

Half Nelson

by

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OVER BLACK:

Obnoxious morning talk show CHATTER plays alongside a radio alarm clock BEEPING repeatedly.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON DAN DUNNE (white, mid 30s), heavy bags under his glassy eyes and wadded toilet paper stuffed up a nostril. He stares off into another dimension.

A WIDER ANGLE reveals him sitting on the floor in his living room, back against the couch. A small, gray cat watches him from a few feet away, while the shock jock CHATTER and incessant BEEPING continue seeping in from another room.

DAN'S APT. - BEDROOM

The alarm clock reads six a.m. Dan smacks it off.

DAN'S APT. - BATHROOM

He removes the wad of toilet paper from his nose. Opens the medicine cabinet, pops a few Motrin.

DAN'S APT. - KITCHEN

Pours food into the cat bowl.

DAN'S APT. - BEDROOM

He searches for something in yesterday's pants and coat pockets, but can't seem to find it. He stops to think, looks off.

DAN'S APT. - FRONT DOOR

He opens the door to find his keys dangling from the lock, pulls them out.

EXT. DAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Casually dressed, sporting dark sunglasses, Dan exits the modest, five-story building. He carries a thermos of coffee and a folder overflowing with papers.

STREET

Dan approaches his car to find a parking citation tucked under his windshield wiper.

A WIDER ANGLE reveals the driver's side tires up on the curb.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

DOCUMENTARY-STYLE IMAGES of Dan driving his 1991 Civic hatchback through city streets on his way to work: HOMELESS pushing carts filled with cans, 40 OUNCE MEN drinking early in front of closed liquor stores, COMMUTERS waiting for the bus, and local SHOPOWNERS opening for business.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

The Civic pulls into the lot next to a weed-ridden baseball field and netless basketball courts. Dan checks his hair in the rearview mirror, runs his fingers through it.

INT. SCHOOL TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

Several debates are in progress over the quality of the lounge's coffee. The TEACHERS discuss in little groups of two, their conversations overlapping each other.

JIMBO

(wood shop)

Why does it matter? It doesn't matter. So what?

ROSE

(English)

It's shit.

JIMBO

Let's have a vote. This is a democracy after all... Suzanne?

SUZANNE

(Spanish)

I'm trying to cut back; don't get me involved.

JIMBO

Which reminds me, I just went on the patch.

ROSE

That's great.

JIMBO

It's like magic. Three days. It's a start.

Dan wanders into the lounge unnoticed, puts his lunch in the fridge.

SUZANNE

They got one of those for caffeine?

EARLE

(math)

Did you know there's a boycott on
Folger's?

SUZANNE

You're thinking of Columbian.

EARLE

I thought it was all Columbian.

SUZANNE

No, they pretty much grow coffee
everywhere now.

ROSE

Were you guys at the march this
weekend?

Dan closes the fridge, makes a bee-line for the door, when...

JIMBO

Hey, Dan, what do you think of the
coffee in here?

Dan stops, addresses the room, coffee thermos in hand.

DAN

Sorry?

JIMBO

Nice hair.

The morning bell RINGS.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Dan makes his way to class, as STUDENTS whiz by, SLAMMING lockers, and SCREAMING to friends down the hall. PRINCIPAL JOY HENDERSON (Black woman, 50s) steps alongside Dan, hands him a thick three-ring binder.

HENDERSON

Check it out.

Dan tucks it under his arm.

DAN

Okay.

HENDERSON

The workbooks for the new Civil Rights section. I listened to the tapes last night.

DAN

There's tapes.

HENDERSON

Narrated by Oprah. I know, I know. But the section on Rosa Parks is great. Take a look.

DAN

I will.

HENDERSON

Also, Dan, I'm nominating you for the Academic Alliance Award this year... you deserve it.

Dan stops, but Joy continues on, walking backwards.

DAN

Gee, Joy, that's really--

HENDERSON

--Don't let me down. And take a look at those workbooks. Really, Dan. They're new, they're alternative...

(smiles)

They might even be hip.

Dan gives Henderson a skeptical look, as she turns and continues down the hall.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Dan at his desk, in front of his eighth grade social studies class. He stares at the three-ring Oprah binder, unopened, on his desk, while his students SHRIEK and CLAMOR before him.

Dan takes a deep breath.

DAN

Okay, where were we...?

ROODLY

Nice hair cut, Mr. Dunne.

Some kids LAUGH. Dan runs his hand through his hair.

DAN
Thanks, Roodly.

Dan writes on the board: "1 - OPPOSITES, 2 - TURNING POINTS,
3 - SPIRALS."

DAN
Okay, folks. Let's review a bit.
History - what is it?

STACY
Change.

DAN
Yes, the study of change over time.
And change is caused like this...

Dan puts his palms together like he's about to pray, and
moves them in one direction, then the other, slowly.

DAN
Right? Two things pushing against
one another in opposite directions.
Opposing forces. Opposites.

Dan pauses, surveys the class. AUDREY (DREY), a bad-ass
little b-girl with tight braided cornrows, looks at Dan with
a quiet intensity. Some other students doodle in their
notebooks or play with their hair.

DAN
Who can name some? I'll start...
(starts to write on board)
Day and night... C'mon, what else?

BERNARD
Big and little.

DAN
Good! What else?

Dan scribbles them on the board.

TERRANCE
Black and white.

STACY
Happy and sad.

LENA
Me and you.

Some kids LAUGH.

DAN
 You and I, sure. We could also say
 boys and girls, men and women.

ISABEL REDDING (Latina, 30s) steps near the doorway in the
 hall, observes the class.

JAMAL
 Right and left.

DAN
 Good one... And while we're at it,
 let's do right and wrong too.

ROODLY
 (hand in the air)
 Mr. Dunne?

DAN
 Yes, Roodly.

ROODLY
 I was wondering if you could count
 me and Gerald's bigfoot sister as
 opposites?

The class LAUGHS. Isabel smiles, continues down the hall.

JAMAL
 Insult!

DAN
 What was that? Gerald? You gonna
 let him get away with that?

Gerald thinks hard, flips through his notebook.

DAN
 C'mon, you don't really have a
 bigfoot sister do you? Do you?

GERALD
 (finds what he wants)
 May 17th, 1954.

THE CLASS
 Oooohhh...

ROODLY
 Damn.

DAN
Nice one, Gerald. Got that,
Roodly? May 17th, 1954.

Roodly writes the date in his notebook.

DAN
I expect some thought from you this
time. Not just dates and facts,
but consequences; what does it
mean? Okay? Now back to this.
Gerald's sister - let's use her.
(some kids LAUGH)
Careful people...

INT. SCHOOL GYM - AFTER SCHOOL - DAY

The seventh-grade girls basketball team gathers around Dan
for instructions. Drey sucks on a blow-pop off to the side.

DAN
Don't forget we're a team. Nothing
gets done by one person alone.
Spread out. Find your open man to
pass to. No more rainbow passes.

SCHOOL GYM - LATER ON THE COURT

The team works hard, running, passing, shooting, huffing, and
puffing. Stacy scores an easy layup.

DAN
Why is nobody defending her? Why
is she walking right up to the
basket?

Dan turns to Drey on the sideline.

DAN
Hey Drey? You ready to put that
away and get in here or what?

DREY
I ain't done yet coach.

Dan glares at her, then smiles.

After a beat, she smiles too, crunches on the blow-pop, pulls
the stick out of her mouth, and runs onto the court.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dan comes through the door, sets his coat and bag on a chair, pats his cat on the head. He hits a button on the answering machine, then disappears into the kitchen. The machine BEEPS, a MAN'S VOICE says...

MAN'S VOICE

(on machine)

Hello, this is an urgent message for Mister Daniel Dunne. This is Taylor calling from Consolidated Credit. Please call me back as soon as possible. I can be reached at 877-349--

BEEP. Dan hits the delete button before Taylor can finish, heads back toward the kitchen, when...

WOMAN'S VOICE

(on machine)

Hi Dan, it's me... Rachel.

He stops, listens.

WOMAN'S VOICE

...I'm in town for a while, you know, my mom... Anyway, I know it's been forever, but I'd really like to see you, I don't know. Please call. I'll be at 436--

BEEP. Again, Dan hits delete before the message is over. He plops down onto the couch, throws his head back. Hold. After a beat, Dan checks his watch, then glares down at the...

COFFEE TABLE

...where an empty baggy of cocaine rests beside a nearly full bag and a short plastic straw. Dried white powder is smudged all over the table's surface.

He leans forward, cracks his knuckles.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A dark, out-of-the-way place for drinking, dancing, and other extracurricular activities. Dan enters the bar, squeezes past DANCERS, finds a seat at the bar, and orders a...

DAN
Jack an' coke.

The BARTENDER nods and pours.

Dan makes eye contact with a worn out brunette seated a few stools down the bar. She smiles, then points him out to her girlfriend seated next to her. They all smile hellos.

BAR DANCEFLOOR - A LITTLE LATER

Music THUMPS, while Dan dances close to his new friends.

LATER AT THE BAR

Dan and the girls huddle close together, sharing "big" ideas, though nobody is really listening.

VANESSA
That is so amazing. You're
amazing.

DAN
Yeah.

VANESSA
I feel like--

DAN
--I used to be so selfish, you
know, just fucking it all up. When
I was younger...

VANESSA
What?

DAN
The shit I put my parents
through... You know? Just really
self-indulgent.

SIMONE
Right.

DAN
I was a writer.

VANESSA
I hate words.

DAN
 Fuck that. I mean everything
 that's worth saying, it's already--
 you know? It's been-- Am I right?

SIMONE
 Forget it.

DAN
 Why not make a difference doing
 something important? Real. No?

VANESSA
 Yeah.

SIMONE
 So you're a teacher.

DAN
 I'm a teacher.

He kisses Simone and when he's done he kisses Vanessa too.

DAN
 But that's bullshit too. I mean,
 who am I, right? To teach? C'mon.

VANESSA
 I wish I had you for history.

DAN
 What am I supposed to teach these
 kids? Fucking Oprah! They gave me
 these--

SIMONE
 Oprah's cool.

DAN
 But if you help one student right?
 What do they say? Make a
 difference for one kid? I don't
 know.

VANESSA
 You wanta dance?

Dan looks at her, then away. Vanessa shrugs and heads off to
 dance with Simone. Dan stares off, his high fading. Hold.
 He glances at his watch.

EXT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Dan's car pulls to a curb in front of a duplex, where a shiny black Lexus is parked in the driveway.

After a beat, Javier (Nicaraguan, 17) emerges from the building, gets in Dan's car. They drive away.

EXT/INT. DAN'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Javier removes his headphones.

DAN
(re: headphones)
What's that?

JAVIER
New street shit. Check it out.

Javier reaches over, places the headphones over Dan's ears.

We can't hear, but Dan bumps his head to the music, while Javier smiles, does the same.

After a beat, Javier removes the headphones.

JAVIER
You like?

DAN
Yeah, not bad. Street shit, eh?

JAVIER
(laughing, then)
So what you need, Teach? Another eight?

DAN
I only got thirty.

JAVIER
Word?

DAN
It's been a long week.

JAVIER
Want that other thing?

Dan nods.

EXT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Dan's car pulls in front of the building again. Javier hops out, and Dan drives away.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Roodly stands in front of the class, looks directly at the lens/us.

ROODLY

On May 17th, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled on the case of Brown v. Board of Education, making it illegal for states to segregate public schools.

Stock newsreel footage covering the decision, and subsequent years of integration efforts play over Roodly's voice-over.

ROODLY (V.O.)

This decision was a major step forward in the struggle for racial justice, and helped start a fury of bold and heroic actions known as the civil rights movement. Unfortunately, the desired goals of the decision remain unfulfilled, as today, less than a third of Black students attend racially integrated schools.

Back to Roodly staring straight ahead. Hold.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - GAME NIGHT

Dan CHEERS his team from the sidelines, as a series of highlights take us through the game's ups and downs... mostly downs.

Dan glances at the scoreboard, his team losing 24-11. His eyes shift over toward the stands, stopping on a WOMAN (white, 30s) standing near the exit.

He recognizes her.

She smiles.

He quickly averts his eyes back to the court, sits down on the bench a few feet away from Drey. She watches him while he anxiously glances at his watch, then back to the woman seated in the stands behind him.

ON THE COURT - LATER

The referee BLOWS the final whistle, and the winning team celebrates on the court.

ON THE SIDELINE

Dan rubs his fingers over his forehead, eyes clenched shut, working out the tension. He takes a deep breath, looks up at the final score (42-19), then glances down at his watch.

He pounds his fist into his hand, then CLAPS for encouragement, patting players on the back.

DAN

That's okay. Almost. Good work, girls. At least now we know what needs work.

Dan sees the woman advancing on him, and ducks away to the...

SCHOOL HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

Just outside the girls' locker room, players and PARENTS mingle with Dan, who seems anxious to get them out. He fiddles, nervously, with something in his pants pocket.

DAN

(to a concerned parent)

This week I think we'll practice a little zone defense, see if we can take better advantage of our quickness, run some picks, you know... but I like our chances against St. Joe's. If we can figure out a way to put the ball in the hoop, I think we can win...

The concerned parent nods in agreement, when Stacy emerges from the locker room.

DAN

Nice work Stacy. Anyone left?

STACY

That's it, Mister Dunne.

Dan waves goodbye, as Stacy's family brushes past the mysterious woman Dan has been avoiding, until now.

DAN

Rachel? Hey. What're you doing here?

RACHEL
I don't know. Wanted to check out
some b-ball. I heard this was the
place.

DAN
Yeah, I know the team needs work,
but we're dealing with it.

Rachel smiles, nods.

RACHEL
How are you?

Dan shrugs, nods, uncomfortable.

DAN
You know. Same old...

RACHEL
It's nice to see you.

DAN
You too. You look great.

RACHEL
Gained some weight.

DAN
It works. Healthy.

RACHEL
Hey, you wanta grab some--

DAN
--I've gotta go. Yeah. I've got
this...

RACHEL
Something to eat? Coffee?

DAN
Coffee... No, I'm sorry, but
tonight's just really crazy for me.
But we should totally hang out.
Definitely. You know, some other
time.

RACHEL
That would be nice.

Rachel turns around to go. Dan closes his eyes and brings
his fingers up to his forehead.

DAN
(calling after her)
How's your mom?

Rachel stops.

RACHEL
Did you get my messages?

Dan shakes his head, about to say something, but doesn't.

Rachel nods, shrugs, and continues down the hall.

EXT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Drey, alone on a bench, waiting for her ride. She fiddles with the strap on the back of her BROOKLYN DODGERS CAP, as Rachel passes by. Drey watches as she gets into her car. Through the passenger's side window, Drey can see Rachel lean her head against the steering wheel.

INT. SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM - SAME TIME

Dan passes quickly by the rows of lockers, still playing with the object in his pocket...

DAN
Everybody out? I'm closing up!
Last chance!

EXT. SCHOOL

Drey sees a car approaching, perks up, but it continues on.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM STALL

Dan sits on the toilet, removes a pipe from his pocket, loads it with crack rock. We remain with him, as he lights up, inhales, gets high. We watch his face and body change, relaxing and tightening, when...

...the sound of someone entering the locker room causes him to flinch and tilt his ear, listening to the approaching FOOTSTEPS.

He lifts his legs, to avoid being seen.

We hear the neighboring stall door open and close, and after a beat, pee trickles into the toilet, then FLUSHES.

Dan bites his lips to avoid making any noise, but hears...

...the stall door open, FOOTSTEPS come out and stop in front of his stall. He sees a small pair of sneakers facing him under the door.

Long pause. The toilet flushing fades to silence.

DREY'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hello?

Dan stares at the door.

DREY'S VOICE (O.S.)

Somebody in there?

After a beat, the door slowly glides open to reveal Drey standing before Dan.

They stare at each other for a long beat.

DREY

What's goin' on?

DAN

Nothin'... What are you doing here?

DREY

I had to pee. What're you doing?

DAN

What?

DREY

Are you hiding?

DAN

No.

Drey notices his clenched fist by his side.

DREY

What's in your hand?

DAN

What do you mean?

DREY

You smell that?

DAN

Smell what?

Drey looks Dan over.

DREY
They got rules about teachers
smoking crack in the girls locker
room?

DAN
What do you want, Drey? I mean
what?

DREY
I need a ride home. My father
didn't show.

EXT/INT. DAN'S CAR - THAT NIGHT

Silence. Only the HUM of the engine, as Drey stares out the side window, while Dan focuses on the road ahead.

EXT. DREY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX

The car pulls over to the curb, Drey jumps out.

DREY
See you tomorrow?

As she walks away...

DAN
(desperate)
Don't forget your homework.

Drey continues on her way.

Dan shakes his head, mutters "stupid" under his breath.

INT. DREY'S APARTMENT

It's dark, until the door opens, and the outdoor street lamps send in a shaft of yellow light. Drey enters, flips the light switch to reveal a tidy living room. She turns on an off-screen television and we hear the chaotic CHATTER of professional wrestling ANNOUNCERS giving the melodramatic play-by-play of a match.

DREY'S KITCHEN

Drey pulls a dinner plate (loaded with chicken, mashed potatoes, and greens) from the refrigerator, puts it in the oven, then sits down at the kitchen table. She calmly stares off, while the announcers continue their verbal assault in the other room.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dan pours a glass of whiskey, stares at it, takes a sip.

EXT/INT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - INSIDE DAN'S CAR

Dan sits in his car before school. He hasn't slept. He lifts his sunglasses, checks his bloodshot eyes in the mirror, leans back, and squirts eye-drops into his eyes.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

The chalkboard reads, "Making changes that work for you."

Dan's students huddle in small clusters around the room, supposedly working on group projects, however, no one seems to be working on anything, mostly goofing off.

Dan leans back in his chair, struggling to keep his eyes open. He nearly nods off, but jerks up awake, glances around the room to see if anyone noticed. His eyes stop on Drey's empty seat.

DAN

Anyone seen Drey today?

TERRANCE

She was in science.

STACY

Yeah, but I think she was sick, or something. Maybe she went home.

Dan leans back in his chair, just as Drey enters the classroom, goes to her seat. Dan stares at her for a long beat. Drey leans over to Stacy, whispers something. They laugh.

DAN

Drey... You have a note?

DREY

Nope.

The bell RINGS.

DAN

Come here, Drey.

The other students get up to go. Drey approaches Dan's desk.

DAN
What's going on?

DREY
Hm?

DAN
You missed class. What am I
supposed to do about this?

DREY
I don't know. You the teacher,
right?

DAN
Want me to send you to Henderson's
office?

DREY
Is that what you want?

DAN
No...

DREY
Me neither.

Drey exits the classroom.

DAN
(calling after)
I expect you here on time tomorrow.

SCHOOL HALLWAY

We TRACK back with Drey down the hall. Dan exits his class in the background, walks off in the opposite direction. Drey turns around and watches him go. Her hard expression softens.

INT. SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM EQUIPMENT CLOSET - DAY

Dan steps inside the tiny closet surrounded by an assortment of balls, and P.E. supplies. He grabs one of the rubber kick balls, SLAMS it against the floor. As it bounces back up, it hits one of the shelves, causing it to collapse and send the other balls tumbling down around his head. When the commotion calms, he exits the closet.

EXT. SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Drey practices her jump-shot, when she sees Dan approaching his car in the distance. She stops and watches, as he gets in the car, and sits, motionless, his head back. After a few beats, he stirs, and gazes straight ahead.

Drey watches, thoughtfully, transfixed by Dan's emotion.

He pulls himself together, starts the car, drives away. Drey looks after.

EXT. GOWANUS DINER - DAY

Through the front window, we see Drey eating french fries, staring at the traffic outside.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - DAY

Drey wanders through the city on her bike after school passing the elevated subway train, a vacant construction site, playground basketball courts.

INT. DREY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Drey steps inside to find her mom, KAREN (30s), unpacking grocery bags in the kitchen. She's wearing an E.M.T. uniform.

KAREN

Hey kid. Who's hungry?

Drey turns on the TV and plops herself on the couch.

KAREN

How was school?

DREY

Fine.

KAREN

Some boy called. Who is Jamal?

DREY

Some faggot-ass nigga.

KAREN

Faggot ass what? Audrey please...
What I tell you about that word?

DREY
What? Faggot or nigga?

Karen stares hard at Drey.

KAREN
So, smartass, how's Darryl's leg
healing?

DREY
I don't know.

KAREN
You don't know? Your father pick
you up from practice last night?

DREY
Nope.

KAREN
No? Motherfucker. How'd you get
home?

DREY
Mister Dunne.

KAREN
I'm tired of this. Something's
gotta change around here, cause I
don't know what.

DREY
It's cool, ma... You don't gotta
worry about me...

Karen rolls her eyes.

KAREN
Look at you, Miss Twelve.

DREY
Thirteen. I'm thirteen now.

KAREN
You're all grown up. Is that it?
You can take care of yourself?

DREY
Pretty much.

KAREN

Well, that's a relief. Guess I won't have to cook up these burgers then, huh?

DREY

Guess not.

Karen glares at Drey. After a beat, Drey smiles, joins her mom in the kitchen to help with dinner.

DREY

Hey mom... you know this dude Cesar Chavez once fasted for thirty-five days... That means he didn't eat for thirty-five days.

Karen smiles, and they continue preparing dinner.

INT. DAN'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - LATER

He scrubs dried cocaine off the coffee table, tosses trash into a garbage bag, puts loose CDs and records into their appropriate locations.

LATER

He does push-ups. And sit-ups.

LATER

He stares at the phone on the table, picks it up, dials. After a beat...

DAN

(into phone)

Hello... This is... Is Rachel there?

DAN'S APT. - BATHROOM - LATER

He pops two xanax, closes the medicine cabinet, and stares at his reflection in the mirror.

DAN

Okay.

DAN'S APT. - BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON alarm clock, which changes from 5:59 to 6:00. The alarm sounds with a morning news report of recent casualties in Iraq. Dan snaps awake, turns off the alarm.

DAN'S APT. - KITCHEN

From the waist down, we see Dan feed and pet his cat before leaving for work. Hold on the cat eating.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Stacy stands in front of the class, looking directly at the lens/us.

STACY

In October of 1966, Bobby Seale and Huey Newton organized the Black Panther Party for self-defense in response to rising incidents of police brutality.

VARIOUS STOCK NEWSREEL IMAGES of 1960s Panther activities play over Stacy's brief lecture.

STACY (V.O.)

The Party was responsible for organizing breakfast drives and educational programs for Black communities nationwide. The FBI's Counter Intelligence Program, however, worked hard to harass and destroy the Party, committing 295 documented illegal actions, including disinformation campaigns, theft of files, and physical attacks, including the brutal 1969 murders of Chicago Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark.

Back to Stacy staring straight ahead. Hold.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Drey, Stacy, Regina and Lena munch on junk food, braiding each other's hair.

REGINA

He hella thirsty though.

LENA

Thirsty?

REGINA

Yeah, he like, when we gonna kiss, or when we gonna do this?

(MORE)

REGINA(cont'd)

And I'm like, nigga no, because when we went out, I paid for the movie and for you to eat, and everything. So you can't be serious you that thirsty.

STACY

Why you go out with him then?

REGINA

I don't really mess with him like that like that. But he aw'ite sometimes.

LENA

What about Mr. Wright and Ms. Redding? Now that's a cute couple.

Drey half listens, her attention occupied by several BLACK MEN hanging out near the shiny, black Lexus parked down the block.

REGINA

They do make a cute couple and they don't because Ms. Redding is into fashion, and Mr. Wright is like into street stuff.

STACY

I thought they were married.

REGINA/LENA

Married?

This catches Drey's ear.

DREY

Y'all think Mr. Dunne is married?

REGINA

Mr. Dunne?

LENA

Naw, he's hella crazy. Spirals, changes an' shit.

REGINA

Would you marry Mr. Dunne?

Drey shakes her head, no.

REGINA

I'm sure there's somebody for everybody, but not Mr. Dunne.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Students CHATTER in the background as Dan sits at his desk with a cup of coffee in front of him. He looks clean-shaven and well-rested.

The bell RINGS.

As students straggle in, Dan checks his watch and looks to Drey's empty seat in the middle of the room. He looks back to the door, when Drey enters. Dan smiles and turns to the class.

DAN
I feel good this morning. Who else
feels good?

Some students GRUMBLE from various corners of the classroom.

DAN
I need a volunteer... Who feels
strong?

SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MINUTES LATER

Dan leans over his desk, arm-wrestling with Terrance. His arm trembling, Terrance slowly begins to push Dan's arm downwards.

DAN
(addressing the class)
What happens here - two opposing
forces - Terrance and myself - are
pushing against each other. As
long as one side is stronger -
looks like Terrance - change is
slow and consistent... but when the
other side becomes stronger...

Putting forth a burst of effort, Dan slams Terrance's arm to the desk. Some kids LAUGH.

DAN
...there is a turning point. You
all right, T?

Terrance smiles, goes back to his desk in front of Drey. Dan turns around and circles the second step on the list written on the chalkboard: "2 - TURNING POINTS."

DAN

Now these forces can be personal,
as in this arm-wrestling match.
Or, for instance, puberty causing
Jamal's voice to change...

More kids LAUGH. Dan notices Principal Henderson standing in the doorway. She shoots him a serious look. Dan turns back to the class, makes eye contact with Drey.

DAN

But turning points can also happen
on a greater scale. A war for
instance. Um... Why don't you take
five minutes to write down two or
three historical turning points
that we've discussed in class.

Dan hesitantly walks over to Henderson, joins her in the...

SCHOOL HALLWAY

Dan shifts nervously.

DAN

What's up?

Henderson looks at him a beat, shaking her head.

HENDERSON

Have you even opened the Civil
Rights binder I gave you?

Dan laughs, relieved.

DAN

Yeah, the binder. It's, uh, got
some great stuff. I'm just
finishing up this section, and
then... as soon as--

HENDERSON

I want you on the Civil Rights
section by next week.

DAN

Sure. I'm just providing some
general context before we really
get into the specifics.

A small SHRIEK echoes from inside the class.

HENDERSON

I think you better get back in there.

Dan nods, turns back into the...

SCHOOL CLASSROOM

The students quiet down as Dan sits at his desk. He looks at Drey, smiles.

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - DAY

Drey cruises around the neighborhood on her bike, listening to music on her headphones.

DUPLEX DRIVEWAY

She rolls near the shiny black Lexus she observed in an earlier scene. FRANK - the smooth, handsome, local drug dealer - washes the car in a tight white tank-top. He smiles to Drey. She stops, removes her headphones.

FRANK

What's new?

DREY

I don't know.

FRANK

What? Come here, I can't hear you.

Drey walks her bike to the driveway. Frank notices the Dodgers cap hanging around her handle bars.

FRANK

Nice cap.

DREY

Thanks. It's Mike's.

FRANK

Yeah, I know... Heard from him lately?

DREY

He writes sometimes.

FRANK

He all right?

DREY

Yeah, I don't know, I guess.

FRANK

Let me know if I can help, all right? I know people in there. I could make a call.

DREY

Okay.

FRANK

Okay?

DREY

Yeah.

FRANK

All right.

They stare at each other. Nobody moves.

FRANK

You thirsty? Wanta come in?

DREY

My bike.

FRANK

Ain't nobody gonna fuck wit that.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

Frank leads Drey inside, through the well-kept living area where Javier plays Playstation on the sofa. He nods to Drey, as they continue into the...

FRANK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

A WOMAN is kneeled over, putting dishes into a lower cabinet, her tight, ripped, cutoffs exposing a little more ass than intended.

FRANK

Tina.

TINA

Hey baby.

FRANK

You remember Mike's sister Drey, right?

TINA

Hey sweetie.

FRANK

(pointing to a seat at the
dining table)

Sit down a minute... I'll fix you
some juice.

Drey takes a seat while Frank grabs a peppermint candy from a dish in front of her. He pops it in his mouth and motions Tina into the other room with him.

We stay with Drey, as she sits uncomfortably, waiting. She looks around the room and notices several depression-era ETHNIC FIGURINES: a bug-eyed picanniny eating an enormous slice of watermelon, a fat-lipped mammy cookie jar, a dish of peppermint candies with a slit-eyed Fu-Man-Chu design.

She takes a blowpop out of her pocket, unwraps it, and puts it in her mouth.

After what feels like an eternity, she gets up, and wanders back into...

FRANK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

...where Javier had been. The Playstation is still on, but the room is empty.

FRANK (O.S.)

Guess which hand...

Drey turns around to find Frank standing with his hands behind his back. Drey points to the left, wherein Frank holds up a wad of cash. He hands it to her.

FRANK

Lucky guess... How 'bout that
juice?

DREY

No thanks. I'm not really thirsty.

FRANK

Well, don't be a stranger, kid.
You know where to find me.

INT. DREY'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Karen, in her bathrobe, sips a steaming cup of coffee. She stares out the kitchen window, waiting to wake up, when...

...Drey comes through the front door. Karen watches as Drey opens a kitchen cabinet, pulls down a coffee can, and inserts Frank's cash inside. She reseals the can, puts it back on the shelf, and notices her mom at the table.

DREY

Hey...

KAREN

Hey... You saw Frank?

DREY

Just ran into him.

Karen looks out the window. When Drey starts off for her room, Karen opens her mouth to talk, but can't find the words. She lowers her head in frustration. After a beat, she gets up, takes Frank's cash from the coffee can, and puts it in her purse.

She returns to the table, stares out the window, and sips her coffee.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Dan types away on his computer. Then stops, stares at the screen. He gets up, paces back and forth, thinking.

DAN'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Dan watches a ridiculous sitcom, when an anti-drug PSA comes on the screen. He turns off the TV.

EXT. DAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD - SUNSET

Dan jogs in sweats, huffing and puffing, but making the effort.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dan, fresh out of the shower, wipes steam away from the mirror, examines his reflection.

DAN

Okay.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY

The team watches Dan, as he demonstrates defense with Lena.

DAN
 You wanta shoot? Huh? Go head,
 you got it like that? Shoot.

Lena takes a shot, but Dan swats the ball away, then turns to the team.

DAN
 See what I mean? This is defense.
 Defense wins games. If they can't
 score... they can't win.

Drey and several other players laugh. Dan pats Lena on the back.

EXT. SCHOOL - ALMOST NIGHT

Dan comes out of the main entrance, glances over to see Drey seated on a nearby bench, waiting for her ride.

Startled to see her, he quickly steps back into the doorway, hides. He takes a breath, mulling something over in his mind, then...

...steps out to the street, heads for his car without looking in her direction.

SCHOOL BENCH

Drey notices Dan getting into his car. She stands up and looks down the street for her ride.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

QUIZ TIME. Students train their eyes on their papers, while Dan reads a newspaper at his desk.

In back of the class, Leonard leans forward, cheating from the kid in front. His eyes dart back and forth from the kid's paper to Dan, unaware. However, when Leonard glances back to Dan again, he's busted. They lock eyes. Leonard slouches back in his seat fearing what comes next, but...

...Dan merely redirects his eyes back to the newspaper.

After a beat, Leonard slowly eases forward again, but this time...

DAN (O.S.)
 Leonard-

Leonard flinches back into quiz position, low to the desk, eyes on his paper.

DAN
Up here... and ten points off.

Leonard moves to a chair in front of the class.

DAN
Second chances are rare in life.
You should take better advantage.

Dan looks at Drey, who is quietly working on her quiz.

INT. SCHOOL TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

Jimbo reads the newspaper out loud, while Dan and Isabel eat their lunches at a table off to the side.

JIMBO
A man who was curious to know if
a knife could penetrate his
bulletproof vest was killed
yesterday by a stab wound through
the chest. Witnesses say the man,
Jeff Turner (32) urged his brother,
Scott Turner (35) to stab him as
hard as he could, believing the
vest would stop the knife... It
didn't.

Jimbo looks up as if inviting further comments from the room.
Isabel and Dan redirect their attention to each other.

ISABEL
So how's your opposites and things?

DAN
Not bad.

ISABEL
Where'd you come up with that
stuff?

DAN
Dialectics. It's just a hobby, I
guess.

ISABEL
A little thick for eighth grade,
no?

DAN
Maybe. But I think they're
starting to get it.

ISABEL
That's good... I don't know how
you get away with it, though. Joy
is so textbook.

DAN
I dunno. She has to be, I guess,
but I think, secretly, she prefers
my curriculum.

ISABEL
Whatever it takes... How's your
book?

DAN
Mmm... Don't ask.

ISABEL
There's always summer.

DAN
You want to do dinner again?

ISABEL
Okay.

DAN
Friday.

ISABEL
Yeah.

DAN
I'll make something nice.

They stare at each other for a beat, until Jimbo interrupts.

JIMBO
Did you guys hear they found a
crack vial in the locker room?

DAN
What?

JIMBO
Yeah.

DAN
Do they know whose it was?

JIMBO

Whose it was? I don't think so.
But that's a good idea. Why don't
we put it in the lost and found,
see if anybody claims it? Better
yet, we could post flyers with a
picture....

Long awkward pause until Dan forces a LAUGH.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Drey paces down the block on foot after school, when Frank's
black Lexus creeps up next to her.

FRANK

Where's your bike, kid?

She stops.

DREY

They stole it.

FRANK

They who?

DREY

I don't know. I'mma find out
though.

Frank smiles.

FRANK

You hungry?

DREY

Nah, I'm cool.

FRANK

C'mon, burgers on me.

Drey checks down the block in both directions before getting
in.

INT. GOWANUS DINER - DAY

An old-style take-out burger joint. Drey and Frank chow down
at the counter.

FRANK

How's your burger?

DREY
(mouthful)
S'good.

FRANK
You wanta try my chicken?

DREY
Do I have to give you a bite of
mine?

FRANK
(smiles)
No.

He hands her his chicken sandwich; she takes a bite.

FRANK
How's school?

DREY
S'alright.

FRANK
Sup with basketball?

DREY
We gotta game tomorrow.

FRANK
Yeah?

DREY
Wanna come?

FRANK
Your moms gonna be there?

DREY
Workin'.

FRANK
Pops?

She shakes her head, no.

FRANK
Fuck it. I'll come check you out
then. Somebody gotta represent.

Frank pops a few fries into his mouth.

FRANK
Tina packed some sweets for Mike
last night. Sent'm off today.

Drey takes a big bite of her burger.

FRANK
He was a good friend. Still is.
Funny guy. He ever show you the
chicken walk?

DREY
(smiles)
What?

FRANK
Chicken walk. I can't do it, but
it's like...

Frank sticks his thumbs under his armpits, begins a
ridiculous imitation of a chicken, then stops, laughs.

FRANK
Crazy right?

DREY
Yeah.

FRANK
You know we worked together?

DREY
Uh-huh.

FRANK
You ever thought about working?

No answer. They sit eating for a beat.

FRANK
I used to work at this place.

DREY
For real?

FRANK
One-fifty a week...

Drey looks at the COOK (a hunched over BLACK MAN in his
sixties) flipping burgers behind the counter.

FRANK
Two milkshakes!

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A WAITRESS refills Dan's cup of coffee, while he stares out the window, anxiously tapping on the table with his fork. He is well-dressed and clean shaven.

WAITRESS
Ready to order?

DAN
Um... No, I'm waiting for a friend.

WAITRESS
No problem.

DAN
Can I have some more cream, please?

WAITRESS
Sure thing.

Dan glances back out to the street, where he sees Rachel approaching in the distance. He lowers his head, takes a deep breath.

Rachel steps inside, looks for and finds Dan, who waves hello.

He stands up and greets her with a hug. They sit.

DAN
You look great.

RACHEL
You too.

DAN
Thanks for coming.

RACHEL
Thanks for calling.

DAN
I should have sooner.

RACHEL
S'okay.

DAN
How are you?

The waitress approaches.

WAITRESS
Coffee?

RACHEL
Please.

They smile awkwardly at each other, waiting for the waitress to pour and leave. She eventually does.

DAN
How are you?

RACHEL
Okay. I went back to school.
Taking some time off now to be with
my mom.

DAN
How is she?

RACHEL
Not good.

DAN
Sorry.

RACHEL
What about you? Still rockin' out?

DAN
When the occasion calls. You?

RACHEL
Two years, clean as a whistle.

DAN
Congratulations. Has it been two
years?

RACHEL
Twenty-seven months.

Dan smiles.

DAN
What're you in school for?

RACHEL
Social work. I'm gonna save the
world after all.

DAN
Somebody's gotta do it.

RACHEL
I'm also getting married.

Dan stares at her.

DAN
(after a beat)
That's great. Wow. That's
really... Congratulations.

RACHEL
Thanks.

DAN
Who's the lucky guy?

RACHEL
Someone I met in the program.

DAN
Well, that's just great. You're
really growing up. You're like...
a responsible adult now. Saving
the world, getting married, I can't
believe it. Gee whiz...

RACHEL
I'm a different person now, Dan.

DAN
I can tell. And to think I knew
you when you were giving back alley
blowjobs and freebasing with pimps
on dirty mattresses...

The waitress approaches. Rachel stares at Dan.

WAITRESS
You ready to order?

DAN
Grilled cheese with bacon, please.

RACHEL
I'm okay, thanks.

The waitress leaves.

RACHEL
I was hoping you had changed.

DAN
Guess not. I was trying though.
Believe it, or not, I really was...

RACHEL
You can't do it alone, Dan.
Believe me, you need help.

DAN
Here we go...

Rachel nods and smiles.

DAN
I know... I'm an asshole. I know.

RACHEL
You're not an asshole. You're just
a big baby.

DAN
A big asshole baby.

RACHEL
I've seen you with your kids.
You're a great teacher.

DAN
I know.

RACHEL
Be a shame to throw that away. You
just need to grow up. I know
people who can help when you're
ready.

Dan sips his coffee.

DAN
Great.

He shrugs, looks off.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP

Through the window we see Dan and Rachel hug goodbyes.
Rachel exits, while Dan stays behind, staring out the window.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Bernard stands in front of the class, looks directly at the
lens/us.

BERNARD

On November 9th, 1969, 78 American Indians occupied Alcatraz Island to focus attention on Indian Rights and to improve the quality of life on reservations.

STOCK NEWSREEL IMAGES of the event play over his V.O.

BERNARD (V.O.)

They offered to buy Alcatraz for glass beads and red cloth, the price paid Indians for Manhattan Island three hundred years earlier.

Back to Bernard, glaring straight ahead.

INT. VISITOR'S ROOM - JUVENILE HALL

Drey sits at one of several tables in the room. She wears her A's baseball cap. She looks around at the prisoners, wearing bright orange jumpsuits, and the visitors across from them. She sucks on a blow pop.

She stands up when she sees MIKE (17), a tall, thin black man with short hair, coming towards her. He's wearing an orange jumpsuit.

MIKE

Hey, hey!

Drey and him do some kind of complicated handshake that turns into a hug.

MIKE

This is a nice surprise, what's the occasion?

DREY

No occasion.

MIKE

Where's ma?

DREY

Workin'. Darryl's uncle was comin' to visit, so he took me along.

MIKE

How's Darryl's leg?

DREY
S'alright.

MIKE
It's great to see you... Got one
of those for me?

Drey reaches into her jacket pocket and pulls out a bag of
blow-pops. She pushes them across the table.

MIKE
Sweet... Looks like someone got
into these already.

Drey shrugs. Mike smiles. He takes a red one out of the
already opened bag and unwraps it.

MIKE
Frank sent me some a' them nasty
peppermints he always eatin'. What
is that? I threw them shits out,
kid.

Drey smiles as Mike reaches across the table and smacks the
rim of her baseball cap.

MIKE
So, how's the team?

He puts the red blow-pop in his mouth.

DREY
We suck.

MIKE
(laughs)
And mom. How's she doin'?

DREY
She aw'ite.

MIKE
Still workin' too hard?

DREY
Yup.

MIKE
But she okay for money, right?

DREY
Uh-huh.

MIKE
Frank still lookin' out?

DREY
Yeah.

MIKE
Good, good... He owes us.

Mike looks off.

DREY
How come you never told on him?

His attention snaps back to Drey.

MIKE
For what? Woulda just made things
more complicated. Shit was fucked
up then - I know you remember.

DREY
I guess.

MIKE
It's all in the past now though.
I'll be out soon. You'll see. We
got Russell Simmons on the case.
We'll be alright...
(looks off again)
We'll be alright.

A prison bell RINGS.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

CLOSE on a TV featuring Mario Savio's 1964 FSM speech on the Berkeley campus.

SAVIO
(on the TV)
There is a time when the operation
of the machine becomes so odious,
makes you so sick at heart, that
you can't take part; you can't even
passively take part, and you've got
to put your bodies upon the gears
and upon the wheels, upon the
levers, upon all the apparatus, and
you've got to make it stop.
(MORE)

SAVIO(cont'd)

And you've got to indicate to the people who run it, to the people who own it, that unless you're free, the machine will be prevented from working at all!

Dan shuts off the TV, flips on the lights, and turns to the class.

DAN

Interesting, right? What's going on here? What's this machine thing?

JAMAL

War?

DAN

The war machine. The military, yes, that's part of it.

DREY

Prisons.

DAN

Yes, Prisons too... Good, Drey.

TERRANCE

Whitey!

DAN

Whitey. The man. Yeah, that too. Good.

LENA

The school.

DAN

Okay. The school. Excellent.

STACY

Ain't you the machine then?

DAN

Me? The machine?

Kids LAUGH.

STACY

You white; you part of the school.

DAN

Yes! You're right. I am part of the machine. And so are you.

(MORE)

DAN(cont'd)

We are all part of the machine. This is the thing... Remember the opposites? Everything is made of its opposite? We may be opposed to the machine, but we're also very much a part of it. I work for the government, but I'm opposed to many of its policies. You guys hate school, but you come anyway... most of the time at least. Hey, remember Rage Against the Machine?

Dan's punk reference is met with empty stares. He smiles.

DAN

Before your time, I guess... Okay, who made some changes this week?

ROODLY

I changed my underwear.

DAN

Good for you, Roodly.

TERRANCE

He still smells like booty though.

DAN

Oh boy, here we go... Roodly?

Roodly shuffles through his notes, finds something.

ROODLY

November 1st, 1977.

DAN

Got that?

Terrance writes down the date, nods.

DREY

What about you, Mr. Dunne? Make any changes lately?

Dan thinks about it, stares at Drey.

DAN

My cat's litter box. I changed it. Might seem like a small thing, but really it's a turning point for me. I like to think that I'm getting my domestic life together. What about you?

Before Drey can answer, the bell RINGS. Dan smiles at Drey and twirls his finger around in a circle.

DAN
And the cycle continues...

INT. SCHOOL GYM - GAME NIGHT

On the court Drey fights for position against an oversized DEFENDER. When she gets the ball, she leans in for a shot, but the defender hacks her on the arm causing her to miss badly. Drey glares at the REFEREE.

DAN
C'mon, ref, what was that? You're
killing us!

A voice calls out from the bleachers...

FRANK
Shake it off Drey! Shake it off!

Dan looks back into the bleachers, sees...

...Frank and Tina in the last row. Frank is on his feet, while Tina munches on popcorn by his side.

Drey looks to Dan, notices him noticing Frank. Dan motions Drey out of the game and sends in another player.

Drey grabs some water and sits down on the bench. Dan looks back at Frank, then sits down next to Drey.

DAN
You need a ride home later?

Drey shrugs.

DREY
Alright.

MORE GAME HIGHLIGHTS present the larger, more physical team roughing up Dan's squad on the court.

Elbowed and pushed around by her larger opponent, Drey seethes. Dan catches her attention from the sideline, and motions for her to remain calm.

After one particularly aggressive foul, Dan rises to his feet as Frank calls out from the bleachers...

FRANK

Goddamn ref! Where's the foul!

Dan steps onto the court, gets in the ref's face...

DAN

Are you kidding me? That is ridiculous! I want that player out of this game and locked up. This is bullshit!

REF

You're gone, coach! I will not tolerate that language on my court!

The ref blows his WHISTLE, ejects Dan from the game.

DAN

Oh, so it's language you don't tolerate!

EXT/INT. DAN'S CAR - NIGHT

QUIET. Dan drives Drey home after the game. Dan has one hand on the wheel and the other lying on a bag of ice beside him. They sit in silence for a long beat, until...

DREY

(teasing)

I think you're hand's changing colors... get more ice on it.

DAN

You shoulda seen the wall.

DREY

I'm telling you, Dunne, you shoulda knocked that nigga out.

DAN

You can't just go attacking people every time you disagree with them.

DREY

But it woulda felt good, though, right? Felt good to just get it out.

DAN

They're are other ways of getting it out.

DREY
Right... like you do.

DAN
What's that? Huh? You know
everything about me now, is that
it? Well you don't. One thing.
One thing does not make a man....

Drey studies Dan for a moment as he uncomfortably plays with
the stick shift. She looks out the window. After a beat...

DREY
One thing does not make a man?

Dan cracks a smile. Drey smiles back.

DREY
You know I was just talkin' about
your hand, right?

DAN
Oh... yeah, me too.

DREY
Okay. So, you all right?

DAN
What? Yeah, yeah, I'm fine...

DREY
Sure?

DAN
Yeah... What?

DREY
I don't know.

DAN
What? You don't know?

DREY
That ref. For a second, thought I
was gonna have to come over, back
you up. Help you out.

DAN
Help me out? Help ME out?
(laughs)
Help me out.

Drey smiles. They sit in silence for a beat.

DAN
Who was that guy? Cheering for you
back there? You know him?

DREY
Not really... do you?

Hold on Dan. After a beat...

DAN
Do me a favor... that whole
punching the wall incident? Let's
keep that between us, alright?

Drey smiles.

EXT. DREY'S APARTMENT

Dan's car pulls in front. Drey jumps out and walks away.

EXT/INT. DAN'S CAR

Dan watches Drey go into her building, then shifts his attention down the block, where drug dealers are perched on the corner. He taps the steering wheel with his thumb for a beat before he pulls out down the street.

He passes the kids on the corner and puts his blinker on, about to turn left, but pauses and looks back in his rearview mirror.

DAN
(under his breath)
Shit.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Dan strolls down the bar, past 4-5 people, all drinking alone. He has a fresh bounce to his step. He sits a few stools away from a WOMAN (white, 40s).

He nods to the bartender and looks to the woman next to him.

DAN
I had a good day.

The bartender delivers a double shot of something. Dan toasts in her direction, downs the drink. She looks at him and smiles.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dan speaks to the woman in mid-conversation.

DAN
(fired up)
Even after the Duelfer report,
right, said there were no weapons,
no WMD programs... nothing. 72% of
his supporters continue to believe
Iraq had actual WMDs. 75% think
they was providing support to Al
Qaeda. Of those, okay, the
majority believed we should NOT
have gone to war if those things
weren't true... So what? What do
we do? I'm just one person, what
can I, how can I...? You wanta
know? Hm? In a word... Education.

Dan snorts a line off the dresser.

DAN
I used to be so fucked up. Just,
out there, ya know? But I cleaned
up. I mean, mostly... So I can
deal now, right? Get by. I did
the rehab thing when I was younger.
It works for some people. My ex--
She's getting married now. Jesus,
ya know? But, but that shit's just
not for me... I mean... it's the
kids who are really... they keep me
focused. The thing that... I don't
know...

Dan looks at the woman, who is flipping channels on the bed.
He approaches her, kisses her. They go at it.

DAN (V.O.)
Number three - change moves in
spirals, not circles.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Dan at the board, chalk in hand.

DAN
Example - the sun comes up, the sun
goes down. But every time this
happens what do we have? A new
day.

(MORE)

DAN(cont'd)

It's never the same as the day before. We breathe in, we exhale, but after each breath, we're a little bit different from the last. This is dialectics...

ROODLY

Why we need to know this?

DAN

We are always changing. Always.

Drey looks on, curious and absorbed.

DAN

Whether we like it or not. What's important to know is that there are some changes we cannot control... and others we can.

The bell RINGS.

DAN

(swirling his finger)

Okay, the cycle continues...

While the other kids stream out of class, Drey takes her time, allows the class to empty, approaches Dan's desk.

Dan removes his lunch items from a brown paper bag.

DREY

How come you never eat with the teachers at lunch?

DAN

I don't know. I like being alone, I guess.

DREY

I know what you mean.

DAN

You do?

Pause. Drey nods.

DREY

All right. I'll see you later, Mr. Dunne. Enjoy your lunch.

DAN

Thanks.

Drey heads out, but stops in the doorway.

DREY
Oh yeah... can I get a ride home
after practice?

DAN
(almost too quickly)
Okay.

Drey exits. Dan stares at the empty doorway.

DAN
(mocking himself)
"Okay..."

EXT. DREY'S STREET - DAY

Dan's car pulls in front of Drey's apartment building.

DREY
Thanks, Mr. Dunne. I guess I'll
see you Monday?

DAN
Have a good weekend, Drey.

Dan waits in the car as Drey steps onto her porch.

EXT. DREY'S PORCH - DAY

Drey takes her key out of her pocket and looks back to Dan,
whose car is still idling in the street.

She slips her house key back into her pocket.

INT. DAN'S CAR - DAY

Dan messes with the car stereo when...

...the passenger door opens, and Drey peeks inside.

DAN
What happened?

DREY
I lost my key.

DAN
You lost your key? That sucks.

DREY
What do we do?

DAN
Can you call your mom at work?

DREY
She's an E.M.T. I could page her,
I guess, but...

Dan looks down at his watch, scans the neighborhood, thinking, when he notices Frank's Black Lexus turning onto the street.

DAN
Is there some place I can take you?

Drey shrugs.

DAN
Get in.

As she sits down in the passenger's seat, Frank drives by and stops next to Dan's car.

Frank's window glides down. He gives a puzzled nod to Dan, who stares, tense.

FRANK
Sup y'all? Want some candy?

Frank extends a bag of peppermint candies toward Dan, who declines.

FRANK
Drey?

Drey leans over Dan's lap, sifts through the candies in the bag, as Dan awkwardly squirms out of her way.

DREY
That's all you got?

FRANK
Sorry... So, y'all chillin', or
what?

DREY
Yeah--

DAN
She lost my key-- her key.

Frank gives him a sideways glance.

FRANK
Okay... You need a place to hang
till your mom--

DAN
--Nah, we're cool.

FRANK
(to Drey)
You cool?

DREY
Uh-huh.

FRANK
Aw'ite then... See ya.

Frank's window glides back up, and he pulls away.

DAN
You don't know him?

DREY
Who? Frank?

DAN
Frank? I thought you said you
didn't know him... Who is Frank?

DREY
Just a guy from the neighborhood.

DAN
You know what he does? I mean, I'm
not one to judge. We all do what
we do to survive, but... Drey... I
know I'm not exactly the best...
whatever, but...

DREY
I hear you, Coach.

DAN
You have a choice.

DREY
I know. You don't hafta worry
about me...

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dan and Drey enter. Dan sets his keys and briefcase on the table.

DAN
Here it is... make yourself
comfortable.

Dan disappears into the kitchen. Drey glances around the living room, noticing a stack of old records on the floor next to Dan's record player.

DREY
You got them old things?

DAN (O.S.)
What old things?

DREY
Records?

DAN (O.S.)
Yes, mp3 girl, I have them old
things... take a look, there's some
good stuff.

Drey observes old family photos and books on the bookshelf.

DREY
(pointing to a photo)
Who is this?

Dan glances over.

DAN
That's my brother. Over there,
those are my parents...

DREY
They still live together?

DAN
Yeah.

Drey turns to the bookshelf, noticing copies of books by Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, W.E.B. DuBois.

DREY
Why you got so many books about
Black people?

DAN (O.S.)
I have books about all kinds of
people, Drey.

DREY
Yeah, but it's mostly Black folks
on this shelf.

DAN (O.S.)
I teach history to mostly Black
folks. Don't you think I should
know about the history of the
people I'm teaching it to?

Drey notices a photo of Dan and Rachel on the bookshelf.

DREY
Who's she?

DAN (O.S.)
Who?

DREY
The girl.

DAN (O.S.)
Old girlfriend.

DREY
What happened to her?

DAN (O.S.)
Mind your business.

DREY
You put it up there.

Drey stares harder at the photo, begins to recognize Rachel.

DREY
I've seen her... She was at the
game that night.

DAN'S APT. - KITCHEN

For the first time, we see Dan in the kitchen. He pauses,
stares off.

DAN
That's right... She was.

Drey joins Dan at the counter.

DREY
You need help in here?

DAN
Don't you have homework, or something?

DREY
It's Friday.

Dan stares at her for a beat, then...

DAN
Okay. I'm going to share something with you. Can you keep a secret?

Drey shoots him an "Are you kidding me?" look.

DAN
All right, listen... this is my great aunt's secret spaghetti recipe. Now you can help, but if anyone asks...

DREY
I was never here.

DAN
Good kid. Okay, here we go. First wash your hands.

DREY
(at the sink)
You gotta lady comin' over tonight or what?

DAN
Uh... Yeah.

DREY
You must like her a lot.

Dan shrugs.

DREY
Does she like you?

DAN
I don't know. I'm not easy to like sometimes, you know?

DREY
That's true.

Dan smiles, hands her carrots.

DAN
Wash these.

Drey goes over to the sink.

DREY
What you need is some jokes. Women
love jokes, trust me. Keep'm
laughing and you'll be all right.

DAN
Okay. You know any good ones?

DREY
Aw'ite, check it out... What do you
call cheese that's not yours?

DAN
What?

DREY
Nacho cheese.

Dan chuckles.

DREY
It's yours... If you need it.

DAN
Thanks.

Long pause. They chop vegetables. Drey looks at Dan.

DREY
Coach?

DAN
Yeah?

DREY
I gotta question for you.

DAN
Okay.

DREY
Why you smoke rocks?

Dan stops chopping, stares at Drey. Hold.

DAN
(after a beat)
When's your mom get home?

DREY
...Sorry...

DAN
Why don't you call her? I'll be
right back.

Dan disappears into his bedroom.

EXT. DREY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dan's car stops in front of her building.

DREY
Hope you have a good date, Mr.
Dunne.

DAN
Okay, thanks for the joke.

We stay with Dan as Drey gets out of the car. He grips the steering wheel.

EXT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Dan's car pulls to a curb, sits, idling in front of Frank's driveway. Javier emerges from the duplex, gets in Dan's car. They make a brief exchange, and Javier gets out. Dan drives off.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dan stands at the stove, stirring a pan of sauce, as Isabel sips her wine nearby.

DAN
We, for example, we just throw
things in the garbage, or, or put
them in the recycling bin. Which
gets carted off and dumped or
reused, but we don't know how or
where or whatever. But there, ya
know, everyone needs to recycle and
to reinvent shit to survive. Your
refrigerator dies, you take the
working parts and make them into a
new fridge.

ISABEL

Or, if you live in the countryside,
you take the rotten crop, and feed
the new crop with it.

DAN

Exactly. But even in cities, where
people may not be as connected to
the cycle of the days, the seasons,
whatever, folks are still so...
connected to that process of...

ISABEL

Reinvention.

DAN

Yes.

Dan looks back to Isabel. He laughs, embarrassed.

ISABEL

When were you there?

Dan takes the sauce off the stove, pours it, steaming, over
two plates of spaghetti.

DAN

I've never actually been. I mean,
I'd love to go, but--

ISABEL

I guess I just thought... The way
you talk about the culture.

Dan hands her a plate of spaghetti.

DAN

I watch a lot of PBS.

They laugh.

DAN

Um, you can bring this in...

He points to the living room.

DAN

I'm just gonna be... Just a second.

INT. DREY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Drey sits on the couch watching TV, while Karen argues on the phone in the background.

KAREN

I'm tired of this... No, no, no, you listen to me. What I want-- what I need is for you to give a little support now and then. This isn't asking much. I'm not saying everyday. Just when she needs you. I mean today she got locked out, she didn't even know your number at work. How's your child not gonna know...

Drey gets up, wanders out of the room.

INT. DAN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dan stands in front of the mirror, sniffs a few bumps of coke off the end of the pen cap. He wipes his nose, and we follow him out to...

DAN'S APT. - LIVING ROOM

...where Isabel is standing, waiting for his return, the two plates of spaghetti on the coffee table next to her. They stare at each other for a beat, before...

...they go at it, kissing, rubbing, breathing, intensely.

She pushes him back, down onto the sofa, and he removes his shirt, while she does the same.

INT. DREY'S APT. - DARK BEDROOM - NIGHT

Drey turns on the light in her mom's bedroom, goes to the mirror. She stares at her reflection, then opens her mom's makeup kit, removing the lipstick first.

BACK TO DAN'S LIVING ROOM

Where he and Isabel continue having sex in various ECUs of lips, fingers, eyes, arms.

BACK TO DREY IN HER MOM'S ROOM

We continue to hear Dan and Isabel over A SERIES OF ECUs of Drey combing out her cornrow braids, applying lipstick, eye shadow, etc.

DAN FINISHES WITH ISABEL ON THE COUCH

Their breathing continues over...

DREY

Finished making herself up, she stares into the mirror for a long beat. Hold.

FADE OUT.

INT. DAN'S APT. - KITCHEN - DAY

CLOSE on Isabel looking off-screen.

ISABEL
Are you a communist?

Dan stands in the kitchen doorway, shirtless in his boxers.

DAN
(half asleep)
What?

Isabel sits at the kitchen table in Dan's bathrobe (loose and revealing around her chest), eating last night's spaghetti.

ISABEL
I was looking through your books.

DAN
So...

ISABEL
Che in Africa? The Communist
Manifesto?

DAN
If I had Mein Kampf, would that
make me a Nazi?

ISABEL
(taking another bite)
This is really good, no?

Dan goes to the fridge, pours himself a large glass of water.

DAN
It's better warm.

ISABEL
You don't have Mein Kampf, but if
you did, then I suppose I'd ask if
you were a Nazi.

DAN
Maybe I'm hiding it.

ISABEL
Why would you hide it?

DAN
Because I don't want people asking
if I'm a Nazi all the time.

ISABEL
Why not?

DAN
Because it's not cool to be a Nazi
these days, or did they not teach
you that in Peru, or wherever
you're from.

ISABEL
Why would you ever want to
be something that's not cool?
Having to hide all the time? It
doesn't sound very fun.

DAN
It's not.

Dan takes a huge gulp of water, stands and goes to...

DAN'S APT. - LIVING ROOM

...where he flips on the computer, and plays some music on
the stereo.

Isabel follows him, stands in the doorway with his cat in her
arms.

ISABEL
She's so sweet, this one...
So... what are you doing today?

DAN
I don't know... thought maybe I
would...

Dan gestures toward the computer.

Hold on Isabel's uncomfortable reaction. She pulls the loose robe tight around her neck, concealing her body.

ISABEL

Good. You're writing, that's great. I'll let you get to it, then.

DAN

All right. I had a good time.

ISABEL

Me too.

Isabel exits out of the room.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Terrance stands in front of the class, stares directly at the lens/us...

TERRANCE

On November 1st, 1977, Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco City Council. He was the first openly gay person ever elected to public office.

STOCK NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of Diane Feinstein announcing Milk and Mayor Moscone's assassinations play over the V.O.

TERRANCE (V.O.)

The following year he was assassinated by a fellow council member, Dan White, who claimed he shot Milk because he ate too much junk food that day. This would later become known as "the Twinkie defense."

Back to Terrance, who glances off camera, addresses someone off-screen...

TERRANCE

Is that for real?

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM DANCEFLOOR - NIGHT

Dan and Isabel lean against a wall, drinking punch as a hip-hop jam shakes the floor and lights flicker over their faces. They occasionally glance at each other with subtle smiles.

A WIDE ANGLE reveals them to be in the school gymnasium during a dance, kids getting down all around.

BACK OF THE BLEACHERS

Drey sits with her friends while they watch and laugh at the boys, however, Drey isn't smiling.

STACY
(pointing out Jamal)
Damn he looks good. Watch him move.

Jamal turns loose a few new moves on the dance floor.

LENA
He alright, but you know who I'm
lookin' at?

She cocks her finger like a gun toward Terrance on the floor.

STACY
Oh shit, okay, I see how you feel.
Drey? Sup girl, where's your man
at?

Not really paying attention, Drey turns to them, and shakes her head, not interested in playing the game. She directs her attention back to the wallflowers, Dan and Isabel, in back of the gym. She watches as Dan moves away from Isabel and towards the exit.

EXT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Drey steps out of the rear exit door, scans the area, when...

...Dan suddenly emerges from the dumpster pen. Their eyes meet.

DAN
Drey...

DREY
Mister Dunne...

DAN
You have to stop sneaking up on
me kid. Jesus.

He starts back inside, touching her shoulder as he passes.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Dan dances by himself, a little out of control. He catches Drey spying him from across the gym, motions for her to come and dance. She pretends not to notice him, so...

...he dances over to her, circling around her like a crippled shark, until she smiles, wherein he takes her hand, leads her in a dance.

Kids take notice of Dan's aggressive behavior, pointing him out to their friends. Some of them laugh.

Isabel notices too, but she's not smiling.

After a quick twirl, Dan and Drey make eye contact, which snaps him out of his high. He releases her hand, and walks away.

EXT. SCHOOL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kids filter out into the street after the dance. While saying his goodbyes, Dan sees Drey walk off towards a shiny black Lexus parked down the block.

DAN
Drey! Where you goin' kid?

DREY
Home.

DAN
C'mon, I'll give you a ride.

DREY
It's cool, coach, I gotta ride.

DAN
Yeah, well, I think you should
come with me. Don't you think?

Frank pokes his head out of the Lexus window.

FRANK
Drey! Everything cool?

Some of the kids take notice as the tension builds.

DAN
Everything's cool, thanks! We're
good. Drey's going with me.

FRANK
Is that true, Dee? You stayin'
wit Teach?

DREY
Nah, man--

DAN
Yeah, that's right. Thanks for the
offer, but she's with me tonight.
Thanks, dude.

Frank steps out of the car, approaches.

FRANK
Look, I'm sorry, I think there
must be a misunderstanding here.
(extends hand)
I'm Frank.

The gesture frazzles Dan. He doesn't shake it. Isabel steps
up behind him.

ISABEL
Dan?

DAN
Drey?

DREY
Later coach.

Drey starts off with Frank, so Dan grabs her by the arm,
pulls her away. She flinches.

ISABEL
Dan! What are you doing?

DAN
Drey, I'm sorry, Drey. You okay?

FRANK
Yo, take it easy, man.

DAN
You take it easy! I am taking it
easy. I always take it easy.

FRANK
Okay.

ISABEL
Dan!

DREY
It's okay, Coach. I'll be okay.

Drey heads off with Frank.

FRANK
See you later?

DAN
No you won't see me later. See me
later? What is that?

ISABEL
Calm down.

Dan watches Drey get into the car with Frank.

DAN
Fuck!

ISABEL
What's the matter with you?

DAN
I'm sorry.

ISABEL
Relax.

DAN
I fucked up.

ISABEL
Listen, calm down. What's going
on?

Dan stares at her, then looks away.

INT. ISABEL'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

They enter. Dan is still a little tense, glancing around her living room. Awkward.

ISABEL
Want something to drink?

DAN
Um...

ISABEL
Wine, whiskey, water...

DAN
Whatever.

ISABEL
Okay...

Isabel disappears into the kitchen. Dan remains on his feet, shifting nervously, he glances around her apartment.

ISABEL (O.S.)
Do you smoke?

DAN
What?

She emerges from the kitchen.

ISABEL
I've got this joint--

DAN
Jesus.

ISABEL
--I don't know.

DAN
Oh, no, sorry, I don't...

ISABEL
What's wrong?

DAN
I don't know.

ISABEL
I just thought, you know--

DAN
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

ISABEL
...that things were a little...

DAN
Sure, no.

ISABEL
You need to relax, Dan.

DAN
No. You're right. You're right.

ISABEL
What's going on with you tonight?
You can tell me.

DAN
No, I'm cool. Really... How bout
some wine? I'll have some wine.
Wine sounds fine, really...

Isabel watches Dan as he nervously shifts on his feet, biting his lip.

DAN
I should go. I'm sorry.

ISABEL
What's going on?

DAN
I don't know.

ISABEL
Is there something I--

DAN
--No. I don't think so. There's
just a lot on my mind.
Distractions that make it
impossible for me to be here
now.

ISABEL
So you'll be here now some other
day.

DAN
Yes. Good night. I'm sorry.

Pause. Dan leans in and they kiss for a beat, until he pulls away, and exits.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Dan sits at the bar, hammered, but that doesn't stop him from ordering another drink.

A MAN and WOMAN recognize Dan, approach.

MAN
Mister Dunne?

Dan stares blankly at the couple.

MAN

Lloyd Dickson. Our daughter,
Paula, went to Jefferson. Paula
Dickson. You taught History,
right?

DAN

Paula Dickson.

WOMAN

Yeah, right. You were always her
favorite teacher...

MAN

She's in her first semester at
Berkeley.

WOMAN

History major.

DAN

Paula Dickson.

The couple glance at each other, sensing their bad-timing.
Dan's glassy eyes can't seem to focus.

MAN

Well... enjoy the show.

WOMAN

Nice to see you.

DAN

Wait...

After a long awkward pause, the couple walks away, leaving
Dan alone at the bar. He gets back to his drink.

INT. DAN'S APT. - KITCHEN - DAY

Dan fills his thermos with coffee, fills the cat bowl. He
glances into the living room, sees his cat on the floor,
makes a smooching sound for it to come eat. It doesn't move.

Hold on Dan, watching the cat.

DAN

Hey girl.

More smooching sounds, but no movement from the cat. It's
dead.

After another beat, Dan exits the apartment.

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Dan sniffs a bump of coke, steps out of the stall, and runs into Jimbo on his way out.

JIMBO
Whoa, slow down, partner.

DAN
Gotta run, Jim.

JIMBO
(as Dan exits)
Don't forget to wash your hands.
(too late)
Gross.

Jimbo steps up to the urinal, sighs.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Dan at the chalkboard. He scribbles incomprehensible notes and diagrams while giving an intense lecture.

DAN
In Asia, the idea that everything is made from opposites - yin and yang - dates back to the i ching, about 3000 years ago. Taoism holds that change is the only constant. For some reason that idea died out in Western thought. Perhaps the Christians thought of all of God's creations as being perfect, so to say that man is both strong and weak, crooked and straight, dominant and dominated, would be to suggest that God had created imperfection. I think that they did recognize, however, that there is good and bad in every person - we may be sinners but we can strive for good - just not in nature itself...

Dan stops, looks at the class. His attention fixates on Drey for a moment.

A bead of blood drips from Dan's nose. He wipes it away, examines his hand.

DAN

Excuse me.

Dan steps outside the classroom. Drey watches him leave.

SCHOOL TEACHER'S LOUNGE - SECONDS LATER

Dan wanders into the lounge, where Jimbo is reading the newspaper.

JIMBO

Broward County, Florida middle-schools mistakenly failed over sixty-five hundred students in June due to what it later called a computer error. A school official called the total count of students affected... an insignificant sum.

Dan takes a seat at the table across from Jimbo, stares into space.

JIMBO

(folding paper)

What goes, Danny boy? How's history?

DAN

I can't do it anymore.

JIMBO

I know the feeling.

DAN

I think I'm losing it.

JIMBO

Mmm-hm. Yep. Hang in there, it'll pass. Just remember you're the one in control, right? Things'll get better. If not, there's always summer.

Jimbo laughs, but Dan remains serious.

JIMBO

Don't you have class right now?

Dan stares at Jimbo for a long beat, nods.

Hold on Jimbo's concerned expression.

EXT/INT. FRANK'S CAR - DAY

Frank and Drey cruise the neighborhood, looking for somebody specific. They're each sucking on a blow-pop.

FRANK

Where'd he go? Is that him?

DREY

No no no... Next block - look,
look, look...

FRANK

Where?

DREY

Wait wait wait... There!

Frank SLAMS the brakes, throws the car in reverse.

The car SCREECHES to a halt near some KIDS hanging out on the corner. Drey jumps out, runs to one of the kids, CHARLES (14 and much bigger than her). He wears her A's cap and straddles her bike. Frank stands near the car, watching.

DREY

Yo, nigga, that's my bike.

CHARLES

What?

Charles notices Frank looming nearby.

DREY

I said that's my bike. What the
fuck you doin' with my bike?

CHARLES

(scared)

I didn't know it's yours.

DREY

You didn't know? How you didn't
know it's mine? You always see me
on that bike.

CHARLES

I didn't know. I'm sorry. I
thought--

DREY

--What? You thought what?

CHARLES

Sorry.

DREY

Hella sorry, nigga. I should fuck you up.

Drey stares at him for long beat. Charles glances at Frank again, wherein...

...Drey swipes the cap off his head, causing him to flinch, and nearly stumble to the ground. He gets off the bike, hands it to Drey.

She puts the cap on her head and smiles, as she walks the bike back toward Frank.

Frank pops his trunk, helps Drey load the bike in.

FRANK

Thought you was gonna fuck'm up?

DREY

Didn't have to.

Frank taps her cap bill, and SLAMS the trunk closed, smiles.

INT. HALL OF SCIENCE

A SERIES OF DOCU-STYLE ANGLES follow the kids as they roam the many exhibits, labs, and interactive demonstrations.

EXT. HALL OF SCIENCE - SPACE SCULPTURE - DAY

Dan sits at the edge of the fountain, looking out over the park. Drey approaches, sits by his side. They sit in silence, until...

DAN

Your hat's back.

DREY

Yeah... Did you know my brother?

DAN

I knew of him, but he wasn't in my classes.

DREY

Did you know him outside school?

Dan looks to her, shakes his head, no.

DAN
How come you never said anything?

DREY
About what?

Dan looks at her, and she understands.

DREY
For what? It woulda just made
things more complicated... Anyway,
it didn't feel right.

Dan nods, and they look out over the park.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dan pulls his car to the curb, gets out, stalks toward a group of men hanging out near the black Lexus parked in a driveway. Frank is among them, sucking on a blow-pop.

Dan comes within 20 feet, stops.

DAN
Can we talk?

FRANK
Teach? Sup man? How's the team?

Frank steps over.

DAN
I hate to be this guy right now,
but I need you to stay away from
Drey.

FRANK
Excuse me?

DAN
You heard me. Just do me this
solid. Please.

FRANK
Do you a solid?

DAN
You know what I mean.

FRANK

Yeah, right, like some after school special: "Stay away from the girl... she's too precious for these streets."

DAN

I'm not kidding.

FRANK

I know.

DAN

So you understand?

FRANK

Yeah. Yeah, I understand.

DAN

Good.

Dan turns to go, but stops when...

FRANK

What about you?

DAN

What?

FRANK

I understand you. You understand me?

DAN

You got something to say to me?

FRANK

Drey is my friend. Those guys there? Friends. I'm good to my friends... We could be friends too.

DAN

What is this, the fucking Romper Room? Are you listening to me?

FRANK

Why're you so upset?

DAN

You're not listening to me!

FRANK

I'm right here, baby. What's on your mind?

DAN

Do this thing. I'm talking about one good thing in your sorry, fucked up life.

Frank's FRIENDS begin to GRUMBLE. Frank removes the blow-pop from his mouth, spits red on the concrete.

FRANK

Once again, white makes right. Right?

DAN

No, no, no. This is not that. I am not--

FRANK

--Where would Drey be without a nice guy like you lookin' out?

Dan stares hard at Frank, then looks away, closes his eyes. After a beat, he smiles, exasperated. So does Frank.

DAN

(throwing his arms in the air)
I don't know.

FRANK

Me neither.

DAN

What else can I do?

FRANK

You had to get it outta your system. I can respect that.

DAN

I'm sorry.

FRANK

No, listen... You want a drink, or sump'm? Come in, have a drink. Sit down, relax for a minute.

Frank drapes his arm around Dan's shoulder.

DAN

I don't know what else to do. I
had to do something.

FRANK

I know you did. That Romper Room
line gave me chills.
(calling off)
Yo, Tina! Pour Teach a glass a
water... or whatever he wants...
You like candy?

INT. DREY'S APARTMENT - SUNSET

Drey enters through the front door and throws down her
backpack. She glances off screen and stops, startled upon
seeing...

...Karen, staring out the window.

Drey quietly approaches Karen, who barely moves, off in
another dimension. Drey looks to her, then out the window,
trying to see what she sees. Hold.

EXT/INT. DAN'S CAR- NIGHT

Eyes glassed over and dreamy, Dan drives through the streets.

STREET - MINUTES LATER

Parked on a residential street, Dan nods his head to muffled
music seeping through the windows. He glances out at the
building across the street.

INT. ISABEL'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

ANGLE ON FRONT DOOR. Dark. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

A light flicks on. KNOCK KNOCK.

Isabel, wearing pajamas, enters frame, looks through the
peephole, and opens the door to reveal...

DAN

(hand raised as if
taking an oath)
I am not now, nor have I ever
been...

ISABEL

Dan... Hey, what's going on?

He enters.

DAN
I don't know. I was in your
hood... thought maybe... Surprise!

ISABEL
Yeah, it's a surprise, that's true.
You okay?

DAN
Mmm... Yeah, yeah, I'm real good.
How are you?

ISABEL
Good. A little tired. What is
it... two thirty?

DAN
Yeah, I'm sorry, is that late?

ISABEL
Well...

DAN
It is. Shit! Um...

ISABEL
I mean, we do have class tomorrow.

DAN
Yeah, you're right. I didn't think
of that. I'm really sorry about
the other night...

Dan's attention drifts off.

ISABEL
Sure you're okay?

He thinks about the question.

DAN
Yeah.

They stare at each other in confusion, until...

...Dan slowly stalks toward her, kisses her on the mouth.

At first, if only for a second, she goes with it, but then
tries to pull away, so he holds her tighter and kisses her
harder.

ISABEL

Stoppit. Dan. Hold on. Wait.
What's wrong?

He backs her up to the sofa, forces her down, continues kissing her on the mouth and neck.

Her struggle intensifies, pushing, squirming, even punching his back. She manages to scurry a few feet away, but he tackles her to the floor, rips her pajama top, exposing her chest.

He stops, looks at her, scared, beneath him. In this moment of hesitation, she SMACKS his face and scurries away to the bathroom, SLAMS the door.

After a beat, Dan approaches the bathroom door, his lip bleeding.

DAN

Boy, um... that was pretty awkward, right? I mean what was that, really? I don't know. Feel free to whatever, you know... I'll understand. No hard feelings. So... maybe I'll see you tomorrow? Or not. It's hard to say at this point... where I'll be... I am so fucked up, I don't even know what's... I hope you know that I really liked you. I had fun-- I mean not tonight I didn't, but other times with you... We had fun, right?

Dan rests his head against the door.

DAN

I'm sorry...

Dan exits the frame, and we hold on the bathroom door.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Dan pulls his car into a spot, kills the ignition, and sits. He's got a band-aid on his lip.

INT. SCHOOL TEACHER'S LOUNGE

Teachers linger around the coffee pot, when Dan enters and makes a bee-line for the fridge, puts his lunch inside, and attempts to leave, when...

JIMBO
Fucking patch. I got this rash you
wouldn't believe.

DAN
Okay.

JIMBO
Jesus, what happened your lip?

DAN
Ah, yeah... There was a...

JIMBO
Listen, Dan... If there's anything
going on, if you need any help,
anything... you know we're here for
you pal.

DAN
I'm fine, thanks.

Dan exits the lounge.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

QUIZ TIME. Dan pretends to read the sports section at his desk, while the kids focus their attention down on their tests.

However, Leonard, still sporting a black eye, leans forward as he did earlier to cheat off Stacy in front of him.

Dan sees this, stands up, grabs Stacy's test, SLAMS it down on Leonard's desk, and returns to his sports section.

Roodly LAUGHS, wherein Dan shoots him a serious look that causes him to shut up quick. Before Dan can get his eyes back to his newspaper, he catches Drey looking at him.

DAN
(to Drey)
What?!

Drey looks back at her test.

EXT/INT. DAN'S CAR - PARKED - LATER DURING LUNCH

Dan sits in his car, munching on potato chips, when Drey taps on his window. Annoyed, he rolls down the window.

DAN
What?

DREY
How's things?

DAN
What's it look like?

DREY
(hurt)
I don't know. Just asking.

DAN
What do you want?

DREY
Nothing.

DAN
Like, I mean, I'm not you're
friend, Drey. I'm you're teacher.
Do you see any other kids coming up
to my car, trying to talk to me?
Hello? Why don't you go play with
kids your own age? I'm trying to
be alone.

DREY
Then be alone, then. Asshole.

Drey walks away, but Dan gets the last word...

DAN
Bitch.

He rolls up the window, sits alone. He watches Drey for a
beat, then punches the stirring wheel.

SCHOOL TEACHER'S LOUNGE - LATER

Dan wanders in, goes to the coffee pot. The other teachers
begin to whisper about him. The mood is deadly serious.

DAN
(feeling the vibe)
What's up people?

Several teachers glance away from Dan, but Jimbo approaches.

JIMBO
Henderson's looking for you.

DAN
 Oh... Must be the new curriculum.
 She's been all over me about this.

JIMBO
 Yeah, that's probably it.

Dan exits the lounge with Jimbo looking after.

INT. SCHOOL - HENDERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan pokes his head inside the door.

DAN
 You wanted to see me Joy?

HENDERSON
 Dan. Close the door.

Dan steps inside, sits in the chair across from her desk.

HENDERSON
 Is there something going on that I
 should know about?

Dan lowers his head, thinks about the question. He rubs his fingers through his hair and takes a deep breath. Trying not to smile, he gives an awkward sigh and shrugs.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Drey stares directly at the lens/us.

DREY
 On September 11, 1973, the CIA
 helped overthrow and murder
 democratically elected Chilean
 president, Salvadore Allende.

STOCK FOOTAGE of the coup plays over her lecture.

DREY (V.O.)
 The military coup, lead to mass
 disappearances, assassinations, and
 torture of thousands of Chilean
 civilians under the leadership of
 U.S.-appointed dictator, Agosto
 Pinochet. Secretary of State Henry
 Kissinger said of Allende's 1970
 election: "These issues are much
 too important for the Chilean
 voters to decide for themselves."

EXT. DUNNE HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

The door opens to reveal a WOMAN (early 60s). She smiles, SCREAMS.

WOMAN

DANNY!!

DAN

Hi mom.

WOMAN

What happened to your lip?

INT. DUNNE KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Dan helps his mom, JO, prepare dinner.

JO

It's so nice to see you, Danny.

Dan nods.

JO

You should really come see us more often. Why don't you stop by more often?

DAN

Yeah, I--

JO

--Oh, you don't have to answer that. Your mother just misses you, that's all. How's your class?

DAN

It's great. The kids are getting smarter every day... no thanks to me, I'm sure.

JO

Are you feeling well? You seem a little...

A car door SHUTS outside.

DAD (O.S.)

Goddamnit! Whose goddamn car is in my--? What the hell's going on around here?

Dad enters, smiling, goofing off. He wears a worn-out sports jacket with patches on the elbows, carries an old briefcase. Dan does his best to play along.

DAD
Jo... what I tell you about
letting strangers in the house?

JO
He seemed like a nice boy.

DAD
You call that a nice boy? How
bout it boy? You nice?

DAN
I'm not so nice.

Dad sees the butter knife in Dan's hand.

DAD
Oh, my god, he's got a knife!

Dad grabs a kitchen knife and chases Dan around the kitchen island.

JO
No running with knives, please!

Dan sets his knife down, too tired to play.

DAD
What's the matter, kid? Tough day
at the zoo?

Dan and Jo exchange subtle glances.

DAD
How are you?

They hug hello.

DAN
Not too bad.

JO
He looks thin. Doesn't he look
thin?

DAD
You look thin.

DAN
I am thin.

DAD
He is thin.

JO
He's not that thin.

DAD
Looks that thin to me.

JO
Your hair looks good, honey.

DAN
What're you drinking?

DAD
Why? What've you heard? A man's
drink is his business, son. And
in this country, you don't mess
with a man's business. Right Jo?

She sticks a spoon of sauce in his face.

JO
Taste this.

DAD
Mmmm... She's right though, you
look beat-- needs salt.

JO
Salt my ass-- are you getting
enough sleep, honey?

DAN
I'm fine, mom. It's been a busy
week.

DAD
Nice to see you, kid.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

DUNNE FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

It swings open revealing Jeff (late 20s) and Cindy (mid 20s)
at the doorstep.

DAN
Jeffrey.

JEFF

Daniel.

DAN

I guess this is the part where we hug.

JEFF

Ah, nobody wants to see that part. Let's get on with it.

DAN

You're right. Who's your little friend?

JEFF

Cindy, meet big brother, Dan.

CINDY

Nice to meet you. Is your lip okay?

DUNNE DINING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Dad enters with another bottle of wine, pours into Cindy's glass.

CINDY

That's plenty, thanks.

Mom enters with the gravy.

JO

Okay, I think that's it.

DAD

Let's eat!

JEFF

How's your novel?

CINDY

You're writing a novel?

DAN

It's actually a children's book... which I haven't started yet.

CINDY

I love children's books. What's it about?

DAN
Dialectics.

CINDY
Dialectics? What's that?

JEFF
Here we go.

DAN
It's a theory that attempts to
explain how change works.

CINDY
Sounds interesting.

DAN
I think so.

DAD
How does change work, Dan?

Slow ZOOM in on Dan, as plates are passed in and out of
frame.

DAN
Let's save that lecture for
dessert.

JO (O.S.)
I heard you guys were at the march.

JEFF (O.S.)
Yeah, it was really great.

CINDY (O.S.)
Like 200,000 people, right? Danny
Glover was there.

JO (O.S.)
Oh, I love him. What was that
movie? Honey, remember that movie?
With Danny Glover? What was that?

DAD (O.S.)
Cindy, what is it you do again?

THE VOICES slowly FADE as Dan gets lost.

CINDY (O.S.)
I'm currently unemployed.

DAD (O.S.)
 Nothing wrong with that. I
 accomplished more on unemployment
 than I did at any paying job.

JEFF (O.S.)
 Cindy plays in a band.

CINDY (O.S.)
 It's nothing serious.

JEFF (O.S.)
 She's awesome.

JO (O.S.)
 That's great. What do you play?

CINDY (O.S.)
 I sing. We have kind of like a
 new-agey, punk, big-band style I
 guess... If that makes any sense...

JO (O.S.)
 Ohmigod, Danny!

Dan snaps out of it, smiles to Jo.

JO
 You'll never believe what I found
 the other day.

She gets up, leaves the room.

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tina stands behind Frank, braiding his hair tight against his
 scalp, while Drey looks on, smiling from across the table.

FRANK
 (in mid-story)
 She rolls right up on this kid.
 And he's no joke, he's a big dude,
 right? What's his name?

DREY
 Charles.

FRANK
 "Charles, you sorry-ass nigga; get
 the fuck off my bike, before I
 knock yo fat-ass out."

TINA
You said that?

Drey smiles, nods.

FRANK
Kid was stressin', I'm tellin' you.
Started apologizing, "I'm sorry, I
didn't know, sorry."

TINA
Then what? You knock him out?

FRANK
(points to Drey, smiles)
Tell her.

DREY
Didn't have to.

Frank cracks up.

FRANK
You heard that? Didn't have to.
That's my girl right there... How
many's that?

For the first time, we see what's on the table in front of Drey - a pile of plastic baggies next to a fist-sized mound of cocaine.

DREY
Ten?

FRANK
Do ten more.

INT. DUNNE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jo removes the children's classic "Free to be... You and Me" from its sleeve. She puts the vinyl album on the player, drops the needle.

DUNNE DINING ROOM

Jo rejoins the family at the table, as "It's All Right to Cry" echoes in from the other room.

JO
Do you remember this?

DAN

Jesus.

Dad pours everyone another glass.

CINDY

You guys really live it up around here.

DAD

Did you hear that folks? The rock star is impressed.

Cindy laughs.

DAD

Hey Jeff, didn't you tell this girl that around here we always party like it's 1999?

JEFF

Dad, could you be any more embarrassing?

DAD

(to Cindy)

Did you know I was in Nam? Check out this scar...

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Drey stands near the living room table, where Frank's still seated, checking out some of his ethnic figurines. She reaches over, grabs a little sambo, looks it over.

DREY

Why you got these scary things?

FRANK

(smiling)

Reminds me of our past. Can't forget we've come a long way, ya know?

DREY

I wouldn't want those around my house.

Frank chuckles. Drey sits down next to him at the table. She fiddles with the figurine, still in her hand.

DREY
You ever sell to coach?

FRANK
Why?

DAN
Just wondering.

FRANK
Don't you think you and Teach, your
relationship, is a little...

DREY
What?

FRANK
Inappropriate.

DREY
What do you mean?

FRANK
I mean he's your teacher.
Sometimes you act like--

DREY
--He's my friend.

FRANK
He's a basehead, Drey. He doesn't
have friends.

INT. DUNNE HOUSE - NIGHT

The CLITTER-CLATTER of dishes overwhelms the conversation, so this sequence focuses primarily on little details: smiles, subtle glances, forks, reactions to stories...

Cindy takes a sip of wine, not realizing she just finished another glass. Not missing a beat, Dan pours her another, winks at Jeff. Jeff smiles.

Dad leans back in his chair, stuffed.

CINDY
(drunk)
Be sure to save room for dialectics
everyone.

Dan smiles.

DAN
Number one...

JEFF
(to Cindy)
You have no idea what you've
started.

Jeff and Dan smile at each other. It is quiet for a beat as "It's Alright To Cry" continues to play from the other room.

Jo takes the moment to start clearing off the table. Cindy and Jeff get up to help.

Dan and Dad sit alone at the table, both staring off, listening to the music.

Dad looks at Dan. After a beat, Dad stands up and walks into the other room, changes the music.

EXT/INT. FRANK'S LEXUS - NIGHT

Frank at the wheel, Drey riding shotgun.

FRANK
You smoke weed?

DREY
Nah...

FRANK
Good. Keep your shit clear. You
got to. You drink?

DREY
Nah...

FRANK
Well, don't worry about that too
much. Nothin' wrong with a little
drink now and then... Ya heard?

DREY
Yeah, I heard.

FRANK
What about sex?

DREY
What about it?

FRANK
You got a man?

DREY
Hell naw.

FRANK
Smart kid. Smarter than Mike...

INT. DUNNE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dad empties the last bottle drops of whiskey into his glass, opens the cabinet, pulls down a new bottle, and tops it off. He sips his glass alone, stares over to the...

DUNNE LIVING ROOM

...where Cindy puts on an old Tom Petty record, and sings along. Jo and Jeff join in while Dan looks on from the couch.

EXT/INT. FRANK'S LEXUS - NIGHT

Frank turns up the car stereo. He and Drey bump their heads to the underground hip-hop jam BLASTING through the speakers. Hold.

The car pulls to the curb in a residential neighborhood. Frank turns down the stereo, reaches under his seat, and comes up with a brown paper bag.

FRANK
Apartment 3.

Drey takes the bag from Frank, gets out.

INT. DUNNE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Dad sits down next to Dan on the couch.

DAD
(drunk)
Teach me something, Dan. Teach me some ebonics. That what they got you teaching in that zoo?

Dan doesn't respond. We get the feeling he knew this was coming sooner or later.

DAD
I'd like to know... how do you
say... asshole in ebonics?

JO
Russ! What are you doing?

DAD
Nothin' ma. Havin' fun is all.

Dan attempts to stand, but Dad pulls him back down.

DAD
Hey... Why don't you visit more
often? I miss you. You know that?

DAN
I'll try.

DAD
I'm sorry. One more thing... I'm
an asshole, I'm sorry... I love
you. You know that? You should
know that.

DAN
I know it.

DAD
You know that right?

DAN
Yeah.

DAD
Good.

Dan gets up, and as he passes Cindy, she attempts to pour herself another glass of wine, but the bottle's empty.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Drey KNOCKS on the door, waits. She looks back over her shoulder at Frank parked way down the block.

Finally, a white, HIPPIY DUDE (30s) opens the door.

HIPPY
Hey shorty... come inside.

INSIDE THE HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

A PREPPY WHITE KID, wearing a Berkeley High School Varsity Football jacket snorts coke, while several other high school kids lounge around, playing video games.

The hippy dude hands Drey an envelope.

HIPPY

Have a seat, count if you want.

CUT to Drey on the couch, counting the cash.

VARSIITY KID

I know you. You're Mike Duncan's little sister. I used to play ball with him...

Drey doesn't even blink, focused on the cash in her hands. When she's finished counting, she nods to the hippy, gets up, heads for the door...

VARSIITY KID (O.S.)

Hey, yo, Shorty!

At the door, Drey slowly spins around.

PREPPY

Say hi to Mike for me.

Hold on Drey. She exits without responding.

INT. DUNNE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jo and Dan.

JO

I bet you're great with those kids. I'm so proud of you, Dan.

DAN

Thanks, mom... They were the only thing keeping me sane.

JO

It's a good thing, to teach. We used to think we could change the world, you know, when we were young. Those days anything was possible. Revolution was in the air. But we were just kids... we had no idea...

DAN
You stopped the war.

JO
You think so? That's nice honey--
we thought so. Now I'm not so
sure. I think it had more to do
with Dan Ellsberg than any of us.

DAN
One person alone can't do shit.

JO
I guess not... Do you hear from
Rachel anymore?

DAN
Not really.

JO
I saw her at Safeway. Maybe it's
her mom.

DAN
Maybe.

JO
She looked great. Maybe you should
call her.

DAN
I don't know. Maybe.

JO
I know it wasn't easy for you. You
had it harder than Jeff. I'm sorry
that we weren't--

DAN
--Mom... I'm okay. Don't worry.
I'm fine now. That's all over.

JO
Are you happy?

DAN
Yeah... yeah.

JO
Good. When you're happy, I'm
happy.

DAN
I'm happy.

JO
It's so nice to see you and Jeff
together. My boys.

Jo finishes off her glass of wine, stares out at Jeff and
Cindy in the living room.

DAN
Mom?

She doesn't hear, staring straight ahead, distant.

Dan watches her for a beat, then gets up and walks out of the
room. Jo looks after him, about to call out, but stops
herself.

EXT/INT. FRANK'S LEXUS - NIGHT

CLOSE ON DREY staring out the window, while Frank speaks off-
screen.

FRANK (O.S.)
Easy right? Beats flippin'
burgers, I'll tell you that much.

Frank's cell phone RINGS.

FRANK
(into phone)
Hello? Yeah, what's up? Okay...
I could be over there in like
twenty minutes... All good.
Listen, I got a new kid working
tonight, okay? So don't stress...
Peace.

Frank hangs up, looks over to Drey, and smiles.

INT. DUNNE GARAGE - NIGHT

Surrounded by darkness, a glowing red cherry CRACKLES as Dan
gets high. When he exhales, a bottle KLINKS off-screen.

CINDY
Your mom said there was more wine
out here.

Dan stares at her for a long beat.

CINDY
I found it.

Awkward pause.

DAN
Do you like my brother, Cindy?

CINDY
Yeah.

DAN
Why?

CINDY
He's nice. He's funny. I don't
know...

DAN
Does he tell you jokes?

CINDY
Sometimes.

DAN
Like what?

Cindy thinks for a beat, then...

CINDY
Knock knock.

DAN
Who's there?

CINDY
The interrupting cow.

DAN
The interrupting--

CINDY
--Mooo.

They both smile. Hold.

EXT. MOTOR INN MOTEL - NIGHT

Frank's Lexus rolls to a stop in front of the beat-up, single-story motel, that appears unchanged since 1960.

FRANK

Room 109. Meet me at the corner
when you're done. I'll take you
home.

Drey nods and Frank pulls away.

EXT. ROOM 109

Muffled MUSIC and LAUGHTER seeps through the door. Drey
KNOCKS, and after some brief commotion inside...

...the door cracks open, and Dan peaks out. His smile fades.
They stare at each other for a long beat. Nobody breathes.
Dan opens the door, steps aside to let Drey through.

INT. ROOM 109

Drey scans the room, where two WOMEN in their underwear are
sprawled over one bed, spacing out, while an older man
channel surfs with the remote on another. Distorted music
POUNDS out from an old stereo boom box.

Dan frantically kicks several beer cans under the beds,
addresses the women...

DAN

Hey, can you guys? Listen, put
some clothes on. Ladies, we have
company, I mean... Hello?

He pathetically smiles at Drey, humiliated by the situation.

DAN

So...

WOMAN ON BED

Who is that?

Dan wanders to the side table and sits, fidgeting with a
plastic credit card, and clenching his jaw.

Drey goes to the table, sets a paper bag down in front of
him.

DAN

This is Drey. My brightest
student.

One of the women approaches Dan, laughing, grabs a pipe from
the table, reaches into the bag and loads a rock into it.

DAN
Can you please put on a goddamn
shirt please?

The woman makes a face at him and lights up.

DREY
You got the money?

Dan glances up to Drey.

He reaches into his pocket, puts a wad of cash on the table.

Drey counts the money, while Dan walks over to the window,
and stares out.

Drey puts the cash in her pocket, heads for the door.

DAN
Drey?

She looks to him.

DAN
(swirling his finger)
The cycle continues...

She exits.

INT. DREY'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Drey asleep on the couch in street clothes, while an early
morning talk show plays on TV.

The front door opens, and Karen enters, sporting her E.M.T.
uniform. She sees Drey, turns off the TV, and kisses her on
the forehead. Drey stirs.

KAREN
Hey sweetie...

Karen sits down on the couch. Drey, eyes still closed, makes
room for her. Karen leans back and closes her eyes, as Drey
scotches her head onto Karen's lap.

DREY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Drey and Karen at the table over a bowl of cereal. Drey
stares down at her bowl.

KAREN

I don't think it's good for you,
fallin' asleep in front of the TV
all the time.

Drey nods.

KAREN

You feelin' blue today?

Drey shrugs, takes a bite of her soggy cereal.

KAREN

Any reason?

DREY

Naw. Just thinkin' about Mike, I
guess.

KAREN

I miss your brother, too... We'll
go visit him soon as I get some
time off.

(shaking her head)

I can't believe they slapped me
with another double tomorrow. Can
you believe it? I can't get a
goddamn break.

Finishing off her cereal, Karen brings her bowl to the sink.

KAREN

So, what else is going on? I heard
something about a new Civil Rights
thing with Oprah?

After a prolonged silence, Karen looks back at Drey, who
looks up from her cereal bowl. She's crying.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

BEEP. On Dan's answering machine.

ISABEL'S VOICE

(on machine)

It's Isabel... Look, I'm not sure
what happened the other night. I
didn't know what to do...

Isabel's voice continues over images of Dan's empty
apartment: BEDROOM, BATHROOM, KITCHEN WITH HALF-EMPTY CAT-
FOOD BOWL, DEAD CAT IN LIVING ROOM. Dan is nowhere to be
found.

ISABEL'S VOICE

I didn't want this to happen. I
got to school, I asked around,
everyone knows something is wrong.
I'm worried. Please call me back.
I'm sorry.

BEEP.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Drey stares at the clock as an old dork SUBSTITUTE TEACHER
enters.

SUBSTITUTE

Hey everybody. I'm going to be
filling in for your teacher this
week. My name is Mr. Light.

STACY

Where's Mr. Dunne?

MR. LIGHT

I'm sorry I don't know.

GERALD

When's he coming back?

MR. LIGHT

They don't tell me these things.
But why don't you guys tell me...
What have you been learning?

TERRANCE

Dialectics.

MR. LIGHT

Dia-lectics?

JAMAL

As applied to popular grassroots
struggles in world history.

LENA

Negation of negation?

ROODLY

Do you even know who Hegel is?

BERNARD

Spirals and cycles and all that.

We hold on Drey as she stares at Bernard's finger swirling in the air. Something seems to click.

EXT. SCHOOL - BIKE RACK - AFTER SCHOOL

Drey unlocks her bike, but stops upon seeing Frank standing next to his car a few feet away. He nods to her.

FRANK
What's good, Drey?

DREY
Nothing. What's good with you?

FRANK
Need a ride?

DREY
I gotta get home.

FRANK
I'll take you home then.

DREY
Nah, I got my bike.

Drey hops on her bike, begins to pedal away.

FRANK
Drey...

She looks back over her shoulder.

FRANK
See ya around.

Drey continues on, Frank looking after.

EXT. MOTOR INN MOTEL - DAY

Drey cruises to a stop on the street outside the motel, stares down the driveway. She's sucking on a blow-pop.

OUTSIDE ROOM 109

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Drey looks around both ways, then back to the door.

After a long beat, the door cracks open. Drey looks at the figure in the doorway step back and away. She stares at the small opening and slowly pushes the door open.

INT. ROOM 109

A total mess. Empty beer and liquor bottles on the floor, a blanket draped over the mirror, chairs overturned.

Dan on the bed, leans back against the headboard, wrapped in a white sheet. He looks worse than we've ever seen him, lips swollen, bloodshot eyes. His head is shaven.

Drey watches him for a moment, a bit shocked by his appearance. She steps deeper into the room, sits on the edge of the other bed across from Dan.

DREY

What happened to your friends?

DAN

Gone. You missed a great party, Drey.

DREY

Looks like it... What's up with your hair?

DAN

I don't know. It was buggin' me out, I guess.

He runs his hand over his smooth head.

DAN

Feels better though. You like it?

DREY

Not really.

Dan gives an awkward laugh, lowers his head.

Drey reaches into her coat pocket, grabs a new blow-pop, and offers it to Dan. He takes it, unwraps it, and puts it in his mouth.

They each suck on their respective blow-pops in silence.

INT. MOVING BUS

At the back of the bus, Dan leans against the window spacing out, while Drey stares straight ahead.

Long pause. The bus continues, engine HUMMING. Dan rubs his hand over Drey's head. Hold.

INT. DAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Drey, holding a black garbage bag, winces as Dan sets his dead cat inside. She closes it up, hands the bag to Dan. He carries it outside, while...

...Drey, glances around the room, noticing a pile of vinyl records on the floor. She sits down next to the records, begins to thumb through them.

Dan returns, sits on the couch.

DAN

Okay...

Drey continues to finger through his albums, finds the "Free To Be..." album that played earlier at Dan's parents' house.

DAN

Knock knock...

Drey smiles, looks over.

DREY

Who's there?

DAN

The interrupting cow.

DREY

The interrupting cow who?

DAN

(way too late)

Moooo.

After a beat, she smiles.

DREY

That was terrible.

Dan takes a deep breath.

DAN

Sorry.

Drey's smile fades. She looks down at the album in her hands, removes it from the sleeve, and clumsily puts it on.

She joins Dan on the couch. They stare ahead, listening to the upbeat children's tune playing in contrast to Dan's down-trodden appearance.

He is on the verge of tears...

HOLD.

CUT TO BLACK.