

"DAD"

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Based On A Novel By
William Wharton

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REVISED THIRD DRAFT

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FADE IN:

A CHILD'S CRAYON DRAWING

fills the screen. It pulls towards us as the door opens revealing the inside of a refrigerator. Peering in is JOHN TREMONT, about forty-five. An open and appealing face right there at the border of being too handsome.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

as John pulls out some orange juice and some milk, crosses over to the counter where he collects his toast and coffee as well as the sports section of the Sunday paper. He balances all this and crosses over to the table. Spreads out the paper and the breakfast, and is ready to enjoy a quiet moment alone.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

I'm hungry, Daddy.

John looks up, smiles. Sees his daughter, KATE, about 4, standing there. She's still in pajamas, clutching dolls and "My Little Ponies".

JOHN

That's it? No, "Good Morning, Daddy?" No, "I love you?" Just, "I'm hungry?"

Kate snuggles into his lap.

KATE

Morning, Daddy. I love you.
I'm hungry.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John is serving up a breakfast of scrambled eggs to Kate. There are now at least eight hundred "My Little Ponies" on the table.

JOHN

(as he dishes them
out)

And, so the people came from every corner of the kingdom, to view the famous "Daddy" eggs which had been made that day. And, when they saw the eggs laid out before them, they all cried out as in one voice.

(MORE)

JOHN (Cont'd)

"I want some." "I want some."
"I want some." But, it was not
to be. For those eggs were made
for one special person and one
special person only.

KATE

Me?

JOHN

(nods)

Yes, you. And, you have to
finish them up, okay? Otherwise
they go to all the other people
in the kingdom who are lining
up outside.

Kate looks out the window, doesn't see anyone, shrugs.
She'll take her chances. SARA, John's wife, enters. She's
the same age. Quite attractive. They kiss "good morning."

JOHN

Billy up?

SARA

Yeah. I heard him in talking
to Becky.

JOHN

What time did he come home last
night?

SARA

I'm not sure exactly. I didn't
check the clock.

JOHN

I went to sleep at midnight.
So, I know it was after that.

SARA

It's his semester break, you
know. He hasn't seen his
friends in a while.

JOHN

He hasn't seen his parents in
a while either. He's here two
nights and now he's going to
Mexico today. That was some
visit.

SARA

Yeah. Well, I don't think we're
quite the draw we used to be.

JOHN

He talk to you at all about school?

SARA

A little bit.

JOHN

And?

SARA

He's confused.

JOHN

He's confused? I'm the one who's confused. I'm confused about why I'm paying \$8,000 if he doesn't want to be there.

SARA

It's not that he doesn't want to be there. It's just that right now, maybe he wants to take a year off. Maybe he wants to travel. C'mon, you were nineteen once.

JOHN

I was. And, I travelled, too. I went to Vietnam. It was great. A little problem with people shooting at me. But, otherwise, it was a lovely visit.

SARA

Why are you being so hard on him? He's going through a tough time.

JOHN

I would like this to be the one thing in his life he starts and also finishes, that's all.

Just then, BILLY TREMONT enters. He carries a backpack. Beneath the camouflage coat and the hair and the earrings, there's a handsome boy in there. With him is his younger sister, BECKY, fifteen. She's at that awkward stage between young girl and young woman. They AD-LIB "good mornings." Becky notices all the ponies on the table, speaks with righteous teen-age indignation.

BECKY

May I remind you that when I was her age, I was not even allowed to bring a book to the table, let alone this menagerie.

SARA

Why do you care?

BECKY

I am very worried about this child, that's all. She is growing up without any parental guidance whatsoever.

JOHN

Your mother and I are older now. We're tired.

SARA

Sit down. Have some breakfast.

BECKY

I have to skip. I'm going to eat over at Janie's.

KATE

(proudly)

You can't have these anyway. They're only for me.

BECKY

(to John)

Daddy eggs? You are so cute sometimes.

JOHN

(to Billy)

How about you sport?

BILLY

Pass. I'm going to take Becky over the her friend's. Then I'm going to pick up Jody and we're going to get going.

JOHN

Mexico, huh?

BILLY

Um-hum.

JOHN

What's the big attraction with Mexico? The people in Mexico are trying to come to America, did you know that?

BILLY

(smiles)

Well, a lot of kids from school are down there. It could be fun.

JOHN

Since you brought up school...

BECKY

I'm going to wait in the car.

She exits.

BILLY

What about school?

JOHN

You tell me.

BILLY

It's lame, Dad. I don't know why I'm there.

JOHN

You may want a job some day, Bill, believe it or not. And, lying on the beach in Mexico is not going to help prepare you for anything. Unless you want to be a mariachi singer, I don't know.

BILLY

I can say I want to college. Nobody checks. I'll say I have a B.A. Wait a minute, I'll say I have a Ph.D. May as well do it right.

JOHN

Listen to me, I have seen guys, I know guys who are living with the consequences of decisions they made when they were nineteen and didn't know any better. Just leave yourself some options. That's all.

BILLY

Okay. I don't have to decide right now.

JOHN

You'll think about it?

BILLY

Yes.

JOHN

Okay.

Billy kisses Sara and Kate. Shakes hands with John.

BILLY

Bye.

JOHN

Adios.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

The dishes are all cleared. Kate and John are playing Candyland at the table. PHONE RINGS.

SARA (O.S.)

I'll get it.

John and Kate continue with the game. Sara enters.

SARA

(to John)

It's your sister.

JOHN

Play for me.

Sara slides in as John crosses to the phone.

JOHN

(enthusiastically
into phone)

Annie...

He stops short.

Um-hum... Yeah... How's Dad
taking it?... Okay... I'm on
my way... Yes... Okay. Bye.

He hangs up. Crosses over to the table.

SARA

What's the matter?

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's my mother. She had a heart
attack.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

a packed suitcase next to John who's speaking on the phone.

JOHN

(into phone)

That'd be great, Dave. I
appreciate it... Yeah, the
lessons plans are all there.
Top left drawer.

(MORE)

JOHN (Cont'd)
Coscarelli has a copy of the
mid-term in case I don't get
back in time. Thank's buddy.

He hangs up as Sara comes in.

SARA
You're all set. United into
LAX arriving 4:30. Either Annie
or Mario will meet you there.

John nods.

SARA (CONT'D)
You okay?

JOHN
Yeah. Yeah, I'm okay.

SARA
Your mother's going to be fine.
She's a tough woman. You know
that.

JOHN
Yeah. There aren't a lot of
things I know. But, I do know
that.

EXT. LAX - DAY

a United jumbo jet lands.

EXT. LAX - CURBSIDE - DAY

as John comes out. Waiting there, standing in front of
his van, is John's brother-in-law, MARIO. He's a big burly
phys-ed. type. Salt of the earth. He and John shake.
Mario takes John's bag. They get into the van.

INT. VW VAN - LAX - DAY

John and Mario ride up front. John's bag is piled in back
along side of Mario's sports equipment.

JOHN
You look good.

MARIO
Hangin' in. I'm about three
steps slower on the court. But,
I make up for it, now. I cheat.

JOHN

What do you mean "now"? You've always cheated.

MARIO

I know. But, now I'm blatant about it. These kids today are too fast. So, I hold 'em. I trip 'em. I get 'em in head-locks. It really slows 'em down.

JOHN

Teaches them good citizenship, too.

MARIO

You bet.

JOHN

How's Annie holding up?

MARIO

Good. She's home with your father. I can take you there first or to the hospital. Whatever.

JOHN

Let's go to the hospital first.

MARIO

That's what I figured.

JOHN

How's Dad?

MARIO

(beat)

To be honest, Johnny, he's a little shook up. That's why Annie's there. She didn't want to leave him alone.

JOHN

What's going on with Mom? How serious is it?

MARIO

Hard to tell with her. You know your mother. She won't admit she's actually had a heart attack. She's lying there going into cardiac arrest, she's claiming that it's indigestion. She's blaming me.

JOHN

What do you mean?

MARIO

She said it was the sausages
I made for dinner. She claims
I was trying to kill her.

JOHN

What?

MARIO

Yeah. See, somewhere along the
line your mother got it into
her mind that I'm trying to
poison her.

JOHN

(beat)

Are you?

MARIO

No jury would convict me, John.
Believe me.

JOHN

I believe you.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Outside the C.C.U. John and Mario BUZZ to enter.

MARIO

I'll stay out here. If she
wakes up and sees me, it could
be a relapse.

The BUZZER RINGS. John announces himself and enters.

INT. CARDIAC CARE UNIT - DAY

The modern version of an Indian dying house--rows of
cubicles, every bed filled, every patient taped up and
plugged in. A soft whirr of machines dominates. John
crosses to his mother's bed. Studies her. Even in repose
you can feel the strength of BETTE TREMONT. She's quite
attractive. Looking younger than the late sixties that
she really is. A NURSE is by the bed.

JOHN

(studying her)

I don't think I've ever seen
my mother lying down in daylight
before.

BETTE
(without even
opening her eyes)
I can hear every word you say.

JOHN
I should have figured that.

John leans in to kiss her and takes her hand.

JOHN (CONT'D)
How are you feeling, Mom? Are
you in any pain?

BETTE
I'm staying alive by willpower.
She'll tell you.

Bette motions to the nurse.

BETTE (CONT'D)
I have the willpower of a woman
half my age.

NURSE
(smiling)
You underestimate yourself.

BETTE
I must really be sick if you're
here.

JOHN
See, Mom, that's why you're the
best. Not many people would
have gone for guilt in your
situation.

BETTE
Did you see your father yet?

JOHN
No. I came right from the
airport.

BETTE
When you see him, don't say
anything to him about a heart
attack. Just tell him it's
something with my "insides."
He'll understand that because
I had the hysterectomy.

JOHN
Mom...

BETTE

Listen to me. You just tell him it's only something went wrong with my insides. Okay?

JOHN

Okay.

BETTE

There's food in the freezer. It's all marked. If you have to go out, go to McDonald's or Wendy's. Someplace simple.

JOHN

Don't worry so much about Dad right now. Worry about yourself. You had a heart attack. It was...

BETTE

You know, I'm not so sure I had a heart attack. It felt like gas pains to me.

JOHN

Mom, for gas pains they give you Tums. They don't hook you up to twenty million dollars worth of machines.

BETTE

Did you see the doctor who was taking care of me, because I don't think he was a real doctor. He was wearing tight pants with a big silver belt buckle. And, he had long hair and a beard. He can't be more than thirty years old. They let anybody through medical school these days.

John can only shake his head in wonder.

EXT. JOHN'S PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mario pulls the van into the driveway of a modest home in a working class Culver City neighborhood. John's sister, ANNIE, comes out to meet them. She's younger than John, late thirties. A great energy and warmth surrounds her. John and Annie hug.

ANNIE

How'd Mom look?

JOHN

Good.

ANNIE

Really?

JOHN

She complained about everything.
Ordered everyone around
including me. Business as
usual.

ANNIE

(laughs)

God, it's great to see you.

JOHN

Where's Dad?

ANNIE

He's in back. You want to put
your things away first?

JOHN

No, I'd like to see him.

John, Annie and Mario start off towards the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Smallish with a little greenhouse/workshop along the back
fence. As they get near, Annie stops John.

ANNIE

Listen, John. Don't expect too
much from Dad, okay?

JOHN

Mario told me. It's been a jolt
for him, huh?

ANNIE

It's more than that, really.
You know, Dad's slipped a little
bit the past few months. He's
slowed down a little.

JOHN

How much is a little?

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

John, Mario and Annie enter the surprisingly elaborate
little shed. There's a wide variety of fancy, many colored
leaf plants. A popsicle stick stuck beside each one has
the Latin name and place of origin.

In the center of the room potting plants is JAKE TREMONT. He works slowly. He seems hardly to notice their entrance.

JOHN

Hello, Dad.

Jake turns and we get a good look at him now. He's about 70, very frail. Father and son stand there awkwardly for a beat, Jake really studying John's face. Almost as if he were trying to figure out who it was.

ANNIE

It's John, Dad. He's come to visit.

Jake just stares.

JOHN

(sotto voce)

What's going on? Doesn't he know who I am?

MARIO

(sotto voce)

I don't know. Sometimes he's here. Sometimes he's not.

Jake still staring. Annie puts a hand on his shoulder, trying to get him to focus.

ANNIE

It's John, Dad. He's come to visit.

JAKE

(beat)

I know who it is.

Jake slowly crosses over, stops in front of John, extends a frail hand. John takes it. They shake.

ANNIE

John's just come from seeing Mother.

JAKE

How is she?

JOHN

Good. Good. She said to say hello and give you a big kiss.

JAKE

It's something went wrong with her insides, huh?

JOHN

Yeah, Dad. It's something like that.

Jake nods. Satisfied, he goes back to his plants.

INT. TREMONT HOME - EVENING

John, Mario and Annie having tea. Jake in the background, mesmerized in front of the TV. John stares.

MARIO

(to John)

It's tough. I know. Such a sweet guy, to see him like that.

JOHN

When did he get so bad? I saw him a year ago.

ANNIE

It's just gotten progressively worse. Haven't you noticed it when you talk to him on the phone?

JOHN

You know what those phone calls are like. Dad gets on, says, "Hiya, sport," then Mom grabs the phone and it's forty minutes about how much trouble Mario is.

JAKE

(calling)

Annie, it's over. I need you to change the channel.

MARIO

I'll get it for you, Pop.

Mario crosses in to Jake.

ANNIE

I don't know how he's going to get by with Mom in the hospital. She does everything for him, John. And, I mean everything.

John nods.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

I could move him out to our place, but I think he's better off here where he can putter around his garden and his greenhouse. It's secure. He knows the environment.

(beat)

But, that means someone's going to have to come in. A stranger. Now, that could really scare him. I don't know.

JOHN

(beat)

I'll stay with Dad.

ANNIE

What?

JOHN

I said, I'll stay with Dad.

Annie studies him for a beat.

ANNIE

Are you sure? He's practically a baby.

JOHN

I'm sure.

INT. TREMONT HOUSE - NIGHT

Annie, John, Mario and Jake, who is seated by himself watching TV. Annie is going over last minute instructions.

ANNIE

The main thing is, I think, to keep everything on an even keel. Mom has a schedule and their life is essentially one long routine.

JOHN

Got it.

ANNIE

Dad gets two cups of coffee in the morning. Decaf. And a sweet roll. They start the day by clipping coupons and making out a shopping list. That's very important. I marked the soap operas he likes in TV Guide. Am I forgetting anything?

JOHN

It doesn't seem like it.

MARIO

He likes to watch baseball, too. Especially the Dodgers. I watch with him. I like to kid him about how those guys are all Hollywood. He gets a kick out of it.

JOHN

Okay.

ANNIE

One other thing, John. Dad works a bit in his shop but he doesn't have his old coordination. This drives him crazy. You know how he could fix almost anything. Now he has trouble keeping his own electric razor running.

Her eyes fill and she looks down.

He's beginning to think I'm a mechanical genius because I can clean it, replace the blade, things like that. Try going along with him, okay? He's fine as long as he doesn't get flustered.

JOHN

Sure.

ANNIE

I gave you the list of the pills Dad has to take, right?

John holds up a piece of paper.

ANNIE

I guess that's it, then.

JOHN

I guess so.

ANNIE

You'll call me if you need anything, right?

JOHN

Right.

ANNIE

You know the number?

JOHN

No.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

John is getting everything in order, setting up pills, etc. Jake remains in front of the TV. Pasted on the refrigerator is a picture from Kate, "I love you, Daddy."

JOHN

Well, Dad, we'd better hit the sack.

Jake gets up, turns off TV, exits down the hall. John crosses to the table where Jake's pills are set up. Matches them against the list. Beat, Jake reappears.

JAKE

I can't find my pajamas, Johnny.
I don't know where Mother keeps them.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

There are two beds, a closet and chest with three drawers. John goes to the chest and finds the pajamas right away. He hands them to Jake who looks at John as if he were a wonder man. Smiles. They stand there for a beat. Jake expectantly waiting for John to tell him what to do.

JOHN

(kindly)

Why don't you put 'em on, Dad?

Jake fingers the pajama top and bottom like two pieces of a complex puzzle. John reaches over, takes the pajamas and begins to put them on Jake. Jake doesn't fight this at all. John gets the pajamas on Jake who sits there with that same expectant look on his face. "What next?"

JOHN

Well, Dad, I guess I'll turn in too.

JAKE

Okay.

JOHN

Good-night.

JAKE

Good-night.

Jake sits there, clearly afraid of sleeping alone. John senses this. Hangs there for a beat.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Leave a hall light on.

JOHN
I will.

Jake sits unmoving as John puts out the bedroom lights, crosses into the hall and puts the hall light on. John comes back. Stands in the doorway, looking at his father, then crosses over to Jake. He gently pressures him to lie down and tucks him into bed, pulling the covers up over his father. Then, John gets into the other bed and both men go to sleep.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John is there making breakfast. He has Jake's pills all lined up in a row next to a big glass of juice. He has the phone cradled under his chin, speaks as he cooks.

JOHN
It's hard to say how long...
You sure it's okay, because
Annie said she can come in here
if I... Thanks, hon. I
appreciate that.

(calling)
Breakfast's almost ready, Dad.
(then, back into
phone)

Look, I'd better be going. Give
my love to the kids... I miss
them, too. I love you...
Yeah... I will... Okay. Bye.

He hangs up. After a beat, Jake comes shuffling down the hall. He's made a valiant effort to dress himself, stands proudly in the doorway--shirt sticking out, buttons in the wrong holes, tie askew, no socks, etc.--waiting for some sign of approval. John gives him the "thumbs up." Jake smiles broadly.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John and Jake finishing breakfast. John is clearing dishes. Jake reads the paper.

JAKE
(off paper)
Double coupon day at Ralph's,
Johnny. Look at this. Tuna,
two cans for \$1.38. Can't beat
that.

Jake gives a low whistle and conspiratorial little laugh. Starts clipping out coupons, stops and looks up.

JAKE (CONT'D)
What do you pay for tuna in New York?

JOHN
Tuna? I don't know.

JAKE
Not two for \$1.38, I bet.

JOHN
No, I don't think so.

JAKE
No way, Jose.

He starts laughing again. Resumes clipping. Beat, then:

JOHN
Listen, Dad, I'd like to talk to you for a minute about Mom.

Jake tenses nervously.

JOHN (CONT'D)
There's something you should really try to understand. Mother's sick...

JAKE
It's not cancer, is it?

JOHN
No, Dad. It's not cancer.

JAKE
Because that cancer is a killer, you know. Your Uncle Ben had five operations. Didn't do a damn thing for him. When they tell you you have cancer, mister, you may as well pack your bags.

JOHN
Well, this wasn't cancer, Dad. It was a heart attack. A serious one. Mom's going to be okay, but she's never going to be able to work as hard as she used to.

JAKE
I always tell her she works too hard, Johnny. She works too hard.

JOHN

You're going to have to learn to do a lot of things around the house by yourself, Dad. You see, Mother's convinced herself nobody can take care of you except her. We have to prove her wrong.

Jake starts laughing.

JAKE

That's right, Johnny. That's right. I'm going to learn all those things, you'll see. We'll fool her.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - CLOSE ON TELEPHONE

A message taped over it. We HEAR Jake's VOICE OVER.

JAKE (V.O.)

This is a heart attack emergency. The victim is unconscious. Come immediately. Address: 10432 Colby.

Underneath are numbers for hospital, ambulance, fire, etc. PULL BACK to REVEAL John and Jake there. Jake reading from a duplicate card to the one taped on the phone.

JOHN

That's perfect, Dad. Now, let's try and put it all together. Dial the fire department. Give them the message.

JAKE

I'm game.

JOHN

They know it's a test and they're expecting this call.

JAKE

Okay.

John stands there, makes sure he has Jake's attention, then crumples to the floor with his arms spread.

JOHN

Now, Dad, I'm Mother and I've just had a heart attack. Call the paramedics and give them the message.

JAKE
Are you all right, Johnny?

JOHN
Yes. Now, call them, Dad, give
them the message. Hurry.

Jake lifts the receiver and holds it against his ear,
listening, but now he isn't dialing.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Dial, Dad.

Jake has the receiver wrong way around. The wire coming
out of his ear.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Turn it around, Dad.

Jake turns the phone around on the table.

JOHN (CONT'D)
No, the receiver, Dad. Turn
it so the wire comes out the
mouth part.

Jake pulls the receiver away from his head, stares at it,
then slowly turns it around. He smiles. Concentrates on
the card tacked to the wall.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Remember, Dad, call the fire
department.

JAKE
Got it.

Jake begins dialing with great precision, keeping his
finger in the hole at all times. We can HEAR the phone
RINGING and then a voice on the other end.

PHONE VOICE OVER
Hello... Hello.

JOHN
(whispering)
Give them the message.

JAKE
Hold on, my son wants to talk
to you.

Jake tries to pass the receiver to John on the floor, but
the cord isn't long enough.

JOHN
No, Dad. Give them the message,
remember, the message.

JAKE

Oh, yes, I remember.

(then, into phone)

My son's lying on the floor in front of me. He says he's my wife and he's had a heart attack.

INT. MARKET - DAY

John and Jake shopping together. They come to the tuna aisle and Jake beamingly tosses a few cans into the basket. John picks up a few more cans, tosses them into the basket, too. "What the heck?"

INT. CAR - DAY

John driving, Jake alongside. The groceries piled in back, cans of tuna spilling out. They drive for a beat. John notices a friendly neighborhood bar across the street. Puts the car in a hard U-turn.

INT. BAR - DAY

An ordinary neighborhood establishment; dim, noisy, messy. A few regulars near the bar. John and Jake are in a booth. Jake's obviously enjoying this, although it's hard for him to shake the feeling that there isn't something somehow wicked about all this.

JAKE

You sure this is all right?
I mean, in the daytime like this?

JOHN

Not only is it all right. It might even be fun.

A WAITRESS comes over. Puts down a bowl of peanuts.

JOHN

What'll you have, Dad?

JAKE

Well, a beer would be fine.
But, we've got plenty of cold beer in the fridge at home.

JOHN

Two draft beers then.

The waitress leaves.

JAKE

You know, I don't think I've been inside a bar in more than twenty years.

JOHN

I remember after one of your softball games, you and Vern Smith sneaked me into a bar up in Silverlake. I couldn't have been more than four. I think you stuffed me in the ball bag.

He laughs at the memory. Jake stares blankly. John realizes that Jake's having trouble remembering.

JOHN (CONT'D)

The softball team from Lockheed, Dad. You played on Sundays up at Cummings Park.

JAKE

I'm sorry, Johnny. I don't remember some things too well.

JOHN

A lot of times we'd get there early. You'd hit me grounders, or we'd have a catch. Just the two of us.

John smiles at the memory. Jake studies his face trying to will the moments back into his mind.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You were the best hitter of 'em all, Dad.

He shows Jake's old stance.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Slight crouch, elbow up, step into the ball.

(beat)

Sometimes they'd walk you on purpose because you were so good. And I'd get mad and yell, "Hey, let him hit. Let him hit. That's my dad."

JAKE

I played third base, I think.

JOHN

You played third base, I know. You owned third base.

JAKE

When I'd catch a grounder, I used to hold the ball a long time before I threw to first...

JOHN

Yes. That was your trademark.

JAKE

I'd hold the ball... Let the runner dig towards first... Then at the last possible moment, I'd gun him out by half a step.

JOHN

Exactly.

JAKE

(beat, sheepish)

I was kind of a show-off, huh?

JOHN

You were just good, Dad.

Jake looks around. A little more comfortable now.

JAKE

(beat)

You were right, John. This is fun.

JOHN

Good. Good. Glad you're enjoying it.

JAKE

You know, your mother and I used to enjoy having fun as much as anybody. We just stopped doing the things we liked. I don't know why.

JOHN

Well, you should remember the fun things you used to do. And, you should do them.

JAKE

That's a good idea, John. I'm going to write that down. I'm going to make a list of fun things and I'm going to do them. Yes, sir.

JOHN

Okay.

They clink glasses.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John is asleep. O.S. WE can HEAR SIRENS ringing. Then CAR DOORS opening. Sound of FOOTSTEPS on the pavement. John stirs. There's a running into the hallway and the door to John's bedroom bursts open and two paramedics grab him. They start dealing with him as if was in need of CPR, rip his shirt, etc. He's yelling, "No, no, what are you doing?" Struggling with them. Finally, John breaks away.

JOHN

(panting)

What the hell do you think
you're doing?

Just then, Jake shuffles in, a big grin on his face. He has the instructional card in his hand. Waves it proudly.

JAKE

(beaming)

I got 'em here, Johnny. Just
like you showed me.

John falls back under the covers as Jake beams.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jake is lying on the floor. John kneeling over him.

JOHN

I think you have to accept the
possibility that Mom might have
another heart attack. It could
happen here at home and the
chances are I wouldn't be here.

JAKE

Annie might be here.

JOHN

She might. She might not. But,
if you can learn this, it could
be the difference between life
and death for Mom.

JAKE

You could teach Annie, and I
could call her.

JOHN

C'mon, Dad, I'll show you how.
You only need to follow
instructions.

John leans over Jake and begins pressing with the heel of his hand on Jake's chest.

JOHN (CONT'D)

This is to get the heart beating again. You have to push here, once every second, right in the center of the chest.

JAKE

Hey, that hurts! That would really hurt a woman, you'd be hitting her right on the... in the...

JOHN

Breasts.

JAKE

That's what I'm trying to tell you.

JOHN

She wouldn't feel anything, Dad. She'd be unconscious.

Jake lifts himself up on his elbow.

JAKE

Mother'd never let me do that, Johnny. She'd never let me hit her like that. I've never hit a woman in my life.

John puts a hand under Jake's neck and lifts.

JOHN

Now open your mouth and stick out your tongue, Dad.

Jake does as he's instructed. John grabs hold under Jake's chin, lifting and pulling back at the same time.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Now, right here, Dad, is where I put my mouth over yours and breathe for you.

John leans in on Jake as if he were going to kiss him. Jake reaches up and slaps John across the face.

JAKE

Oh, no you don't.

JOHN

I wasn't going to actually do it, Dad. I was only explaining.

JAKE

Do people do this to each other in public, Johnny?

JOHN

Sure, if she has another heart attack, you might have to do this for Mother. It's the only chance she'll have.

Jake sits up.

JAKE

Maybe sometimes God just means for us to die.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

On the counter are two stacks of 5"x7" index cards, a clipboard and a similar stack of larger index cards. On each of those larger cards is a specific chore detailed step by step for Jake to follow. John crosses to the sink, pastes up one of the larger cards. It is headlined: DISHWASHING, underneath about fifteen separate steps are outlined. John gives Jake a set of cards and a clipboard.

JOHN

Now, all you need to do is just follow these cards and you'll be all right. They're color coded and there's a different set of cards for each chore. For instance, this is dishwashing. So, you look and see what step number one is.

JAKE

(reads from card)

Number one. Fill sink with water.

JOHN

Right.

JAKE

Number two. Put one squeeze of soap in the water.

JOHN

Right.

JAKE

Number three. Put dishes in soapy... This is great, Johnny. There's no chance I can make a mistake as long as I follow these cards.

John smiles, pleased with Jake's enthusiasm.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(off cards)

You know you could market these.

Jake crosses down the hall as John begins pasting up other cards for dusting, emptying the garbage, etc. After a beat, Jake reappears. He's carrying a black trucker's cap in his hand.

JAKE

(holding it up)

I think I'll work better with this on, you know.

He puts the cap on.

JAKE

Mother doesn't like me to wear this. She thinks I look too tough. Like Johnny Cash.

John laughs.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You don't mind if I wear it, do you?

JOHN

I don't mind.

Jake crosses away, turns back.

JAKE

(sings)

Don't take your guns to town, son. Don't take your guns to town.

He laughs and crosses away to get to work.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

as Jake goes about his chores, vacuuming and dusting, checking his cards, re-checking, getting the job done. John passes by. Jake smiles and salutes. Waves the cards proudly and goes back to work.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jake is in pajamas ready for bed. His hat is still on his head as he goes over his index cards quizzing himself on the different steps to each of the chores, miming the different steps involved in each task. John peeks in. Jake is too involved to notice.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John is kind of half-sleeping. O.S. we HEAR a CLOCK chime three. He gets out of bed, paddles down the hall to the bathroom. A light on in the kitchen and some NOISES from there draw him over.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - JOHN'S P.O.V.

Jake is in there washing dishes. He works quietly, methodically checking his cards when he needs to. He's not only re-cleaning the dinner dishes, he's cleaning every dish and cup and pot in the house. Taking them down from the cupboard, from underneath the sink, etc.

BACK ON JOHN

He smiles, softly, almost sadly. Goes back down the hall.

ANGLE ON JAKE

at the sink working as the CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY IN on him. The SOUND of the water running FADES OUT and the SOUNDS of outdoor farm life FILTER IN. We HEAR horses neighing, reins jingling, men calling.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM - DAWN

There is an "other worldliness" to the scene. The colors muted, kind of amber tone, an old photograph. The SOUNDS, too, are muffled, like they're coming from much further away. A man comes out of the house and walks across the field. We can't make out his features, bundled up against the cold as he is. His breath forms in clouds as he strides briskly along, his footsteps crunching against the early morning stillness. We HEAR the man's VOICE OVER as he walks. We'll learn later that it's Jake's voice. He speaks slowly, lyrically. A voice from another "time."

JAKE (V.O.)

The sun leans quietly over the barn. Each day a mite sooner, a bit more to the right. I stop and stare at the new light. I think of everybody still safe in that other place inside themselves.

INT. BARN - MORNING

as the man enters and goes about his chores.

JAKE (V.O.)

I close my eyes and listen to the sounds. There's the beginning humming of insects and the twitter of ground thrushes, spring is coming. I hear the sound of the screen door slam; must be Johnny coming out to feed the chickens before school. I'd better be getting up there to see him off. He's a sweet boy, Johnny. Like his mother.

INT. C.C.U. - DAY

Mario and Annie are there as John and Jake walk around the nurses' station over to Bette's cubicle. She is awake and begins to cry the moment she sees Jake. He begins to cry also. They kiss. John waits his turn then leans in and kisses Bette, too. Jake stands there looking at Mom, tears coming down his face.

BETTE

Are you all right? Are you taking your blood pressure pills? Are you eating?

JAKE

Oh yeah, Bette, I'm fine. I make my own bed now and I do the dishes. John's been teaching me to cook. He's like a regular wife.

BETTE

(to John)

Just keep him alive 'til I get home.

JOHN

Thanks for your confidence.

MARIO

Mom looks good, doesn't she?

BETTE

Yeah, wonderful. I never go anywhere without tubes.

MARIO

I meant your color, Mom.

BETTE

My color? What are you, a decorator? And, don't call me Mom. I don't call you son, do I?

ANNIE

(sotto)

Mario, stop trying to be nice to my mother. You're gonna kill her.

BETTE

(to John)

Why are you cooking? There's food prepared in the freezer. I told you.

JOHN

It's just for a little variety, Mom, that's all. Last night we had salmon. The night before that we had coq au vin.

BETTE

Your father doesn't like foreign food.

JOHN

It is not "foreign." It's chicken in red wine.

BETTE

He's not allowed to have red wine.

JOHN

Mom...

BETTE

I don't want him becoming an alcoholic while I'm in here.

JOHN

Nobody ever became an alcoholic from coq au vin.

JAKE

(interrupting)

Take it easy now, Bette, c'mon. It can't be good for you to get all excited. You don't worry about me. Just do what the doctors tell you and concentrate on getting better, you hear?

Jake's "standing up" to Bette is not lost on John, Mario, Annie... or Bette. Bette's doctor, DR. REESE, comes by.

He is, as advertised, very casually dressed with long hair, boots, and a big silver buckle on his belt.

REESE

Well, Mrs. Tremont. I see you have your fan club here.

As they AD-LIB "hellos" and Reese turns away to study her chart, Bette motions and makes a face about the long hair and the clothes. Reese turns back.

REESE

This is all very encouraging.

BETTE

Am I ready to go home then?

REESE

Not quite. You had a serious heart attack.

BETTE

What about increased activity? Television at least?

REESE

Mrs. Tremont, I don't think you really understand just how serious this was. You will have to take it very easy while you're here and even when you're back home, you're going to have to be severely restricted in what you do.

BETTE

Did you hear that? I'm going to be a cripple for the rest of my life.

REESE

I didn't say that.

BETTE

Doctor, I've wanted to ask you. You're so young, how many of these so called "heart attacks" have you actually seen?

REESE

Enough.

BETTE

(beat)

Where did you go to school?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

John, Annie, Jake and Mario. Walking towards the elevator.
Annie and John a few steps ahead.

ANNIE

Did my father stand up to my
mother in there? Or, did I
dream that?

JOHN

No, I was there. I saw it.

ANNIE

I'm marking this down. This
should be a national holiday.
(takes his arm)
You know, you have been so good
for him.

JOHN

It's been good for me, too.
We've been having a great time.

ANNIE

I can't believe it. He's alert.
He's making jokes. He's a
different guy.

JOHN

I know.

ANNIE

How do you think Mom's going
to handle this when she comes
home?

JOHN

I don't know. I hope to be out
of here by then.

Jake and Mario catch up to John and Annie. They enter the
elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

JAKE

(beat)

She's a tough cookie, isn't she,
kids?

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

John is on the phone in the dining room. O.S. in the
kitchen we can hear Jake rumbling around.

JOHN

(into phone)

Well, I thought I'd just run these few days into the Easter break... Yeah. That way I can get everything settled here when Mom comes back. I'll feel better... He's doing great. I mean it... I will. Love you.

He hangs up. Sits down at the table. Calls back to the kitchen.

How's it comin', Dad?

INT. KITCHEN - LATE DAY

which looks like a scene from the sorcerer's apprentice as Jake tries to follow his instruction cards pasted on the cupboards, manage several skillets and pots, and deal with an oven whose bell is tolling. He scurries from pot to pot, sifting and tasting. Apron and oven mitts on, and a big chef's hat on his head.

JAKE

(calling out)

Almost ready.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATE DAY

Jake and John are seated across from each other as Jake finishes serving both men. They sit there for a minute, studying what's been offered. Not quite sure. John, particularly, doesn't know quite what to make of it.

JAKE

Go ahead, start.

JOHN

I will. I will. Looking forward to it.

John makes no effort to start eating, however.

JAKE

You want me to feed you or you going to do it yourself?

JOHN

Just waiting for it to cool down.

Jake stares him down. Obviously, John's going to have to give it a try. He picks up his fork and digs in. It clearly sends shock waves through his entire body, but he smiles gamely as he struggles to chew through it.

Well? JAKE

John, speechless and forcing himself to continue chewing, makes the "A-Okay" sign with his thumb and forefinger, motions for Jake to dig in. Jake does. Clearly he's also shocked and taken aback. Chews on gamely, makes a similar "A-Okay" sign back to John. The two men chew on vigorously, smiles pasted on their faces, not quite able to swallow, making increasingly bigger "A-Okay" signs back and forth. Beat, then Jake speaks, mumbling with his mouth full.

Johnny? JAKE

JOHN
(mouthful)
Yeah, Dad?

JAKE
From now on, let's eat out.

JOHN
You got it.

They continue to do the best they can.

JOHN
John?

JOHN
(looks up)
Yeah, Dad?

JAKE
I've thought of something.

JOHN
Huh?

JAKE
Something fun I'd like to do
after dinner.

EXT. STREET - IN FRONT OF TREMONT HOUSE - DUSK

John and Jake playing catch as the sun sets.

MONTAGE

as Jake and John go about domestic life together. Jake goes about his chores with great enthusiasm. Always with a smile, always checking his index cards for accuracy, always saluting John as their paths cross. We see him:

- 1) making and re-making his bed.
- 2) vacuuming
- 3) doing dishes
- 4) at the neighborhood bar
- 5) at the park playing with Annie, Mario and the kids
- 6) shopping
- 8) visiting Bette, etc.

EXT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT

There's a motorcycle in the driveway as John pulls in at the curb. From inside the house, we can HEAR LOUD MUSIC filtering out into the street. John and Jake exit the car and move closer to investigate.

INT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT - JOHN AND JAKE'S P.O.V.

Billy is in there dancing away playing "air guitar" to some fairly awful heavy rock 'n' roll.

BACK ON JOHN AND JAKE

as they cross over to the front door and enter.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

as John and Jake tiptoe their way through Billy's gear and into the living room. Billy turns, sees them, smiles.

INT. DINING ROOM AREA - LATER

Billy is finishing everything in sight. Jake is there with him. John, too.

BILLY

So, I'm down there at the American Express in Tecoman and there's a note from Mom saying Grandma was sick. So, I hustled back up here. I figured you might need some help, Grandpa.

JAKE

Never mind helping "Grandpa."
When was the last time you ate?

BILLY
Why are you Americans so
obsessed with food?

JAKE
Excuse me, Senor. And, you're
not?

BILLY
(smiles)
Well, you know, when in Rome.

Jake takes Billy's plate, crosses into the kitchen.

JOHN
What's with the motorcycle
there?

BILLY
I'm taking it back to school
for this guy. He took my car
up there because he had to move
a lot of stuff.

JOHN
So, you are going back to
school? You decided.

BILLY
(beat)
Yeah.

JOHN
Okay. Good.

He reaches out his hand to Billy. They shake.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Grandpa looks pretty good.

BILLY
What's been going on?

JOHN
I'm not sure. We've been
spending a lot of time together.

BILLY
Quality time, huh? They say
that's good for parents and
kids.

JOHN
(small smile)
Maybe you and I should spend
more time together, huh?

BILLY
Take is easy, Dad. Let's not
get carried away.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

John is finishing cleaning up. O.S. from the greenhouse WE HEAR the SOUNDS of Jake and Billy having a good time. John crosses to the back door, opens it and peers out across the small yard towards the greenhouse.

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT - JOHN'S P.O.V.

He can see Billy and Jake scurrying about between the plants. They look like two kittens playing in the jungle.

BACK ON JOHN

watching wistfully. There's an ease and a comfort level to that relationship that he doesn't have with his own son.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Same as before. Same amber tone, same MUTED SOUNDS, same picturesque country setting. A man's VOICE OVER is heard. We recognize it now as Jake's.

JAKE (V.O.)
Ed and I move along slowly with
the heavy burlap sack hooked
to our belts. Every foot length
we push a hole in the moist
earth with our staffs, drop a
seed potato and stomp it down.
It's like sliding eggs under
a brooding hen.

A young boy comes running through the fields.

JAKE (V.O., CONT'D)
Johnny comes running up to tell
me that he's home for lunch.
I can't believe the way that
boy is growing.

The young boy reaches the man, jumps into his arms.

JAKE (V.O., CONT'D)
Good God, am I a lucky man.

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

Annie, Mario, Billy and Jake are making last minute preparations for Bette's return. There's a big "Welcome Home, Mom" banner, a little store-bought cake and some wine. Jake is dressed nicely.

JAKE
How do I look, Billy?

BILLY
You look great, Grandpa.

JAKE
I don't want to look too good,
now, Bill. I don't want to
excite the woman. She does have
a heart condition.

He laughs. O.S. we HEAR the CAR pull up.

ANNIE
They're here.

A flurry of excitement as everyone rushes to the door.

EXT. IN FRONT OF TREMONT HOME - DAY

John brings the car to a halt. Gets out of the driver's side and Mario comes over quickly with a wheelchair. Annie, Billy and Jake are half a step behind. Bette gets out of the car but refuses to get in the wheelchair. Mario tries to get her seated, but she resists his help, swings her purse at him. There's a lot of screaming and yelling, but Bette wins and walks triumphantly, if slowly, into the house. Mario rubs the side of his head where he was hit.

JOHN
(to Mario)
I see you two are as close as
ever.

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

as they all enter. Off to the side is a cake with a homemade inscription which reads, "Welcome Home, Mom."

BETTE
(without breaking
stride)
Where'd you get the cake?

ANNIE
It's from Lucky's, Mom. Dad
picked it up.

BETTE

Lucky's is not the place to get cake. The best cake is at Von's.

JAKE

(calmly)

Okay, Bette. Next time I'll go to Von's.

Bette continues walking. Everyone else walks with her.

JOHN

Where are you going, Mom?

BETTE

I'm going to pee. You all coming with me?

ANNIE

You're supposed to use the bedpan, Mom.

BETTE

I'm not using any bedpan.

She walks toward the bathroom. Everyone walks with her. She holds on to the wall with one hand, leans on John with the other. She maneuvers herself into the bathroom and closes the door on everyone else. They remain there hovering outside. We HEAR the TOILET FLUSH, but Bette doesn't come out. They wait and wait. Finally:

JAKE

Are you all right in there, Bette?

BETTE (O.S.)

I'm fine. Don't hang over me so. It makes me nervous.

After a few seconds she opens the door. She's all made up--rouge, eyeliner, powder, hair all done.

BETTE

I may not have a strong heart, but I do have some pride.

Everyone just shakes their head in wonder as she goes by.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family "renunion" dinner is in full swing. Lots of food being passed, wine being poured, etc.

MARIO

I would like to make a toast.

Everyone quiets down.

MARIO (CONT'D)

A lot's happened the last two weeks. We've overcome a lot of adversity. Pulled together as a team, and now we're taking time to say thanks.

JOHN

That's beautiful, Mario.

MARIO

It's my regular halftime speech...

(then, more seriously)

Actually, I just wanted to say how happy I am to see the family together again. It's a thrill.

BETTE

It's a thrill for me, too. Are you finished? My soup's getting cold.

MARIO

I'm finished.

Beat, Bette looks around.

BETTE

It's good to be home.

They raise their glasses and toast.

ANNIE

I wish Sara and the kids were here.

JOHN

Me, too. They send their love to everybody.

JAKE

Well, at least we have Billy. That's a treat. We don't get to see him enough.

BILLY

Thanks, Grandpa.

JAKE

He looks good, too. I like that earring. You think I should get one of those?

BETTE

(to Billy)

Yeah. It's very nice. I have a pin that goes with that if you want.

ANNIE

(giving Billy a hug)

Leave him alone, Mom. He looks fabulous. The girls must be falling all over themselves.

JOHN

He doesn't have time for girls, Annie. He's too busy studying.

BILLY

Don't worry about me, guys. This isn't at all embarrassing.

Bette rises. Starts clearing soup bowls.

JOHN

What are you doing, Mom.? You're not supposed to be doing any lifting. You know that.

BETTE

I'm not lifting, I'm carrying. Besides, I need to be in shape if I'm ever going to get this house back in order.

JOHN

I don't think the house looks so bad.

BETTE

That's okay. I understand. You had a good time here, the two boys. A little fraternity house. I know what that's like. I wasn't born this age, you know.

She starts to carry the plates in. Annie helps her. As they go, Annie turns back to John, mouths, "talk to Dad."

JOHN

It can't go on like this, Dad. You're going to have to stand up to her now. For her own good and yours. You're going to have to be in charge.

JAKE

You don't think I can do it, do you, Johnny?

JOHN

She's a tough cookie. You said
it yourself.

INT. TREMONT HOME - EARLY MORNING

The clock reads 5:15 as Bette slips out of her room and begins to systematically go through the house to "check for damage". She checks the linen closet, the cupboards, the refrigerator, the pantry, etc. She finds, not happily in fact, that everything is in order. There's contact paper on the shelves, towels and sheets folded and pressed, paper products, food staples all there. More tuna than you might need, but still, she has to face it -- these guys did okay without her.

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

The incongruous wailing of heavy rock music bounces off the traditional walls and echoes through the hallway. John crosses to Billy's room, enters, crosses to the tape deck, turns it off. Billy comes out from the bathroom.

JOHN

I'm sorry, but the lyrics were
really getting to me. Such a
sad and thoughtful song.

BILLY

Maybe we can put on Joan Baez
or James Taylor? You can
perform root canal on people
when those guys are playing.

JOHN

Let's try and make it easy for
Grandma and Grandpa while you're
here, okay?

BILLY

Okay.

JOHN

I talked to Mom this morning.
She wants you to call her.

BILLY

I will.

JOHN

She asked about school. I said,
I thought you were going back...
at least for this quarter.

BILLY

Yeah... I probably will.

JOHN

She also said school started two weeks ago.

BILLY

I don't need to be there yet. I'm doing a lot of independent study this year.

JOHN

What are you trying to pull here, Bill?

BILLY

I'm not trying to pull anything.

JOHN

You told me you were going back.

BILLY

I didn't want to discuss it, yet, that's all. God, I'd been in the house five minutes, you jumped all over me.

JOHN

Well, what are you going to do? Are you going back?

BILLY

I haven't decided. Anyway, it's probably too late.

JOHN

It's not. I called the school. I explained a few things. Your grandma was sick, you know. Anyway, they'll let you register late.

BILLY

I can't believe you did that.

Just then Jake enters. He's still in his pajamas.

JAKE

Johnny, something's wrong in here. Would you step into the bathroom and have a look?

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

John and Jake enter. John sees what the problem is. The toilet bowl is filled with blood.

INT. DR. SANTANA'S OFFICE - DAY

John is pacing in the outer office. From within, we can HEAR some grunts of pain from Jake. After a beat, DR. SANTANA comes out. He's a very tight-looking man. Speaks in clipped tones. An air of condescension. He barely acknowledges John, reading x-rays, checking charts, etc.

JOHN

Any idea what might be the trouble, Doctor?

SANTANA

It could be any number of things. I most suspect small growths in his bladder. It's a question of whether they're malignant.

JOHN

Will the tests you've just done tell you that?

SANTANA

Not completely. The fact that they're bleeding is not a good sign. We'll have to do some exploratory surgery. That's the only way we'll know for sure.

JOHN

Listen, Dr. Santana, whatever you do, please break this lightly to my father. It would probably be best if you let me explain it to him.

SANTANA

Don't you worry, Mr. Tremont. We're very careful. Especially with older patients.

INT. CAR - DAY

John is driving home with Jake. Jake is shaken. Fighting to keep under control.

JAKE

You don't think it's cancer, do you, Johnny?

JOHN

Nobody said anything about cancer. Put that out of your mind, okay?

JAKE

Okay.

JOHN

If it were anything serious, they wouldn't have let you out of there today. They'd have cut you right open and operated on the spot. I wouldn't be surprised at all if it were just a cyst.

JAKE

Just a cyst, huh?

JOHN

Right. I don't even think it's worth telling Mom about it. Why worry her for nothing?

JAKE

(turns to John,
smiling)

Okay, Johnny, whatever you say. You're the boss.

John pats Jake on the knee. Takes his hand.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

John is making up breakfast. After a beat, Bette shuffles in. Stands there for a beat, searing John in her glare.

JOHN

(beat)

He told you, didn't he?

BETTE

Of course he told me.

JOHN

Okay. Then you know it's nothing serious.

BETTE

If it wasn't serious you would have told me about it yourself.

JOHN

Look, Mom, you may not believe this, but you have had a heart attack. You're supposed to avoid any stress right now. I was afraid you might get worried over nothing. That's why I didn't say anything.

BETTE
(studies him)
He says it's just a cyst.

JOHN
That's right.

BETTE
That's a fairly simple
procedure.

JOHN
Yes, it is.
(beat)
Mother, I'd tell you if anything
was wrong. I would.

BETTE
Okay.

Jake comes in. He's packed and ready to go. He gives a
kind of apologetic half-shrug to John.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. - DAY

John paces. Jake comes out of the bathroom dressed in his
hospital gown. He seems embarrassed, keeps tugging at it.

JAKE
Do I walk around in this,
Johnny? With the back open and
all the nurses here?

JOHN
(checks admission
papers)
Yeah, Dad, it says right here
on the admission card, dress
is informal.

Jake crawls into bed, covers up. A NURSE comes in, crosses
to Jake, checks chart, begins hooking up I.V.

NURSE
Dr. Santana has ordered that
we begin this medication. It's
just something to relax you.

John comes over by his father for support.

JOHN
If you have any left over, I'd
like a little.

She doesn't laugh, adjusts the I.V., and leaves.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I guess you have to pay extra
to get one with a personality.

JAKE
What time is it?

JOHN
It's about noon.

JAKE
Not much longer.

JOHN
Nope.

Silence for a beat, John checks the I.V.

JOHN
That comfortable enough for you,
Dad?

JAKE
Fine.

JOHN
That should really mellow you
out.

JAKE
I'm starting to feel tired
already.

JOHN
I'm going to let you rest then.

JAKE
Okay.

JOHN
Don't forget, if you need
anything, ring the buzzer. Any
problems, call me at home.

John stands there for another beat, looking at Jake,
neither of them sure how to get past this part.

JAKE
You know, John, I see a lot of
men now they hug. We've never
hugged.

JOHN
Want to give it a try?

JAKE
I do.

They hug. Hold it.

JAKE
I love you, Johnny.

JOHN
I love you, too, Dad.

INT. DR. SANTANA'S OFFICE - DAY - CLOSE ON SANTANA
as he studies a report.

SANTANA
Well, Mr. Tremont, I'm afraid
it's cancer.

PULL BACK to reveal a stunned John.

JOHN
Cancer?

SANTANA
Yes. There were several
malignant tumors. I think I
got them, but we'll have to do
some chemotherapy. We won't
radiate. Not with a man your
father's age.

JOHN
Maybe this is a silly question,
but are you absolutely sure?

SANTANA
Yes, a virulent form, too. It's
a good thing we went in and got
it when we did.

JOHN
Listen, Dr. Santana, whatever
you do, don't mention "cancer"
to my father. He's terribly
anxious and frightened about
that word. It's beyond anything
rational.

SANTANA
Come, Mr. Tremont, you'd be
surprised what these older
people can take. Their children
tend to underestimate them.

INT. JAKE'S ROOM - DAY

John enters. Jake's sleeping. John is obviously relieved. Studies him for a beat, writes a note that says, "Everything's A-OK. Be back soon. Love, John."

INT. TREMONT HOME - MORNING

John, Bette, Annie and Billy are there.

BETTE
It's cancer, isn't it?

JOHN
Mom, I told you. It was a cyst and they took it out. That's all.

BETTE
I want to go see him.

JOHN
You can't go see him now, Mom. You can't expose yourself to that kind of stress.

BETTE
If he was all right, you'd let me see him.

ANNIE
C'mon, Mom, you know John is only thinking of what's best for you.

Bette motions over to John.

BETTE
This is my husband and I'm going to see him. Now, either you're going to take me there or I'm going to walk, but I'm going.

As she stands there, her brave stand being taken, she begins to falter. John crosses to her. Helps her sit.

JOHN
All right. I'll drive you. But we have to take it very easy.

INT. CAR - DAY

John driving. Billy alongside. Bette sits in the back with Annie. She has on a big pair of black eyeshades. John drives very slowly, carefully.

ANNIE

Mother, you're supposed to be lying down.

BETTE

I'll have time to lie down when I'm dead.

JOHN

With all the attention you're paying to yourself, that could be some time this afternoon.

BETTE

Listen, the way you're driving we won't get there 'til tonight anyway. What're you doing, fifteen miles per hour?

ANNIE

John is driving this way for your sake, Mom.

BETTE

I should have walked. I would have been there already.

John can take no more. He peels out, burning rubber all the way. Passing cars on the right, going up on the sidewalk at one point. Bette is thrown across the seat.

BETTE (CONT'D)

(beat)

That's better.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

John, Annie, Bette and Billy enter Jake's room. As they enter the room, they stop abruptly. Jake is in bed and he's awake but something's obviously wrong with him. His eyes are wide open so you see the blue isolated in the white. He glances at the three of them but there's no sign of recognition. He's twisting the sheet in his fingers and staring at the door. John crosses quickly to Jake and takes his hands; they're ice cold. Jake looks at him briefly; nothing--thick, concentrated pupils. His lips start trembling. Then his whole body starts shaking; he's trying to speak. John bends close to listen. Jake's voice comes out, rattling, deep, scared.

JAKE

What's that? What's out there?

JOHN

It's nothing, Dad. You're here in the hospital and there's nothing the matter. You're fine.

Jake looks John in the eyes without belief. Bette has pulled herself up beside John. She reaches past him, leans over and kisses Jake. He kisses back, lips puckered big, like a child kissing, a burlesque of a kiss.

BETTE

Hello, Jake, sweetheart, are you all right?

She holds his face in her hands. He stares that glossy stare at her. He smiles, but it's not real. It trembles, a smile of a child smiling on command. Bette holds his head against her, looks at John in despair, tears starting to roll down her cheeks. She mouths the words:

BETTE (CONT'D)

What's the matter with him, Johnny?

John holds Jake's hands while Bette holds his head. He makes no resistance. He's gone. This is only a shell.

BETTE (CONT'D)

Baby, can you hear me? It's me, Bette. Jake?

JOHN

(to Annie)

Get her out of here. I'll get Santana.

INT. JAKE'S ROOM - LATER

Santana is examining Jake. There are two nurses with him. Jake is grinning, sitting there quietly.

SANTANA

Mr. Tremont, this is Dr. Santana. Do you know who I am?

Jake starts nodding again, smiling.

JAKE

I'm fine, yes, I'm just fine, Doctor. Thank you.

Santana leans back, turns to John.

SANTANA

He's in shock.

He sends a nurse out to get some medication. He motions John to go outside the room with him.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

as John and Santana step out of the room.

SANTANA

This is fairly standard with older people, Mr. Tremont. They often go into delayed shock like this even after minor surgery.

JOHN

This is standard?!!

SANTANA

Well, it's actually a form of senility...

JOHN

He wasn't senile when he came in, Doctor. Why should he suddenly go into senility?

Dr. Santana runs his hands through his hair, sighs.

SANTANA

Senility is a strange thing, it can go on and off. You get a stress situation like this and it crops up. I'm sure rest and proper medication will correct the situation.

JOHN

And, what do we do in the meantime?

SANTANA

Nothing.

JOHN

Nothing? No tests? No consultations? We just wait?

SANTANA

We just wait for him to respond to the medication. It'll be fine, don't worry.

JOHN

Hey, what's there to worry about?

John starts to go, turns back.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Did you tell my father he has
cancer?

Santana reflexively takes a step back. He doesn't have
to answer.

JOHN (CONT'D)
You bastard!

INT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT

Annie, Billy and Bette are there as John enters.

BETTE
How is he, Johnny? Any change?

JOHN
He's stable, Mom. I spoke with
the doctor. It's interesting.
He thinks it's kind of a delayed
shock reaction. Evidently, it's
fairly common in patients Dad's
age.

BETTE
He should be home. That's the
only thing that's going to make
him better.

JOHN
He can't come home. There's
nobody here who can take care
of him.

BETTE
I can take care of him.

ANNIE
Mom, we'd all feel better if
Dad was here. But, right now,
the best place for him is the
hospital.

BETTE
Don't you see? It's me he's
missing. That's why he's not
getting better. He's my
husband. He can't do without
me.

She starts crying. Gets up and leaves the room. John
starts to follow. Annie stops him.

ANNIE
Let her go. She needs some
release.

BILLY

(beat)

How bad is he, Dad? Really.

JOHN

He's not there, Billy. He's gone.

INT. JAKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Two nurses are finishing up changing Jake's bed. He's seated in a chair alongside, secured by a kind of strait-jacket. It's tied behind and has straps attached to wristlets which can be slipped over his hands. Jake struggles with this, like a puppy on a leash. John, Billy and Annie enter. They're all taken aback, clearly stunned by the condition of their father.

JOHN

(off strait-jacket)

Why's he wearing that now?

NURSE #1

Keeps him from hurting himself.
He's been flailing around pretty good with those hands.

NURSE #2

When you're ready to go, give a ring and we'll put him back in bed.

The two nurses leave John, Billy and Annie alone with Jake who is basically tied down, staring out into space. John loosens the ties on Jake's wrists.

JOHN

Dad, It's John. I brought Annie and Billy with me.

No response. Annie leans in, pats his hand.

ANNIE

How are you, Dad? Can you hear me?

Billy leans in, too.

BILLY

Grandpa, it's me, Billy. How you doin'?

Suddenly, without much outward change at first, Jake begins crying. He's crying quietly, not sobbing, only a long, continuous, uncontrolled crying. His whole face is becoming wet with tears. John takes his hand.

JOHN

What's the matter, Dad? What is it?

Jake doesn't respond, just continues crying. Annie sits beside Jake, watches him cry and starts crying herself. She holds on to his hands and tries to get his attention but he won't look at her. She kisses him. He puckers up his lips for the kiss as usual. It's almost instinctive, the way an infant will start sucking when you touch its lips. He stays puckered after the kiss for almost five seconds. There's no change in his facial expression, just the puckering up. He continues to weep silently, non-stop.

INT. JAKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Annie sits against the wall, Billy over her. John is pacing. Santana is there along with the hospital administrator, DR. ETHRIDGE, an older man.

SANTANA

I gave him a sedative. I think that will calm him down. How long had he been like that?

ANNIE

I don't know. The whole time we'd been here. Twenty minutes.

ETHRIDGE

Did he seem depressed?

JOHN

Jesus, Doctor, it's a good thing you're not a detective. Yeah, he seemed depressed. What the hell you think's been going on here?

ETHRIDGE

I meant any more than usual, Mr. Tremont.

JOHN

He's been sliding every day since he's been in here. You know that.

(fixes Santana with a stare)

You're not going to tell me that this is normal behavior, are you, Doctor?

SANTANA

This particular manifestation of the depression is unusual, true. I think the sedative will bring him around, though.

JOHN

A sedative! The man is hallucinating. He's crying non-stop. He doesn't recognize anyone in his family and you're going to fix it with a sedative! Why don't you give him sucrets, too, you asshole? Maybe he's got a sore throat you can fix.

Beat of silence. Santana and Ethridge exchange glances.

ETHRIDGE

We're scheduling your father for release tomorrow, Mr. Tremont. You can pick him up after twelve o'clock.

JOHN

What do you mean you're scheduling him for release? Are you trying to tell me he's recovered, Doctor?

ETHRIDGE

Well, no, of course not, but medically speaking, there's not much we can do for him. And we just cannot hold hospital beds for patients who can't profit from medical care.

JOHN

How would we know? He's never gotten any medical care.

SANTANA

You have to understand that while his condition is stable, basically he's custodial.

ANNIE

What exactly does that mean?

JOHN

I'll tell you what it means, Annie. It means they don't give a shit if he lives or dies.

SANTANA

Now, Mr. Tremont, really...

JOHN

He's not custodial, goddamn it.
What the hell kind of word is
that to describe a person?

SANTANA

Come now, Mr. Tremont. Let's
not be hysterical.

JOHN

(exploding)

You want my father out of here,
fine... Well, I'll tell you
something... I want him out
of here more than you do, okay.
You're not good enough to take
care of my father.

John crosses to the bed. Santana and Ethridge cross over,
too. John turns back fiercely on them.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Don't you touch him.

John goes about bundling Jake up in the blankets.

SANTANA

Mr. Tremont, this is very
unnecessary and highly...

JOHN

I said I'm taking him home.

John has finished bundling Jake up. Lifts him out of bed.
Santana makes a move to stop him.

SANTANA

There are forms that have to
be...

Ethridge puts a hand on Santana's shoulder, restrains him.
Gives him a look, "Let him go." John exits with Jake in
his arms. Billy and Annie follow.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

as John carries Jake to the elevator.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - DAY

as they exit the elevator. Jake lies still in John's arms
as they stride toward the front door.

INT. VAN - DAY

Annie driving. Jake lies on the rolled-down back seat, John and Billy with him.

ANNIE
What do we do now?

JOHN
I don't know.

ANNIE
We may have no choice but to put him...

JOHN
No!

(beat)
I don't want to do that. I don't want to put him in a nursing home.

ANNIE
I don't want that either. But we have to do something.

JOHN
Maybe Mom's right. Maybe Dad'll do better if he's at home.

ANNIE
What do we do with Mom? She can't be around him when he's like this.

JOHN
If you can take her out to your place, I'll take care of Dad. I did it before.

ANNIE
Wait a second, John. You can't handle him in this condition.

JOHN
I think I can do it. I know I'll do better than they're doing at the hospital.

BILLY
I can stay and help.

JOHN
No.

BILLY
Why not?

JOHN

I'll take care of him. He's my father.

BILLY

He's my grandfather.

JOHN

I'm your father.

BILLY

Great, now that we know who everybody is, can we please talk about what's best for this man here?

JOHN

I want you gone. You don't want to go back to school, don't go. Just go somewhere. You're in the way here.

BILLY

Dad...

JOHN

Goddammit, listen. One time. Just once. Nod and say, "Yes, Dad" and do what I ask you to do.

BILLY

(beat)

Yes, Dad.

EXT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

The VW van is parked in the driveway. John is inside sitting in the back with Jake. Mario, Annie and Bette come out. Mario carries Bette's suitcase towards his car. Billy is already seated there. Bette looks back to the van.

BETTE

I want to talk to him.

ANNIE

It's not a good idea, now, Mom. Really.

Mario leads Bette to the car, opens door.

MARIO

Annie's right. C'mon, Mom. Get in the hearse.

BETTE

(stops)

You'd like that, wouldn't you,
Mario?

MARIO

I meant, "get in the car." It
was a slip of the tongue.

They start to lead Bette into the car, but she breaks free
and strides purposefully over the the parked van.

INT. VAN - BETTE'S P.O.V.

John sits with Jake's head in his lap. Jake is
unseeing--fingers and toes, curled in, head turned toward
the seat.

REVERSE ANGLE - ON BETTE THROUGH THE WINDOW

She cries softly as Mario and Annie lead her away. They
put her in the car and take off. Billy doesn't look back.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jake is staring at a ball game on TV with blank
incomprehension as John enters with sandwiches and a couple
of beers, goes about setting them up on TV trays.

JOHN

(off game)

This kid, Gooden, is fabulous,
isn't he, Dad? Little problem
with drugs, but we can overlook
that when he's got a 98 mile
per hour fast ball, don't you
think?

Jake leans slightly forward, reaching slowly with one hand,
as if to pick something out of the air about two feet in
front of his face. He does this several times then gives
up. By now John has arranged everything on the tray. He
slides a glass of beer into Jake's hand.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Here you go, Pop. A nice cool
one.

Jake allows the beer to be placed in his hand, but doesn't
do anything. He stares as if he has no idea what it is
or what to do with it. John puts his hand over Jake's
around the glass and brings it up slowly to Jake's lips.
Jake's hand is trembling as John lifts the glass so the
beer goes into John's mouth. About half runs out the
corners, but he gets some and swallows.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(kindly)
We'll have to work on your
technique here, Dad.

John lowers Jake's hand, takes the beer out and fits half a sandwich in. He bends Jake's arm again, moving the sandwich up to his mouth, but Jake won't open his lips. His jaws are clenched tight. John removes the sandwich, cuts it into smaller pieces -- four squares. He takes one of the squares and Jake seems to accept the food this way. He chews and swallows. Takes about a half sandwich -- seems to like it.

JOHN (CONT'D)
All right, we made a sale here.
Let's push our luck.

He tries the beer again on Jake. It's easier this time, but Jake hasn't worked out the difference between eating and drinking; he chews the beer, almost biting off the edge of the glass.

JOHN (CONT'D)
No biting the glassware, house
rules.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

John is in the final stages of getting Jake ready for bed, getting pants off, putting on pajamas, etc. He has rearranged the furniture moving both night tables side by side on the near wall. The bed is shoved up against the far wall and three dining room chairs are arranged in a row along the other side of the bed to keep Jake from falling out. He pushes back two of the chairs and eases Jake into the bed. Jake studies John for a beat, then speaks in a deep, breathy voice.

JAKE
Why are we here, Ed? Why aren't
we at the farm?

JOHN
(taken aback)
What?

JAKE
They'll get mad at us if we stay
here, you know that. Where's
the owner of the house?

JOHN
Dad, this is your house. You
built it yourself, nail by nail,
from the ground up.
(MORE)

JOHN (Cont'd)
Foundation, framing,
electricity, plumbing, the whole
thing.

Jake reaches out tentatively with one shaking hand. Pats John's knee. Whispers excitedly. The FARM SOUNDS FADE IN. STOP. START UP AGAIN. Jake straightens up, looks at John with a weird twinkle of recognition. He points out toward the garden.

JAKE
Mandy's out of the pasture
again, Ed. I'm worried about
her.

JOHN
(tentatively)
Well, don't worry. I'm sure
she's okay.

JAKE
You think so?

JOHN
I do.

JAKE
Hand me the eighteen wrench,
there, next to the chicken wire.

JOHN
Okay.

He hands an invisible "wrench" to Jake who takes it and starts the business of putting two things together. He's holding something invisible in his left hand and pushing something invisible in his right hand against it. He's pressing hard as he can, applying full strength and gritting his teeth, grunting with the effort and completely concentrated. Finally, he stops. He got it. Hands the "wrench" back to John. Sits back. He's quiet; John's not sure what to do. He covers Jake with some blankets, makes him comfortable.

JOHN
A good night's sleep is what
we need here, Dad. Isn't that
what you always said when we
had a problem? "Let's sleep
on it." Well, we got a little
problem here, Dad. So, let's
sleep on it.

He reaches in and kisses him "good night". Jake just lies there, his eyes wide open, hardly blinking, staring at the pink ceiling as if he's seeing a whole new world of color and pattern. Seeing the way an infant sees.

John leaves the nightlight on and exits.

INT. SHOWER - NIGHT

John lets steamy water roll over his weary body.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

John sits in a sweat-suit, bare feet, finishing a snack. After a beat, crosses down the hall to Jake's bedroom, opens the door part way and peers in.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - JOHN'S P.O.V.

The bed's empty. Jake's gone. John pushes the door open all the way, flips on the lights, checks the closets, etc.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

as John comes running out and checks all the rooms. Bathroom, "No!" Living room, "No!" Kitchen, "No!" John is frantic running through the house turning on all the lights. He runs back toward the bedroom again.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

John enters on the fly. No one there. Slowly he moves toward the bed, looks underneath.

ANGLE UNDER THE BED - JOHN'S P.O.V.

Jake is curled up on his side under the bed. He's not asleep and is moaning quietly as he tries to turn over onto his stomach. He's pushing his shoulder against the springs of the bed, but the bed's too low and he can't turn over.

BACK ON JOHN

as he crawls under the bed to get to Jake. He tries to get hold of Jake's feet, but Jake kicks John's hands away. John tries pulling Jake on his arm, but Jake screams loudly and John backs off. He wriggles out from the bed, kneels there for a minute trying to catch his breath. Trying to think of something that might work. After a beat, John lifts one corner and holds it up, hoping Jake will roll over onto his stomach, but Jake lies there unmoving in a fetal position. When John can't hold the bed any longer and puts it down, Jake screams in pain. John quickly lifts the bed, struggling against its weight.

JOHN

(yelling)

Turn over, Dad! Turn over!

John can't hold the bed up any longer. He lets it down. Jake screams again in pain. John lifts the bed again, quickly. The screaming stops. John is sweating profusely now, straining every muscle to keep the bed up. He stretches out a foot and hooks one of the chairs. He edges the chair toward him and with a last burst of strength muscles the bed up and over at the same time until the bed springs rest on the chair. John falls down dripping and breathing heavily. He's shaking from the strain as he fights to catch his breath.

ANGLE ON JAKE

still curled up under the bed, quiet now, but not moving.

BACK ON JOHN

His strength returning. He checks to make sure the bed is secure on the chair, slides a second chair over and wedges it in for insurance, then slides under the bed to retrieve Jake. He squeezes in close to Jake, puts his arms around Jake's waist and starts pulling backwards. Jake doesn't resist, but remains curled in the fetal position as John inches his way out from under the bed. Finally, they're clear, streaked with dirt and dripping with sweat. They stay huddled together in the center of the room.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

John maneuvers Jake into the bathroom, sponges the dirt off his head, his arms and shoulders.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

John is finishing up wrestling Jake into clean pajamas. After the pajamas are on, John crosses to the bed and takes it off the chairs, letting it down to its normal position on the floor. He gets over there and lowers Jake down onto the bed. Then John lies out across the foot of the bed himself, his hand securely over Jake's feet. Like that, they go to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CLOSE ON JOHN

who is asleep. He wakes suddenly to find Jake on his hands and knees on top of him straddling the bed. He's looking straight in John's face in the dark. His nose practically touching John's. John is so startled he jumps and bangs heads with Jake. He grabs Jake by the shoulders and carefully rolls him off onto the bed. John lies there for a minute trying to get his bearings when out of nowhere he is whacked in the face by Jake's flailing right hand. His nose is bleeding, his lip is cut.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

John washes away the blood, puts on a Band Aid.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

John comes out of the bathroom. He's still woozy and mending his cuts. Suddenly, he stops. The bedroom door is open. He runs down the hall toward the open door.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jake's gone again. John quickly checks under the bed. He's not there. He checks closets, behind the desk, nothing, he's not in the bedroom.

INT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT

John dashes around calling Jake's name and checking every door, closet, nook and cranny in the house. Still no Jake. Finally, John notices one "door" he didn't try. It's covering the water heater. Slowly, he approaches, opens it. There's Jake squeezed in there somehow, hugging up against the water heater. John tries to lead him out, but Jake resists, starts swinging wildly. John is screaming, out of control, as he wrestles with his father.

JOHN

What the hell's the matter with you, Dad? What are you doing to me? I want to be home. I want to be with my family. You're making me crazy. Stop it. Stop it.

John gets a hold of himself. Things quiet down. John has Jake pinned. Starts caressing him, now.

JOHN

I'm sorry, Dad. I didn't mean to yell. I didn't mean it. I just want to see my children, Dad, that's all. I'm sorry. I am so sorry.

John starts crying. Jake looks up at him terrified. John smooths out Jake's clothes, brushes back his hair, slips off him. Jake withdraws against the wall.

JOHN

You want to come to bed?

Jake does not respond.

JOHN (CONT'D)
At least let me cover you.

He crosses to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

John gathers up some blankets and pillows.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

John comes back out. The sight of Jake causes him to stop dead in his tracks. Every part of Jake is moving, vibrating, twisting, twitching. He looks like a washing machine trying to shake loose of its moorings.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

John rushes in, throws open the medicine cabinet, knocking things flying until he finds a bottle of Valium.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

John comes running. He smashes the Valium into a glass of water, forces some through Jake's teeth. He gathers Jake up and heads for the door. Jake is still "active" and it's a struggle for John to hold on.

EXT. TREMONT HOME - DAWN

The sun is just peeking up over the hills, as John and Jake fight their way toward the car. Jake is climbing over John at one point, knocking them both to the ground. John is almost dragging Jake to the van--a soldier pulling his wounded buddy to safety.

INT. VAN - DAWN

John speeding toward the hospital; Jake "roaming" the back seat area. John narrowly avoids accidents as he alternates between concentrating on driving and keeping Jake from hurting himself back there.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAWN

John pulls up to the emergency entrance, horn blaring. A couple of paramedics come running out, get Jake onto a gurney and wheel him into the emergency room.

INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - MORNING

Small rooms opening on to a large monitoring center. Jake looks peaceful lying there in bed. He looks like one of the men in the capsules in the film "2001". A doctor comes over.

DOCTOR

Well, he's out of danger for the moment. We'll need to do more tests to find out what's wrong. But, for now...

JOHN

What the hell happened? What was that?

DOCTOR

(off chart)

Hard to say. It was a seizure of some sort. That's all I can tell you now.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

John strides down the hall to Ethridge's office. He enters.

INT. ETHRIDGE'S OFFICE - DAY

A secretary guards the inner sanctum as John enters.

JOHN

I want to see Dr. Ethridge now.

SECRETARY

I'm afraid that's not going to be possible. He's very busy. I can make an appointment for you later this afternoon, however...

John ignores her and bursts into Ethridge's office.

INT. INNER OFFICE - DAY

Ethridge is surprised by John's entrance.

ETHRIDGE

What's going on?

JOHN

We need to have a talk.

ETHRIDGE

If you just go back out and make an appointment with Betsy, I'm sure...

JOHN

You don't understand. We need to talk now.

Ethridge senses the seriousness of John's anger. Motions for the secretary to back out. She does. Beat.

ETHRIDGE

Excuse me, Mr. Tremont. But, before you say anything, let me remind you that your father is not a patient here. You made a very specific point of that.

JOHN

Well, he's back. He had a seizure. He's in I.C.U.

ETHRIDGE

I'm very sorry.

JOHN

Save it. You're going to need it.

ETHRIDGE

Is that a threat?

JOHN

(rambling some)

No. No. A threat is if I tell you I'm going to take you and hoist you out the window. That's a threat. I will do whatever it takes to get my father better. This is a promise. I will sell my house. I'll sell my car. I'll stay here the rest of my life. You want to talk malpractice? You did something to him. Something happened to him in this hospital. You did something to him. And, I want my father better.

ETHRIDGE

We'll do everything we can if there's any physical damage. But, we've told you, as to his mental condition, he's custodial. There's nothing more we can do.

JOHN

Oh, you're going to be surprised
how much more you can do.
You're going to be fucking
amazed.

ETHRIDGE

What is it you want, Mr.
Tremont? A settlement? Are
you looking for money here?

JOHN

No. No. You complete and total
asshole. I told you. I want
my father back. I want him
given every test that's ever
been given in the history of
medicine. I don't want you
giving up and releasing him from
this hospital until I say it's
okay. No one else. Me! And,
I want your best man on this
case now.

INT. HOSPITAL I.C.U. - DAY

John is watching with Annie as DR. KASHIM CHAD, a handsome
black man, late forties, works carefully and methodically
on Jake. Chad's taking Jake's pulse, blood pressure,
listening to Jake's heart, his breathing. A platoon of
nurses are at the bed ready. He speaks softly, then more
loudly, calling Jake's name.

CHAD

Mr. Tremont? How are you, Mr.
Tremont?

He pinches Jake's shoulder and slaps his face lightly, then
harder. Each time there's no response.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I'm not sure exactly what caused
it. But, right now, I'm
inclined to go along with Dr.
Santana's diagnosis -- a sudden
decline to deep senility or
stroking. If you want to have
another consultation on this,
please do.

John looks over at Annie who shakes her head, "no."

JOHN

That won't be necessary, Doctor.

CHAD

Well, having said that, don't get the impression we're going to sit by and do nothing. We're not. We've just done a whole series of tests and we'll do more. It's just that right now, we're really shooting in the dark.

ANNIE

We appreciate your honesty.

CHAD

It's strange though. The LP we did showed some red cells in the spinal, but nothing to indicate a stroke. We did an EEG, but it's hard to tell anything while he's like this.

JOHN

Those tests should have been done a long time ago, shouldn't they, Dr. Chad?

Chad doesn't respond directly.

CHAD

We'll keep him here in F.C.U. That way he'll be monitored at all times. I'll check in and see him twice a day.

JOHN

I think I'm going to move in here with him, if that's okay.

NURSE

I'm afraid that's entirely against...

CHAD

(cutting her off)

If it makes you feel more comfortable, I think it's a good idea.

John pulls a small envelope out of his bag. Takes out some photos, starts putting them up near Jake's bed. They're photos of Jake as a young man -- playing with the kids, playing softball, by the sea, by the car, etc.

JOHN

I think it's good for everyone here to see him as he once was.

(MORE)

JOHN (Cont'd)

I mean, you see him now and you think, "Hey, if he ever sits up again it'll be a miracle." But I want you to see what I see when I look at him. I want you to see my father.

MONTAGE

- a) John rolling in a cot next to Jake's bed; setting up his little "corner".
- b) Chad checking Jake.
- c) Chad going over test results with John.
- d) Annie, Mario, Bette visiting Jake.
- e) Nurses changing bedding -- cajoling John into helping them.
- f) John doing various nursing chores, taking blood pressure, temperature.
- g) John eating lunch with eleven nurses in uniform.

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chad and John finishing some late night Chinese food. Chad has Jake's file in front of him.

CHAD

I'm beginning to think a big part of the problem might be metabolic. I've moved the I.V. up directly into the vena cava. I'm giving nitrogen as protein. I don't know what else to do right now.

John nods.

CHAD (CONT'D)

The renal functions are slightly off. His BUN is up and his pulse is irregular. The good news is the brain scan we did showed no tumor.

JOHN

That's a relief.

CHAD

We'll just have to wait for lab reports.

(MORE)

CHAD (Cont'd)
Sometimes I think I spend my
life waiting for lab reports.
They didn't tell us about this
in medical school.

He closes the folder.

JOHN
Did you always want to be a
doctor?

CHAD
No. No. When I was young I
wanted to be cowboy.

John laughs.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I was shocked to learn that we
had no cowboys in Nigeria. It
was a very big blow. I'm not
sure I have recovered yet.

JOHN
What made you become a doctor?

CHAD
My father. He was a doctor.
It was what he wanted for me.
In my country you really must
do what your father asks of you.

JOHN
Yeah, well, here in America it's
a little more complicated.

CHAD
I've noticed.
(beat)
And, what about you? Did you
do what your father asked?

JOHN
My father never asked anything
of me. He just worked all the
time. I always thought I'd play
professional baseball. But,
it didn't work out. I became
a teacher.

CHAD
You enjoy teaching?

JOHN
I do, very much. I like the
kids.

CHAD

You have children of your own?

JOHN

Two girls--Katie, 5, Becky, 15.
And, a very complicated teenage
boy, Billy, 19. How about you?

CHAD

Four girls. They're in Nigeria
with their mother.

JOHN

You get homesick?

CHAD

I do.

JOHN

I know the feeling.

We have a place outside of
Lagos. We would spend weekends
there, all the kids. Go
boating. Play ping-pong. I
was the Junior Champion
ping-pong player of Nigeria.

JOHN

Really?

CHAD

Of course I could be lying.
You have no way of checking.

JOHN

True.

CHAD

Some time we'll play... for
money.

PHONE RINGS. Both men tense involuntarily. Chad gets it.

CHAD

(into phone)

Hello... Yes... Go ahead.

He reaches for a pencil, starts to write down some numbers.
He's not happy. Says "good-night" and hangs up.

CHAD (CONT'D)

(beat)

The latest tests were not good.
Damn. I thought I had something
there. He was responding well
at first. But, now, we're back
to square one.

JOHN

I see. Is there any reason to
be hopeful?

CHAD

(beat)

No. There really isn't. I wish
I could say otherwise.

John is shaken by the news. Even though it's not
surprising, it's still shocking.

CHAD (CONT'D)

You should probably start
considering arrangements for
your father's death. I don't
think he'll last more than a
few days.

JOHN

Thank you, Doctor.

CHAD

I'm very sorry.

John rises. They shake. John starts to exit.

CHAD

Mr. Tremont?

JOHN

Yes, Doctor?

CHAD

I hope someday someone loves
me the way you love your father.

INT. I.C.U. - NIGHT

John enters and starts over to Jake's bed. Is stopped
short by what he sees.

ANGLE ON JAKE'S BED - JOHN'S P.O.V.

Jake lies quietly, still in his coma. Sitting next to
Jake, holding his hand, eyes closed, is Billy. He looks
up, sees John, starts to get up, nervously gathers his
things.

BACK ON JOHN

crosses over.

JOHN

When did you get back in town?

BILLY

(beat)

I never left. I've been staying
with friends. I didn't want
to leave Grandpa.

JOHN

You've been coming here every
day?

BILLY

(nods)

After you leave, one of the
nurses calls me. I usually stay
an hour or so. I didn't expect
you back tonight. Sorry.

Billy starts to walk away. John reaches out for him and
hugs him close.

INT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT

Mario and Bette are playing gin at the kitchen table. In
the background, Annie and John are going over cemetery
brochures and contracts, etc. Bette lifts a card off the
top of the deck, studies it, then puts it back.

MARIO

Don't look at the cards, okay?

BETTE

I wasn't looking. I was just
checking to see what card that
was.

MARIO

Oh, forgive me.

ANNIE

(off brochures)

Have you looked at these
brochures at all, Mom?

BETTE

What's there to look at? Daddy
and I agreed when the time came
we wanted the simplest kind of
funeral. We want to be buried in
the ground together. In the
same grave. That's all.

MARIO

I like that idea.

BETTE

I'm not gone yet, Mario.

MARIO

I mean, it's good that you and Pop will be together. And, you'll be so close. We'll be able to visit you a lot.

JOHN

There are some beautiful plots here, Mom. Young maple tree growing. You know how Dad loves maples.

BETTE

When he's dead he's dead, and that's all there is to it. The only thing I can hope is that I go right behind. I don't want to live without your father. It makes no sense.

Bette again picks up the top card from the pile, studies it, puts it back down.

MARIO

It's my turn to pick.

BETTE

So, pick.

MARIO

You just looked at that top card.

BETTE

I made a mistake.

INT. I.C.U. - EARLY MORNING

A pale grey light filters in through the window, as does the sound of early morning traffic. CAMERA PANS the room, across the old photos of Jake etc. and comes to rest on John who is asleep on his cot alongside Jake's bed. The jingling of glass and metal, the sounds of the hospital coming awake cause John to stir. He lies there for a moment half-thinking, half in suspended animation. He sits up slowly, glances over at Jake. Jake's eyes are open and he's looking at John. Not past him or through him or around him. He's looking into his eyes. John slides out of bed on his side and approaches carefully. Jake's eyes follow, keeping John in focus. John comes to the edge of the bed. Jake's mouth opens twice, dry pale lips, paper-frail. But he gets out a sound, a thin, high voice.

JAKE

Where am I, Johnny?

JOHN
You've been sick.

Jake nods, looks down the length of his bed, smiles.

JAKE
I think I could've guessed that one. But what are you doing here? Was there an earthquake or a car crash or something?

As Jake is talking, the morning nurse comes in. Jake smiles, gives a little wave. She stands there in shock.

NURSE
He speaks?

JAKE
Yes, he does. It's something he learned as a child.

JOHN
You'd better page Dr. Chad.

She runs out to get Chad. She passes by the nurses' station, tells them what's transpired. The other nurses start filing in. Orderlies and other doctors follow. Patients come in carrying their I.V.'s with them. They make a semi-circle around Jake's bed. Start applauding. Jake gives a "tip of his cap."

INT. I.C.U. - LATER

Chad is finishing his exam. He writes something on a pad, gives it to a nurse. He turns back to John, somewhere between perplexed and elated.

CHAD
Don't ask me to explain it, yet. Because I've never seen anything like it.

JOHN
I don't care if you can explain. Just don't let it go away.

Chad turns back to Jake.

CHAD
Well, Mr. Tremont, what can we do to make you comfortable?

JAKE

Well, to start with, you can take off a few of these tubes and wires, then maybe I can have something to eat.

(holds up his
withered arm)

It looks to me like you've been starving me here.

CHAD

Okay. But, we'll have to start you off slowly. Don't forget, you haven't really eaten anything in quite a long time.

JAKE

(smiles)

Maybe that's what was wrong with me. You ever think of that?

Just then Bette and Annie come in. Billy a half step behind. They stand there for a beat, overcome with joy. Jake smiles up at them.

JAKE

Hello, girls. Hello, Bill.

Bette and Annie come over. Bette leans in and hugs Jake. He pulls her into bed with him. She protests all the way, but John comes over and gives Jake a hand. Together they get her in the bed. She's laughing and crying at the same time. They hold each other tight. John and Annie join in. Then Billy. They all get in bed, crying and laughing together.

INT. I.C.U. - DAY

There are magazines and newspapers scattered about. Several nurses are in attendance, one is massaging Jake's shoulder, another cutting his meat as he eats. John enters, stands there surveying the scene. Jake waves to John.

JAKE

Johnny, come on in.

John enters slowly.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to nurses)

Ladies, I believe you know my son, John.

The nod that they do. AD-LIB hellos.

JOHN
How's it going, Dad?

JOHN
Oh, great, Johnny. Just great.
(continues eating
with gusto)
You know something, I can smell
this food. I haven't been able
to really smell anything for
over twenty years.

Jake puts his head down close and sniffs each dish, points
excitedly at the foods on the tray.

JAKE (CONT'D)
It's exactly the way it was
after I quit smoking. Each food
tastes so good, so strong. This
spinach here tastes completely
different than this apple sauce.
These carrots taste completely
different than that yellow stuff
over there.

He turns to the nurse. Points to the yellow "stuff."

JAKE (CONT'D)
What do you call that?

NURSE #1
That's summer squash.

JAKE
It's a beautiful vegetable.
Really. The texture. The
color. The flavor. You should
be very proud.

NURSE #1
We are.

They each reach in and give Jake a little kiss good-bye.

JAKE
Next time bring a deck of cards.
I'll show you some tricks.

The nurses exit. John stares at Jake for a beat.

JAKE (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

JOHN
You're supposed to be in
intensive care, Dad.

JAKE

Hey, John, if the care was any more intense, we'd get arrested.

They start laughing.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Billy and Jake walking together. Jake uses the aid of a walker but manages a pretty snappy pace. Everyone they pass has a "hello" or a wave for Jake.

BILLY

You're pretty popular here, Grandpa.

JAKE

Oh, yeah. I'd run for mayor if I wasn't getting out of here so fast.

They come around the corner to a set of doors leading out on to the patio. WE SEE Bette, John and Annie seated out there waiting. There's an empty wheelchair next to John. Jake pauses a little starts to negotiate the bump up to the outside. Does it fairly smoothly.

EXT. HOSPITAL PATIO - DAY

as Billy and Jake come through to this side.

BILLY

(off walker)

Very smooth, Grandpa. You can really handle that baby.

Jake holds up the walker.

JAKE

Well, I don't really need this, Bill, see. I just use it to keep the nurses away.

He holds the walker up like a lion tamer. They walk over to the others. AD-LIB HELLOS. Jake sits in the wheelchair. John, Annie and Bette come over to kiss him. It is a fairly warm day. Jake sits smiling as if he were in the Garden of Eden. He looks up at the sky.

JAKE

Boy, it's easy to forget how wonderful the sky is. Those are beautiful clouds, aren't they, Bette?

Billy looks up. She's not quite as moved.

BETTE
Clouds are clouds.

JAKE
No, no. No, they're not. Every cloud is different. They're like little puffy snowflakes... made of cotton. I must say I do miss clouds here in California. We had beautiful clouds in Philadelphia.

BETTE
Don't forget those clouds used to be full of rain. You remember it would rain sometimes for two weeks straight, even in summer.

JAKE
That's right, Bette. But rain's good for growing things.

BETTE
I remember once we took our vacation in Wildwood on the Jersey Shore, and it rained the entire time. We were locked up in one room with two beds and these two kids for two weeks. What a nightmare that was.

JOHN
Thank you. Thank you very much.

ANNIE
I loved that trip. There were no boys your age there, Johnny. And, you had to play with me the whole time.

Jake studies Bette for a beat, smiles like a little boy.

JAKE
C'mere, Bette. Sit on my lap.

BETTE
Are you crazy?

JAKE
It's just the way the light is hitting you right now. You look so beautiful. I want to touch you.

Bette gasps. The others are almost as surprised.

BETTE

Are you crazy? What will people think? You are seventy-three years old, Jake Tremont. And, I'm not far behind you.

JAKE

(sincerely)

Honest, Bette, you still look like a girl to me. Nobody'd think you were a day over forty. Now, sit here with me for a minute, please. I love you.

After a beat, Bette coyly, shyly walks over, sits on his lap. He snuggles her. Everyone applauds.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE O.R. - DAY

Chad is there getting ready for an operation. John is with him. Chad has Jake's file propped up in front of him as he scrubs.

CHAD

All the tests are positive. The vital signs stable. The cancer in remission. This is the profile of a healthy man. He's ready to be released.

JOHN

You know, it's really more than that, Dr. Chad. My dad's different now. He seems so clear. So calm, somehow younger. It's like he's stepped into a time machine.

CHAD

I know.

JOHN

Any idea yet what it was?

CHAD

(smiles)

Some theories. Nothing that I'd want to see published.

JOHN

Like what?

Chad finishes scrubbing, starts off towards the operating room John follows.

CHAD

It's entirely possible that he was so fearful of the cancer that his brain "froze up", stopped producing a vital chemical or enzyme that he needed. Somehow with that last variation of the I.V. mixture we got lucky and he replaced that enzyme.

JOHN

I see.

Long beat, then:

CHAD

But, you know, if we were back home, we would say that it was not that at all, but rather it was your love and caring that called your father back from where he'd gone.

JOHN

I think I like that one better.

CHAD

Me, too.

Chad enters the O.R. John starts to follow, then realizes. Backs out sheepishly.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

The Rambler moves through daytime traffic.

INT. CAR - DAY

John is driving, Jake alongside, Billy in the back. Jake watches the streets keenly as they go.

JAKE

There it is, Johnny. Over there. Stop.

John parks across the street from an open air swap meet, about the size of a parking lot.

JOHN

What are you lookin' for, Dad?

JAKE

Your mom and I are starting a new life, John. We're going to need new clothes.

EXT. SWAP MEET - DAY

A colorful display of goods and people. Everything from tennis shoes to dining room sets. Jake, John and Billy wander through the different stalls. Over in one of the clothing sections, Jake looks through the pants, finds a pair he likes, pulls them out and shows them to John. They are violet velvet. He holds them up to his waist. They're about five sizes too large.

JAKE

Are these too big, John?

JOHN

Maybe a little, Dad.

JAKE

Ah, what's the difference? I like 'em. If they don't fit, I'll give them away. I think I'd feel fine in a pair of pants like this. I'd feel like somebody special, as if people could see me.

JOHN

Okay, Dad.

JAKE

(to Billy)

What do you think?

JOHN

He probably thinks they're too conservative.

BILLY

I think they're rad.

JAKE

You hear that, John? I'm going to be rad.

He does a high-five with Billy. Begins "shopping" with a vengeance. He seems attracted to the most bizarre stuff there as he moves about the furs, the shimmer shirts and the wigs.

JAKE (CONT'D)

All the rich people I've seen on television wear crazy clothes. They don't have to please anybody except themselves, and they don't care what people think of them. Now I don't need anything from anybody either.

JOHN

What do you suppose mother'll say?

JAKE

Well, she'll laugh and call me crazy, but she'll laugh. We haven't had enough laughing around our place the last ten years.

INT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT

Annie is there as Jake, Billy and John enter. They are laden with bags of clothes. They cross quickly down the hall.

BETTE

Where have you been? I almost called the police on you.

JOHN

(as they go)

You may still get that chance.

They're gone, leaving a befuddled Bette and Annie out in the living room.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy, Jake and John are changing clothes. Jake's laughing and giggling the whole time. He's wearing his aircraft carrier cap with the bill slightly cocked to the left. He looks like a seventy-three-year-old Dennis the Menace. John slips on a pair of striped Italian no-belt pants with a brown, long-sleeved, three-button-at-the-cuff shirt. Big lion as a monogram.

JAKE

(whistles between his teeth)

Boy, Johnny, you should dress that way all the time. You look like a man who's never done a day's work in his life.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Bette and Annie are there. John enters, crosses to the middle of the room. The ladies gasp, start laughing. Annie whistles between her fingers. John acknowledges the "crowd."

JOHN

Ladies and gentleman, the house now presents the star of the show. The late sick-man and almost corpus delicti, just back from a successful tour of the Caribbean, Gorgeous Jake and his faithful companion, Billy.

Billy and Jake come out. Jake's wearing a pair of golden ski pants with a burgundy silk shirt. Also, blue Adidas running shoes with one toe sticking out. He walks to the center of the living room slowly, carefully, and turns around with his arms wagging loosely in the air. Billy follows in another outrageous outfit. An almost pistachio ice cream shirt with yellow Jack Nicklaus golf pants. Annie and Bette crack up totally.

JAKE

(off Billy's outfit)

This is my costume for bicycling in Venice along the beach or maybe roller skating.

Applause. Then holds up his other outfit.

JAKE (CONT'D)

This here's my baseball watchin' outfit. Mostly I'll only wear it around the house. I'm also going to actually go see a few games, but not in my costume.

John begins walking and turning around, breaks out with "A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody" and joins in. They start clapping to the song. Bette's in hysterics.

BETTE

Stop them, Annie. I'm dying. They're trying to kill me. I'll pee in my pants.

Annie's rocking back and forth, laughing on the couch. Jake crosses down to Bette. Her cheeks are wet from crying and laughing.

JAKE

I never heard of anybody dying laughing, Bette, but wouldn't it be nice?

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Bette is alone in there sipping a cup of tea. John enters.

JOHN
(cheery)
Good morning.

Bette just "harumphs" back.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Guess I was out of line. Sorry.
Where's Dad?

BETTE
Take a look.

Bette points out toward the side yard. John looks out.

EXT. YARD - MORNING - JOHN' P.O.V.

Jake is practicing golf putts, putting into a little hole with a flag over it. He's dressed in an outlandish outfit--baggy pants, leather vest, turtleneck and beret. Annie and Mario are out there with him. Jake is singing "It Ain't Gonna Rain No More" in different voices and accents.

BETTE (V.O.)
What do you think?

JOHN (V.O.)
I think he needs to keep his
head down a little more. Follow
through a touch slower.

BACK TO KITCHEN

JOHN
Looks like he's just having fun,
Mom.

Jake's singing draws closer and then he enters with Mario and Annie.

JAKE
What a day! What a day! What
a day!

He kisses Bette and John.

MARIO
Not bad. I shot a ninety-four.
It's a one hole course, but
still...

JAKE (CONT'D)
How about a little drive after
breakfast?

ANNIE
Good idea, Dad. Maybe Mom'll
come along with us.

BETTE
I'm not going to drive with him.
He drove too fast before. I
hate to think what he'd be like
now.

JAKE
(goes across to
Bette)
Don't you worry your pretty
little head, Bette. When old
Jake Tremont gets behind that
wheel, you're safe as if you
were in your own bed. And, it's
almost as much fun.

He gives her a kiss on the neck, then another on the lips.
Then he lowers himself onto the floor in front of the TV.
He stretches out on his stomach.

BETTE
What on earth are you looking
for?

JAKE
Not looking for anything. I
want to see if I can still do
a pushup.

He tries pushing himself up with his frail arms but can't
budge. Then he bends at the waist to push his shoulder
and head up from the floor until his arms are extended.
He lets himself down again.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I'll call these old-man
push-ups.

He pushes himself up and down a few times.

JAKE (CONT'D)
What about it, Bette? Want to
hit the beach?

BETTE
I'll go, but only in a taxicab.

Jake grunts out his reply between push-ups.

JAKE

I don't want to go in a cab. We'll probably wind up in Santa Monica. That town's an outside old-people's home. Everybody's moving along slowly, shopping for nothing, or waiting for the next meal. Every corner in that town's a bank or a doctor's office. I want to drive to Venice. Maybe to the pier to get in some fishing. I used to like fishing. I can't figure out why it was I stopped doing the things I like.

He struggles himself up off the floor and falls back into his rocking chair, cocks his leg under him.

JAKE (CONT'D)

We should have some fun while we can. Where's all my fishing gear.

BETTE

I think I put it away in the garage about thirty-five years ago.

JAKE

I'll get it.

He exits singing.

BETTE

I tell you, he isn't the same. I think he's senile -- going into his second childhood. Do you think he's gone crazy, Annie? Tell me.

ANNIE

He's no crazier than this one here.

(points to John)

Or me. Or Mario.

Bette just grunts a kind of "what does that prove" harumph.

MARIO

C'mon, why don't you lighten up and give the guy a break? You're always busting his colyones.

There's silence.

BETTE
I beg your pardon. What exactly
are colyones?

JOHN
(pointing)
Well, you see, Mom, the colyones
are located here, beneath the
rib...

MARIO
Colyones... Huevos... Balls...
He's a great guy. You're always
steppin' on him. Why don't you
let him live.

BETTE
I see.

Bette rises, crosses out of the room.

EXT. IN FRONT OF TREMONT HOME - DAY

Bette stands there, almost the hint of tears around the
edges of her eyes. She seems to pull them back in as John
comes out, crosses to her, puts his arms around her.

BETTE
Is that what everybody thinks?
That I'm trying to kill Daddy?
That I'm always, as Mario so
elegantly put it, ..."busting
his balls?"

JOHN
Mom...

BETTE
Is that what you think?

JOHN
No, Mom. Of course not.

BETTE
I know you love your father more
than you love me...

JOHN
Mom...

BETTE
That's okay. I don't blame you.
He's an easy man to love. I
love him too, you know.

JOHN
I know.

BETTE

Let me tell you something about your father. He has never been an easy man to live with. If he was left alone, we wouldn't have two nickels to rub together right now, believe me.

JOHN

I believe you.

BETTE

Yeah... He was always "Good Time Charlie" and I was always the one who had to go to the landlord at the end of the month and ask for a few days more to pay the rent.

(beat)

But, I did. And, I usually got it.

JOHN

I'm sure.

BETTE

And, it was exciting for awhile. But, then we had kids. We had a house. We had a life. It had to be protected. And, I protected it. But, I paid a big price for that, didn't I? The love of my children.

John looks at her. He has nothing to say. She crosses away, then starts crying. She's sobbing hard. Just standing there shaking her head and crying. John crosses over to her.

JOHN

C'mon, Mom. It's going to be okay. We love you...

BETTE

Johnny, I'm scared. He's talking about people I don't know or people I'm sure are dead. He says we live on a little farm in Cape May, New Jersey and he wants us to go back there now because it's harvest time.

JOHN

What?

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Jake is there singing and tearing through piles of old fishing tackle and sporting gear. John enters, looks right at Jake. Jake looks away, staring off into the distance. Beat, then:

JAKE
She told you, huh?

JOHN
Yeah. What's going on, Dad?

JAKE
Take me for a ride, John. I need to talk in private, and I don't want any interruptions.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

John is driving. Jake alongside.

JAKE
Could we drive down to the beach, John? I'd like to see the water.

EXT. BEACH PARKING LOT - DAY

John heads for a corner of the lot that's fairly deserted, stops the car. They're facing the beach now. Off to the right a group of surfers are slipping on wet suits and unloading boards. Jake speaks slowly, trying to piece it together himself.

JAKE
Johnny, what chance is there I have a wife and four kids, and live on a farm in Cape May, New Jersey?

JOHN
I don't think there's much chance, Dad.

Jake's eyes well up with tears. No sobbing, just deep, deep sighs.

JAKE
You mean there's no chance I have a little truck farm there next to Bill Sullivan and Ira Taylor, across from my brother Ed and Gene Michaels?

(MORE)

JAKE (Cont'd)

And, I don't have four kids, there? You, Annie, Hank and Little Lizbet?

JOHN

So far as I know, Dad, you've been living here in L.A. about twenty-five years. And, you held a regular job at Lockheed all that time. Before that we lived in New York and you worked for G.E.

Jake takes it all in; shakes his head.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

as John and Jake walk along.

JAKE

I know you must be right. I mean, how can you be in two places at once? But, I've got to tell you, Johnny. My life there's as real to me as we are here, sitting looking at the ocean.

Jake sits on the rocks, stares out at the water.

JOHN

What exactly did you say to Mom? She seemed awfully upset.

JAKE

Oh, I don't know. Something about how the corn was growing so high out back and what a beautiful day it was and did she want to take a walk with me into Cape May village.

JOHN

Maybe you made all this up while you were sick, Dad. Maybe you got this idea in your head then and it's coming back to you now.

Jake looks off into the distance for a long beat.

JAKE

John, it's something like the water out there. The top, the waves, the ripples, are us, right now.

(MORE)

JAKE (Cont'd)

We call it real because we can see it. But my life in Cape May is the water, it's under the surface and holds everything up.

(beat)

It's the best part of my life, Johnny. How can it not be true?

INT. DR. DELIBRO'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is very much "non-psychiatrist" in its decor, a kind of shipping crate wood with stenciled markings "this end up," etc. John and Annie are waiting together. After a beat, Jake and DR. DELIBRO come out. They're chatting and laughing. The doctor is a young man, studious with wire-rimmed specs.

DELIBRO

Well, I must say your father's story is one of the most interesting things I've ever heard. I honestly don't think most people have as much reality in their daily world as he has in his Cape May existence.

Jake kind of smiles and shrugs. He looks like a fifth grader being praised by a loving teacher. Delibro puts a hand on Jake's shoulder, does it nicely, not patronizingly at all.

DELIBRO (CONT'D)

It's okay, we've talked about this and your dad understands it's all a dream. He has no confusion in this area at all. It's an ongoing long dream he's made up for himself.

Jake gives that little boy shrug again.

DELIBRO (CONT'D)

We need to work on putting together what's real and what's the dream. What's possible and what isn't. The important thing is to find ways he can bring into his life all the best parts of his dream.

INT. INNER OFFICE - DAY

John and Annie sit across from the young doctor.

DELIBRO

Stop me if this gets too
technical... or too fantastic.

JOHN

Okay.

DELIBRO

Your father's what Laing would
call a successful schizophrenic.
Over the years he hasn't been
getting enough pleasure from
his daily life and he's isolated
his greatest joys into a dream.
He's created a personal
experience more to his liking,
an alternate coping system, if
you will. It's a private,
complete, and apparently,
satisfying world.

JOHN

How long has this been going
on?

DELIBRO -

Hard to say yet. At least
twenty years. Maybe more.

ANNIE

You mean, all the times we
thought he was off in space,
he was actually in this other
world?

DELIBRO

Yes. And, when you thought he
was retreating into himself,
he was just sinking deeper into
the fantasy.

JOHN

Incredible.

DELIBRO

You realize it takes an
extremely intelligent,
strong-willed, and imaginative
person to do this successfully.

Delibro leans back in his chair and runs his fingers along
the arms. A sneak-up smile creeps across his face.

DELIBRO (CONT'D)

Sometimes already, I've had a difficult time keeping distance listening to your father. His fantasy is so compact, so texturally rich and, at the same time, idyllic. He's like a medieval spellbinder explaining the nature of paradise.

ANNIE

Where's my mother in all of this? Is she just shut out?

DELIBRO

No, she's there. She's younger, very supportive, very sweet.

(beat)

I take it that's not always the case here in this world.

JOHN

She has her moments.

DELIBRO

The problem is your father's participation in this life is totally tied up with your mother's approval. Since his recovery, he's been a happy person. The walls dividing the two worlds have broken down, and he's bringing into his everyday life the joy in living he's kept separate all those years. If she doesn't go along with him here, he'll just fade away again.

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

John and Bette are here. Jake enters, in his now standard outlandish garb, looks like he's on his way to the mad tea party. He jogs in a set of small circles between John and Bette, loosens his shoulders like a boxer coming into the ring.

JAKE

Hello, all you beautiful people! It's a lovely day, let's go down to the beach. Maybe I can do a little jogging along the bike path.

Jake switches gears now, tries a few high knee bends which means he lifts his feet about as far off the floor as most people do when they're walking.

He's wearing his light blue Adidas shoes with the hole in the toe.

BETTE

What will people think if they see you like that?

JAKE

Who cares? We need to get over the idea that we're old fogeys, and stop worrying what people think. You sure as hell don't see any of the young people asking us what to wear.

JOHN

I'll go with you, Dad.

JAKE

Good boy.

Without missing a beat, Jake jogs over to Bette, jogs in place in front of her for a beat, gives her a little kiss, then jogs out the door waving John to follow.

BETTE

Don't worry about me. I'll run over to Newark. Pick up some things for the farm.

John shoots Bette a "look," but Jake just turns back and smiles. He knows it's hard for her to accept. Blows her a kiss. Jogs out.

JOHN

Mom, I told you what the doctor said. It's very important that you support Dad now. Making those kind of remarks isn't going to help anything.

BETTE

What? Are you saying it's my fault?

JOHN

No. I'm saying Dad needs you. You're very important to him.

BETTE

The man lives in another time zone. I think it should be pointed out to him, that's all.

JOHN

I explained this to you, Mom. It's a dream that's all.

(MORE)

JOHN (Cont'd)

A very well defined and lovely dream world. Dad is just learning how to separate the two right now. He's trying.

BETTE

I don't care what you say. It's not normal. Something's happened to him. This is not your father.

JOHN

Mom, I think this is the real Jake Tremont. He's just been hiding for fifty years.

Bette exits. After a beat, Jake "jogs" back in.

JAKE

Johnny, I've been thinking.

JOHN

Yeah, Dad?

JAKE

I think I'd like to start racing cars again.

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

CLOSE on blurry, noisy racing cars. Could be LeMans. Could be Indy. PULL BACK to reveal a go-kart track.

INT. GO-KART - DAY

Jake driving. Having a ball. John is behind him. Billy is behind John.

INT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT

Perfectly still and dark. Only illumination is a night light in the hall. After a beat, the door to John's room opens and he comes quietly out into the hall. Another beat and Billy comes out, then Jake. Jake has a tiny flashlight with him. They creep down the hall.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

The flashlight beam precedes the entrance of John, Jake and Billy into the garage. They move quietly over to the parked Nash. John fumbles for the work light, finds it, plugs it in.

John lifts the hood, Jake gets out his tools, and beneath the photographs of Jake's earlier racing glories, the three men set out to soup-up the old engine.

INT. JAKE AND BETTE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A vague sense of things "being out of place" has caused Bette to momentarily awaken. She twists and turns. Strains to hear any noise that might be out there. She looks puzzled, it's quiet now, and she goes back to sleep.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Bette is alone at the table as John comes in.

JOHN
Good morning, Mother.

He crosses over, gives her a kiss.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Where's Dad?

BETTE
I don't know. Probably out pole vaulting.

John laughs, goes about getting some juice and coffee.

BETTE (CONT'D)
You hear any strange noises last night?

JOHN
No. Why, did you?

BETTE
I thought I heard something.

JOHN
Must have been the wind.

O.S. we HEAR Jake SINGING.

JAKE
"Close the door. They're coming in the window. Close the window. They're coming in the door."

John goes about getting some juice and coffee, etc.

JOHN
How's it going with Dad? The doctor thinks he's making a lot of progress.

BETTE

He keeps coming into my bed at night. He won't leave me alone. Your father has always been a highly sexed man, but since he came back from New Jersey, it's insane.

Bette is caught up in her story, doesn't notice John's jaw has dropped somewhere around his knees. She continues.

BETTE (CONT'D)

When we first got married and I told my friend Fanny Hogan the things we were doing, she said I should leave him and notify the police. I told the priest in confession, and he said he'd pray for me. Fat lot of good that did. When your father gets excited, police, priest, prayers or nothing is going to stop him.

Bette looks over now, notices the look of astonishment on John's face.

BETTE (CONT'D)

- Oh, grow up! -

INT. TREMONT HOME - NIGHT

Again the darkened, quiet hallway. John, Billy and Jake sneaking out.

INT. JAKE AND BETTE'S ROOM - NIGHT

She wakes up. This time she's sure she's heard something. Looks over to Jake's bed. In the half light we can make out what looks to be the rumpled figure of a man lying under the covers. The aircraft carrier hat perched on top seals it. It must be Jake safe and sound asleep in his bed. It is, of course, nothing more than bundled up pillows.

BACK ON BETTE

She turns over and goes back to sleep.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

as the Rambler blasts off; a homemade racing decal on the side now.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT - NIGHT

as the car zooms through the quiet part of town, taking the hills and the turns with ease.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

John, Jake and Billy. Wall to wall smiles. Racing helmets on. Gloves, etc.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

As the Nash Rambler goes zipping by a parked police car at about 95 miles per hour. The police car roars in behind the Nash, sirens screaming and red light flashing.

INT. NASH RAMBLER - NIGHT

as they notice who's on their tail.

JOHN

Oh, shit. What should I do, Dad?

JAKE

Lose 'em.

John makes a hard right down one of the alleys. The police car follows behind.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

as the chase continues. After several twists and turns, John manages to duck down a side street and momentarily elude the pursuing police car. Billy nad John jump out. Jake gets out his side.

JOHN

We're going to hide inside the trunk. You drive home... slowly. Try to look old.

They rip off the decals. John takes Jake's helmet. He and Billy climb into the trunk. Jake gets behind the wheel.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

as the police car prowls through the streets and alleyways looking for the crazy kids in the hot rod Nash.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The two cops, flashlights on, studying the neighborhood, looking for the hiding place. After a beat, the gray Nash cruises by at about twenty miles per hour. Jake is driving. He smiles and nods at the police as he goes by. The two men exchange quizzical looks. They swing around and head on in the same direction as Jake. Pull him over to the side. Jake gets out very slowly. Shuffles over.

JAKE

I'm sorry, officer. Was I going too slow?

POLICEMAN #1

Too slow? No, I don't think...

JAKE

I try to keep it up around thirty, thirty-five. But, I'll be honest, sometimes I get a little scared at those high speeds.

The two policemen exchange "looks."

POLICEMAN #2

Listen, Pops, you didn't happen to see another gray car like yours out tonight, did you?

JAKE

Can you speak up a little, please? I don't hear that well.

POLICEMAN #1

Never mind. Why don't you go home and get some sleep?

Jake feigns not hearing. The two officers wave good-bye and get back into their car, take off. Jake gets back into the Nash, peels out in the other direction.

EXT. OAR HOUSE, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jake pulls in and parks. The ATTENDANT comes over to help. Jake motions, "just a minute," crosses to the trunk. Opens it. Starts to let John and Billy out. The attendant looks at Jake quizzically.

JAKE

They've been bad.

Billy and John struggle free. "High-fives" and laughter all around.

INT. OAR HOUSE - NIGHT

Crowded, noisy, beer and sandwich kind of place. John, Jake and Billy sit at a small table finishing dinner. A glass of beer in front of each of them, a pitcher on the table. Three generations of Tremont men, clearly enjoying that bond. A pretty young girl goes by, smiles at them.

JAKE

Listen, Billy, if you see someone you're interested in here, don't let two old dudes like us slow you down.

JOHN

You're embarrassing me, Dad. I don't like being referred to as an "old dude."

JAKE

Well, I hate to be the one to break it to you, Son. But, it's better that you hear it from me.

Jake and Billy laugh, slap palms. The girl looks back over, smiles again.

JAKE

She's interested in one of us, fellas. And, my guess is it's Billy. Want me to go over and break the ice for you, Bill?

JOHN

Dad!

JAKE

What is it now?

JOHN

This is completely inappropriate behavior.

JAKE

Not at all. Do you know that there are some tribes in the South Pacific where it is mandatory that the grandfather of the boy be there on his first date?

JOHN

You're making that up.

JAKE

Yes I am. But, for a minute there, you weren't sure now, were you?

Jake and Billy laugh, slap palms again.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come on. You don't want him to be like you were. I don't think you even spoke to a girl until you were in college.

BILLY

I didn't know that about you, Dad.

JOHN

Dad, is this really necessary?

JAKE

Your father was so shy as a boy, that if a girl spoke to him, he would break out into hives.

JOHN

That is not true.

(beat)

All right. One time. But, I still say that was the heat.

They're all laughing now.

BILLY

Tell me more, Grandpa. Tell me more about Dad when he was a kid.

Jake stops laughing, studies John, wistful almost.

JAKE

He was a good boy. Even when he was little. Very loving.

JOHN

(touched)

Thank you, Dad.

JAKE

You cried a lot as a kid, though, Johnny. Had me worried for a while.

JOHN

Da-ad!

JAKE

Every year you cried before school started because you didn't want to go. Then at the end of the year you cried because you didn't want school to end. In between you cried on all major holidays and anytime a dog appeared on TV. I was afraid you were going to dehydrate yourself.

BILLY

(sincerely)

What's he like in Cape May, Grandpa?

There's an awkward silence.

JOHN

You know, Bill, I don't think Dad really wants to talk about...

JAKE

It's okay. I don't mind talking about it. He's much younger there. Can't be more than fifteen. See, we have a farm. Raise produce for the market in Philadelphia--corn, tomatoes, lettuce. He helps me truck it up in an old '29 Ford I converted into a flatbed. We go up on Tuesdays and Fridays.

BILLY

What else do you have there, Grandpa?

JAKE

Well, there are chickens. That's your job, Johnny.

JOHN

I hate chickens.

JAKE

That's a shame 'cause you're good with 'em. Bill Sullivan showed us how to build a coop and we have a hundred laying hens now. I take up twenty or thirty dozen eggs every time I go to Philly.

(MORE)

JAKE (Cont'd)

Kay, Ira Taylor's wife, showed Annie and Mother how to sew up potholders and I sell those, too. We make out all right.

JOHN

What did the doctor say about all this?

JAKE

He made me go through it a couple of times and asked a pack of questions. He's taken to writing these things down. He seems interested. Either that or he's got nothing to do in the afternoons.

He leans back laughing.

JAKE

How's it feel to have a grandpa who's crazy?

BILLY

(with youthful
vehemence)

You're not crazy, Grandpa. Don't say that. You daydream like we all do. You just do it better.

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

Bette's there. Jake enters.

JAKE

You know what I'm thinking?

BETTE

I can honestly say, I have no idea.

JAKE

We don't know our neighbors.

BETTE

So?

JAKE

So, this used to be a fun block. We knew everyone. We had people over. We had their kids over.

BETTE

They've all moved away, Jake.

JAKE

That's my point. Life moved
away from us.

He starts to help her up.

BETTE

Jake!

EXT. STREET - IN FRONT OF TREMONT HOME - DAY

as Jake leads Bette across the street. They knock on the door. After a beat, an attractive young Japanese-American woman, VICKI, answers the door.

VICKI

Hello?

JAKE

Hi. I'm Jake Tremont. This
is my wife Bette. We're your
neighbors from across the
street.

VICKI

Of course. Can I help you with
anything?

JAKE

Nope. Nope. Just wanted to
introduce ourselves and say
howdy.

Just then, a LITTLE BOY about three peeks his head around
the corner, snuggles in at his mother's knees.

JAKE

How're you doing there, little
guy?

VICKI

That's Christopher. Chris say
hi to Mr. and Mrs. Tremont.

CHRIS

(shyly)

Hello.

JAKE

You know, we're home all the
time. So, if you ever need
anyone to babysit...

Bette's knees buckle, but Jake catches her in time.

EXT. STREET - WIDER ANGLE - SERIES OF DISSOLVES

as Jake and Bette go door to door, and more and more neighbors spill out on to the once quiet street.

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

There are toys and puzzles and games scattered all around. Jake is on the floor playing with young Chris from across the street. Bette sits reading.

CHRIS

Aren't you going to play,
Grandma Bette?

Bette looks at him.

BETTE

You know, I'm not really old
enough to be your grandma,
Chris. You should call me Aunt
Bette.

Chris looks strangely at her. Jake comes over.

JAKE

You know, I just realized
something. We don't speak
Japanese.

BETTE

You just realized that? I've
known that for a long time.

JAKE

I mean, we don't speak any
foreign languages. French.
Spanish. Russian. The world
is so small now. We really
should know how to communicate
with these people.

BETTE

Jake...

JAKE

We should have one night a week
where we try to learn about a
new country. We should eat food
only from that country and speak
that country's language. Then
we'll give each other quizzes.
We should do that.

BETTE

No we shouldn't.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

where an attempt has been made to make it Japanese. Posters are up, silk cloth, etc. The table has been moved out and John, Billy, Bette, Mario, Annie and Jake are seated on their knees, shoes off. Lots of rice and fish on the floor in front of them. Jake is reading in Japanese from a little guide book he has.

JAKE

(reads)

Eki wa doko desuka? Where is the train station? Eki wa doko desuka? Where is the train station?

BETTE

What are you doing?

JAKE

I'm trying to find the train station.

Jake laughs. So does everyone else. Bette doesn't.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I think this is good. This is working. I'm feeling very Japanese now. Annie give us some facts please.

ANNIE

(reads)

The Japanese costume for women is hardly different from that of the man. In many districts, the peasant women wear trousers and raincoats like their husbands. This, coupled with the absence of beard in the men, often makes it difficult for a newcomer to distinguish between the sexes.

MARIO

I don't know about you guys, but I'm very nervous about a country where you cannot distinguish between the sexes.

ANNIE

Mario!

MARIO

I mean it. That happened to me in a bar once.

JAKE

Your turn, John. Tell us about
the agriculture.

JOHN

(reads)

In this land of mountains,
barely twelve percent of the
entire surface can be
cultivated.

BETTE

(to Mario)

Pass the rice, please.

MARIO

Only if you ask in Japanese.

(he reads)

Gohan o watashite, kudasai.
Pass the rice, please.

Bette reaches over and just grabs it, sending rice flying
over Mario..

MARIO

(reads)

Arrigato. You're welcome.

ANNIE

C'mon, Mom. Get in the spirit.

BETTE

No.

MARIO

(reads)

Iie! No! Iie! No!

Everyone is laughing. They can't help it, except Bette.

JAKE

Go ahead, Bill. Traditional
Japanese sports. What do you
have for us?

BILLY

(reads)

The sumo wrestler must reach
the weight of three hundred
pounds before he is allowed to
don the traditional sumo diaper
and compete.

JOHN

There's a great idea. Get 'em
as fat as you can, then put a
diaper on 'em.

MARIO

You don't find those guys
attractive, John?

ANNIE

Mario, I'm really starting to
worry about you.

JAKE

(to Bette)

Honey, could you pass the...
Wait, wait.

(checking his book)

Gohan o watashite...

BETTE

(losing it)

What is it you want? The rice?
Here.

She starts shovelling rice over towards Jake.

You want the fish, too? Here,
take it.

She starts piling up everything in front of Jake.

JAKE

Bette...

BETTE

What about soy sauce? What
about tofu?

She starts hurling things now.

BETTE

I can't go on like this anymore.
I can't take it. Ever since
he came out of the hospital it's
been like a looney bin around
here. Costumes and jogging and
a farm in New Jersey. I didn't
live my life to end up this
way--with a crazy person as a
companion in my old age.

JOHN

You know better, Mom. The
doctor says Dad's not crazy.
In fact, he's impressed at how
Dad's survived the past thirty
years without going crazy.

JAKE

Don't do it, Johnny. Please don't say those things to your mother. We're family, that's all that counts. It kills me hearing you talk this way.

He exits. John watches him retreat.

JOHN

(off Jake)

You're not going to be happy until you shove him back down again, are you? Is that what you want?

BETTE

I want my husband back.

JOHN

He wants his life back. He has loved you for fifty years. Can't you give him what's left?

INT. GREENHOUSE - NIGHT

Jake sits quietly potting some plants. Beat, then Bette enters.

BETTE

I'm scared, Jake. I don't know who you are anymore. I don't recognize you.

JAKE

I know. You look at me, or people look at me and they see this... old man. But, inside, honest to God, Bette, I feel nineteen.

(laughs)

And, act it, too, I guess.

Bette laughs a little, clearly trying hard to understand.

BETTE

This "other life," Jake. It hurts. Was it so terrible here with me?

JAKE

We just got off the track a little. A lot.

BETTE

You're asking me to turn my back on our whole life together.

JAKE

No. I'm asking you to remember the life we wanted to have. God, Bette, you took it all on yourself, didn't you? And, you were so good. I'm asking you to let go a little. To open up. Not just to me, but to the world.

(beat)

We used to have such good times, remember? We used to dance together. Slow. You were such a wonderful dancer. I'd like to dance with you again before I die.

BETTE

Don't talk about dying.

JAKE

That's okay. We're all going to die. Dying's not a sin.

(beat)

But, not living is.

Slowly she crosses to Jake and kisses him. They begin to dance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John is there. Bette enters. She's dressed in a subtly beautiful Japanese kimono. John notices, smiles.

JOHN

Good morning, Mom.

BETTE

Good morning.

She pours herself some coffee.

JOHN

(sincerely)

Nice outfit.

BETTE

Your father likes it.

They smile. Nothing more is said. Nothing more needs to be. Bette exits. John crosses off towards Billy's room.

INT. BILLY'S ROOM - MORNING

Billy is packing. John knocks and enters.

JOHN

Getting ready to take off, huh?

BILLY

Yeah. I thought I'd get an early start.

JOHN

Where you headed?

BILLY

South.

JOHN

South? Long Beach? San Diego? Paraguay?

BILLY

Back to Tecoman.

JOHN

Okay. I was going to give you some fatherly advice, but I couldn't think of anything. So, I got you this instead.

He hands Billy a Spanish-English dictionary.

BILLY

Thanks.

John starts to go. Stops.

JOHN

I guess I do have one piece of advice to give you... to give a young man about to take on the world.

BILLY

What's that?

JOHN

Be forgiving.

They hug. Jake enters.

JAKE

Johnny, something's wrong here.

John crosses down the hall with Jake. They go into the bathroom, closing the door behind them.

INT. DR. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

John and Jake there with Chad who doesn't look happy.

CHAD

Well, of course, it's not the same in all cases, but it seems that...

JAKE

Give it to us straight, Dr. Chad. It's all right.

CHAD

The cancer's back. It's spread. It's in the lymph system.

JAKE

How long?

CHAD

Well, it's difficult to say. Different patients respond...

JAKE

(firmly)

Dr. Chad!

CHAD

(beat)

It's later than you think.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Jake is asleep in the bed. He looks tired and worn. Attached to his arm is an I.V. tube leading up to three different medicine dispensers. Bette is in a chair across from the bed, also asleep. She stirs as John and Billy enter. They cross quietly to her as she rises to meet them. They hug their hellos.

JOHN

How's he doing?

BETTE

Okay. He slept a little.

JOHN

You were here all night?

BETTE

(shrugs)

He does better when I'm here.

BILLY

Come on, Grandma. I'll take you down. Let's get some breakfast.

BETTE

The doctor should be here soon. I don't want to miss him.

JOHN

Go ahead. I'll come get you.

Bette allows Billy to lead her out the door. John checks Jake for a beat. Sits. Jake stirs. John crosses back and hovers over him as Jake comes very slowly awake. Clearly he's in great discomfort.

JAKE

Where's Mother?

JOHN

She's down having breakfast with Billy?

JAKE

Good.

JOHN

How're you feeling?

Jake makes the "A-OK" sign with his fingers.

JOHN

Yeah, I can tell.

Jake gives a weak smile back.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Anything I can do for you?

JAKE

(shakes his head)

No.

JOHN

Can I make you more comfortable?

JAKE

(shaking his head)

You know what I've been thinking about?

JOHN

What?

JAKE

The 1947 World Series.

JOHN

Huh?

JAKE

It's crazy, I know. I mean, at a time like this, I should be having very deep thoughts, right? And, I'm trying. But, all that's going through my mind is old ball games and old TV themes.

Beat, then Jake starts whistling a haunting old TV theme. Finishes, looks up sheepishly.

JAKE

Tombstone Territory.

John nods. Jake hums another theme loudly.

JAKE

Da-da-dum, da-da-dum, da-da-dum,
da-da-dum, da-da-da-da..
(beat)

Bonanza.

JOHN

This is great, Dad. That's a great gift.

JAKE

Thank you.

JOHN

But, what about the '47 series? How does that fit in?

JAKE

Well, as a series, it wasn't anything unusual. Yankees beat the Dodgers as always. But, it produced one of the great moments in baseball history between the Yankee centerfielder, Joe Dimaggio, the prince of players, the star of stars, and the Dodger leftfielder, Al Gionfriddo, a second stringer, who was only playing at all that day because Carl Furillo, the regular leftfielder, got hurt. You know the story?

JOHN

Tell it to me.

JAKE

It was the sixth game, bottom of the sixth inning, 8-5 Dodgers. Two out, two on when DiMaggio steps up and hits a smash deep to left field. It's got home run written all over it. Everyone in the stands knows it. I know it. DiMaggio knows it. It's perfect. The way it's supposed to end. All is right in the universe. DiMaggio the hero. But, wait. Here comes this Gionfriddo guy racing after the ball, and running it down like he doesn't realize it was hit by Joe DiMaggio. And, at the last possible moment, this Gionfriddo, this nobody, this mutt, reaches over the railing at the 415 sign and robs DiMaggio of a three run homer. Incredible catch. Live forever. But, then the really amazing thing happened. DiMaggio was just approaching second base when he sees Gionfriddo catch the ball and he was so upset, he kicked the dirt like this.

Jake demonstrates the kick.

JAKE (CONT'D)

This man who had never shown any emotion was human after all. And, it took Al Gionfriddo to bring it out.

Jake demonstrates the kick again.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You know what that means to me?

JOHN

What?

JAKE

In America, anything is possible if you show up for work.

(beat)

You'll watch over her after I go, won't you, Johnny?

JOHN

Don't talk about "going," okay? You're not "going" anywhere so fast.

Jake shakes his head.

JAKE

Don't be feeling sorry for me,
John. I don't want that.

JOHN

I don't think I'm feeling sorry
for you, Dad. I'm feeling sorry
for myself.

JAKE

Sometimes I wish I held you more
when you were a kid. I wish
I kissed you more. Too late
to make up for that now.

JOHN

You did fine, Dad. You did
fine.

JAKE

You know how much I love you,
don't you?

JOHN

I know.

John crawls up into bed with his father. They lie there in
each other's arms.

JAKE

A lot of things have happened,
John. Some good, some bad.
When I look at you... I know.
I must have done something
right.

INT. TREMONT HOME - DAY

Everyone is there and dressed up. The black arm bands tell
you where they've been. John's wife Sara is there as well
as their two girls, Kate and Becky. The house overflows
with neighborhood people, and, ironically, there is in the
air a warm, bonding feeling that sometimes accompanies such
events. There are bags packed in the hall. John comes
out with one more bag, crosses to Mario.

JOHN

It's almost time, Mario. We'd
better start packing up the car.

MARIO

Let me give you a hand.

Mario exits to start loading the car. Billy crosses over to the door. He wears a black armband, too. A suit of sorts. Stands there looking expectantly at John. John motions, "wait a minute." Annie comes over to John.

ANNIE

All right. Mom will stay here for now. At least 'til the middle of next month. After that, we'll talk about it.

JOHN

Right.

ANNIE

I think she'll be okay.

ANGLE ON BETTE

seated on the couch, wearing Jake's familiar aircraft carrier cap. She's surrounded by her grandchildren who seem to be basking in the glow of her presence. Becky hangs on one shoulder, while little Katie lies there with her head in Bette's lap. Bette strokes the little girl's hair.

JOHN

(to Annie)

How are you holding up?

ANNIE

I miss him.

JOHN

Yeah. Me, too.

Sara comes over.

SARA

Ready?

JOHN

I need a minute.

He give Billy the "high sign."

EXT. YARD - DAY

John and Billy crossing to the greenhouse out back.

INT. GREENHOUSE - DAY

Billy and John slip out of their suits and each into a different one of Jake's outlandish outfits. John in beret and cape, Billy in gold jogging suit and cap.

They put one of Jake's favorite plants on the table, front and center. Stand over it. Billy awkwardly begins.

BILLY

We just wanted to take a minute to say good-bye our way, Grandpa. Or, rather, your way, I guess. This seemed like the right place since there's so much of you in here. And, so much that's still alive and growing. Which is how I still think of you. Funny, huh?

Billy stops. There's silence. Billy fighting tears. Then Billy speaks again, strangely loud.

BILLY

Grandpa... Grandpa, I love you. And, I miss you already. And, Dad and I are here. And, we're together. And,...

He starts crying. Heavy, deep sobbing. Then John, too. They hug there together, crying.

JOHN

(through the crying)
This is good. This was a good idea. I feel better.

BILLY

(sobbing)
Me, too.

CAMERA PULLS BACK AND UP.

DISSOLVE TO:

HIGH ANGLE SHOT - OUTSIDE

the Tremont home as the music continues over this shot of the family dispersing. Sara, John and the kids into Mario's van. Billy on his motorcycle. Annie and the kids waving good-bye. Bette surrounded by the neighbors in the bosom of her new family.

FADE OUT.

THE END