your
new Mommy?

LUKE

What if she's not nice?

Sonny fishes in his pockets and pulls out a pair of
sunglasses, which he hands to Luke.

SONNY

Put these on.

LUKE

Why?

SONNY

They're magic sunglasses. When
you're afraid, you put them on,
and you're invisible.

LUKE

Really? Nobody can see me?

He puts on the glasses.

SONNY

(mock alarmed)
Luke? Luke? Where'd you go?

LUKE

I'm right here.

SONNY

Oh, yeah, I forgot - the magic
sunglasses.

Luke smiles.

SONNY

So you keep these on, and then
you'll have a chance to check
Mommy out before you decide if she
can see you or not.

LUKE

Okay.

INT. VANESSA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The doorbell rings. Vanessa answers it. It's Sonny.

VANESSA

Hi.

SONNY

Hey, welcome back.

Vanessa sees something out of the corner of her eye - about ten feet down the hall, a little boy wearing sunglasses.

VANESSA

Who's that?

A beat.

SONNY

Who's who?

Another beat. Then Sonny leans in toward Vanessa and mutters under his breath.

SONNY

He's invisible.

Vanessa absorbs this.

VANESSA

Well, why don't you come on in,
Sonny...

Vanessa leads Sonny into the living room. Luke, fully thinking he's invisible, slips in and takes up a position near the door. Vanessa and Sonny sit. Vanessa keeps looking at Luke uneasily.

VANESSA

Sonny, I'm not sure what's going
on right now, but we need to talk
about--

SONNY

(very confident)

Look, let me talk. I thought a
lot about what you said, and I
thought I needed to do something,
something bold, to show you how
reliable and responsible I am...

VANESSA

Sonny, before you say anything
else, I want to--

As she's saying this, Luke takes off his sunglasses.

SONNY

Look! He took off the sunglasses!
He's letting you see him! That
means he likes you!

Vanessa's really thrown for a loopy now.

SONNY

Luke, come on over here!

Luke comes over and stands next to Sonny.

SONNY

Vanessa, meet Luke. My son. Our
son. I adopted him.

Vanessa stares in shocked silence at Sonny, then Luke, then
Sonny again. But then her eyes dart briefly towards her
bathroom.

Sonny follows her glance. The bathroom door is closed.

VANESSA

I don't know what to say.

SONNY

Well, don't say anything until -
hey, is there somebody in your
bathroom?

A beat.

VANESSA

No.

SONNY

Then why's the door shut?

VANESSA

I don't know.

Tension suddenly fills the air as Sonny gets up and tries
the door.

SONNY

It's locked.

VANESSA

Sonny...

SONNY

(devastated)

Oh...man... What a fool I am...

Sonny starts pounding on the door violently.

SONNY

Get outta there, you son of a
bitch! Open up! You hear me,
open the damn door!

As Sonny starts kicking the door, the lock is unlatched and the door swings open. Inside is a well-dressed, sixtyish gent named SID.

SID

Is everything okay?

Sonny takes a deep breath - and starts laughing.

SONNY

Oh, man, I'm sorry. I just
freaked out there for a second...
(extending his hand)
I'm Sonny.

SID

I'm Sid.

They shake hands. Sonny is relieved.

SONNY

I guess I had an attack of
paranoia or something. I thought
you were sleeping with my
girlfriend.

SID

I am.

Sonny slowly stops laughing.

SONNY

What?

Luke puts the sunglasses back on.

VANESSA

Sonny, what I was trying to tell
you before I left is that I found

(MORE)

VANESSA (cont'd)
someone I can rely on, who'll be
there for me...

SONNY
...this old guy.

SID
Sid.

VANESSA
There's an age difference; I'm
aware of that. Sid has already
acheived so much, yet he's still
goal oriented, still focused. He
has a five year plan...

SONNY
What is it? "Don't die?"

Sid frowns.

SONNY
Vanessa, I love you. I need you.
We finally have a family, like you
always talked about.

VANESSA
Sonny, you surprising me with a
kid you adopted while I was away
isn't what I always talked about.

SONNY
I did this for you. You wanted me
to be a responsible guy, a dad.

SID
I'm a grand-dad.

SONNY
You better zip it, old man, or
I'll break your hip.

VANESSA
Sonny, how could you miscontrue
this situation so badly?

SONNY
I don't know.

Sonny looks over at Luke, what he's feeling hidden by the
sunglasses.

SONNY
Come on, kid.

Sonny and Luke move towards the door. Vanessa and Sid follow.

VANESSA

Sonny, you're a great guy. You'll find someone else.

As Sonny and Luke walk out, Sonny whirls to confront Vanessa.

SONNY

You just made the biggest mistake of your life, baby. I know you'll be thinking of me when you have that big, white, wrinkly body on top of you, with his... loose skin and... old... balls...

Sonny, grossing himself out, turns, grabs Luke and walks off.

SID

(calling after them)
My granddaughter babysits, if you're interested!

Sonny runs back to Sid and gets him in a headlock.

SONNY

Alright, bitch, time for the sleeper hold.

VANESSA

No! Sonny! Don't hurt him!

SID

It's okay... I'm alright... It's--

Sid abruptly falls asleep. Sonny lays him on the ground and walks off.

VANESSA

You animal!

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Sonny and Luke are standing at the door to the Social Services office. Sonny looks crazed, like he's been up all night. Someone unlocks the door, and Luke and Sonny enter.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

Sonny and Luke enter the cavernous office. Most of the employees are having coffee and chatting. Sonny makes an announcement.

SONNY

Hi, I'm Kevin Gerrity, and I'm having an emergency problem with my kid here.

*

Brooks looks up from his desk, fearful when he hears who it is. He finally gets the courage to speak.

BROOKS

Mr. Gerrity, I can help you...

Sonny starts walking over, but then turns to Luke.

SONNY

You better stay over here while I talk to this guy. Stay where I can see you.

Sonny walks over to Brooks' desk, and sits in a metal chair adjacent to it.

BROOKS

Pleasure to meet you, Mr. Gerrity. Terrific.

*

SONNY

Look, here's what happened: an old girlfriend of mine dropped--

BROOKS

(cutting him off)
I know the whole deal, man. We've spoken on the phone.

SONNY

Oh, that was you? Nice to meet you.

Sonny smiles, they shake hands; Brooks relaxes - this guy's not so bad.

SONNY

Anyway, I don't want him no more.

Brooks reacts.

SONNY

I mean, I want him, but I can't manage him, I'm not a good dad, I made a mistake.

BROOKS

Mistake?

SONNY

Actually, it was more like he tricked me. He was so good over the weekend...

BROOKS

If the kid was quiet and passive, that wasn't "being good," man. He was just feeling out the new situation.

*
*
*
*

SONNY

Whatever. There's just no way I could do a decent job with this kid. You should give him back to his mom. Her first name is Jane; that's all I got.

*
*

BROOKS

I can't do that, Mr. Gerrity.

SONNY

Look, I know it's probably against procedures or something, but if you just pick up the phone and explain the situation to her--

BROOKS

Jane was very sick. We were in the process of setting up an adoption when she sent Luke away--

SONNY

What do you mean, "was" very sick?

BROOKS

She passed away on Sunday morning, Mr. Gerrity. I just found out last night.

*

Sonny reacts.

BROOKS

I guess she sensed that time was short and decided it was best to

(MORE)

BROOKS (cont'd)
send Luke to you, the natural
father. You dig?

Sonny looks over at Luke, still trying unsuccessfully to
snap his fingers.

BROOKS
If you don't want Luke, we'll take
him but I'm afraid he's gonna have
to chill out in a group home for
awhile.

SONNY
You mean like an orphanage?

BROOKS
We don't call them that anymore.

Sonny thinks.

SONNY
It's not that I don't want - how
much time?

BROOKS
Hard to say, man. It's much more
difficult for bigger kids. People
want infants.

SONNY
Are they like the orphanage in
that movie "Oliver"?

BROOKS
I've never seen that flick. But
they're not too bad.

Just then, Luke runs over.

LUKE
Look! I almost did it.

Luke tries snapping his fingers, but he just can't do it.
It's really cute.

SONNY
Don't worry, you'll get it. Just
wait over there for a little while
longer.

As Luke runs off, Sonny watches, his heart hurting.

BROOKS

Let me put in a call to the
Heatherton Home--

*

SONNY

Hold it. What if I kept the kid
temporarily while you looked for a
new family? That way he wouldn't
have to spend any time at an
orphanage.

Brooks thinks about this.

BROOKS

Sure. That'd work, man. Whatever
floats your boat. Terrific.

SONNY

Any idea how long it's gonna take
to find a family?

BROOKS

Could be a few days, could be a
few months. We'll keep trying,
and we'll let you know.

Brooks shuts and locks the door behind Sonny and Luke as
soon as they walk out. He's relieved.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sonny walks out of Social Services with Luke and takes a
deep breath. He's stuck with a kid. Unsure of his next
move, he looks around. He sees a pay phone.

He looks at it with dread. There's no other choice.

INT. SONNY'S PARENTS' CONDO - DAY

A nice Florida condo. SONNY'S DAD answers the ringing
phone.

DAD

Hello?

COMPUTER VOICE O.C.

Hello, you have a collect call
from...

SONNY O.C.

Your baby boy!

COMPUTER VOICE O.C.
Will you accept the charges?

Sonny's Dad sighs.

DAD

Yes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sonny is talking on the pay phone. He seems cheerful.

SONNY

Hey, Dad, it's Sonny. How are things down in Florida?

INTERCUT PARENTS' CONDO/STREET - DAY

DAD

Not too bad. Your mother got a sunburn playing tennis yesterday...

SONNY

Hey, guess what?

DAD

What?

SONNY

I kind of adopted a kid.

DAD

You idiot! What are you adopting a kid for?! You give that kid back!

Sonny's happy facade drops.

SONNY

I tried! But his mom...

Sonny looks at Luke and thinks better.

SONNY

...they were gonna take him to an orphanage, so I took him back for awhile. Look, I don't know what I'm doin'...

DAD

You're damn right you don't know what you're doin'!

SONNY

Come on, Dad... I need help. I'm no good at this. This kid, he's always... around. All the time. We've been together every single minute for four days. You'd think he'd want some privacy. He doesn't. I'm in deep shit.

DAD

Listen: just give that kid back before you ruin both your lives. Living in an orphanage would be better for him than living with you.

Sonny's stung.

SONNY

Oh, that's real nice, Dad. I appreciate that...

*
*

DAD

You're out of your mind! You can barely bathe and dress yourself.

SONNY

Yeah, okay, Dad...

*

DAD

How could you be so reckless? You're not ready to be anyone's father, you schmuck!

SONNY

I could be a great father! I could be a better father than you!

DAD

That's impossible, cause all you care about is yourself.

SONNY

That's not true; I care about you saving money on this phone call.

Sonny slams down the phone.

FADE TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Sonny and Luke are sitting on the edge of the big fountain at the center of Washington Square in Greenwich Village.

SONNY

My old man - your temporary grandpa - never showed an ounce of support for me. It was his way or the highway; he didn't care about what I wanted. "Study hard, go to law school" - he tried to bring me up to be like him: a sucker, a wage slave. And most fathers are that way.

Sonny notices a snotty NYU STUDENT walking under the giant arch.

SONNY

Check out that poor guy. He was a cute kid like you once. But I bet his dad screwed him up. Now look at him - pale, dressed in black, angry at life...

(yelling to Student)

Hey, buddy, you know who won the Jets game?

NYU STUDENT

Who cares?

SONNY

(to Luke)

See what I mean?

(to NYU Student)

You gotta let it go, man. He can't control you anymore.

NYU STUDENT

What are you talking about?

SONNY

You know what I'm talking about.

The NYU Student walks away scowling.

SONNY

Look, while we're hanging out, I'm not going to "Dad" you to death. I'm just gonna try to expose you to some cool stuff I've picked up over the years - how to dribble

(MORE)

SONNY (cont'd)
lefty, how to talk to girls, how
to do your own thing regardless of
what anybody else thinks.

*
*
*

A SKATE PUNK rolls past.

*

SONNY
Look at that guy...
(to Skate Punk)
Hey, dude! You could run into
someone on the sidewalk. Take it
on the street.

*
*
*
*
*

SKATE PUNK
Screw you.

*
*

SONNY
I forgive you. Your lashing out
at your dad. Get a shrink.
(to Luke)
You understand what I'm saying,
Luke?

*
*
*
*
*
*

Luke nods. A thought occurs to Sonny.

*

SONNY
Do you like that name, "Luke"?

LUKE
I guess.

SONNY
Why shouldn't you be able to pick
your own name? What name would
you like to have?

*
*
*

Luke ponders this.

LUKE
Frankenstein.

SONNY
Alright, Frankenstein, time to
learn how to be a man.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

*

Sonny is sitting on the couch. Luke comes out of Kevin's
bedroom, wearing a wool hat, a vest without a shirt, shorts
and Kevin's cowboy boots.

*
*
*

LUKE
This okay?

*
*

SONNY

If it's okay with you, it's okay
with me.

INT. NATHAN'S HOT DOGS - NIGHT

Sonny and Luke are on line. Luke is shuffling along in the
oversized cowboy boots.

LUKE

What are we having for dinner?

SONNY

Well, what do you want for dinner?

CUT TO:

INT. NATHAN'S SEATING AREA - A SHORT TIME LATER

Sonny is eating two chili dogs, cheese fries and a giant
coke. Luke is methodically emptying and eating twenty
packets of ketchup.

Tommy and Phil slide into the booth opposite Sonny and
Luke; they are in shorts and sweaty. Tommy is carrying a
basketball.

SONNY

Hey, fellas. You're late; we
started without you.

PHIL

The game went into overtime...
(looking at empty
ketchup packets)
What's up with the ketchup?

SONNY

I don't know, he likes ketchup.
You guys getting anything?

TOMMY

I'm gonna get a couple of franks
and some cheese fries.

PHIL

Me too.

SONNY

Well, you know what they say: the
only thing better than franks and
cheese fries is free franks and
cheese fries...

TOMMY

Oh, no, Sonny, come on. We're 32 years old...

PHIL

We're attorneys. Don't do this.

Sonny, ignoring their protests, smiles and instantly drops to the floor, violently writhing in agony.

SONNY

My stomach... It's on fire!

People stop eating and stare. A nervous NATHAN'S MANAGER hustles over.

NATHAN'S MANAGER

Sir, are you okay?

SONNY

Your chili... My guts are exploding...

NATHAN'S MANAGER

Um, what can I do to help?

SONNY

Pain... Hurting... Ouch...

The Manager looks around and sees how Sonny's performance could affect business - he has to get him out of there.

NATHAN'S MANAGER

Do you want me to call an ambulance?

SONNY

(moaning)

No, I think I would feel better if you just... just gave my friends some food... for free.

The Manager, realizing it's a scam, angrily motions for a worker to bring over some food.

Sonny winks at Luke.

EXT. CANAL STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT

Sonny and Tommy stroll past the street vendors and Chinese seafood stores, sharing a huge basket of Nathan's famous french fries. Luke and Phil are a few feet ahead, playing with the basketball.

SONNY

Look, this is very temporary, I know that. But while he's around, the more time I spend with him, the better off he's gonna be when he grows up.

TOMMY

You really think a couple of weeks with you is going to affect the kid's life so much?

SONNY

Well check it out...
(calling ahead)
Phil, give Frankenstein the ball.

Phil looks at Sonny quizzically. Sonny motions toward Luke. Phil gives Luke the ball.

SONNY

Show Tommy and Phil what I taught you today.

Luke, concentrating hard, dribbles the ball. After a beat, he bounces it between his legs.

Tommy and Phil cheer and clap. Sonny looks on proudly...

DREAMY DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

PATRICK EWING and the rest of the NEW YORK KNICKS are on the floor, having just been introduced. They are awaiting one more player...

GARDEN ANNOUNCER O.C.

...and finally, at power forward,
from Syracuse University... Luke!

The crowd goes nuts. A young man who looks a lot like Luke runs out and high fives the team.

PATRICK EWING

Luke, you are the best.

DREAMY DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CANAL STREET - NIGHT

Sonny is smiling, caught up in his daydream.

TOMMY

So a few basketball tricks are gonna change this kid's life?

SONNY

No, you idiot. This is a whole new school of child-raising: give the kid options, not orders, and let him make the right decision.

TOMMY

Well good luck, psycho. What are you doing tomorrow?

Sonny looks up at Luke. The wool hat is pulled down almost over his eyes.

SONNY

Tomorrow, we learn about work.

EXT. TOLLBOOTH - LATE AFTERNOON

A city bus stops near the entrance to the toll plaza. Sonny and Luke descend. Luke is wearing sandals, a bathing suit, a child-size sportcoat and a straw hat. Sonny is trying to teach him how to snap his fingers.

SONNY

You gotta push your fingers together hard and then just snap.

Luke tries, but can't do it.

They walk over to the manned toll booth. George is there, surrounded by all sorts of personal stuff: electric razor, dirty clothes, deodorant, magazines, a tiny TV, an alarm clock, etc. A sleeping bag has been kicked to the side.

GEORGE

Hey, Sonny. Who's your friend?

SONNY

My son - well, temporary son. What's going on in there?

GEORGE

I left my wife.

SONNY

Oh, I'm sorry about that.

GEORGE
She needed a wake up call, man.
Too much weed. But to tell you
the truth, I don't think she even
noticed I'm gone. Did you say
that's your son?

SONNY
Yeah.

GEORGE
What's his name?

SONNY
Frankenstein.

GEORGE
(nonplussed)
Hey, Frankenstein.
(to Sonny)
You don't mind if I hang during
your shift, do you?

CUT TO:

EXT. TOLLBOOTH - NIGHT

"The Kangaroo Song" is blaring from the boombox inside the
tollbooth. An BIG EARED MOTORIST getting change gives
Sonny a funny look.

BIG EARED MOTORIST
Nice song.

SONNY
Nice ears.

The BIG EARED MOTORIST pulls away, mad.

INT. TOLLBOOTH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

George is on the floor in his sleeping bag, brushing his
teeth. Luke is hopping around in the little remaining
space, acting out "The Kangaroo Song."

George spits a mouthful of toothpaste into a coffee cup.

GEORGE
Hey, Frankenstein, how'd you get
such a cool name?

LUKE
Sonny let me pick it.

GEORGE
That's great. I wish I could pick
my own name. Maybe "Danny". Or
"Paul"...

*
*
*
*

Sonny turns off "The Kangaroo Song" and switches tapes.

SONNY
(to Luke)
I've got something really special
here: the best grown-up music ever
made. Check it out...

The Bee Gee's "More Than A Woman" comes out of the boombox.

*

Luke frowns and puts "The Kangaroo Song" back on.

*

SONNY
I ain't gonna force it. Then
he'll never like it.

*
*
*

GEORGE
Good plan. So you two just hang
out together all day?

*

SONNY
Yeah, we go to museums, toy
stores, movies, whatever he wants.
We went to the park today and hung
on the monkey bars. It was great!
Did you do that when you were a
kid?

*
*
*
*
*
*

GEORGE
I always fell off. I had
extremely weak hands.

*
*
*

SONNY
(to Luke)
What do you want to do tomorrow?

*
*
*

LUKE
I want to go to school.

Sonny looks at George.

SONNY
See? I don't force him, and he
makes the right decision. Easy.

*

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Sonny and Luke are walking into P.S. 137 in Tribeca.

SONNY

Whoa, kid, you're kind of smelly.
How about you taking a bath when
we get home?

LUKE

I don't want to!

SONNY

Then I support you and your
stench.

*
*
*

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Sonny is standing at a big counter. Luke is seated in a
small chair behind him. A matronly ADMINISTRATOR sits
behind the big counter.

SONNY

We'd like to get him registered
for school.

ADMINISTRATOR

Last name?

SONNY

(thinking)
Uh, let's go with Gerrity.

*

ADMINISTRATOR

(suspicious look)
First name?

SONNY

Frankenstein.

The Administrator just looks at him.

SONNY

Or Luke, Luke or Frankenstein...

ADMINISTRATOR

Is he a transfer student?

SONNY

Um, yes.

ADMINISTRATOR

Where is he transferring from?

SONNY

Hold on a second...

Walks back to Luke. Confers for a moment. Sonny walks back.

SONNY

Toronto.

ADMINISTRATOR

Toronto. What grade is he transferring to?

A pause - he thinks about it - then he rushes back to Luke. Whisper, whisper. Races back to the counter.

SONNY

Kindergarten.

ADMINISTRATOR

(rolling her eyes)

He starts tomorrow morning. Nine a.m. Have a nice afternoon.

SONNY

Oh, we will.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Luke wanders alone. Scared.

LUKE

Sonny! Sonny!

A vivacious young woman in jeans and a Rangers jersey, LAYLA DONNELLY, sees Luke. She's naturally concerned. After a moments hesitation, she calls out to him.

LAYLA

Hey, kid, are you okay?

LUKE

Where's Sonny?

LAYLA

Uh, I don't know, but I'll help you find him. What's your name?

LUKE

Frankenstein.

Just then, Sonny races over. Concerned.

SONNY

There you are! I told him not to race off. You okay, buddy?

Luke nods.

SONNY

I just turned my head for two seconds and he disappeared. You shouldn't run off like that...

Sonny winks at Luke. Luke winks back.

LAYLA

Are you his dad?

Sonny answers very hesitatingly.

SONNY

You might say that... Would you... prefer... I be his dad?

Layla gives him a crazy look.

SONNY

No, I'm not his dad. I'm kind of his temporary father-type figure, until Social Services can place him with a new family.

(smooth)

My name's Sonny...

LAYLA

I'm Layla.

SONNY

So are you headed to work or home?

LAYLA

Well, I was going home...

SONNY

Now you say "was": does that mean you're considering a change in plans, perhaps to accompany - hey!

Sonny sees Luke peeing on a tree. He gets excited.

SONNY

Thattaboy, Luke! He's doing it by himself!

Layla smiles.

LAYLA

That's nice.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sonny and Layla are on the couch. Sonny has his left shoe and sock off; Layla is examining his foot. *

LAYLA *

So the cab's tire rolled right over the middle part here?

SONNY *

No, actually more in the toe area. I like to say I collected forty grand per injured toe... *

LAYLA *

And you have a kid...

SONNY *

Just for a little while.

LAYLA *

It's hard, huh? I have a little niece, she's the cutest thing, but she needs so much time and attention. After a couple of hours with her... well, I'm glad I'm an aunt, not a mother. *

SONNY *

(not sure he agrees) *

Yeah. *

(changing subject) *

So you like hockey, eh? *

LAYLA *

Diehard Ranger fan.

Sonny moves a little closer.

SONNY *

You know what they say about hockey chicks, don't you?...

A voice booms from Kevin's bedroom.

LUKE O.C. *

Sonny!

Sonny frowns. Not good for the mood. *

SONNY *

I'll be right back...

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sonny swings the door open. Luke is in bed.

LUKE

You forgot to say "good night."

SONNY

So?

LUKE

I can't fall asleep until you say
"good night."

Sonny sees that this is cute. He sits on the bed and
tucks Luke in.

SONNY

Did you learn anything about girls
tonight?

LUKE

Initiating the conversation is
half the battle.

SONNY

That's right. Now...good night.

Luke smiles and closes his eyes. Sonny leaves.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sonny walks right over to the stereo.

SONNY

Everything's fine. Hows about a
little mood music...

"How Deep Is Your Love" by the Bee-Gees comes on.

LAYLA

Oh, man, this is my favorite
album.

This stops Sonny in his tracks. This is the girl he's
going to marry.

SONNY

You're kidding me.

LAYLA

No, seriously, I love it. My friends make fun of me all the time.

SONNY

Mine too!

Sonny lights up a cigarette.

SONNY

I always identified with Tony Manero. We're both from Brooklyn, our parents don't understand us and we both like to ride the subway all night and think.

LAYLA

Really?

SONNY

Well, the first two things. Plus, my best friend fell off the Verrazano bridge.

LAYLA

No!

SONNY

Yeah, I'm lying again...

They both laugh. This is going great.

Suddenly, the music stops.

Luke is standing next to the stereo.

Sonny hands off the cigarette to Layla.

SONNY

(nervous)

Hey, you don't mind if Layla smokes, do you?

LAYLA

(going with it)

I'll only smoke this one...

She takes a drag and coughs violently.

LUKE

I don't want to be alone.

SONNY
You're not alone. Layla and I are
right here in the next room.

LUKE
My mom left me alone before.

Sonny' upbeat tone drops.

SONNY
What do you mean?

LUKE
She used to have emergencies and
it's hard to find a baby-sitter
sometimes.

SONNY
What did you do?

LUKE
I cried. I didn't mean to.

Sonny's heart is bleeding for this kid.

LUKE
Please don't leave me alone.

Sonny looks at Layla.

SONNY
I'm really sorry about this.

LAYLA
Don't be; I totally understand.

Layla grabs her coat. She gives Luke an affectionate pat.

LAYLA
You have a nice night now...

SONNY
Could we do something tomorrow?

LAYLA
I have a seminar. New York County
Environmental Law Coalition.

This stops Sonny dead in his tracks.

SONNY
You're a lawyer?

LAYLA
Yeah. Hard to believe?

SONNY
Kind of. A real lawyer would
never go to anything as goofy as a
New York County Environmental Law
Coalition seminar.

LAYLA
She would if she was teaching it.

Sonny soaks this information in.

SONNY
Even worse: a lawyer who's psyched
about it.

LAYLA
Is that so bad?

SONNY
Yeah, cause I actually kind of
like you...

Layla smiles.

LAYLA
Bye Frankenstein. Bye Sonny.

She leaves.

FADE TO:

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Kids are entering. The kids already there are talking and
playing happily.

PAN TO Sonny, tying Luke's shoelace, adjusting his
backpack, combing his hair. He's more nervous than Luke
(who's dressed crzily, as always).

SONNY
You gonna be okay?

LUKE
You aren't staying?

SONNY
I wasn't planning on it. It's
Thursday; I've got to work.

LUKE
I don't like these kids.

SONNY
I don't like them much, either.
But maybe you should give them a
chance. Don't you think?

LUKE
I guess so.

Sonny looks to his pocket. An idea.

SONNY
You want the sunglasses? In case
you get scared.

Luke takes the glasses out of Sonny's pocket. He puts them
on.

SONNY
Hey, where'd you go?

Luke smiles.

SONNY
Now, be careful with those, I
might need them tonight.

LUKE
Why?

SONNY
Phil and Tommy are taking us to
"Laser Floyd" at the planetarium.

LUKE
What's "Laser Floyd"?

SONNY
Trust me, it'll change your life.
Now you better get going.

Luke hesitantly walks over to where the other kids are.
One starts talking to him. Luke talks back.

Sonny, taking this all in, smiles.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny is in a bathrobe, smoking a cigarette. He's
practicing putts with a golf club. ESPN's "SportsCenter" is
on in the background. Alone and happy at last.

*

*

*

*

*

Sonny putts toward an empty Pringles can - and sinks it.
No reaction; now we see he's kind of bored and antsy.

He kind of wanders around the apartment. He's looking at
Luke's backpack when the phone rings. He rushes to answer
it, thankful for some break in the monotony.

SONNY

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. SIERRA CLUB LEGAL DEFENSE FUND - DAY

Layla is at her cluttered desk in an outpost of the
venerable public interest law firm. She does work as she's
on the phone.

LAYLA

Howdy.

SPLIT SCREEN: S.C.L.D.F./SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny's not sure who it is.

SONNY

Hi...

LAYLA

It's Layla. Your unsuccessful one
night stand from last night.

SONNY

(flustered)
Oh, hi. It wasn't unsuccessful.
I had fun.

LAYLA

Me too. It was like my only night
off this month, and I had a blast.

SONNY

Sorry about the way it ended.
He's a good kid.

LAYLA

I know. And I think it's great
you're taking care of him until he
finds another home.

Sonny smiles. It's his new favorite subject.

SONNY
Isn't he the greatest? He's gonna
be a movie star or a rock star or
a basketball player.

LAYLA
Maybe he'll be elected to the
Senate or something.

SONNY
Yeah, a senator. And when he gets
sworn in, I'm gonna run up and
grab the microphone and say, "Hey,
Dad! So you thought I couldn't
raise a kid? Well, eat shit!"

LAYLA
I don't know if the kid would like
that. It might embarass him in
front of all his senator friends.

SONNY
You're right. I'll just send my
dad a letter or something.

LAYLA
And speaking of his friends, you
better keep an eye on them.

SONNY
Why?

LAYLA
They say the most important
influence in a kid's life is
friends - even more than parents.
Much more than temporary parents.

This troubles Sonny greatly.

SONNY
Friends? That would ruin
everything...

LAYLA
Yeah, he's probably hanging out
with all the drug dealers and
delinquents in school.

There's a pause in the converstion. Sonny looks concerned.

LAYLA

That was a joke. He's in kindergarten. Lighten up.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Sonny is sitting on a bench with Luke and three classmates: ALEX, JEFF and JOHN. They're all drinking Yoo-Hoo's.

SONNY

(trying too hard to be conversational)

This is great, sitting around, drinking Yoo-Hoo with the boys. Isn't it?

The boys just look at him.

SONNY

You know what else is great? Smoking dope. Gettin' high as a kite. You know what I'm talking about, right, Jeff?

JEFF

What do those words mean?

SONNY

Come on, you can tell me, I ain't gonna rat you out. Y'all love to puff on that cheeba, don't you? Smoke a little J before homeroom? Or... kindergarten homeroom, I guess. Who does it? You, Alex?

ALEX

Can I go home now?

SONNY

Alright, forget I said that. Just drink the Yoo-Hoo and chill out. These are great, aren't they? Yeah, nothing beats drinkin' a Yoo-Hoo, smoking some dope and then going out and stealing some stuff, shoplifting, little stuff, candy, gum. You like stealing, don't you, John?

John just looks at him.

SONNY
Stealing, cutting class, skipping
school, playing hooky - it's all
good, right? Right? *

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Sonny pushes a cart filled with cereal and TV dinners (and
Luke). He looks really tired.

Luke scratches recklessly at his arm. *

SONNY
Why you scratchin' so much?

LUKE
I have ex-sa... ex-sa...

SONNY
Eczema? Yuck.

LUKE
How do I make the itch stop?

SONNY
Keep scratching. That's what I
do.

Luke starts scratching again. They stop at the canned
foods section.

SONNY
Hey look. Spaghetti-O's. You
like them?

Luke nods yes.

SONNY
Good. Watch this.

Sonny grabs a can and bangs it on the metal cart, denting
it, then throws it in the cart. He repeats this with
another can. *

SONNY
Dented cans are half-price. Here,
help me out...

Sonny hands Luke a can, which he begins banging against the
cart, making lots of noise. A woman in the same aisle
turns to look: it's Corinne. She's wearing a tight t-
shirt.

CORINNE

Hi Sonny. Hi... Sonny's friend.

SONNY

His name is Frankenstein.

Corinne raises an eyebrow and starts walking over.

CORINNE

Hello, Frankenstein. Remember me?

SONNY

Hey, that's funny - you guys wear the same size t-shirt.

LUKE

(showing arm, proud)

I have ex-a-ma.

CORINNE

Then you shouldn't be scratching. That just makes it worse. It will only go away if you don't scratch.

SONNY

Hey, he can scratch if he wants to scratch. Don't tell him what to do.

She ignores Sonny and pulls a package of frozen peas out of her cart and rubs it on Luke's arm.

CORINNE

Now when you really want to scratch, rub something cold on it.

He tries it. It works.

LUKE

Thank you.

Sonny feels a little threatened.

SONNY

Gee, Corinne, I didn't know you knew so much about kids. I thought you were a foot doctor.

CORINNE

(snidely)

This isn't doctor stuff, this is just common sense: scratching spreads rashes.

SONNY

Oh, so it's something you learned
at "Hooters"...

*

Corinne ignores this and turns to Luke.

CORINNE

I got engaged last month. Do you
want to see my ring?

LUKE

Okay.

She holds out the ring proudly.

CORINNE

(to Luke)

I didn't want the wedding to be
huge huge, but there's at least
two hundred people we absolutely
have to invite--

WHAM! A loud noise cuts her off.

Sonny has thrown a can of Spaghetti-o's on the floor.

CORINNE

What the hell are you doing?

SONNY

Shopping.

WHAM! Sonny slams another can to the floor. Luke
gleefully joins in.

LUKE

(to Corinne)

Dented cans are half price.

INT. PUGLIA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The atmosphere is clamorous inside the Little Italy
stalwart. JORGE BUCCIO serenades the diners with his
version of Billy Joel's "Just The Way You Are." Sonny and
Layla are crammed into a corner.

*

LAYLA

I still can't believe that two
guys you were best friends with in
law school fell in love with each
other. That must be kinda weird.

*

*

*

*

*

SONNY
Naah, things haven't changed that
much. They just like a different
kind of porno now...

*
*
*
*

There's a quiet beat.

*

SONNY
I feel a little weird being away
from Luke. I hope they aren't
undermining my philosophy...

*
*

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy is sitting on Sonny's couch watching "All The Right
Moves". ON TV, Tom Cruise takes his shirt off.

TOMMY
That's my boy, Cruise. Now the
pants...

*
*

PAN OVER to the table, where Phil is playing cards with
Luke, who's making up the rules as he goes along.

PHIL
I've got two fives, a seven, a
jack and a queen.

LUKE
I win!

PHIL
(laughing)
Why do you win?

LUKE
I have a two... a six... a five...
a two... a nine...

PHIL
I don't understand the rules to
this game. Why do you always win?

LUKE
Because I do...

Luke gathers the cards and begins methodically shuffling.

INT. PUGLIA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sonny is saying something to Jorge. As Sonny walks back to Layla, Jorge begins playing the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive."

JORGE

(singing)

Well you can tell by the way I use
my walk, I'm a woman's man, no
time to talk...

Layla smiles as Sonny sits.

LAYLA

I put this album on to relax when
I'm really stressed out from work.

(a beat)

I've been listening to it alot
lately.

SONNY

Work sucks, eh?

LAYLA

It doesn't really suck; I'm just
busy. We're suing the National
Park Service, and I think the
Supreme Court may hear the case
next year.

SONNY

Wow. Did they grant *certiorari*
based on *Grubbs v. Nevada*?

LAYLA

(impressed)

Well, yes, that was one of the
cases they cited...

Layla's cel phone rings.

LAYLA

Shit. Sorry about this. I told
them only to call in case of an
emergency...

As Layla answers the call, Sonny stares off, thinking about
Luke.

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Luke is banging on pots and pans and singing nonsense. Tommy and Phil are on the couch, looking pained, shouting above the din.

PHIL
I didn't even know Sonny had pots!

TOMMY
They must be Kevin's!

Phil walks over to Luke.

PHIL
Luke, could you please stop that?

LUKE
I'm Keith Moon! I'm Keith Moon!

Phil takes a piece of paper out of his pocket and looks at it. It's an extremely detailed list of "do's" and "don'ts." Phil scans down the "do" list and finds "DO let him pretend to be Keith Moon."

INT. PUGLIA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sonny and Layla are eating their Chicken Parmigiana. Both have a lot of "mozzarella management" problems. *

LAYLA
Kids? Definitely. But not now.
I've seen too many women I work
with take a few months off to have
a kid - and then never catch up. *

SONNY
Well, I'm not a woman, and I don't
have a real job, but with me and
Luke, it's only a short-term
thing, and even while he's here,
he doesn't set the tone of our
relationship: I do... *

Suddenly, Sonny's beeper goes off.

SONNY
Gotta go.

LAYLA
What's wrong? *

SONNY

This is Phil's beeper. He said
he'd only use it in an emergency.

*

Sonny gets up, fairly frantic.

LAYLA

Well, I had a nice time. Thanks.

*

Sonny remembers that he's on a date.

SONNY

Oh, yeah. Me too. Sorry about
this... again. Maybe in a few
weeks when things aren't so...

*

*

LAYLA

Frankenstein-y?

*

*

SONNY

Yeah.

*

INT. KEVIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Luke is laying in bed, holding his stomach, moaning. Tommy
and Phil hover concernedly nearby.

LUKE

My stomach... It's on fire!
Where's Sonny?

PHIL

He'll be here any minute, Luke.
Hang in there.

Sonny bursts through the door.

SONNY

What's wrong?

On seeing Sonny, Luke jumps out of bed and embraces him.

LUKE

Sonny!

Sonny looks at Tommy and Phil quizzically.

TOMMY

His stomach... he was moaning...

SONNY

Aw shit. You idiots fell for
that?

LUKE

Sonny, look what I made!

Luke runs out of the room.

SONNY

One second, Frank!

PHIL

How'd your date with the hockey-chick-lawyer go?

SONNY

Well, you know how you go to a bar, and you meet a good-looking girl, and then you find out she has a kid, and she gets a lot less good-looking?

PHIL

Not really, but continue.

SONNY

Well, I think it's happening to me, and I don't like it.

Sonny leaves to see what Luke has made.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

It's "Parent's Day". Sonny is dragged around by Luke, who excitedly shows him every detail of the room, including the sink.

LUKE

This is where I wash my hands.

SONNY

Wow. Right here? All by yourself?

Sonny is spotted from across the room by Luke's teacher, MS. FOOTE, a young woman about Sonny's age. She comes over to him.

MS. FOOTE

Hi, I'm Luke's teacher, Ms. Foote. Are you his father?

SONNY

Yeah... I'm Kevin Gerrity.

They shake hands.

MS. FOOTE

I've been looking forward to meeting you.

*

SONNY

Really. Wanted to meet the guy who raised the star of the class?

MS. FOOTE

No. Do you mind if I take a few minutes of your time to discuss a couple of things that have been troubling me?

SONNY

Sure.

(to Luke)

Beat it for a second.

*

*

*

Luke runs off toward some kids playing.

*

MS. FOOTE

Luke has been demonstrating some odd behaviors. Last week, he spilled a tube of glue on the floor, and didn't tell anybody. He just covered it with newspaper and pretended it didn't exist.

SONNY

That doesn't sound too weird.

MS. FOOTE

Well, a few days later he threw his carton of milk on the floor - he said it would be cheaper if he did that. And let me show you something.

They stop at her desk. She pulls out Luke's lunchbox.

MS. FOOTE

This is what he brought for lunch today.

Ms. Foote opens the lunchbox, revealing...

MS. FOOTE

A Snickers, a bag of Fritos and a Mountain Dew.

SONNY

He packs his own lunch.

MS. FOOTE

So he's told me. Mr. Gerrity,
Luke falls asleep in class fairly
regularly. And he never does his
homework. He says he doesn't have
to do it if he doesn't want to.

SONNY

Well, he's very advanced for his
age, so I try to let him do what
he wants...

Sonny trails off as he sees Luke peeing against a wall in
the classroom. Luckily, Ms. Foote doesn't see it.

MS. FOOTE

He doesn't seem too advanced to
me. In fact, he's making the
least progress of all the children
in class...

This hits Sonny hard.

MS. FOOTE

I'm starting to suspect that your
son may have serious behavioral
and developmental problems...

SONNY

(weakly)

You seen him dribble lefty?

MS. FOOTE

What good is dribbling if your son
has no attention span, is unable
to relate to other people...

Sonny is barely listening. He's thinking about
something...

DREAMY DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Patrick Ewing and the rest of the Knicks are on the floor,
having just been introduced. They are awaiting one more
player...

GARDEN ANNOUNCER O.C.

...and finally, at power forward,
from Syracuse University... Luke!

The crowd goes nuts. A young man who looks a lot like Luke runs out - drunk. The crowd boos him. He pees on the court. It's ugly.

PATRICK EWING

Boo! Boo!

DREAMY DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Ms. Foote is still talking.

MS. FOOTE

...might potentially be left back a grade unless he improves. And Mr. Gerrity, his personal hygiene is becoming a cause for concern--

This is the worst news of all.

SONNY

(aghast)

Oh, no: he's the smelly kid in class. I can't believe I let him become the smelly kid in class...

MS. FOOTE

Also, the class will be giving a presentation on the Founding Fathers in two weeks. Luke drew the part of Benjamin Franklin, which is a pretty big role. You could help him as much as you can.

SONNY

You got it.

Sonny goes across the room to collect Luke.

SONNY

You got us in trouble, kid. Let's go.

He gets an eyeful of Luke: long-sleeve "Pac Man" t-shirt, pajama bottoms and cleats.

SONNY

You look nuts. What do you say we go to Barney's and get you dressed up like a scholar?

Lukes eyes widen.

LUKE
Barney?

SONNY
Oh, no, different Barney.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAND ARMY PLAZA - DAY

Luke is sitting miserably on the edge of that big fountain across from the Plaza Hotel, wearing a sharp cream-colored suit.

LUKE
This suit is dumb.

CUT TO Sonny, wearing an identical cream-colored suit.

SONNY
Well, I'm not a big fan either, but we both need to act different, starting right now.

LUKE
I don't want to act different.

Sonny grimaces and looks out over Fifth Avenue, packed with mid-day crowds. Sonny, deciding to try another tack, points to the big statue in the middle of the fountain.

SONNY
Boy, I bet there's a lot of history in that statue. Don't you think?

LUKE
(sulking)
No.

SONNY
Speaking of history, did you know that Ben Franklin invented bifocal glasses?

Luke ignores him.

SONNY
That's pretty cool. And he also started the first library in America. I wonder if he invented that you have to be quiet in libraries.

Still no response.

SONNY

He had long stringy hair. I wonder if George Washington made fun of him--

LUKE

Who cares about that stuff?

Sonny winces, knowing that he created this monster.

SONNY

Well, now you do, cause you have a big project to do for school.

LUKE

I don't want to.

SONNY

Yeah, well, that's the other thing. You gotta start doing things you don't want to do.

LUKE

You said I didn't have to.

SONNY

Well, we tried something out and we failed. You do.

*
*

LUKE

No!

SONNY

You're going to have to start bathing, and going to bed early, and doing your homework...

LUKE

(increasingly frantic)
Stop telling me what to do!

SONNY

...and eating healthy food, and wearing human clothes, and generally not doing bad things.

*

LUKE

I want my mommy! I hate you!

Sonny is stung. He gently grabs Luke by the shoulders.

SONNY

Well, I don't hate you, and that's why--

LUKE

You're a liar! Where's my mommy?

SONNY

(losing his cool)

Look, I'm doing this for you...

LUKE

(out of control)

I hate you! Where's Mommy? *

Where's Mommy! WHERE'S MY MOMMY!!

SONNY

(cool lost)

She's gone, and she's never coming back!

Luke's face goes pale. Hit with a wrecking ball. Sonny grits his teeth, "did I just say that?" Luke trembles. Hearing it said confirms his greatest fear. He knows Sonny is right. He pushes Sonny away.

SONNY

I'm sorry, Luke... *

Luke squirms free and breaks into a sprint down Fifth Avenue. Sonny follows-- knocking everyone out of the way.

SONNY

Luke!

Sonny gets to the corner of 59th Street. Luke is nowhere in sight.

SONNY

Luke!

He chooses a direction and randomly goes to it. He breaks through to an open area. No sign of him. He stands on a hydrant to get a better perspective. Nothing.

Sonny begins to panic. He yells as loud as he can.

SONNY

Luke!

A few people look at him with compassion. His face is full of fear. Still no sign of Luke.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Luke is running down the crowded street, crying.

From LUKE'S POV, we see the confusing jumble of unfamiliar faces.

LUKE

Mom?

ON LUKE, searching for something familiar, totally lost.

LUKE

Sonny?

The cabs on the avenue start jamming on their horns, creating a deafening sound. Luke slinks back against a building, alone and scared.

EXT. 58TH STREET - DAY

Sonny turns the corner. He sees a small figure halfway down the block. He begins to run. Hope floods his face as he heads toward the figure.

Now, closer, he can see that it is indeed Luke.

SONNY

Luke!!

Sonny is completely overcome with emotion. He hugs him tight. Luke is teary and hyperventilating.

LUKE

I'm sorry.

SONNY

No, I'm sorry.

Luke calms down a little.

LUKE

I'm scared to be alone.

SONNY

Well, I'll never let you be alone again.

LUKE

Promise?

Sonny thinks about the gravity of this.

*
*
*
*
*
*

SONNY

I... promise.

Luke puts his arms around Sonny' neck and holds tight. The pedestrian traffic steps around them gingerly. The flow of people grows thicker and they are obscured by the bustling and disappear in the commotion.

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Luke sits in the bathtub. Sonny, still in his suit, attempts to bathe him.

SONNY

Do you like the guy who brings us Chinese food?

LUKE

Yeah. He's funny.

SONNY

Well, what would you think about him babysitting for you on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday?

LUKE

I'm not a baby.

SONNY

I know, but is it okay?

LUKE

Why?

SONNY

I asked for some more hours at work; you're eating me out of house and home. Is it okay?

LUKE

Okay.

Luke stands up, he's wearing a bathing suit.

LUKE

How come I have to wear a bathing suit?

SONNY

Because grown men shouldn't see little boys naked. Sit down.

Luke sits down very sulkily. Sonny starts shampooing Luke's hair.

*
*

LUKE

Why did my mom send me here?

SONNY

She sent you here to give you a chance at a good life. But I screwed it up...

Luke, sensing Sonny's feeling bad, reaches out of the tub and pats his back.

*
*

LUKE

You did okay...

SONNY

(smiling)

That's nice of you to say. But I think your mom would want you to be raised a little differently. She'd want me to make sure you were healthy, and nice, and did good in school.

LUKE

We can do it.

SONNY

You think?

Luke nods. Sonny smiles.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK SHEEP MEADOW - DAY

It's very overcast. Sonny and Luke are flying a kite; both are wearing white powdered wigs.

*

INT. NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Luke reads children's books on American history while Sonny reads the New York Post.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Luke and Sonny are at the curve where they watched the Rollerbladers lose control. They are putting up a handmade sign reading, "SLOW DOWN."

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sonny and Luke are sitting down to a healthy lunch of steamed veggies. Suddenly Luke grabs his gut.

LUKE

My stomach... It's on fire!

SONNY

You're actually trying to fool me with that?

FADE TO:

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

A kindergardener (Alex) wearing a white powdered wig steps forward on stage, very nervous.

ALEX

My name is Alexander Hamilon. I was the first Secretary of the... Treasury. I owned a bank, and a newspaper. Aaron Bird shot me.

Alex steps back. Luke steps forward.

LUKE

My name is Benjamin Franklin. I was a writer, a diplomat, an inventor and a statesman...

Sonny is in the audience. He's mouthing the words along with Luke.

LUKE

...although I only went to school for two years...

Luke gives Sonny a look. Sonny smiles. Layla, sitting next to him, smiles too.

*
*

LUKE

...I wrote many books, and invented many things that we still use today...

Young Tom Jefferson (Jeff) steps forward.

*

JEFF

The Declaration of Independence is finished! Who will be the first
(MORE)

JEFF (cont'd)
to sign? How about you, John
Hancock?

JOHN

Okay.

But a rush of kids presses forward, breaking character, all
wanting to be the first to sign. Only Luke stands his
ground, proudly beaming.

Sonny is awash in paternal love.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Parents and children are filing out of the auditorium into
a hallway. Sonny is walking down the hallway between Luke
and Layla. Luke is still dressed in his costume.

LAYLA

I'm telling you, for a minute, I
thought it was really Ben Franklin
up there. It was uncanny...

SONNY

(to Luke)
What do you say?...

LUKE

Thank you.
(to Sonny)
Can I go get some Kool-Aid?

SONNY

Sure. Enjoy.

Luke runs off toward a table full of cookies and Kool-Aid
down at the end of the hall.

SONNY

I didn't know they still made Kool-
Aid; I gotta get some of that.

LAYLA

Forget the Kool-Aid for a second.
I have to go to Miami tomorrow to
take a deposition, just for a
night. What about you coming with
me?

SONNY

Wow, that sounds great, but...

Gestures toward Luke. Layla's disappointed.

LAYLA
I got a suite at the Fountainbleu.
Can't you get Tommy and Phil to
babysit?

SONNY
Nah, I... I gotta say "good night"
to the kid or he can't fall
asleep.

LAYLA
(mock pleading)
But I need you to say "good night"
to me, too...

They walk on quietly for a beat.

LAYLA
Well, I guess we won't be able to
see each other more than once a
month until either Luke finds a
permanent family or I quit my job.

SONNY
I think Luke has found a permanent
family.

This stops Layla in her tracks.

LAYLA
Who?

SONNY
You're looking at him.

Layla reacts.

SONNY
Look, I haven't told him yet; I
just decided. It's the right
thing to do.

LAYLA
(trying hard to be
positive)
Wow, that's great. I... that's
great--

They're interrupted by Ms. Foote, who comes walking over.

MS. FOOTE
Luke did such a splendid job
today. What a turnaround!

SONNY
Well, when Sonny Koufax puts his
mind to something, it gets done.

MS. FOOTE
Who's Sonny Koufax?

SONNY
Uh... that's my cousin. He's a
tutor, a professional tutor. He
really helped out with--

Luke comes running over.

LUKE
Sonny! Sonny! Wanna see me make
Kool-Aid come out my nose?

SONNY
Sonny is also my nickname. Me and
my cousin were very, very close...

Sonny smiles. Layla smiles. Ms. Foote smiles. Luke makes
Kool-Aid come out his nose.

FADE TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Luke is sitting on the couch trying to snap his fingers.
Sonny is playing cards with the Delivery Guy. Sonny looks
over at Luke.

SONNY
Bend your finger a little bit
more... You'll get it someday...

SNAP!

Sonny looks up, shocked. Luke is even more shocked. He
just snapped his fingers.

SONNY
You did it.

Luke does it again. SNAP!

SONNY
You can do it now. You're a
pro...

SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP!
SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP! SNAP!

DELIVERY GUY

Yeah, snap, got it.

There's a knock at the door. Sonny goes to answer it.

It's Corinne.

CORINNE

(walking past)

I need to get Kevin's immunization records for the marriage license. I'll be out of here in a second.

She walks past Luke and the Delivery Guy into Kevin's bedroom.

CORINNE

Hi, Frankenstein. Hi, Ti-Hua.

DELIVERY GUY

Hello, Hooters!

There's another knock at the door; Sonny answers it. It's Brooks.

BROOKS

Hello, Mr. Koufax.

SONNY

Hey, just the man I wanted to see. I think I've changed my mind about- did you just call me Mr. Koufax?

BROOKS

Absolutely. We got a call from a teacher. She said there was a kid in her class named Luke Gerrity, whose father seemed a little odd, like not really his father. I recognized the name, so I investigated...

The Delivery Guy walks over.

DELIVERY GUY

What's going on?

He hears silence and sees glum faces.

DELIVERY GUY

Aw jeez, was my bike stolen or something?

SONNY
(to Brooks)
Look, the real Kevin Gerrity asked
me to take care of this kid.

BROOKS
You lied before, Mr. Koufax. Why
should I believe you now?

SONNY
Because... I'm not lying now.

BROOKS
The boy is coming with me right
now, or else I'm going to have to
involve the police. And you don't
want Luke's last memory of this
place to be of you handcuffed to
the radiator, do you?

A tense beat, then...

DELIVERY GUY
This is a little too heavy for me,
Sonny. It's been real, it's been
fun, but it hasn't been real fun.
I'm outtie.

The Delivery Guy walks out. Sonny stands there, defeated.
Brooks starts walking towards Luke

LUKE
(scared)
Sonny?

SONNY
Hey!

Sonny grabs Brooks' wrist, stopping him. A tense standoff,
then...

SONNY
Just give me five minutes to say
goodbye to him.

CUT TO:

INT. SONNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Brooks is standing in the doorway. Sonny is packing Luke's
backpack. This is tearing him apart.

LUKE
You don't want me here anymore?

SONNY
No. It's just... you have to go
away for awhile.

*
*

Sonny finishes packing Luke's backpack.

LUKE
How long am I going away for?

SONNY
Um...a long time. In fact, I'm
going to have to be honest with
you, Luke. I'm probably not going
to see too much of you anymore.

LUKE
Why?

SONNY
(getting misty-eyed,
barely audible)
I don't know.

LUKE
I don't want to go.

SONNY
I know you don't. But it's gonna
be okay.

Sonny walks Luke over to Brooks, struggling with his
emotions. He hands Luke over to Brooks, who's not enjoying
this. Luke looks at Sonny with frightened eyes.

*
*
*

LUKE
I'm sorry.

SONNY
Don't be sorry, it's not your
fault. It's no one's fault.

LUKE
Please don't make me go.

This couldn't tear Sonny up any more.

BROOKS
Come along, Luke. We've got a
nice new family waiting for you.

*
*
*

Brooks takes Luke by the hand and leads him out the door.
Luke never takes his eyes off Sonny.

LUKE
I won't play the kangaroo song
anymore.

SONNY
That's not it, buddy.

LUKE
I promise. I'm sorry. I don't
like that song any more!

Brooks leads Luke into the elevator. He's gone.

CORINNE O.C.
That was the saddest thing I've
ever seen.

Sonny turns to see Corinne standing in the doorway to
Kevin's room.

SONNY
He didn't have anyone else. I
figured if he hung out with me for
a few weeks, it might be a good
thing in his life. I...well, I
got attached to him...

CORINNE
I thought you were good with him.

SONNY
(wait for punchline)
But...

CORINNE
It seemed like he really liked you
and respected you.

SONNY
(still waiting)
And...

CORINNE
I'm paying you a compliment.

Sonny struggles to come up with a compliment in return.

SONNY
Well you... at Hooters... you were
always very fast, especially with
(MORE)

SONNY (cont'd)
appetizers. We'd order potato
skins and mozzarella sticks and
before you know it, boom! there
they were...

Corinne stands and makes a sour face.

CORINNE
Thanks. Good luck with this. If
I were you, I'd take 'em to court.

Sonny nods, appreciative. Corinne walks out.

FADE TO:

INT. SIERRA CLUB LEGAL DEFENSE FUND - DAY

Layla is at her desk. She hangs up the phone and starts
running out of her office - right into Sonny.

SONNY
Hey.

He looks like shit.

LAYLA
Sonny, I have mock arguments for
this Supreme Court case this
afternoon and--

SONNY
They took Luke.

Layla reacts.

LAYLA
Who?

SONNY
The city Department of Social
Services. I filed a brief to get
custody, based on the best
interests of the child. There's
gonna be a hearing on Monday.

LAYLA
Wow...

SONNY
I need your help.

There's a beat of quiet.

LAYLA

Sonny, you know how I feel about you. You're the first guy I've really liked since... ever. You're the first guy I've ever really liked. And I know how much Luke means to you. So... tell me what I can do.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A JUDGE is seated at the bench.

JUDGE

Good morning. We are here to determine proper custody of Luke McGrath, also known as Luke Gerrity, a minor child. Representing the City of New York?

A city lawyer, TED CASTELUCCI, who is sitting at a table with Brooks, stands.

CASTELUCCI

Ted Castelucci.

JUDGE

And representing Sonny Koufax?

Phil, sitting at another table, stands.

PHIL

Phillip D'Amato...

PAN DOWN to Tommy, standing.

TOMMY

Thomas Grogan...

PAN DOWN to Layla, standing.

LAYLA

Layla Donnelly...

PAN DOWN to Sonny, standing.

SONNY

Plus, I'm pretty much representing myself, your honor.

JUDGE

How wonderful. Anyone else?

KEVIN O.C.

Kevin Gerrity.

Kevin and Corinne walk through the door. He walks over and sits next to Sonny. She takes a seat in the gallery.

SONNY

(sotto voce)

What are you doing here?

KEVIN

Corinne called and said you were in trouble.

The Judge surveys the crowd at Sonny's table.

JUDGE

Think you have enough lawyers over there, Mr. Koufax?

SONNY

We'll see.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

George is on the stand; Phil is questioning him. His manner is melodramatic and "Matlock"-ish.

PHIL

And was Mr. Koufax... a good parent?

GEORGE

Shit, yeah. He was always talking about his kid. It made me jealous.

PHIL

Really? How so?

GEORGE

I've always wanted children. But it's hard to make a baby when your wife is more interested in doing bong hits and watching the Game Show Network...

PHIL

Fascinating...
(suddenly bursting
into tears)
(MORE)

PHIL (cont'd)
Your honor, if you saw Luke and
Sonny together...

He's too choked up to go on.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

The Delivery Guy is on the stand; Tommy is questioning him.
His manner is smarmy, "Unfrozen Caveman Lawyer"-ish.

TOMMY
And how long have you been
delivering food to Mr. Koufax?

DELIVERY GUY
Going on six years.

TOMMY
So you'd say you had a... close
relationship?

DELIVERY GUY
Big time.

TOMMY
And in your experience, was Sonny
a good father to Luke?

DELIVERY GUY
Yes! Those two made a terrific
pair. They went together like
spaghetti and meatballs...

After a quiet beat, the Delivery Guy addresses the whole
courtroom.

DELIVERY GUY
You all thought I didn't know what
spaghetti and meatballs were...

Everyone in the room hangs their head guiltily.

TOMMY
Be that as it may, sir...
(suddenly bursting
into tears)
Your honor, it's just not right
that these two be separated...

Phil goes over and tenderly consoles Tommy.

PHIL
It's alright... Shh....

JUDGE
(banging his gavel)
Alright, that's enough. Some
dream team you have here, Mr.
Koufax.

Sonny smiles apologetically. Castelluci throws his hands
up in disgust.

CASTELUCCI
Your honor, Mr. Koufax is just
parading his friends up there to
say what a great dad he was.
Can't they find someone who isn't
his friend?

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Corinne is on the stand; Tommy is questioning her.

TOMMY
And what were Luke and Mr. Koufax
doing when you saw them?

CORINNE
Shopping.

TOMMY
And did Mr, Koufax appear to be an
attentive and loving father?

CORINNE
He certainly did.

TOMMY
And how long have you disliked Mr.
Koufax?

CORINNE
Since the day I met him.

TOMMY
And once again, where did you work
while you attended medical school?

CORINNE
(icy glare)
Hooters.

Tommy gives Sonny a not-as-sly-as-he-thinks thumbs up.

TOMMY

No further questions, your honor.

Corinne steps down from the stand. Sonny whispers in Layla's ear.

SONNY

You're on.

Layla stands.

LAYLA

Your honor, we'd like to call Luke McGrath.

All eyes shift to the rear of the courtroom, where a court officer leads Luke in. Luke stares at the floor as he shuffles over to the witness stand. Layla stands front and center.

LAYLA

Luke, I just want to ask you a few questions...

Sonny wants very badly to run over to the witness stand and embrace Luke. Kevin, seeing Luke for their first time, watches him very closely.

LAYLA

You stayed with Sonny for a little while, right?

No response. Luke stares at the floor.

LAYLA

You stayed with him, and he was kind of like your dad, wasn't he?

Again no response. Layla tries another tack.

LAYLA

When I was a kid, my dad taught me how to spit. And I was really happy, cause before that, when I tried to spit, I just kind of drooled all over myself...

Luke kind of smiles.

LAYLA
Dads are good like that, cause
they teach you stuff you would
never learn in school. Luke, did
Sonny teach you anything like
that?

Luke looks up at Layla.

LUKE
He taught me how to pee on a
building.

LAYLA
(laughing)
That's nice. Anything else?

LUKE
(smiling)
He taught me how to dribble a
basketball between my legs.

LAYLA
Wow!

For the first time, Luke and Layla are really talking.

FADE TO:

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Luke is now chatting away.

LUKE
...and then, we went to fly a kite
in the park, just like Ben
Franklin did.

LAYLA
Sounds like you two had fun
together...Okay, just one more
question, Luke. If you could pick
anyone in the world to be your
daddy, who would it be?

Luke looks straight at Sonny.

LUKE
Sonny.

Sonny smiles.

LAYLA

Thank you, Luke. You can get down now.

Luke climbs down from the witness stand and is led to a seat in the gallery. Sonny gives him a thumbs-up as he walks past; Luke gives him a thumbs up back.

JUDGE

Mr. Koufax?

SONNY

I'd like to call Arthur Brooks.

Brooks makes his way to the witness stand.

SONNY

Welcome, Mr. Brooks. Now you are the case worker assigned to Luke, correct?

BROOKS

That's correct.

SONNY

And pursuant to your work on this case, you had some contact with Luke and I.

BROOKS

Yes, I did. On two occasions.

SONNY

And at any time during those two occasions, did you see me act in any way inconsistent with what a good father would do?

BROOKS

Yes.

Hubbub in the courtroom. Sonny's shocked.

SONNY

That's a lie. I never mistreated Luke.

BROOKS

Depends on what you consider "a good father", Mr. Koufax. When you brought Luke into my office, you said you were a bad dad, that there was "no way you could do a

(MORE)

BROOKS (cont'd)
decent job with him" and that you
wanted give him up for adoption...

SONNY
But I changed my mind...

BROOKS
During our first phone
conversation, you yelled at me and
called me "stupid"...

SONNY
I said your questions were stupid--

BROOKS
When I went to your apartment,
which was quite unkempt, you
grabbed my wrist very tightly,
inflicting pain...

SONNY
I was mad--

BROOKS
Your file indicates you only work
six hours a week...

SONNY
I'm trying to get more hours--

BROOKS
All this, plus the fact that you
lied to me as to your identity,
makes my general impression of you
to be an unstable, surly,
underemployed bully.

Sonny soaks this all in, then...

SONNY
Let me rephrase the question...

JUDGE
You sound like a real jerk, Mr.
Koufax.

Sonny's reeling. He sees Layla borrow Kevin's pen and
start scribbling furiously on a pad of paper; Layla then
surreptitiously holds it up - it says, "Jane".

But Sonny's not looking at the note; he's looking at the
pen Layla wrote it with. A "Blue Jays" pen.

JUDGE

Mr. Koufax?

SONNY

One second, your honor...

(turning to Luke)

Hey, Luke, you have your walkman
with you?

Luke holds up his walkman.

SONNY

Why don't you listen to "The
Kangaroo Song" for a minute?

Luke slips on the earphones and presses play. Sonny turns
back to Brooks.

SONNY

Where is Luke's mother?

BROOKS

She is deceased.

SONNY

And his father?

BROOKS

His father is unknown.

SONNY

So if I lose here today, Luke will
enter the foster family system...

BROOKS

Correct.

SONNY

I'm sure most foster dads are
good, your honor. So Luke will
probably get a good one. But why
take that chance? It's not easy
to be a good dad. Good dads don't
get promotions at work; they spend
too much time at home with their
kids. Good dads don't drive fancy
cars; they need that money for
braces and bikes and video games.
Good dads don't dress nice; why
buy nice stuff when it's gonna be
covered in tears and throw up and
grass stains from playing "army"
on the lawn?

JUDGE
That's enough, Mr. Koufax...

SONNY
My dad used to come home angry
from work all the time; now I
realize one of the reasons he was
so mad was because he didn't get
to spend enough time with his
kids. That wouldn't be a problem
for me - as long as I could find a
"sugar mommy" to support us.

He winks at Layla.

SONNY
My dad was a good dad; he gave up
so much for me. And I thank him
by yelling at him. But that's how
much love a good dad has: even
after so much sacrifice, and so
little thanks, he still loves you.

JUDGE
I said, that's enough, Mr. Koufax!

SONNY
And I know I'll love Luke when
he's living far away and not
returning my calls and telling his
friends I'm an idiot. Cause no
matter what happens in this court
today, he's my son, and I'm his
dad.

There's silence in the courtroom, then...

The familiar tones of a cel phone being dialed. Phil is
making a call.

PHIL
(into phone)
Hello, Dad?

Soon many cel phones appear; the court is filled with
tones. Almost everybody has one...

KEVIN
Dad, it's me, Kevin...

CASTELUCCI
Hi, Mom. Could you put Dad on for
a second?

DELIVERY GUY
Xin hua, duo san jiuha...

George taps someone with a cel on the shoulder.

GEORGE
Could I borrow that when you're
done?

TOMMY
Dad, I'm queer...

Layla looks at Sonny, moved and misty-eyed.
But the judge just glares straight at Sonny.

JUDGE
My dad used to beat me every day.
Mr. Koufax, the fact is you
kidnapped this child. Not only
shouldn't you get custody, you
should be in jail! You may step
down now, Mr. Brooks.

Brooks does. Sonny, spent, sits down at his table.

Layla slides over a note. It reads, "I love you."

She takes the pad back, writes something, and hands it
back: "Let's make it work." He smiles and grabs her hand.

As he does, the "Blue Jays" pen catches his eye again.
After a pensive beat, he leans over and whispers to Phil.

SONNY
Let me see that perpetual calendar
you got in your Rolodex...

As Phil fishes around in his briefcase...

JUDGE
Are you going to call another
witness, Mr. Koufax?

Sonny is staring down at the table. When he looks up, his
face is one of grim determination: he's made a fateful
decision.

SONNY
Yes, I'd like to call Kevin
Gerrity.

Kevin looks at Sonny, shocked. But Sonny is engrossed in the calendar Phil just gave him. Kevin makes his way to the witness stand and sits.

Sonny stands, takes a deep breath, and begins.

SONNY

We've already heard testimony that Luke was dropped off by an unidentified youth on the morning of October 23rd, along with a note indicating that you were his natural father. At that time I called you, and you indicated that you could not possibly be the natural father. Is that what in fact happened?

KEVIN

Yes.

SONNY

Big baseball fan, are you, Mr. Gerrity?

KEVIN

Yes.

SONNY

Any team in particular?

KEVIN

I follow the Toronto Blue Jays.

SONNY

Ah, the Blue Jays. Now didn't they win the World Series a few years ago?

KEVIN

Twice, in 1992 and 1993.

SONNY

Now, when we were roommates in law school, did you steal my Neil Young "Rust Never Sleeps" Tour t-shirt?

KEVIN

(to Judge)
Your honor?

JUDGE

Mr. Koufax...

SONNY

I just always wondered that, and I figured he was under oath...

JUDGE

Please continue with the "important" questions.

SONNY

Certainly. Now Mr. Gerrity, were you in fact present at the Toronto Skydome to see your beloved Blue Jays win the 1992 World Series?

KEVIN

Yes.

SONNY

Must have been a proud moment for you.

KEVIN

I guess.

SONNY

You guess?

Kevin steals a glance at Corinne in the gallery.

KEVIN

Well, Mr. Koufax, at that time in my life, I was quite a drinker. I was so drunk for Game 7, I barely remember it.

SONNY

Now when you're drunk, your friends have a nickname for you. Can you tell this court what it is?

KEVIN

Captain Love.

Corinne avoids making eye contact with anyone, angry and embarrassed.

SONNY

"Captain Love." How charming.

KEVIN
Hey, you made it up--

SONNY
(cutting him off)
And why do they call you "Captain
Love"?

KEVIN
Cause when I would get drunk, I...
I would become more... amorously
inclined.

SONNY
(bailing him out)
This behavior, of course, pre-
dated your relationship with your
lovely fiancée, Dr. Corinne
Maloney, who has made a better man
out of you.

KEVIN
(smiling at Corinne)
Yes, that's correct.

SONNY
So back to Captain Love's drunken
fiesta in Toronto: do you remember
having sexual relations with
anyone?

KEVIN
No.

SONNY
Do you remember not having sexual
relations?

KEVIN
No, I don't remember anything
after the seventh inning.

SONNY
But do you remember someone
sitting in front of you? A young,
vivacious blonde woman?

KEVIN
Kind of...

In the gallery, Corinne leans forward in her seat, eyes
widening. She gets what Sonny is doing.

SONNY

An innocent, carefree Toronto girl
so susceptible to the charms of a
handsome New York lawyer?

KEVIN

I guess...

SONNY

Do you recall her name?

KEVIN

I think it was Jane.

There's a buzz in the courtroom. Sonny pulls a piece of
paper out of a pile on the table.

SONNY

Your honor, I'd like to submit
this into evidence. It's a
certified copy of Luke's birth
certificate. It indicates he was
born on July 15th, 1993 - exactly
nine months after the seventh game
of the 1992 World Series.

The buzz becomes a roar.

JUDGE

Mr. Koufax, what the hell are you
doing?

Sonny thinks. What the hell is he doing?

Corinne and Kevin make eye contact. Corinne slowly nods.

Kevin turns to Sonny and slowly nods. Sonny takes a deep
breath.

SONNY

Pending the results of a blood
test, I would like to withdraw my
petition for custody of Luke in
favor of the natural father, Kevin
Gerrity.

The Judge turns to Castelucci, who confers with Brooks then
says...

CASTELUCCI

It's okay with us.

JUDGE

Then, subject to this blood test,
this court awards custody to Kevin
Gerrity.

LUKE

No!

Luke runs over to Sonny and embraces him.

LUKE

I want you to be my dad, Sonny.

SONNY

I can't be your dad, Luke, cause
you already have a dad. But what
I can do, is be your friend--

(starts to choke up)

I will always be your friend. For
forever. Even if you forget about
me, I will never forget you.
Never. I promise.

The court officers gently pry Luke away from Sonny.

EXT. 23RD STREET - DAY

Sonny and Kevin walk down the street. They're both
drinking coffee from deli cups. Kevin, who's carrying a
bag, looks nervous.

SONNY

He doesn't like to lose at cards.
He can tie his shoes, but not well
enough for them to stay tied. He
likes his oatmeal with blueberries
and M&M's and a cheese yet to be
determined.

They arrive at a large, old building and walk in.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

Brooks stands and greets Kevin. Sonny stands a few feet
behind him, sneering at Brooks.

BROOKS

(trying not to be
nervous)

Hey, I'm Arthur Brooks. You must
be the real Kevin Gerrity.

They shake hands.

BROOKS

I'll tell you, this case has been a real rollercoaster ride. But I get the vibe a happy ending is just around the corner...

Behind Kevin, Sonny stares daggers at Brooks. Brooks' nervousness triples. *

BROOKS

...And, uh, it'll be a terrific environment, and...

Sonny shakes his head at Brooks, disappointed.

BROOKS

(terrified)

And so, that's that, good luck, clet me bring you to Luke. *

Brooks leads Kevin down the hall. *

INT. BACK OFFICE - DAY *

In a dingy, unused office, Kevin and Luke sit side by side on a desk. Luke stares straight at the floor. *

KEVIN

So, Luke, I just got back from China. Do you know where that is? *

No response.

KEVIN

It's really far. I brought back some cool stuff... *

Kevin gets up and grabs the bag which is on the floor. He sits back down and starts pulling stuff out of the bag. *

KEVIN

I got this gum that tastes like ginger. Do you like ginger ale?

LUKE

No.

KEVIN

Alright, I got some dolls - no, bad idea...I got some noisemakers.

Kevin pulls a small box out of the bag.

KEVIN

Check this out.

Kevin pulls a little white pellet out of the box and throws it on the floor - BAM!

Luke is startled, but intrigued.

Kevin throws another one - BAM!

KEVIN

That's cool, isn't it?

LUKE

Can I try?

KEVIN

Sure.

Luke pulls out a pellet and chucks it - BAM!

He smiles, and picks out another one.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES HALLWAY - DAY

Sonny is peaking in through a grimy window in the door, listening. BAM! Laughter, BAM!, more laughter.

Sonny smiles, jealous but happy.

FADE TO:

INT. WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

Sonny, Tommy and Phil walk into the small, crowded chapel from a side entrance. All are wearing tuxedos.

TOMMY

This place is tiny. What happened to the monster wedding?

SONNY

Corinne cut a deal with her parents. They got to keep the extra money for Luke.

Phil gestures toward Kevin, who's in the front of the church, nervously clapping his hands together.

PHIL

Look at that idiot...

*
*
*
*

SONNY

Hey, watch it; that's the father
of my son you're talking about.

The music starts. Sonny goes up and stands next to Kevin
as Tommy and Phil scamper toward the back.

SONNY

How you feeling, chump?

KEVIN

Am I really about to marry that
chick from Hooters?

SONNY

Relax. She's nice.

Kevin's a little surprised by this.

The back door opens and Luke emerges. His ring-bearing
duties hampered by a tangled ribbon.

Luke looks to the front of the room, his worried face
signals relief... he rushes down the aisle. Sonny waits in
anticipation for him to approach and Luke races-- right
past him-- to Kevin, who quickly untangles the problem.

Sonny soberly watches this unfold, takes a deep breath,
and after a moment, resigns himself. Kevin and Luke are
father and son, he sees it clearly now. And it's right.

As Luke turns, he sees Sonny-- for the first time. His jaw
drops and he produces a big, open-mouth smile.

LUKE

Sonny!

Sonny smiles. His faith is restored.

He looks out into the crowd and makes eye contact with
Layla. She smiles. *

All three guys look back to see Corinne walk through the
doorway in an elegant wedding gown. She looks radiant.
Luke waves to her as she approaches.

She pulls a hand off of her bouquet, drops her delicate
bridal composure momentarily, and... waves back. Luke
smiles big.

INT. COLES SPORTS CENTER - DAY

Sonny, in a T-shirt reading, "NYC YOUTH HOOPS" is on one of the basketball courts in NYU's massive sports complex. He's teaching a dozen kids in identical T-shirts to do the crossover dribble.

As he does, something far away catches his eye. He blows his whistle.

SONNY

Alright, good job, everybody.
Where are my assistant coaches?

George, Brooks and the Delivery Guy, sitting over on the bleachers talking, look up. *

BROOKS

Yeah, man?

SONNY

Take over.

Sonny chucks George the ball and starts walking across the floor, where he comes face to face with his Dad.

DAD

Hey, kid.

SONNY

Hi, Dad. How does Mom like the hotel?

DAD

When I left, she had just discovered the mini-bar. It's gonna cost a fortune.

SONNY

I told you, you could have stayed with me. I've got all this extra space now.

DAD

You don't need that bullshit.

Father and son smile at each other, enjoying the peace between them.

DAD

I was watching you; you do good with those kids.

SONNY

You caught me on a good day. Half the time those kids just whip the ball at my head.

DAD

No job is perfect.

SONNY

Well this one's especially not perfect cause...

(takes deep breath)

...it doesn't pay anything. It's a volunteer thing.

Dad frowns.

DAD

Hey, schmuck - you think that matters to me?

Sonny's shocked.

DAD

You think it's important to me that you become a big-shot lawyer or something?

SONNY

(flummoxed)

Well...

DAD

I just wanted my son to be happy. And I knew you would never really be happy until you accomplished something...

SONNY

You were right.

DAD

Now your mother, that's a different story. She's gonna have a heart attack if you don't take that stinkin' bar exam...

Sonny and his Dad walk back towards the kids.

THE END