Elephant

by
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A high school jock catches a football and runs like mad to the end of a large playing field. Not wearing his shirt or shoes he walks by a line of girls in their gym uniforms that are doing jumping jacks and pushups. One girl is standing in front of her P.E. instructor.

THE GIRL SPEAKS

We used to wear sweat pants. I can wear those. I can do that - Okay?

THE INSTRUCTOR SPEAKS

No. You cannot wear sweat pants. Nobody wears sweat pants. They aren't allowed.

(2 minutes have elapsed) The jock returns to his game. The players line up again, hike the ball and there is a skirmish, one of them is knocked down, their bodies form a pile. He unlocks himself from the pile holding the ball, throws the ball back to one of his friends.

THE JOCK SPEAKS

I've got to get going.

He walks slowly to one side of the large playing field. He puts on his shoes and picks up a shirt on the ground. He walks farther across the field passing other students who are sitting on the grass and he enters one wing of his high school. (5 minutes) The boy walks down a brown and tan colored linoleum hall confidently and in slow motion.

He puts his shirt on and nods at a group of distracted blond haired girls but he continues walking until he sees a very pretty girl, he puts his arm around her and says hello with a little kiss. They they are in no rush as they walk to the end of the hall and enter the office of the Principal and Assistant Principal.

They lean against the office desk where there is an officious middle aged secretary and a younger assistant secretary. The jock asks for a pass. A red haired kid is sitting in a chair nervously.

THE RED HAIRED KID RECITING TO HIMSELF UNDER HIS BREATH

I was going to the art room to pick up my supplies, I was on my way to the art room to see about picking up some supplies from Mr. LaVigne, I was on my way to the art room by myself.

A blond haired boy John Robinson walks out of the Assistant principal's office and stands by the jock and the pretty girl. He holds a set of car keys up and points to them. (8 minutes)

JOHN ROBINSON SPEAKS

I would like to leave these for my brother. Paul Robinson.

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY SPEAKS

Okay.

She produces an envelope.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Put them in here and seal it and write his name on it, and we'll put it in the pickup box.

JOHN SPEAKS

Thank you.

The red haired boy is interrupted by the Assistant Principal's secretary.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

The Assistant Principal will see you now.

The jock and the pretty girl receive a pass leave the office and stop a little way down the hall and talk, they are serious, whispering about something that matters, but it is indistinct at first until we grow closer and we can hear them.

THE JOCK SPEAKS

I wouldn't be nervous about the doctor, baby ...

They are interrupted by distant explosions and gunshots. They turn in the direction of the blasts and listen for more. (10 minutes)

Ω

John Robinson rides in the passenger seat as his dad drives him to school. The dad jerks the wheel to one side, alarming John. Then his dad slams on the brakes, jerking both of them violently forward.

The dad notices John is uncomfortable.

DAD

What's the big deal. I had to stop.

John doesn't say anything for the moment. Then his dad almost runs over something that flashes by their view. He slams on the brakes again, and they see he almost hit a ten year old on a bike.

JOHN SPEAKS

I have to drive.

HIS DAD SPEAKS

What do you mean. What's the big deal. I don't see what the big deal is.

(MORE)

HIS DAD SPEAKS (cont'd)
It's not like I almost killed that kid or anything like that. I didn't even come close. (twelve minutes)

JOHN SPEAKS

Let me drive.

He grabs the keys from the ignition.

JOHN

I'm driving.

John gets out of the car. His father remains in the car for a moment.

John speaks from outside of the car standing on a neighborhood lawn.

JOHN

I have to drive the car now, dad. I'm sorry, but I have to drive.

Slowly his dad gets out of the car and walks obsequiously to the passenger side and gets in. John steps around the stopped car cautiously as if his father is going to do something unexpected. Then John slowly gets in and starts the car. His father makes a sudden drunken lurch for the keys in the ignition, then John grabs the keys and gets out again.

JOHN SPEAKS

I'm not letting you drive. That's it. Hear me dad?

His father sits still again obsequiously.

JOHN SPEAKS

I have to drive.

DAD

Okay, what's the fucking big deal, John. You're making this such a big deal.

John gets in, starts the car and proceeds down the street.

They round a corner, stop at a light, and pull into the front of a the high school. John gets out taking the keys.

JOHN SPEAKS

You stay here and wait for mom.

DAD

What!

JOHN SPEAKS

Just. Stay! Wait!

Almost crying, John walks into the school with his books. Some of the kids look at him but he doesn't pay attention to them. The Assistant Principal turns and sees John walking in the front of the school.

JOHN SPEAKS

Mr. Luce?

MR. LUCE SPEAKS

Mr. Robinson... so late in the morning? Why are we late today?

JOHN SPEAKS

I have to call my brother, my dad has been sick and he needs to come and help him. Could I use your phone?

MR. LUCE SPEAKS

Why of course Mr. (stretching the syllables) Robinson.

Mr. Luce leads the boy into his office which is conveniently right off the hall. (15 minutes)

Mr. Luce watches John as he dials the phone.

John intuitively plays into the scary and possibly lascivious Mr. Luce.

JOHN

Dial nine, is that right Mr. Luce?

Mr. Luce speaks and smiles approvingly.

MR. LUCE

That is correct, John. Nine will get you a private outside line.

JOHN SPEAKS

Paul? Hello? Hey, I've just had a terrible time with him. This morning was a disaster. You have to come out or send a cab. (under his breath) He can't drive. I told you that I can't stay with him alone. It's too much. These things happen if I'm with him alone.

Mr. Luce purses his lips and raises an eyebrow at John's conversation.

Outside we can see the red haired kid enter the office and report to the secretary. She indicates for him to take a seat.

Then the secretary pops into the offices.

SECRETARY

John Falsey is here sir.

JOHN SPEAKS

I'll leave the keys here at the front desk of the school for you, Paul.

John hangs up.

JOHN

Thank you Mr. Luce. I'm really sorry, but I haven't got an excuse.

Mr. Luce sighs and points out the a different door that leads through the front office.

MR. LUCE

You may go now, Mr. Robinson.

The jock and the pretty girl are leaning against the office desk as John is walking out of Mr. Luce's office, he joins them at the desk <u>as before.</u>

JOHN ROBINSON SPEAKS.
I would like to leave these for my brother. Paul Robinson.

AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY SPEAKS
Okay.

She produces an envelope.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
Put them in here and seal it and write his name on it, and we'll put it in the pickup box.

JOHN SPEAKS.
Thank you.

And the secretary interrupts the red haired kid <u>as before</u>.

SECRETARY

The Assistant Principal will see you now.

The kid gulps in anticipation of the visit with Mr. Luce.

John walks down the hall. He stops for a minute, sees an empty classroom, goes into it and stands in front of the chalk board and can see nobody is around, and cries.

A girl named Acadia appears at the door of the classroom and takes a few steps toward John.

ACADIA
Oh. Hello.

John reacts, but tries to hide his tears.

Acadia walks over to John and pushes his hair back and very gently brushes away his tears.

ACADIA
You were crying.

JOHN
Yeah. I was.

ACADIA
I'm sorry. Is it something terrible?

JOHN ROBINSON SPEAKS
I don't know.

Acadia looks into John's eyes. Then she gives him a little kiss on the cheek. This makes him smile.

ACADIA
I'll see you later I hope. I have to go to our gay straight alliance meeting right now.

JOHN ROBINSON SPEAKS
Okay.

Acadia walks back out of the room as quickly as she came in.

He finishes drying his eyes then John leaves the empty classroom. He passes a boy named Elias who is carrying a camera. Elias lifts his camera and John stops for a second and lets Elias takes a picture of him.

John continues out the door. He passes the same four blond haired girls we saw in the hallway at the beginning, who are now sitting in the lunchroom on the other side of a picture window, they are talking about him, John is a little confused that he has attracted their attention.

He walks across the lawn where other kids are sitting and standing he passes two boys shockingly dressed in combat fatigues that are carrying guns.

One of the kids speaks at him.

KID

Get the hell out of here and do not come back into the school unless you want to die with us.

He checks his watch as if he is on a schedule. (22 minutes)

KID

A lot of shit is going down in a couple of minutes.

Ω

Elias is taking pictures of street kids that are hanging in the park at dawn...(24 minutes)

Elias walks up the street arriving at the high school, enters, and walks down the hall to a small closet which he opens, and he turns on the lights to a small darkroom.

He unloads his pictures and develops the negative, dries it with a hair dryer, cuts it into sections, and pops one of the sections into the enlarger, places a piece of unexposed paper under the enlarger exposes it and then processes the paper in a tray of developer, a tray of stop bath, a tray of fixer, and turns on the light so he can examine the photograph. It is a picture of one of the kids on the street.

(28 minutes) Elias turns on a water bath, adjusts the flow of water, and checks the temperature and leaves the photo washing in the water.

He picks up his camera and leaves the darkroom, and walks down the hallway where John is approaching, he pauses and John lets him take his picture. Elias smiles and continues down the hallway and walks into the library.

He passes a section of magazines, and he picks up a photo magazine, reading as he stands. He hears the assistant librarian speaking sharply to some kids near the front desk. When Elias looks up he can see the two boys carrying guns who are dressed in black combat gear.

Lifts his camera and takes a picture. His expression changes when he hears shooting. He tries to take more pictures as he lowers his camera in alarm and shock that there are actually kids shooting other kids. (31 minutes)

Ω

The Four blond girls stand together in the hallway. One girl is very intense and talking to another one, the two others are quiet, flanking the main two girls who are the prettiest.

GIRL ONE SPEAKS

> You know, you have to work on it a little bit. I mean if I call you and you don't call me right back because you are busy. I feel bad about it to the point that, I start to get worried that we're not friends anymore. I know that you have to have time with Thomas.

GIRL TWO SPEAKS

Is that okay?

GIRL ONE SPEAKS

Your girlfriends are important too.
And I am your best girlfriend.

Girl one and two stop talking, and everything changes when they see the boy who was playing football outside walk by putting his shirt on. They wave at him and he nods back.

GIRL ONE SPEAKS

You have to just be a little more
nice.

GIRL TWO SPEAKS

I'll work on it. Are we eating?

GIRL ONE SPEAKS.

I'm starving.

GIRL THREE SPEAKS

I'm starving too.

GIRL ONE SPEAKS

You know what we have to do, guys,
if we're going to keep this
clubhouse going.

They all answer yes and walk to the lunchroom and get in line.

GIRL TWO

Macaroni and cheese again, my
favorite. But I'm not going to
have that.

GIRL THREE

What are you having?

GIRL TWO

Ringdings.

GIRL THREE

That'll make you fat~!

GIRL ONE

No, Ringdings won't. The polyunsaturated fats don't become ugly fat cells quick enough, you'll get rid of them before you gain an atom.

GIRL TWO

If I gain an atom...

GIRL ONE

You'll have a crisis.

GIRL TWO

I'm having one already.

GIRL ONE

Then you'll have a full on teenage nervous breakdown.

GIRL TWO

I'll have this.

GIRL THREE

Just a pecan pie?

GIRL FOUR

I love those little things.(3¼ minutes)

They make their way past the cash register, pay, find a table.

GIRL FOUR

They are making it in more colors now anyway.

GIRL ONE

I won't have to worry. What's in it?

GIRL THREE

It's a secret formulae,

GIRL TWO

The same company is making it.

GIRL FOUR

It's for the holidays.

GIRL ONE

Brilliant marketing.

GIRL TWO

They're devious.

GIRL ONE

I can't stop buying them. I loose them as soon as I get a new one.

GIRL THREE

Oh my god, Justin is getting booted from the team for pot.

GIRL ONE

I don't care about Justin.

GIRL THREE

Why?

GIRL ONE

I'm dropping him.

GIRL FOUR

Why?

GIRL ONE

Because he smokes pot.

They all laugh.

GIRL THREE

Can I have him?

GIRL ONE

No! What are you talking about, you can't have him!

She takes a tiny little bite.

GIRL ONE

He's a lousy lay anyway.

They see John Robinson outside the window of the school and they stare at him.

GIRL THREE

Who is that?

GIRL FOUR

He's in my French class.

GIRL ONE

He's too little.

GIRL TWO

He's cute.

GIRL ONE

He's a preppy.

GIRL FOUR

It's a preppy school.

GIRL TWO

It's a preppy country.

GIRL ONE

It is not. You're ruining my lunch.

All four girls get up, and walk in line out of the lunch hall.

GIRL ONE

It's an edgy inner city school.

GIRL THREE

It's a super not-edgy boring school.

GIRL ONE

I liked it better at Franklin before I transferred.

GIRL FOUR

Why'd you transfer anyway.

GIRL ONE

I can't tell you.

They enter the girls bathroom which is relatively deserted, each of them goes into a stall and throws up what they have just eaten.

When they're done throwing up, they clean up at the sinks.

GIRL THREE

Why'd you transfer again?

GIRL TWO

Tell her.

GIRL ONE

If you gotta know there was trouble back at Franklin.

GIRL TWO

You came over with Noel Murphy.

They can hear explosions outside the bathroom door.

GIRL ONE

What the hell was that, a bomb?

GIRL TWO

Are they bombing the school? That would be genius.

GIRL ONE

We hate Noel.

GIRL TWO

We didn't used to hate her.

GIRL ONE

She used to be one of us.

GIRL TWO

She's actually really nice when you get to know her.

GIRL THREE

Why doesn't she hang with us now?

The girl that they are talking about, Noel, runs into the bathroom from the hall, petrified.

GIRL ONE

Noel, we were just talking about you.

Noel runs into one of the stalls.

GIRL TWO

Wow.

GIRL THREE

Wow.

GIRL FOUR

Wow.

GIRL ONE

What's up with Noel?

Just then one of the combat dressed kids comes through the bathroom door holding his guns. Two girls scream.

SHOOTER
Do you believe in God?

GIRL ONE
I don't know, what's the right answer?

The shooter begins to undo his belt buckle.

GIRL ONE
What are you doing?

(42 minutes)

Ω

A skinny quiet boy, one that we saw wearing combat fatigues and carrying a gun earlier, is sitting in the back of a class in session. He isn't paying attention. He looks miserable. The teacher turns his back to write on the board and two boys turn in their seats and throw very large spitballs at his head.

One hits the wall hard, and one splatters on his hand and across the desk and onto his shirt. (44 minutes)

The bell rings. He walks to the washroom to get the messy spitball that went everywhere, off his hand and shirt.

He walks across the school yard. Some kids look at him and look away for some reason.

He walks down a side street, and enters a single story project house, he goes to his room and turns on a computer.

He logs on the internet and joins an interactive video game among hundreds currently in play. It is a military game, and he is in combat. He is playing insanely.

He yells at the screen.

BOY

Die you fuckers. Die, die you cocksuckers.

The game not only includes guns and killing, but simulated raping of civilians.

A friend shows up at his window. He opens the window and the friend climbs inside and watches the other play for a minute, until he wins the game and logs off.

THE GAMEPLAYER SPEAKS

Okay.

He opens a file in the computer and an array of guns pop up on the screen.

They prepare an inventory of weapons in what seems like Military-speak, the inventory includes grenades a Walther P38 - Mauser KAR 98K - a KAR sniper rifle - MP40 submachine gun and a ST44 Sturgewehr. They are running through a military style mission in very precise terms.

Then they place an order over the internet for a German machine gun falsifying their age. They check the overnight shipping option and have it sent to arrive the next morning. They pass out on top of the bed together. In the morning one wakes up and takes a shower. While he is in the shower, the other boy gets in.

THE OTHER BOY SPEAKS

Well, it's our last day on the planet, I know I'm not Noel Murphy, but...

They make out under the shower head. (50 minutes)

They sit at the breakfast table with the parents who both have to rush off to work.

The two boys wait for the overnight delivery and in the living room. They are watching a Soldier of Fortune documentary on the television. They can see a Delivery truck arrive through the front window.

They sign for the package, and open the package in the bedroom. They put the gun together and admire it.

Then they take it down to the basement where there is a shooting area with a large metal bullet catching receptacle at one end made of plastic and metal. They load the gun and fire it, it is incredibly noisy when it is fired. They both are amazed and high five each other (58 minutes)

They return upstairs and dress and gear up for a mission. They review their plans for taking the school. They open a computer file, there are detailed illustrations: the layout of the school, where they have already hidden weapons, ammunition, and bombs and a planned route once they are inside. They get in their car. Drive to school. Get out, walk past John Robinson.

KID 1
Get the hell out of here and do not come back into the school unless you want to die with us.

He checks his watch as if he is on a schedule.

KID 1
A lot of shit is going down in a couple of minutes.

They continue walking toward the school. And they go inside. Walk down the hall. They look confused.

KID 1
The explosives in the cafeteria were meant to have detonated by now. We have to divert.

They walk in the opposite direction. (60 minutes)

KID 2
Plan B.

Ω

A girl with glasses leaves the playing field after doing pushups with other uniformed girls.

She gets dressed in the locker room, passes by some of the other girls who purposely ignore her, and she walks down the hallway behind Elias and his camera just as he is finishing taking a picture of John Robinson, following him into the library and putting her books down.

She begins to help behind the desk with a Japanese American librarian named Mr. Fong. She walks into the middle of the library where there is a cart of books and begins putting the books back into the shelf. The two boys walk in carrying guns.

SHE SPEAKS

You can't bring those guns in here.

One of the gunmen aim at a bewildered boy sitting and reading and they fire. (63 minutes)

Ω

Acadia sits in a classroom with a group of other students in a semi-circle. A black teacher talks.

BLACK TEACHER
...the youth planned and youth oriented representation of diversity and the youth organized fight against homophobia in our school systems nationwide. If you have a sexual orientation it does not mean that you are sexually active.
(MORE)

BLACK TEACHER (cont'd)
What does it mean when you are not sexually active and you have decided on your sexual orientation. Why decide. Why have a sexual orientation?

ACADIA
I think that all students have some kind of sexual orientation even from when they are very little kids. I know that I was attracted to boys when I was seven years old. I had a sexual orientation at that time. I would not want that orientation inhibited or suppressed by a male dominated family oriented aesthetic if I were a gay kid. And I plan to stand by any one that has a problem assimilating their orientation because of the pressures put on them by what I see as an imbalanced non-diverse and non-tolerant society.

BLACK TEACHER
Good Acadia. Very good. Diversity rocks.

The teacher and the students hear commotion and shooting down the hall.

One of the students in the group walks out in the hall and is shot.

The Black teacher helps the group up and out a window.

Just as Acadia is being helped up, a black kid named Benny appears at the door, and he walks over and helps push her up. Then as she is walking away on the other side of the window, she can see Benny go back in the hallway.

Ω

Outside, John walks fast around the perimeter of the school telling people not to go inside, then he begins running across a parking lot, repeating the warning, he hears shots and explosions coming from inside the school and he can see smoke rising in back of one of the buildings.

John sees his dad who has run away from his car. He takes his dad farther away from the building. (65 minutes)

Everyone is on the ground, or walking away, except for Benny, a tall black fourteen year old with a cornrow hairdo.

Benny walks toward the school, not afraid, but alarmed by what is happening inside. He walks across the lawn and he goes inside. He stands in the hall and can hear blasts, and he walks toward them as other students are trying to get out. He walks into a classroom where a teacher is pushing students up and out a window.

Benny helps him help one last girl, Acadia, as before. When all the students are out, Benny walks back into the hallway. Down the hall he can see one of the killers aiming a gun at a man on the ground and talking to him. Benny slowly walks up behind him. But at the last second, the killer hears him, turns around and shoots him in the stomach. (70 minutes)

Ω

Elias is behind a bookcase in the library. Shreds of paper and a smoky haze hang in the air from some of the blasts.

He pauses for a moment watching a fourteen year old Asian student crawl around the corner on his hands and knees, Elias peeks around to see the two killers stalking one of the students hiding underneath a desk. Elias throws his camera across the room at the killer, hitting him in the arm and attracting his attention. (72 minutes)

Ω

The football boy and his girlfriend can see down the hallway, one of the killers is walking from classroom to classroom chasing terrified students. They begin walking the other way. (75 minutes)

Ω

We see from the point of view of one of the killers as he combs the hallway. When he sees something move he fires, students in front of him are either scrambling out of the way, or parts of their bodies are exploding with the blasts, when a shot misses parts of the wall explode or metal lockers are disfigured.

Until our view comes upon the Assistant Principal of the school who recognizes the person behind the gun and falls to the ground, curling into a little ball on the floor, the killer waits and watches him crouched in front of him.

THE KILLER SPEAKS

Mr. Luce, you know I should waste you right now you motherfucker for all the shit that you've given me, but I'm going to let you live, because I want you to remember, when students complain to you that they have been picked on or shoved around, remember that I was one of those students. No matter what twisted...

He stops talking.

The killer hears something behind him and turns around and immediately shoots a Benny in the gut who was coming up behind him as before.

THE KILLER RESUMES HIS TALK

Fuck ...anyway, Mr. Luce, whatever. There are others like us, you know who they are.
(MORE)

THE KILLER RESUMES HIS TALK (cont'd)
Just remember that they'll kill you if you fuck with them like you fucked with Jared and me. Now get out of here.

Mr. Luce undoes himself from his curled up position and scampers away.

Mr. Luce runs down the hall, but the killer lifts up his scope rifle and shoots him in the back.

KILLER
Jerk.

Our view makes its way onward, occasionally flushing out a student from a classroom or bathroom, sending blood tile and metal and glass flying from the impacts. (77 minutes)

The gunman enters one of the classrooms, finds two people hiding under desks. It is the jock and the pretty girl. The gunman asks them to stand up.

One by one they stand, their bodies are shaking, and the killer holds his guns in both hands one aimed at the girl and one aimed at the guy.

THE KILLER SPEAKS

Einey, meaney, miney, moe.

Our view retreats, leaving the two students in the classroom with the armed boy killer.

THE KILLER CONTINUES TO SPEAK (O.S.)

Catch a tiger by the toe.

Our view in the hall now as we see a S.W.A.T team making their way toward the classroom.

THE KILLER SPEAKS (O.S.)

If he hollars let him go.

A bomb goes off in back of the S.W.A.T. team. They are distracted, but still advance slowly.

In the distance they can hear the young boyish voice of one of the enraged killers

THE KILLER SPEAKS (O.S.)

Einey, meanie, miney, moe.

Acadia runs away from the school, joining other students watching from afar, she sees John with his dad crying and looking over the topography of the school from a grassy hillside. (80 minutes)