

Radio Flver

by

Mickey Evans

1ST DRAFT
November 7th, 1989

DISSOLVING TITLES:

"But Dad, they're made of wax..."

-Icarus

"And what are we supposed to
fill it with... hot air?!"

-Joseph Montgolfier

"Good luck brother."

-Wilbur Wright

IN THE DARKNESS

a small plane's prop kicks over. We slowly FADE INTO what may be thousands of tightly clustered stars in a rich violet sky. MOVING CLOSER reveals the stars are

SUBURBAN LIGHTS

and rather than gazing heavenward, we are looking down from on high at

THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - 1962

privy to a vast aerial vista of the twinkling lights below. We float forward in an invisible dirigible. DRAWING CLOSER to earth, we pass over a

QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD

whose street lamps glow warmly. DRAWING CLOSER STILL, we pass beyond the neighborhood, over

OLD RAILROAD TRACKS

and finally arrive, hovering above

A SMALL AIRPORT RUNWAY

where an old Piper Cub taxis to the far end of the tarmac. As distant movement catches our attention, we MOVE AGAIN toward a

TOWERING HILLSIDE

adjacent to the airport. We pass over the runway fence, across a public baseball diamond and slowly up behind three boys who are staring up the hill. WE'RE STILL MOVING, just out in front of the middle boy, where we finally become

HIS POV

near the entrance to an abandoned mine shaft jutting out from the hillside. Looking up past the mine entrance, the hill spreads out before us: a 60% grade up a 500 foot slope to a plateau.

LOOKING BACK

the runway fence is 300 feet away.

Lets go.

FISHER'S VOICE

(CONTINUED)

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FISHER

forces his way up the grade, shoving his Indian Head bicycle ahead of him; a pre-adolescent Jimmy Dean in his leather jacket. His two buddies BARNEY (with an oil can) and JERRY (with a makeshift starter's flag) struggle behind him.

BARNEY

I dunno why the hell you're doin' this anyway, it can't be done Fisher.

JERRY

Yeah Fish, come on, what're you tryin' to prove?

Fisher carries on in determined silence.

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

where, as the boys crest the slope out of breath, they're FRAMED IN the moon sitting low in the sky behind them. Fisher whips his bike around. Kick stands it toward the slope. He CHECKS THE TERRAIN

below, 500 monstrous vertical feet to the mine shaft entrance, which -from here - looks suspiciously like a take-off ramp.

FISHER

mounts up.

FISHER

It can be done.

BARNEY

No it can't goddamnit, it's far as a football field to that fence!

Jacket zipped. Baseball cap brim to the back. Kick stand retracted. Chain grease test - no good, snaps his fingers, Barney oils it. Checks it again, it's good, wipes it on his ked sole. Gloved fingers heavy on the bars. Rolls to the edge.

JERRY

Come on Fish, you're scarin' the shit out of me.

FISHER

Flag it Jerry.

(CONTINUED)

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Jerry tentatively raises the starter's flag over his head.

BARNEY
Why're you doin' this Fisher?

FISHER
Cause I'm the King of Pacoima.

Jerry drops the flag. Fisher cuts loose down the
BIG HILL

picking up speed, too much speed over the cloddy dirt.
BARNEY & JERRY

see it and scream their young lungs out:

Fisher! Wait! BARNEY/JERRY

THE PIPER CUB

has started down the runway. Its wheels chatter angrily,
desperately trying to leave earth.

HILLSIDE

where Fisher has busted the envelope. Crushing velocity
shudders nuts and bolts loose from the bike frame. PING! heavy
thrust plucks spokes in half. Sheer speed snaps the chain and
Fisher's keds spin uncontrollably on a loose sprocket. The
tires hits the

MINE SHAFT RAMP

and wrench rotted boards loose from rusty nails.

FISHER AND HIS INDIAN HEAD

soar. Over the

BASEBALL DIAMOND

and crest the top of the runway fence just as the
PIPER CUB

finally breaks gravity and drag, its wheels lifting off above
the asphalt.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

FISHER'S EYES

manage only a quick look of dread as his hair whips madly in the windforce.

BARNEY & JERRY

close their eyes.

PLATEAU - VISTA

where on the runway, 800 feet away, Fisher and the Piper meet in a fiery explosion that lights up the night, turning the blackness a dull gray. The smokey gray clouds become an...

CUT TO:

...old fashioned (b&w) Saturday serial TITLE CARD, reading:

THE BROTHERHOOD OF VALIANT
PEANUT BUTTER

"For God speaks again and again, in dreams,
in visions of the night, when deep sleep
falls on men as they lie in their beds."

-Job 30:15

EXT. HIGHWAY, OKLAHOMA PANHANDLE - 1966 - DAY

Dusty wind across the longest stretch of blacktop in the country. The dashed divider line is faded from long, hot mid-west summers. The dot in the distance grows into an absurdly overdriven 1961 Plymouth Valiant. It passes a sign, "Pleasant Points Oklahoma Welcomes You and Your Family."

INT. VALIANT - TRAVELING - DAY

In the back seat, surrounded by everything they own in the world, are BOBBY (4) and MIKE (6), asleep in matching Roy Rogers cowboy outfits.

They yawn awake. Check out the windows for a navigation fix. Crack a nearly empty jar of peanut butter and a box of crackers. Mike scrapes the last scoop out and is about to eat it. Bobby watches hungrily. Mike stops in mid bite.

MIKE

It's my scoop. 50/50 like we said.

BOBBY

.(disappointed)
I know.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Mike ponders. Bites half the cracker. Gives the other half to Bobby who eats it gratefully. Mike drops the empty jar to the floor where it joins 7 others.

BOBBY

That's seven Mom, how far's that?

Their mother, MARY, is driving. She's older than her late 20's lets on. She's been driving a long, long time.

MARY

One thousand and five hundred miles.

MIKE/BOBBY

(impressed)

Whoa.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

as the Valiant passes, heading toward the small town in the distance. Oceans of swaying yellow wheat from here to eternity flank the empty highway.

NARRATOR

Our Mom never said why our Dad didn't come with us. And we never asked her. But we knew by the time we had gone that one thousand five hundred miles that we would never see him again.

EXT. PLEASANT POINTS, OKLAHOMA - DAY

Wonderful groups of smiling FAMILIES line the sidewalks watching a Veterans of Foreign Wars Parade. OLD TIMERS march all the way down shop-lined Main Street, USA, followed by: the local high school Marching Band, the Prom Queen waving from a sparkling drop-top cadillac, the Mayor, the Elks contingent, the local Ladies Auxiliary, the Boys suited up from the high school grid-iron.

NARRATOR

It didn't matter to us because there was so much incredible stuff to see that, after a while, we forgot all about him.

INT. VALIANT - PARKED - SIDE STREET - DAY

Mike and Bobby are watching through the windshield, on either side of Mary. It's not so much the parade that's got their interest, as the

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FAMILIES

they can see enjoying themselves at the event. Fathers giving snow cones to their sons. Mothers holding daughters. Canopie baby strollers with lemonade sipping Grandmothers fanning the infants therein.

EXT. PLEASANT POINTS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

An inspiring slice of American suburbia. Walt would've approved. An Elm lined street of fairy tale houses; red brick chimneys, wondrous flower beds, OLD FOLKS on porch swings and soothing barbecue smoke from backyards.

NARRATOR

All the people who lived there were perfect people. No one ever got mad at anyone else, and there were never any arguments.

INT. VALIANT - PASSING - DAY

Mike and Bobby bounce back and forth between the two side rear windows, watching wishfully. Something catches Bobby's attention; he follows it intensely through the rear window.

WHAT HE SEES

is a KID hauling a red wagon down the sidewalk.

MARY

is crying silently. The boys notice, say nothing, and sit back down quietly and obediently.

NARRATOR

Even though I was 6-years-old I'm sure I was right when I guessed that no one there, in that most perfect small town in the world, had any idea what an apartment was.

(beat)

We did. We were going all the way across the country to live in one.

EXT. BUFFALO FARM - DAY

the big catastrophe of a weather beaten sign reads, "Geronimo Bill's Buffalo Farm & Wild Adventure Souvenir Shop." The Valiant pulls into the parking lot turning up clouds of dust in the absence of gravel that once covered it. At the

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SOUVENIR STAND

Mike and Bobby hop out. They take two steps and halt dead in their tracks, staring ahead.

NARRATOR

Now, except for the giant Dinosaur in Missouri that they had turned into a hamburger stand when it died, what we saw in Oklahoma was the greatest thing we'd ever seen.

The sign on the whiskey barrel reads, "Genuine American Indian Rubber Tipped Bamboo Spears - 50 cents." Mike and Bobby can't take their eyes off them.

NARRATOR

Even though we were young we knew how important money was. And we knew that Mom didn't have too much of it. So, we never had most of the greatest things in life. But what we had - more than any other kids - were memories.

Mike pulls Bobby away from the barrel before Mary can see their craving. They meet at the entrance turnstile. GERONIMO BILL is a rough 60-year-old clone of his name who chain-chews malted milk balls.

GERONIMO BILL

Hi boys, welcome to the Geronimo Bill Buffalo Farm and Wild Adventure Souvenir Shop where the memories last a lifetime and the past sits up and bites ya like a c'yote.

(beat)

That be three Ma'am?

Mary checks the price sign, "Admission - 25 cents."

MARY

Would it be alright if I just set them on the fence so they could see the buffalo?

The dollar signs in Geronimo Bill's eyes fade. His tobacco stained fingers stroke his bearded chin, drawing his features into pity. His eyes shift from the wayward family to the empty parking lot.

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GERONIMO BILL

Well Ma'am, today's your lucky day.
It's free admission day for folks
from out of town. So you go on in
and stay to the path and enjoy
yourselves.

MARY

Thank you.

Bobby pushes through the turnstile first, rambling down the
fenced walkway ahead of his mother.

MARY

Bobby!

Mary follows him in. Mike ratchets through the bars slower,
noticing the little visitor counter which reads only 15. He
looks up at the old man with thanks, and more understanding
than a 6-year-old should have.

EXT. BOARDED WALKWAY - DAY

Mike and Bobby pass slowly by faded old wild west murals; as
if from Bill Cody's traveling Wild West Show. They're
stupefied by the circusey renditions of thunderous herds of
Buffaloes being hunted by brightly painted Indians on
horseback.

MARY

Okay guys don't get scared, the
buffaloes are behind a fence.

MIKE

Mom, buffaloes don't eat people,
they eat bears and stuff.

EXT. VIEWING AREA - DAY

A rickety wooden staircase to a small platform from where
visitors gaze upon the buffalo. Bobby races up the stairs and
hops, trying to peer over the railing. Mary hefts him up upon
it. Mike tippee toes. As they look into the distance their
countenances waffle from excitement to curiosity to sadness.

BUFFALO FIELD

in which are standing the last of America's last great beasts;
three old, war-torn Bison. Probably circus rejects. One
larger than the others whose coat is patchy and falling off.
The smaller ones have lost their horns.

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They huddle together in a strange communion, sharing the only thing they've left to look forward to: swatting flies off each other with their tails.

The large Bison turns its massive head slowly in Mike's direction. There are tears in his big brown eyes.

SOUVENIR STAND

Mary hurries back through the turnstile, a son at each hand; the familial metaphor was too much for her. Geronimo Bill tips his hat, watching them head toward the Valiant.

MARY

Thank you again.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

just as Mary is pulling away, Geronimo Bill rushes over with one hand behind his back, waving her to stop with the other. He leans in the passenger window.

GERONIMO BILL

Almost forgot, here you go boys.
Take care of your Ma now, ya hear?

He hands the boys each a Genuine American Indian Rubber Tipped Bamboo Spear. Their eyes light up.

BOBBY/MIKE

Thank you. We will.

The Valiant pulls away hacking clouds of smoke from mechanical tuberculosis.

INT. VALIANT - TRAVELING - DAY

Mike and Bobby stare out the back window clutching their spears with all their tiny might, and

WATCH

as Geronimo Bill goes into the Buffalo field. The large Bison lumbers over and he scratches the beast on the head like an old friend. He treats them all to handfuls of malted milk balls.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

where the Valiant is traveling the ironed ribbon of asphalt into the setting sun.

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NARRATOR

The highway we were on was long and straight and flat and at the end of it, where the road met the sky, the sun was sinking down like a big orange ball lost forever behind a neighbor's backyard fence.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN - ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO - NIGHT

the Valiant is parked outside. Mary carries a sleeping Bobby inside. Mike locks the car and carries their minimal belongings after her.

NARRATOR

I remember very little after that.

EXT. MOTEL SIX - PHOENIX, ARIZONA - NIGHT

Mary is at the check-in window pleading with the CLERK to accept an under-payment. Bobby and Mike stand behind her. The Clerk gives in.

NARRATOR

But, enough to know that although she didn't tell us-

EXT. KOA - MOJAVE, CALIFORNIA - NIGHT

Mary and the Boys are asleep in the car at a cut-rate by-the-night campground. Tents and trailers all around the Valiant.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

-Mom was running out of money.

EXT. AN APARTMENT - LOS ANGELES - TWILIGHT

The Valiant, rasping its death breath, sputters into the driveway of a bland stucco building.

NARRATOR

Finally, after 15 jars of peanut butter, just as Mom's car died... an apartment next to an aunt we didn't even know we had.

Their AUNT, a happily porcine woman in a wild Mama Cass moo-moo, rushes out of an apartment and embraces Mary.

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THE SUN

is a distant, soothing orange as it sets over L.A. It sinks in a smooth arch, closing out this part of the memory.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUNRISE - 2 YEARS LATER - 1968

as if millions of miles closer to earth, like an omen in fusion, el sol rises in angry yellow - looming monstrosly - cutting out the sky over the apartment.

NARRATOR

A long time goes by, I think maybe two years. And then-

INT. AUNT'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mike (now 8) and Bobby (now 6) are on the couch, sharing a bowl of popcorn as they watch "Born Free," on television. Mary, the Aunt, her HUSBAND and another MAN are at the kitchen table playing cards.

(Note: we never see this man's face)

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

-a man who was a friend of our Aunt's husband.

INT. THE MAN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

His HANDS adjust Mike and Bobby's clip-on ties and slicks back their hair with Brill Cream. Bobby is momentarily reflected in and distorted wildly on the polished metal surface of a single brilliant, silver cufflink.

INT. CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Bobby and Mike are in the back seat switching their ties back and forth. Mary is up front in a handsome blue dress.

NARRATOR

Mom got a new dress.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

The Aunt, her Husband and a few FRIENDS of the groom. Mike and Bobby throw rice at Mary and the Man as they come out. We can see her, but the grain shower obscures the Man's face.

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EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

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Bobby and Mike, with baseball gloves, play catch with the anonymous new father who's o.s.

NARRATOR

And then, he was our new Dad.

(pause)

And we called him The King.

d Mike

the
ike
with

DISNEYLAND - MONTAGE - DAY

Bobby and Mike gaze wondrously at the small town shops down Mainstreet, USA.

In FRONTIERLAND, The King's HAND sets a Davy Crockett coon skin cap on Bobby's head.

In ADVENTURELAND, Mike gets a Map of Disneyland.

On the DUMBO RIDE, Bobby pilots the flying elephant like a jetfighter.

py.
his
agon.

On the ROCKET RIDE, Mike looks woozy. All the other rockets are flying straight, at one altitude. Bobby's turning everything but loops in theirs.

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NARRATOR

It was at Disneyland, where, for the first time, I knew there was something different about my brother.

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On the PETER PAN RIDE, as the tiny ship lifts off through Darling's window and the narrator warns excitedly, "Hang on everybody, here we gooo!" Bobby's eyes are as big as moon pies.

NARRATOR

I could tell by the look in his eyes that he knew something about a special secret thing that all kids know. Only he knew more. A lot more.

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At the end of the HAUNTED MANSION ride, where the tiny holographic WITCH warns: "Hurry baaack. And don't forget to bring your death certificate..." Bobby clings to Mary's hand tightly. The King is standing too close to him.

NARRATOR

What I didn't know was how important his extra knowledge was going to turn out to be.

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At the DISNEYLAND EXIT, as night is encroaching, Bobby and Mike trail behind Mary at arm's length. They're momentarily separated from The King by the CROWD. They pass beneath the railroad bridge, leaving behind an omen, something that Mike notices Bobby reflected in and trying to fill his memory with before it falls out of sight: a poster for "Peter Pan."

END MONTAGE.

INT. APARTMENT - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAY

Bobby and Mike are opening presents. Walkie talkies, Highlights Magazines, Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots, G.I. Joe flashlights, Incredible Edibles Monster Candy Maker, Map-O-America Coleman sleeping bags, a German Shepherd puppy. And something which Bobby cannot keep his eyes off or take his hands from: a brilliant red Radio Flyer Sidewalk Special Wagon.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM (APT.) - ANOTHER TIME - NIGHT

New bunk beds. The boys are staring at the top one; the one they both want.

LATER - SAME

Mike and Bobby are playing Rock 'em Sock 'em Robots for dibs on the top bunk. Mike's Robot pulverizes Bobby's over and over. Mike tallies up the scores. He's won. He takes the bottom one. Bobby throws his bag up top.

BOBBY

Thanks Mike.

INT. LIVING ROOM (APT.) - JULY, 1969 - NIGHT

The family is watching television. Mary and the King are on the couch. SHANE (the puppy) is with Mike. Bobby's sitting close to the set, one hand holding the wagon handle next to him. Neil Armstrong is about to set foot on the moon:

ARMSTRONG'S VOICE

One small step for a man...

Bobby fingers tighten around the handle.

ARMSTRONG'S VOICE

...one giant leap for mankind.

EXT. WILDERNESS - TWILIGHT

The grasses around Bobby's head tell us he's lying back, maybe in a field. He's watching a hawk circling, lazily riding the thermals high above. .

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MIKE'S VOICE
(over Bobby's walkie
talkie)

Think he'll ever come down?

BOBBY
(into walkie talkie)
Nope. He's gonna fly forever.

MIKE'S VOICE
How do you know?

BOBBY
Cause that's what I'd do if I was
a Hawk.

MIKE'S VOICE
Where would you go?

BOBBY
Really far away.

As Mike and Bobby stand up, they aren't miles apart, they've
been lying side by side. Shane's with them, a year old now.

EXT. HILL ABOVE RIVER - TWILIGHT

as Bobby and Mike crest the trail at the top of a hill, they
stop dead in their tracks, seeing

THE KING

far below, fishing from a stumplog with his back to them. He
tilts his head back, exposing a single blue n' white can to
the fading sunlight.

MIKE & BOBBY

look on in what fast becomes horror. Bobby lets his eyes drop
to the ground in front of him - he knows something Mike
doesn't.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM (APT.) - NIGHT

Only lumps inside the sleeping bags on the bunk beds. Shane
is asleep at Mike's feet.

NARRATOR
After we got back from our camping
trip, some things started happening
to Bobby.

(beat)
Mostly when he slept.

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IN THE BAGS

Mike and Bobby communicate via the walkie talkies.

MIKE

Aren't you gonna tell me what the dreams are?

BOBBY

No. They're just nightmares, but too scary.

MIKE

If you tell me then maybe they won't be scary no more.

BOBBY

No. They will. It don't matter.

MIKE

How do you know?

BOBBY

Just because. Besides I don't remember them after I wake up, just that they're scary.

MIKE

Alright, when you have another one and I see you rollin' around, I'll wake you up and you can tell me what it was.

BOBBY

(paused)

I dunno Mike, you might tell Mom and I don't want to cause she might tell The King and he might get mad at me.

MIKE

No I won't, here-

Mike sticks his arm out through the sleeping bag, holding his pinkie up to Bobby on the top bunk.

MIKE (CONT'D)

-pinkie promise, I swear I won't tell Mom.

BOBBY

(hesitant)

Okay I guess.

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Bobby's arm appears and the brothers lock pinkies in a sacred oath.

LATER - SAME

Only their faces now peek out of their bags. Bobby's eyelids are drooping. Mike's staring up at the bed springs.

Bobby's eyes close.

The springs above Mike begin a danse macabre. Rattle-violent. Mike starts out of his bag to wake Bobby up, then - somewhere in the apartment o.s. - the crack of pull-tab beer can, and a chorus of RANTING scares him stiff. Mike ducks back inside his

SLEEPING BAG

where, true to the bag's name, there's a map of America on the lining. Mike's face-to-face with the state of Oklahoma. Represented in the panhandle is a big Buffalo standing in a field of tall yellow grass.

The muffled SCREAMING beyond their room continues.

Mike reaches carefully under his bed. Brings up his Genuine American Indian Spear and zips the bag shut. He clutches the toy-weapon close, stares intently at the Buffalo, trying to block out the madness beyond his bedroom door.

SLEEPING BAG PRINT

where the Buffalo comes to life in an animated world of its own, charging across the open plains and is joined by another. Another. Soon there are hundreds of the beasts dancing across the vast uni-dimensional plain of cotton fabric.

NARRATOR

I never knew what Bobby was dreaming until one night when it started to rain in our room.

It begins to rain in Mike's sleeping bag. The animated Buffaloes take shelter under a single sprawling Oak. And suddenly Mike is among them in the

VAST PLAINS

and the beasts are real. It's all real. Mike's pajamas are soaked through. The HOLLERING in the apartment permeates even this vivid imagining: It comes in chorus with lightning and thunder from dark and ominous

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WEATHERHEADS

above the fields.

MIKE

moves into the herd and the beasts surround him in a protective circle. Bobby suddenly cries out from beyond this dream. Mike tries to move beyond the circle and the Bison cut him off.

MIKE

I have to go back.

The largest Bison shakes his head.

MIKE

I have to, my brother's having a nightmare.

The Bison snort and paw at the ground in denial.

MIKE

Please... He needs me.

BISON'S VOICE

When you need me, I'll be here.

The big one steps aside. Mike runs into the field, over slicking earth and mud. He slips, falls flat back and goes unconscious. When he opens his eyes he is back in his

SLEEPING BAG

and he's soaking wet. Shane is staring at him through the darkness. Mike throws his bag aside. Finds the springs above him soaked through with urine. Grabs his flashlight. Jumps out of bed shining the beam on the top bunk, finding

BOBBY

curled into a feral contortion like a death-threatened animal, weeping deeply in his sleep. Mike lays a hand on Bobby's back to shake him awake and accidentally slides the pajama top up exposing his brother's back.

Bobby's young muscles are covered with bruises and welts. He shakes Bobby's shoulder instead. Bobby wakes violently, flipping around and crouching against the wall with his arms across his face.

MIKE

Bobby, what was it? What was the nightmare about?

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Bobby comes slowly out from under his cover. His eyes are puddles of tears.

MIKE

What did you dream? What happened?

BOBBY

(slow)

The King. The King was chasing me and I couldn't get away.

Mike flicks the flashlight off.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - 1970 -
Stucco nirvana.

EXT. TRACT HOUSE - DAY

which shares a common wall with a police station parking lot.
A VW bus and a VW bug, both stuffed with furniture, sprint up the driveway. They're quickly unloaded by Mike (now 10), Bobby (now 8), Mary and The King. Bobby tows the Radio Flyer behind him, shuttling stuff with it. The cars speed away empty. Appear loaded. Speed away. Appear...

NARRATOR

In the middle of the hottest month in the middle of 1970 we moved a million miles away. Mom told us that it was only about 30 miles from our apartment, but we went back and forth so many times, that if you added up all the peanut butter jars it would've taken to make all those trips, it would've been about a hundred.

The last of the stuff is unloaded. Mary and Mike and Bobby and the King stand with their backs to us, looking up at the house from the sidewalk. A classic "row-of-steps" family portrait. Shane, Bobby (holding the Radio Flyer handle), Mike, Mary then The King; the photo is marred only by the smallest extra distance between The King and his step family.

NARRATOR

It was here, in the most perfect tract house in the world, where - when things seemed happy and good - that it really all began.

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From across the common wall, a gentle giant of a cop, OFFICER SEAMUS DOUGHERTY waves over to them.

DOUGHERTY

Hi. Welcome to the neighborhood.

Mike and Bobby wave back effusively. Mary smiles softly at him and waves. The King's head turns toward the man, then away, ignoring him as he heads straight for the garage and locks himself inside. Officer Dougherty lowers his arm curiously.

DOUGHERTY

(to himself)

Friendly guy.

Albeit momentary, Mary and the boys have made contact with the big man.

INT. THE HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

A post moving mess. Mary is straightening frantically. The King passes by b.g. in the bedroom doorway. Bobby and Mike are watching their mother work.

MIKE

Mom?

MARY

Yes?

MIKE

Can me and Bobby go exploring?

MARY

Is your room put away yet?

MIKE

Umm... we'll check.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S NEW ROOM - DAY

A mountain of chaos. Mike eyes the closet door. Smiles. Flies it open. Bobby jets around the room, tossing Mike toys, pillows, clothes, lunch boxes, books etc... Seconds later, Mike wedges the door shut, just preventing the entire ill constructed hill of junk from tumbling out after him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary is still sorting. She turns to find Mike and Bobby standing once again before her - as if they never left - clutching their Genuine American Indian spears.

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CONTINUED:

MIKE

We checked, it's clean.

Mary eyes them suspiciously.

MARY

Alrigh-

Before she finishes, they're out the back door, sucking up newspapers in their tiny jet wash.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Mike and Bobby and Shane scan Heaven. From the right; a redwood clubhouse leaking spar-varnish sap like an axed maple, a length of broken chain still bolted to an old clothes line pole, green grass to the redwood fence, an apricot tree, a built-in brick barbecue with redwood cabinets on a detached patio, and around the side of the house:

BOBBY

Wow, a place to put garbage cans.

MIKE'S HAND

closes around the clubhouse doorknob and opens it. They

BOTH

jump back spooked, falling flat on their butts. Shane barks. Sitting now, they're eye to eye with a desert tortoise in the doorway. It eyes them curiously. The other length of chain (from the clothes line pole) is bolted to its shell.

BOBBY

It's a Dinosaur.

MIKE

It's a Turtle.

BOBBY

Look at that chain, he musta busted it and climbed in the clubhouse.

MIKE

Turtles can't climb.

BOBBY

Then how'd he get in there?

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CONTINUED:

MIKE

Don't know.

(picking it up)

Help me, he weighs a ton.

Bobby lends a hand and they set the turtle in the backyard.
It sprints for an apricot.

BOBBY

He musta been in there a hundred
years. We gotta name him.

They think a second. Shane barks.

MIKE

Good one Shane. Samson. Cause he's
so strong to break the chain.

BOBBY

Okay. Samson.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Mike and Bobby comb the structure. Shelves, cupboards, an old
junior chemistry set, wooden table and chairs, cross hatch
windows, and a loose floor board. Bobby lifts the board up
disclosing a secret hiding place cubbyhole. Inside is an old
Yuban coffee can. Mike checks out the back window.

MIKE

Bobby, look at this.

Bobby climbs up on the workbench with Mike.

WHAT THEY SEE

is the field beyond the backyard fence. A vast stretch of
empty overgrown land.

EXT. BEHIND CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Mike runs his hand along the fence and finds a series of loose
clapboards rigged together. They lift aside; a secret doorway
into the field beyond the backyard.

MIKE

The Marshall kids musta built it
for expeditioning.

BOBBY

Yeah.

Bamboo spears at the fore, they step through the fence followed
by Shane into the

EXT. REAR FIELD - DAY

a sprawling expanse of undeveloped land behind the backyards of every house on the block. They proceed slowly into the suburban wilds; peach trees with softball sized fruit, eight foot sunflowers, gravel mounds, wooden palates slathered with creosote, a million kinds of sunbleached play balls, and an old locked construction shed.

The second they see the lock on the door they are unstoppably drawn to the shed like moths to the flame. Mike jangles the rusted-shut lock.

MIKE

No good. See if you can see in there.

Mike cups his hands, boosts Bobby up. He cleans a spot on the greasy pane.

BOBBY

Nope, no bad guys.

MIKE

(straining)

Well, what's in there?

BOBBY

Umm... Hey! There's an engine!
Like from one of those grass cutter things.

MIKE

A lawn mower?

BOBBY

Yeah!

MIKE

Boss.

Bobby hops down.

BOBBY

But how do we get it?

MIKE

Don't know. Shouldn't anyway it ain't ours.

BOBBY

It's been in there a million years,
the owner's probably dead.

..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Yeah probably. Wait a sec, whadda
we need it for?

Something distant in Bobby's eyes.

BOBBY

Don't know... yet.

Bobby heads away a few steps. Mike catches him.

MIKE

What?

BOBBY

Nothin'.

Shane's nearby, Mike turns to him as if called:

MIKE

What Shane?

(after a moment)

Okay.

(to Bobby)

Don't worry, he figures it'll still
be there when we need it.

BOBBY

Yeah, I guess so.

They disappear back through the secret fence-door and night
unfurls over the field like a dark blanket. Against the velvet
sky, the moon rises.

INT. THE HOUSE - DAYS LATER

The house is straightened and arranged. Mike and Bobby bolt
out of their room, spears in hand, soap-box backpacks
shouldered with shoe strings straps. They jet across the house
into

MARY'S BATHROOM

and stare up at their mother, who's getting ready for work in
a waitress uniform.

MIKE

Room's clean.

BOBBY

Clothes are washed and folded.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE
Fed Samson and Shane.

BOBBY
Picked the poop up.

MIKE
Grass is watered.

MARY
Okay-

Mike and Bobby sprint for the door.

MARY (CONT'D)
-guys...

They stop, stick just their heads back into the doorway.

MARY (CONT'D)
-be back before He gets home, I have
to work a double shift, and I don't
want you out too late.

MIKE/BOBBY
Okay Mom.

They're gone.

MARY
And don't go too far!

EXT. UNDEVELOPED AREA - DAY

They did. Far away, below us in the distance, Mike and Bobby
and Shane are tiny dots along the railroad tracks.

EXT. JESSUP DAIRY - DAY

A classic corner drive-thru. Rural - behind it, a working
dairy with hundreds of cows. Mike and Bobby hit the candy
selection, out of breath. Shane sits near the curb.

MIKE
Gotta refuel.

BOBBY
How much we got?

Mike unshoulders his soap-box backpack. Fishes a bag out.
Pulls a tiny toy strong box out of that. Keys it open.
Retrieves a change purse. Finally dumps some coins into his
palm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE
Sixty three cents.

ON THE CURB - A MOMENT LATER

Mike and Bobby divvy up the booty. A ton of stuff for 63 cents: two cheese n' crackers, two twinkies, two fritos, two wax bottle cokes and two 4-pack oreos.

BOBBY
How much we got left?

MIKE
Eighteen cents.

Shane seeks to mooch. Bobby punches Mike.

BOBBY
Dope. What about Shane?

MIKE
Oh right. Whadda you wanna get Shane?

(as if he's heard him)
Good one.

Mike dashes to the drive-thru and back. Sets a Hostess fruit pie in front of Shane. The dog wolfs it.

EXT. DRAINAGE LAND - "THE 500" - ANOTHER DAY

Hundreds of barren acres of dirt, rocks and drainage pipes. Mike and Bobby and Shane are exploring along a desert-dry overflow channel; heading toward a series of massive

FLOOD CONTROL DRAIN PIPES

jutting out from a sandy hillside.

MIKE
This must be it.

BOBBY
(scanning the acreage)
Now I know why they called it The 500.

MIKE
Think they're really in there?

BOBBY
Don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the first pipe all is quiet. They stare into the second -listening. There are tiny indiscernible noises coming from deep in the pipe. At the third, far away into the darkness, they hear commotion. Squeaks. Thousands of squeaks. Splashing water. Then running feet. Then hollering.

Suddenly out of the pitch black of the pipe, CHAD (9) and FERDIE (11) come flying into daylight carrying a big bucket between them. They skid to a stop in the dust, out of breath and scared. Water from their bucket sloshes onto the dirt and is sucked up in the heat. A frog jumps out of the bucket. Chad chucks it back in.

CHAD

Hey Ferdie it's the new pukes.

MIKE

Whadda you guys doin' with those frogs?

CHAD

Selling 'em to the Frog Lady, dope.

BOBBY

Who's the Frog Lady?

FERDIE

She lives down there, at the end of The 500, pays a buck a bucket.

Chad punches his brother.

CHAD

Shut up idiot! It's our business not theirs.

(to Mike and Bobby)

Hey, we're the only ones that sell her frogs. Nobody else. Understand? If you jerks ever try and sell her some we'll kick your asses.

BOBBY

What's she do with them?

CHAD

None of your business asshole!

FERDIE

She eats them.

Chad punches Ferdie again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAD

It don't matter anyway, you're both
too sissy to go in the pipes.

MIKE

No we ain't.

CHAD

Then go ahead.

Mike and Bobby look into the pipe from a distance - hear the
thousands of squeaks - decide against venturing inside.

CHAD

Ha! See, I told you. You're sissy.

MIKE

No we ain't. We just got other
places to go today.

FERDIE

You're the ones that kicked the
Marshalls out.

MIKE

No we didn't, our Mom and- our Mom
and- we bought the house.

CHAD

Tommy and Scott Marshall were really
cool. They were our friends.

FERDIE

And now we got two sissys for
neighbors.

MIKE

We ain't sissys.

CHAD

Everyone says you are.

BOBBY

Who says?

CHAD

Everyone on the block. Big and
little Raymond. The Hernandez
brothers. And we say so too right
Ferdie?

FERDIE

Right Chad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
We ain't sissys.

CHAD
You callin' us liars?

MIKE
He didn't say that.

FERDIE
Yeah he did. Kick his ass Chad.

Chad steps forward and shoves Bobby back a few feet. Chad takes another step toward Bobby and Shane cuts him off - growling - backing him up near Ferdie.

CHAD
Hey man! Call off your mutt!

BOBBY
He ain't a mutt, he's a German Shepherd.

CHAD
If he bites me you're in big trouble!

MIKE
You better stop moving.

Chad stops. Ferdie pees his pants.

MIKE
Say we ain't sissys.

CHAD
You ain't sissys.

BOBBY
Okay Shane.

Shane trots back. Chad and Ferdie snatch up their bucket of frogs. They scramble away, Chad stabbing his finger at them.

CHAD
Just wait, man, just wait! You are in big goddamn trouble! And I mean like BIG, you buttsniffs!

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - DAY

Mike and Bobby walk balancing on opposite tracks. The line seems to go on forever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

It was true what we had heard.
There were frogs in the water of
those pipes. Millions of frogs.
We only went to The 500 when we
needed a dangerous expedition, and
we didn't go too often.

BOBBY

Think she really eats them?

MIKE

Naw, no way. They're jerks.

BOBBY

Mike, how far you think these tracks
go?

MIKE

Probably China or something.

BOBBY

Yeah, probably China.

EXT. TOP OF ROCK MOUNTAIN - DAY

Mike and Bobby hike up a massive boulder-built flood control
dam, leaving the tracks far below. They crest it and look
over.

BOBBY

Whoa, he must be rich.

MIKE

Who?

BOBBY

Whoever's backyard this is.

WHAT THEY SEE

is a vast landscape of green rolling hills and trees.

MIKE

I think it's a golf course.

BOBBY

Really? Then there can't be very
many of them.

MIKE

Yeah, otherwise they'd take up the
whole world.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - CART PATH - DAY

Mike and Bobby stare into the well trimmed links. A sudden BEEP turns them around. A golf cart carrying two BEER GUT ATHLETES almost runs them over. They dive for cover, rolling down a hill of fresh mowed grass onto the

EXT. FAIRWAY - DAY

and stand up, watching after the cart. WHIZ! ZING! Mike and Bobby swat at the air around their heads, chasing off invisible insects.

MIKE

Man there's big flies around here.

200 yards back, a foursome is teeing off. GOLFER 3 swings. The ball comes blazing right at them. Mike knocks Bobby to the grass.

MIKE

Look out!

The ball hooks into the rock mountain.

GOLFER 3'S VOICE

(distant)

Shit!

GOLFER 4 tees off. THWACK! His ball shanks into the bushes.

GOLFER 4'S VOICE

(echoing)

Sonofabitch!

BOBBY

I don't think those balls are supposed to be going into the bushes and stuff.

MIKE

I bet they do that all the time.

BOBBY

There must be a million balls up there.

Mike grins.

GOLF COURSE - MONTAGE

Mike and Bobby rummage through the rock mountain collecting shanked Titelists.

They scrounge through the bushes finding Top Flites.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They root through the brush discovering Max Flys.

Mike digs a big grocery bag out of the trash.

GOLF PRO SHOP

A tall MAN with a kindly face starts into the pro shop. Bobby struggles to hold the bag of balls up at him. The Man takes the bag and pays them. Mike and Bobby pass the \$5.00 bill back and forth -admiring it. Shuffle away across the golf course in a tiny trance -dripping with good fortune - and manage to unwittingly avoid every sailing golf ball that blazes by them.

END MONTAGE.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - TWILIGHT

Mike and Bobby carry Samson inside. Shane follows. Mike locks the door and fires up a cub scout lantern. Bobby retrieves the Yuban can and stuffs the \$5.00 deep inside. Caps it. Sets it back in the cubbyhole. Mike replaces the floor board and the brothers stand facing each other in the serious light of the lantern. They lock pinkies and clutch their spears.

MIKE

From this time on, Mike and Bobby, who know the contexts (sic) of the secret hiding cubbyhole place, will never ever, even if they are tortured to death, ever tell anyone who asks or don't ask and just tries to find out some other way, what is inside the secret cubbyhole place or where it is. Amen.

BOBBY

I swear. Amen.

EXT. CLUBHOUSE - TWILIGHT

The cub scout lantern glows softly in the little cross-hatch window.

NARRATOR

It was tough not spending that money, but what I didn't know and Bobby did, was that God had already made plans for it-

(beat)

-and it was just waiting to be spent on what he had in mind.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mike is lying in bed staring up at the ceiling. By his apprehensive eyes we should be concerned that Bobby is not here.

THE KING (OS)

(slurred)

Now get to bed you sunoofablatch!

Small footsteps o.s. Bobby comes into the room quietly and stops at the foot of Mike's bed. Bobby's not crying but his eyes are brimming wellsprings.

BOBBY

We can't use the lantern in the clubhouse anymore.

Bobby goes straight to bed, pulls his covers up mechanically and his eyes close like the lids of a toy doll that shut when you tilt it backwards.

On the edge of his bed, Mike stares across the dark room at his brother. The front door opens and slams shut o.s. Outside, another door opens and slams shut. Jazz music, the sweet strains of Dave Brubeck's "Take Five," drift into the room from far away, deep in the garage.

HOURS LATER

Mike is still staring at Bobby. The front door opens again o.s. Mike jumps under his covers and snaps his eyes shut. He's scared shitless. Their bedroom door opens. Mike stops breathing.

MIKE'S POV

through his cautiously cracked open eyes, peeking carefully into the darkness to verify it's The King. We can't tell. There's just a figure in the doorway. The Jazz still plays b.g. Blackness - his eyes close.

MIKE

goes stiff. Then relaxes as Mary kisses his forehead. Safe. She leaves the room. Moments pass. Mike sits up warily and finds his bamboo spear. His eyes shift to the window - out to the clubhouse in the backyard. Something draws him across the room.

Standing close to the telltale cross-hatches he seems to be in a subtle prison. It's the clubhouse that's got his attention. Something is happening to it. From the other end of the house comes YELLING. Then SCREAMING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

Even the magic of a new house was
powerless against The King-

(pause)

-it only took a couple weeks and
everything was back to normal.

WHAT MIKE SEES

through the window, is a full moon over the clubhouse. The
soft light floods over the little structure until the shadows
literally begin to dance. Something really is happening to
it. The shadows wander on the varnished clapboards as if there
was a crowd of people in the backyard in front of a spotlight.
But there is no one there.

MIKE

slides the window up and open quietly.

THE CLUBHOUSE

is metamorphosizing. The redwood clapboards become stout
muscles. The windows become eyes. The spotty varnish becomes
thick fur. The tiny peaked roof becomes a set of horns.
Geronimo Bill's biggest Buffalo is standing in the backyard
now. The beast dips his mighty head and pulls a thatch of
grass up to eat.

MIKE

can't believe it. He looks back and forth between the bedroom
door and the Buffalo, sure that at any second both he and the
beast are dead meat. As he turns back the last time

THE BUFFALO

is right in front of him, its huge head sticking into the
bedroom. It looks over at

BOBBY

who's tossing and turning violently. As he flips onto his
stomach, his pajama top slides up revealing lashing marks.
There are tears in the eyes of

MIKE & THE BUFFALO

MIKE

Why is this happening?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BISON'S VOICE

(sonorous)

Good and Bad are brother and sister.

MIKE

I don't know what to do.

BISON'S VOICE

Be wide awake in your dreams and you will.

MIKE

What about Bobby, what if he doesn't make it?

The Buffalo pulls his head back through the window and walks back to the spot in which he first materialized.

BISON'S VOICE

Just believe. Just believe.

(as he vanishes)

When you need me, I'll be here.

In the time it takes Mike to look to Bobby, who has calmed down now, and back to the Buffalo, the clubhouse has reappeared.

NARRATOR

Bobby dreamt bad dreams that night.
I never slept at all.

Mike closes the window and pulls the shade down, against which, as the room goes pitch black...

CUT TO:

...another TITLE CARD appears, reading:

THE WISHING SPOT

"Starlight starbright, first star I see tonight,
I wish I may, I wish I might,
have the wish I wish tonight."

-Traditional

EXT. PRIVATE AIRPORT - DAY

A private plane takes off, roaring into the sky off the end of the runway. It is suddenly shot down by

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE & BOBBY

standing outside the runway near the railroad tracks off San Fernando Rd. firing wrapping-paper-tube rubberband-guns at it. In the distance, across the runway, lies the big hill that Fisher rode down years ago.

NARRATOR

Another week passed before we discovered something really important on an expedition to the little airport by our house.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - DAY

The same one adjacent to the runway fence that Fisher sailed over. Mike, Bobby and Shane traipse across the outfield toward the abandoned

MINE SHAFT

at the foot of the big hill. They inspect it offhandedly, then start

UP THE HILL

where they find Fisher's epitaphs; a rusted old bicycle chain; a bike pedal; a cracked old rear view mirror; a bike bell; a reflector and an old ked sneaker - all sticking up half buried in the dirt. Toward the top, where the climbing gets steepest, the boys hang onto Shane and he pulls them up and over

EXT. THE HILL CREST - DAY

where they look

BACK DOWN

and see the forest through the trees: the fossilized tracks -preserved in dry mud - of Fisher's Indian Head bike tires. The tracks fall in a direct line with the top of the mine shaft 500 feet below.

MIKE & BOBBY

creep close to the edge still holding Fisher's remnants.

BOBBY

That's why they call that kid Fisher the King of Pacoima.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Truly. Because he did the greatest thing anybody's ever heard of.

BOBBY

It wasn't that great.

MIKE

Whadda you mean?

BOBBY

He got killed, didn't he?

MIKE

Yeah I guess.

BOBBY

He probably made a good try... but he just did it wrong.

The boys sit at the edge and unpack lunch from their soap-box backpacks. Triple decker PB&J's, fritos, twinkies and a fruit pie for Shane. Nearby a lizard sun bathes on a rock; squirrels race up a phone pole; and a pair of red tail Hawks drift above on the thermals.

NARRATOR

We called the top of the big hill "The Wishing Spot," because, we reasoned, that God would have to hear a wish made that close to Heaven.

From here, Mike and Bobby can see the entire San Fernando Valley. Including their house behind the police station 6 blocks away. It's quiet up here.

NARRATOR

We made a lot of wishes up there, most of which were the kind that never come true, like for a million dollars, or for a time machine, or to be older than we were then. But there were others that did, mostly it was one wish - for The King to stop yelling at Mom. Although he always started again, at the times we made those wishes he stopped. So, we knew beyond any doubt that The Wishing Spot worked -it was just a little too far away from Heaven for God to hear them all.

INT. CITY BUS - MOVING - ANOTHER DAY

Mike and Bobby sit in the best seats, way in the back - sucking on wax bottle cokes and "Incredible Edibles" monster candy.

NARRATOR

As it turned out, God would hear a certain wish that Bobby made a thousand times and I never even knew he did.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The boys get off the bus, buy 50 cent tickets and go inside the theater.

NARRATOR

A wish bigger than the whole country we had come across to discover The Wishing Spot itself.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Virtually empty. The middle of the movie. Mike and Bobby are in the best seats - right up front - slowly shoveling handfuls of popcorn into their mouths.

NARRATOR

It was a wish that would be the most important wish a kid had ever made in the history of the world.

MOVIE SCREEN

on which plays Walt Disney's "The Absent-Minded Professor." The professor's garage doors suddenly open, and Fred MacMurry drives out in his vintage Flubber-loaded-Ford which lifts smoothly away into the air.

MIKE & BOBBY

stop chewing. The scene has had its effect on them. They're not amazed, rather in a state of profound belief, because they understand.

EXT. DAIRY QUEEN - ANOTHER DAY

Mike and Bobby grab a couple dusty-fudge cones and head home on foot down the train tracks.

BOBBY

Ya know we shouldn't wish for dopey stuff at The Wishing Spot anymore.

..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Like for what?

BOBBY

Like for a million dollars and stuff.

MIKE

Why not? It don't hurt anything.

BOBBY

Yeah it does. Because we don't need stuff like that. We gotta only wish for stuff we need, and we have to really believe in what we wish for or else its just a lie.

Mike and Bobby pass under a decaying track-side billboard ad for "The King of Beers..." and continue on, becoming insignificant specks along the tracks as they converge in the distance.

INT. POST OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

Mike and Bobby stuff an envelope full of bazooka bubble gum wrappers, two dimes and a note reading, "Pleeze send us the 2 fishin polls... signed Mike and Bobby Wright."

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad and Ferdie, JORGE, JESUS, CARLOS and VICTOR (the Hernandez brothers), big RAYMOND and little RAYMOND are loitering on their bikes in the street in front of Mike and Bobby's house.

VICTOR

This is stupid, lets go.

CHAD

Just wait, Victor man, every other night, I swear.

Moments pass on the quiet street. Then, in the fullness if time, true to Chad's hoodlumistic word, the ranting and screaming starts from within the house. With their morbid craws fully gorged, the punks cycle away, laughing as they ride.

Through the side yard fence, Shane watches them go. Only the dog's head moves to follow them, as if he knew exactly what they were doing there.

.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

The postman delivers two long cardboard tubes to Mike and Bobby. They open them fast. Inside, are two simple bamboo fishing rods.

EXT. EMPTY FIELD - DAY

Mike and Bobby are catching alligator lizards with loops at the ends of their new poles. They catch them, hold them up and inspect them so closely that the itty bitty beasties tickle the ends of their noses with their flickering tongues. Then, they set them free to be caught another day.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mike and Bobby appear outside the glass doors - fully outfitted. They park the Radio Flyer wagon (loaded with a plastic bucket and rubber gloves) and instruct Shane to guard it. They come in and saddle up to the

COUNTER

and de-gear. Bobby has trouble leaning back in his seat - his back hurts. They peruse the menus as Mary comes over.

MIKE/BOBBY

Hi Mom.

MARY

What are you guys doing here?

MIKE

Need fuel.

MARY

Fuel?

BOBBY

Food, Mom.

MARY

Big plans?

MIKE

Yep.

BOBBY

We're goin' froggin'.

MARY

Sounds dangerous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE
It is. We'll have a couple steaks
and baked potatoes.

TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Mike and Bobby finish their grilled cheese sandwiches. Mary sets a bill in front of them. They look at each other in disbelief. A bill? Mom gave us a bill?! They swallow hard. Dig deep in their pockets. Come up with exactly 48 cents between them. Reach in unison for the check. Lift it up slowly to see the damage. The ticket only says, "Love you - Mom."

MARY
Gotcha!

MIKE/BOBBY
Mom!

They leave the change on the counter anyway.

MARY
Guys it was a joke.

BOBBY
It's for a tip.

As Mike helps Bobby on with his soap-box backpack, his shirt slides up a little, exposing - just for a moment - bruises on his lower back. Mary notices.

MARY
Bobby?

She comes around the counter carrying a bag of burgers as Mike tucks Bobby's shirt in his pants - around back where Bobby can't reach.

MARY
Turn around.

BOBBY
Why?

MARY
Bobby just turn around.

BOBBY
No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY
Bobby?... What happened to your
back?

BOBBY
Nothing.

Mary takes him by the arm to turn him 'round. Bobby jerks his
arm loose, half panicked.

BOBBY
I'm okay!

He jets outside and hangs near the curb with Shane. Shane is
staring back into the coffee shop at Mary, Bobby's facing the
other way - away from her - holding the steering handle to the
wagon like a shepherd's staff. Mary stares deeply at the dog
- who returns her look with something that may well be
reassurance.

MARY
Mike... I want you to tell me if
He ever-

MIKE
-it don't matter. Bobby's okay.
We gotta go Mom. We'll be home
before dark.

MARY
Here. Some burgers for Shane.

Mike exits with the bag. Mary watches through the glass as
he and Bobby trail away down the street with Shane pulling up
the rear behind the Radio Flyer.

EXT. THE 500 - DAY

A 7 foot high fence with barbed wire across the top. Mike
stops near a half-hole dug under it. He gives Shane the burger
while Bobby ties the Radio Flyer up to the chain link. Mike
and Bobby crawl under with the bucket and gloves. On the other
side, they hold the fence up for Shane.

MIKE
Come on Shane, go under.

Shane finishes his burger and stands looking at the boys,
blinking, with his head cocked curiously to one side. He turns
around and walks away. Bobby drops his part of the fence.

BOBBY
Shane! What're you doin'?!
:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shane stops about 20 feet back. Turns around and his big feet dig into the dirt. His ears go flat. His big chest makes a giant breathing sound. Shane jumps. Shane lands - on the other side of the fence, beyond Mike and Bobby. They stand there staring at him with their mouths hanging open.

Goddamn! BOBBY

Whoa... Truly a big dog. MIKE

Truly. BOBBY

BY THE DRAINAGE PIPES

The guys tentatively peek into the first long, dark tunnel.

Shane, find the frogs. MIKE

Shane sniffs the entrance to the first pipe - no good. The second - nope. The third - that's the one. He barks back to Mike and Bobby and heads inside the pipe.

INT. DRAIN PIPE - DAY

Sunlight travels in and tapers off until - perhaps 30 feet back - the pipe becomes pitch dark. The guys follow Shane deeper inside without looking back. The brackish water mud-sucks at their shoes. Shortly, Shane disappears into the blackness. When the guys finally look back, the entrance is the size of a quarter.

They shine their flashlights ahead revealing the dank interior. The cement walls drip with black algae, the water along the bottom is as still as obsidian. The squeaks begin. Ten cautious steps further and the squeaks become tiny grunts. One more step and...

...GRUNT! Bobby hops to one side:

Ahhhh! I stepped on one! BOBBY

At Bobby's feet is the biggest frog known to mankind, the ever rare:

Buffalo frog! MIKE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Three pounder!

Unscathed, the little beast flops away into the murky river joining an entire herd of the tiny water-bison. Thousands of them. Mike hands Bobby the rubber gloves.

MIKE

Get about ten of 'em.

BOBBY

No way, Mike! Those're maneaters!

MIKE

Okay, she probably don't want the big ones anyway. Just grab a couple small ones.

Bobby searches for the smallest ones. Good luck. There are no small ones. He musters up the gumption and grabs a porker. Mike's eyes widen, Bobby can't even get his hands all the way around it. The amphib struggles.

BOBBY

Come on! He's gonna attack!

Mike scoops up some water in the bucket. Bobby tosses the frog - it lands in the bucket with a splash. He grabs a few more before the spinal woollies get the best of him:

BOBBY

Okay, that's enough lets go.

As they turn to leave, they halt dead.

WHAT THEY SEE

are four SILHOUETTES coming into the pipe.

NARRATOR

We knew we were in trouble instantly, the way kids always know they're in for it when they see bigger kids walking toward them. It's a 6th sense you lose later in life, but we still had it, and knew we were as good as dead. They didn't yell or shout or promise they were gonna beat us to hell or anything, they were silent -and that - we knew, was the mark of death.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE & BOBBY

shut their flashlights off. It's so dark they cannot see each other only inches away. One of the frogs in the bucket croaks. Mike slaps his hand across its mouth. It croaks anyway - loud. The silhouettes hear it and start running.

BOBBY

Mike!

They do the only thing they can think of - they hold their rubber tipped spears out in front of them. The silhouettes halt, momentarily daunted by the weapons - it's the Hernandez brothers. Victor reaches out to Bobby's spear - the rubber tip bends to his finger. Jorge, Jesus and Carlos crack up.

VICTOR

You're dead pinches.

The punks step forward. Mike and Bobby take two steps back, and then, just as the Hernandez' get within striking distance - he appears from out of the shadows: Shane! Jesus and Jorge slip to their butts with fright. Victor and Carlos back pedal.

CARLOS

Nice dog... nice dog.

MIKE

No he ain't a nice dog! And if you touch us, he'll kill you!

BOBBY

Yeah!

Jesus and Jorge scramble to their feet and run. Shane grabs a jaw full of khaki pocket and tears it loose from Jorge's pants.

JORGE

Sonofa-!

VICTOR

Shit, come on!

The Hernandez brothers high tail it, finally disappearing into the light at the end of the tunnel. Victor reappears momentarily, just long enough to yell back:

VICTOR

Your mutt can't save you forever, pinches! Get ready, cause we're gonna kick your asses just like your drunk dad does!

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Bobby steps forward screaming:

BOBBY

He ain't our Dad! He ain't our Dad!

Bobby launches his spear down the pipe at Victor as he vanishes. The toy clatters to a defeated stop in the muck.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - FROG LADY'S HOUSE - DAY

The bucket of frogs splashes in the back of the Radio Flyer. Mike and Bobby stop at a house removed from any other by acres on either side. Big droopy willow trees hide most of the structure, and what they don't is decrepit. The boys gather courage, heft up the bucket and go to the

FRONT DOOR

and knock. Dust falls off the tarnished brass knocker. Terribly violent coughing erupts from inside the house. The door wrenches open revealing

THE FROG LADY

the sight of which makes Mike wince and Bobby's teeth chatter. She's old, her skin is stained phlegmy yellow from decades of nicotine tailings. Her teeth a furry brown. Her Pat Nixon house frock has odd, dark, stinky blotches on it. She's stooped over, craggy and almost bald. The eternal Camel dangling from her fingers has a inch of ash. She flicks it.

FROG LADY

(twixt hacks)

Speak up brats I'm busy!

MIKE & BOBBY

can only present the bucket at arms length - they're tongue tied. The Frog Lady inspects the croakers; poking at them with a hooked finger.

FROG LADY

Umm.

She hand the boys a dollar.

FROG LADY

Put 'em in the back pond with the others. Then git!

Mike and Bobby bolt around the side of the house into the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACKYARD

that, even in the daylight, is a maze of strange sounds and dank recesses into which they dare not go. In the middle of the yard is a small turbid concrete pond with a thick rind of brownish algae. Only a few malnourished frogs remain in it. They quickly dump their bucket and jet.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - DUSK

Mike and Bobby stash the cash in the Yuban can and lock it back tight in the secret hiding place cubbyhole.

BOBBY

I think she eats 'em.

MIKE

No way.

BOBBY

She smelled like one, Mike.

MIKE

She also gave us a buck.

The logic quells Bobby's fears.

EXT. AIRPORT - BIG HILL - ANOTHER DAY

Mike and Bobby hang onto Shane's collar and he tows them, and the Radio Flyer, up the hill at a clip. They all reach

THE WISHING SPOT

and sit near the edge. Shane gazes out over the San Fernando Valley like a noble dominate wolf, king of all he sees.

NARRATOR

Shane really liked it at The Wishing Spot because it was as close to wild land as you could get in Pacoima. It was as if, when he was up there, he was thinking about his relative wolves or coyotes and although he wasn't sad about being our dog, I think he probably wanted to know what it was like to live in the wild land by himself, the same way Bobby and me always thought about what it would be like to live in one of the Main Street houses at Disneyland.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Shane falls into a hazy, distant look. His head involuntarily cocks to one side.

NARRATOR

He would get this far away look in his big brown eyes-

A plane takes off, soaring high overhead. Mike watches it go. Bobby is in a world of his own, resting one hand on the wagon while he stares deeply into its rich red paint.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

-just like Bobby's eyes glazed over whenever he looked at the Radio Flyer.

EXT. REAR FIELD - TWILIGHT

Mike, Bobby and Shane come through the secret fence-door. As they clear the rear of the clubhouse into

EXT. BACKYARD - TWILIGHT

they're frightened by The King staring out at them like a malevolent Pharaoh, through the rear door window. There's a can of something in his hand. Mike and Bobby try to avert their eyes. Shane does not. He stands alone, returning The King's stare measure for measure. The dog knows. His eyes take on a survival look.

NARRATOR

There was another look that Shane would get in his eyes. A look that turned his eyes to big glass marbles.

(beat)

He only got it when he looked at The King.

The King steps away from the window, letting the shade fall back in place. Shane stays his ground. Mike and Bobby consider themselves lucky.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COMIC SHOP - DAY

Mike and Bobby are browsing past myriad horror comics whose covers depict the most horrible mutants known to mankind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

When we were kids there were still plenty of things to be afraid of. In those days there were no video games, no computers, no Nintendo; monsters still existed because they hadn't yet been rounded up and made to live only in electronic games or on floppy discs.

Mike and Bobby buy two horror comics. They sit...

EXT. DAIRY QUEEN - DAY

...on the curb reading them.

NARRATOR

Bobby and me believed in all the regular monsters like Frankenstein, The Mummy, The Fifty Foot Woman and The Creature from the Black Lagoon, but we didn't fear them because mostly - by then - they didn't walk the earth much any more, they just made movies. But there were other mutants that did. Stone killers like the Green-Slime-Puker, the Kid-Eating-Hatchet-Woman and the Five-Armed-Worm-Man still existed and needed to be done battle with.

Bobby finds something great in his comic book.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

They scratch out a note, rip the advertisement out and count up ten pennies to include with their order. The ad reads: "The Magic Spell - renders you impervious to attack by your enemies, destroys all monsters too! Send ten cents, name and address to..." They stuff the stuff in an envelope, address and mail it.

NARRATOR

The best way to be sure you didn't fall prey to these ultimate bad guys was just not to summon them into the world from the bubbling pits of Martian hellblood where they lived.

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INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby are standing before the mirror - concentrating -chanting - moving closer to the glass of it.

NARRATOR

Repeating a monster's name in the mirror a hundred times -only fools and meatheads did that.

MIKE/BOBBY

Five-Armed-Worm-Man, Five-Armed-Worm-Man, Five-Armed-Worm-Man...

The FIVE-ARMED-WORM-MAN appears in the mirror, he drips with viscous ooze. Bobby faints. Mike snatches him up and blows out of the bathroom like a tornado.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM - LATE

The boys are playing Quija board in the middle of the room by the light of a single candle on aluminum foil.

NARRATOR

Playing Quija board - instant death.

MIKE

Quija... board... is there really a Bigfoot?

The pointer rattles. The boys stiffen. The triangular chip slides to the indicative "YES."

MIKE/BOBBY

No way...

BOBBY

(thick)

Well... Quija board where is he?

The chip rattles again. It slides, spelling out the word W-I-N-D-O-W. They can hardly move. They stare at the board, then at each other, then at their window shade. They approach it like two prisoners on their way to the chair. At

THE WINDOW

they reach for the shade, fingers trembling. Just as their fingertips touch the draw cord, the shade furls with a sharp WHAP! And there's Bigfoot in the window. They faint.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

A tiny pup tent set up near the clubhouse glows by the light of two flashlights from inside. Shane sniffs around the canvas trying to find way in. A full moon looms overhead.

INT. PUP TENT - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby are stuffed deep in their sleeping bags camping out in the great wilds.

NARRATOR
Camping out back in our pup tent
on a full moon - an invitation to
disaster.

Brushing and snorting noises along the walls of the tent are rattling the adventurers.

MIKE
What was that?

BOBBY
Don't know.

MIKE
What was that?

BOBBY
Shit, Mike, it's the undead! I know
it!

MIKE
No way. Zombies.
(beat)
You think?

Lovecraftian sniffing and thumping. They grab their spears and throw open the flaps.

MIKE/BOBBY
AHHHHH!

The tent has teleported into the middle of a cemetery.
Gruesome ZOMBIES charge the door.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

The POSTMAN comes up the block and balks as he delivers the mail.

NARRATOR
As it was, Bobby and me had most
of the real scary monster in life
licked...
(beat)
...all except one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE FRONT YARD

is a junk heap. The furniture, Mary's clothes and toiletries, and Mike and Bobby's toys have been jettisoned through the front window and now lie scattered over the driveway and lawn like Dresden revisited.

Mike and Bobby pass the Postman at the corner and see everything. They look into the yard from the sidewalk with their heads hung low. As if this wasn't enough, Chad, Ferdie, the Hernandez brothers and big and little Raymond circle on the bikes in the street behind them, laughing like Buzzard-eenas.

VICTOR
Having a yard sale!

CHAD
Nice Dad!

Jorge and Jesus rummage through the wreckage. Jesus grabs a pair of Mary's underwear. Jorge picks up a bra.

MIKE
Get outta there!

The others ditch their bikes and hold Mike and Bobby immobile while Jorge and Jesus dress them up like girls. Mike and Bobby struggle to no avail. From in the house, Shane barks wildly.

JORGE
Your dog can't save you now, sissys!

Big Raymond finds a lipstick and smears it all over Bobby's mouth as he thrashes. Ferdie powders Mike's face with makeup from a compact. Mike and Bobby can only try and endure the ridicule.

VICTOR
(suddenly to Bobby)
What did you say? Huh?
(no answer, feigns
listening)
Hey! He says he wants to be my
girlfriend!

CHAD
Homos. I knew it!

MIKE
He didn't say that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

What, sissy? VICTOR

He didn't say he wanted to be your girlfriend. MIKE

You calling me a liar? VICTOR

No, I- MIKE

-yeah he did! JESUS

Kick his ass Victor! BIG RAYMOND

Victor moves on Mike. Suddenly, by sheer reflex, Mike catches him with a ked to the nads. Victor sucks O2 and hits his knees in agony.

Maaaama... VICTOR

Pinche homos! CARLOS

The punks advance - Mike and Bobby are dead meat. Then, out of nowhere, a stay-of-execution:

Hold it! DEEP VOICE (OS)

OFFICER DOUGHERTY

comes over the police station wall. As he arrives in

THE FRONT YARD

the punks switch tacks.

That sissy kicked Victor! CHAD

They started it. LITTLE RAYMOND

Oh they did? DOUGHERTY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LITTLE RAYMOND

Yeah, we weren't doing nothing-

DOUGHERTY

-just minding your own business.

FERDIE

That's right, yeah.

DOUGHERTY

Get your friend and go home before
I call all your parents.

(beat)

Move out!

Jorge and Jesus drag Victor away. The others follow - flipping Officer Dougherty off as they go and making "Oinker" noises. By the time the big man looks back, Mike and Bobby are already busy cleaning up the front yard. He feels for them.

DOUGHERTY

Are you boys alright?

MIKE

Yes sir.

DOUGHERTY

Are your parents home?

BOBBY

Our Mom's at work.

DOUGHERTY

Where's your Dad?

BOBBY

He ain't our Dad.

DOUGHERTY

Who is he then?

BOBBY

The King.

DOUGHERTY

I see. You guys need some help?

MIKE

No sir. Are we in trouble?

DOUGHERTY

Are you in-? No, no you're not in
trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

We have to clean up now before He gets home.

On the porch, as Bobby bends to pick something up and moves inside, Officer Dougherty glimpses the boy's back - black n' blue. He jots his number down on a business card and hands it to Mike.

DOUGHERTY

Son? If you need me, I'll be here.

Mike stares at the big man, half-shocked, remembering a similar promise from the buffalo in his dreams. Bobby comes out of the house and checks the mail. There's a package addressed to he and Mike.

BOBBY

Mike! Come on, we got it!

DOUGHERTY

(just before Mike charges off)

Hey, are you sure you guys are gonna be alright?

MIKE

Yeah, we are now.

INT. KITCHEN - QUICK CUTS - LATER

Mike and Bobby have cleaned themselves up. They gather pots and utensils. Then, go over the list if ingredients:

MIKE

One frog.

Bobby squeezes a can of green playdough into the big pot on the stove.

MIKE

Newt's eyes.

Bobby drops in two marbles.

MIKE

Bat's wings.

Bobby drops in the two rubber gloves.

MIKE

Locust goo-ann-o?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They look up the word G-U-A-N-O. They jet outside, scoop up some Samson poop and toss it in the pot. Bobby takes over the list.

BOBBY
Pixie wing dust.

Mike snips the picture of Tinkerbell from his Disneyland map. Drops it in.

BOBBY
What're Bull sweetbreads?

MIKE
Don't know, skip that part.

BOBBY
Magma from hell.

Mike uses mud.

BOBBY
Worms.

Mike uses worms.

BOBBY
A potato bug. No way Mike! No goddamn way!

MIKE
Okay, wait a sec-

He uses a "Cootie" toy.

BOBBY
Brain of Zombie.

They use hamburger. Mike dumps in the entire contents of the junior chemistry set from the clubhouse for good measure. Consults the recipe:

MIKE
Mix well over a high flame.

They crank the gas up real high. Stir the hell out of the goop. Clamp the lid on the big pot real tight. Step back and wait while the metal cauldron buckles and twists. Four seconds later: the pot Explodes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike and Bobby dive under the kitchen table. The anti-monster mixture erupts like Krakatoa. Mike braves the sauce-flow and flips the gas off; the bubbling glop retreats into the pot. The kitchen is ruined; a cavern coated with gelatinous flowstone.

END QUICK CUTS.

Very real tears appear in Bobby's eyes.

BOBBY

Mike, it's everywhere! If he gets home first he's gonna-

MIKE

-maybe he won't. Maybe Mom'll get home first and she'll help us.

Mike pokes at a domed pile of the stuff. The gunk snaps back at the touch, like Disney's famed flubber. He pokes at it again and it's rock hard.

MIKE

It's hardening! Come on!

They rush to the closet - break out buckets, mops, a hammer -anything. They scrub, wipe and scour - no good. The substance will not budge.

BOBBY

It ain't working!

Mike panics. Snatches up the hammer and wails at a grotesque pile. On impact, the stuff drops to the floor in a neat piece.

MIKE

That's it! We wait till it all hardens and knock it off.

Bobby runs around the kitchen blowing onto the piles - trying to harden them faster. Mike joins the crusade. Puff Puff - Hammer Hammer, Blow Blow - Whack Whack! In the middle of the panic Bobby stops. Finds a glass jar and pops the lid. He crumbles some of the potion to dust and fills the jar.

MIKE

What're you doing?!

BOBBY

We gotta save some to protect us if He gets home first.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Oh right. MIKE

MOMENTS LATER

Bobby hefts up two full bags and dashes out back to the garbage cans.

MOMENTS LATER

They've cleared the entire kitchen. Except for one pile on the ceiling. Bobby crawls onto his brother's shoulders. Swings at the glorp with the hammer. He's missing it by inches.

Higher! BOBBY

I can't! Wait, hang on. MIKE

Mike scoots the footstool over and steps up it gingerly.

Okay, okay right there! I got it! BOBBY

Just as Bobby reaches back to deliver the death blow, their hearts sink. Outside in the driveway...

...an engine. The King has arrived home first.

Bobby follows through with a defeated swing. The pile snaps off the ceiling and bounces to the floor. Backs against the wall, they slump to the floor and sit there; Mike with his arms wrapped around his knees; Bobby clutching the jar of anti-monster mixture to his chest.

Right then, we realized that the anti-monster potion would never work against The King. NARRATOR

(beat)

In our hearts we knew it had been a worthwhile effort to save ourselves from the horrors of a monster attack, even if deep down in our souls we suspected - but wouldn't let ourselves believe - that monsters were merely imaginings.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (Cont'd)

(beat)
In our minds we knew that the real threat to our lives was a monster that was worse than anything the combined imaginations of a hundred kids could ever think up.

Bobby rubs at his nose with his sleeve. He's almost crying, but won't let himself.

MIKE

It won't be that bad.

BOBBY

Not for you.

Mike suddenly rushes to a cupboard and swings the door open. He draws out the long, black electrical cord to the Corningware Percolator.

MIKE

For you either if he can't find ole trusty.

Mike searches for a place to hide it. The fridge? No. Under the sink? No. The oven! Mike chucks the cord into the broiler. He sits back down against the wall with Bobby.

BOBBY

Think he'll find it?

MIKE

No way.

BOBBY

Thanks Mike.

Outside, the garage door opens and closes... Jazz drifts into the kitchen - a melodious Oscar Peterson Trio jam. A thousand tons of worry lift from their shoulders.

NARRATOR

It was the only time in our lives that we could ever remember being grateful He went into the garage to get drunk.

Although they're relieved, something remains undone. They check the kitchen for any remaining evidence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

Even though we knew we'd gotten rid of every last spec of evidence, still we couldn't be sure. If only the ghost of the incident lingered in the kitchen, even that, The King would detect.

MIKE

There's only one way he'll never find out.

BOBBY

The Wishing Spot.

EXT. BACK FIELD - TWILIGHT

Mike, Bobby and Shane hurry through the waning daylight, pushing through tall-tall sunflowers along the well-worn path they've trudged into the bush.

EXT. THE WISHING SPOT - TWILIGHT

They crest the edge out of breath - turn back and look out over the whole valley - just beginning to light up for the night. Steadying themselves with their spears, they turn their heads up to heaven to pray. Shane bows his head. Once done, they head back down the slope.

BOBBY

Mike?

MIKE

Yeah?

BOBBY

How come he does it? How come he drinks?

MIKE

Because it means more to him than we do.

BOBBY

Yeah, I guess that makes sense.

As night is about to fall, Mike, Bobby and Shane reach the baseball diamond far below.

NARRATOR

We never devised plans to do away with Him. We did not hate Him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (Cont'd)
We did not love Him. We neither
like nor loathed Him. We feared
Him, and feared Him only. He was
The King of Terrors and that was
that.

They're just tiny dots now in the distance crossing the
railroad tracks.

NARRATOR
Up at the Wishing Spot that night,
we wished that The King never find
out about the mess we'd made. He
never did.

(beat)

I got it once in a while, but Bobby
never should've survived the war.

(beat)

He had three broken ribs before I
got "The Big Idea."

Just as night envelopes the valley, and just before the stars
come out to disturb the unbroken blackness...

CUT TO:

...another TITLE CARD appears, reading:

STICKING UP FOR BOBBY

"Wide, wide in the rose's side
Sleeps a child without sin,
And any man who loves in this world
Stands here on guard over him."

-Kenneth Patchen

EXT. THE HOUSE - SIDE LAWN - DAY

Mike and Bobby are having a Freddie Blasse "wrestle-fest."
Mike's wearing an old torn ski mask, Bobby's got a stars n'
stripes blanket as a cape.

From her window just across the property line, CHICKY ERSKINE,
their squash-faced, buttinski neighbor is spying and growing
more annoyed by the millisecond. While performing their
death-defying stunts, Mike and Bobby don't notice all the grass
they're tearing up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

By design a younger brother is a tag along. You can do all sorts of stuff better than he can by virtue of no other reason than you were born two years earlier. So, you're a little bigger, a little stronger, always waiting for him at the end of the next block, always looking back to see if he's still there and always embarrassed of him in front of all your bigger friends.

Chad, Ferdie, the Raymonds and the Hernandez brothers all show up in the street - circling like vultures on their bikes - watching for a moment when either Mike or Bobby will step out of their yard.

As they wrestle, Bobby ignores the punks, but Mike... Mike keeps taking glances over at them. Not angry ones, somewhat wishful ones - as if he would very much like to be liked by them and "fit-in" with the crowd.

NARRATOR

There was no changing that I was just a little older than him, and those two years difference made all the difference in the world when it came to peer approval.

(beat)

Bobby couldn't have cared less about what the other kids thought.

(beat)

I did.

The punks ride away, taking mean, warning looks back as they go.

EXT. THE BLOCK - DAY

Neighbors up and down the street watch as MOVING MEN load a big truck. Someone on the block is moving - a WHITE FAMILY. Mike and Bobby look on from behind Mary and The King on the sidewalk.

THE KING'S VOICE

Goddamn white flight.

He retires to the garage.

MIKE

Mom? What's white flight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

It's like a disease that people with prejudice give to the places they live. It makes neighborhoods sick and houses cheaper.

Mike and Bobby don't really understand, but they watch - as does everyone else - as the moving van pulls away down the street.

NARRATOR

Grownups thought the world was black and white and a few other colors. But, to us it was all green.

EXT. L.A. ZOO - DAY

Mike and Bobby stroll past the exhibits with Mary. They're fascinated by everything they see. Along the pathway through THE AVIARY

Bobby stops before a towering cage. The sign reads: "North American Golden Eagle." The once proud bird behind the bars is perched sorrowfully on a single branch above the gathering crowd of TOURISTS and GAWKERS.

The Tourists snap off flash pictures - shooting the Eagle with invisible bullets of stark light. It upsets the bird. He shuffles on his perch. Stretches his wings to fly away, but he can't - his wings are clipped, or broken or ruined. He screeches to high Hell. The hoard continues, "Ooing" and "Ahhing" and taunting. And Bobby can't take it anymore.

BOBBY

Stop it! STOP IT! Leave him alone!
Can't you see! Can't you see his wings! He can't fly!

Bobby pushes through the crowd slapping at their cameras, and shoving at the Tourists. Lenses hit the ground, shattering into their optical components. Bobby makes it to the guard rail and stares up at the Eagle. It looks back down at him. All is quiet now, the tourists are stunned.

BOBBY

(to Eagle)
I'm sorry.

Bobby runs away. Mike follows, Mary after him.

EXT. MONTGOLFIER ELEMENTARY - DAY

The bell rings and KIDS pour out of the front gates. Most of them are picked up in cars by their parents. Mike and Bobby walk home down

EXT. OSBORNE BLVD. - DAY

where they start noticing kids tossing their pop bottles in yards, near the curbs etc..

NARRATOR

When school finally started, Bobby and me always used to take the long way home to avoid the punks from our block. It took three times as long, but it turned out to be worth it.

Bobby unconsciously picks up a bunch of the bottles.

INT. DALES MARKET - DAY

He and Mike come in with arm loads of bottles and cash them in. They earn a dollar. They step...

EXT. DALES MARKET - DAY

...outside and grin - they've both got the same idea.

EXT. MONTGOLFIER ELEMENTARY - DAY

The bell rings. Mike and Bobby sprint out of the school.

MONTAGE - BOTTLE COLLECTING

On the BOULEVARD they pile bottles high in the wagon. So many, that they keep falling out.

DALES MARKET, Mike comes out with 4 dollars. Bobby's been guarding the Radio Flyer.

CLUBHOUSE, they stash the money in the secret cubbyhole hiding place.

BACK FIELD, at night Mike and Bobby steal some wood from the palettes.

CLUBHOUSE, Mike draws up a set of amateur blue prints for a modification to the wagon. They build it - Stakebed sides. When it's done, Bobby runs his hands over the little vehicle, as if, the modification has somehow improved the Radio Flyer - brought it closer to some purer combination of function and form. His eyes glass over and Mike has to shake him out of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANOTHER BOTTLE RUN, in which they pile the wagon to the gills. They tow the load across a vast empty parking lot - Bobby pulling, Mike rushing around each side catching bottles before they fall and break.

DALES MARKET, Mike comes out with the cash. Bobby hops in the wagon and Mike tows him home.

END MONTAGE.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY

They shade all the windows and lock the door. Bobby and Shane watch closely as Mike counts up the booty right next to Samson's nose on the work bench. The turtle thinks it's lettuce - keeps trying to eat it.

MIKE
22 bucks!

BOBBY
Yeah, 22 bucks!

MIKE
Oh man, what're we gonna get with it?

Bobby is suddenly serious.

BOBBY
Nothing. We can't spend it.

MIKE
What?! Why not?

Bobby moves to the Radio Flyer and kneels down, falling into his strange trance again.

BOBBY
We just can't. That's all. I just know it. Please Mike, promise we won't spend it.

MIKE
Okay, don't worry, I promise. We'll keep this and collect some more bottles for stuff.

Bobby doesn't respond. Mike watches him as he inspects the Radio Flyer and starts cleaning it, polishing every detail.

..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

I still didn't know what Bobby knew or what it was God had in mind for us to spend the money on, but I felt it, and I knew that whatever I wanted to spend it on was nothing compared to what Bobby was gonna need it for.

INT. 5 & DIME - DAY

A place the likes of which used to exist and where kids could find all the greatest things in life. Mike and Bobby wander up and down the aisles holding their school books. They buy: Pezz dispensers, a six pack of wax bottle cokes, sweet tarts, Viewmaster slides, a styrofoam Soaring Sam glider, comic books, two hot wheels and...

INT. DALES MARKET - MEAT COUNTER - DAY

...a giant cow bone, which they give to...

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

...Shane. Shane carries his bone and follows Mike and Bobby inside the

INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY

where the boys hide their loot in the cubbyhole - all except the Pezz. They sit together and share candy from Popeye and Bozo. From here, through the clubhouse windows, they can see around the side yard to the front. Shortly, Chad, Ferdie, the Raymonds and the Hernandez brothers appear in the street on their bikes.

VICTOR

Hey, Mikey! We're going to the park if you wanna go!

Mike looks over sharply, Bobby ignores them, Shane keeps watch through the doorway.

BIG RAYMOND

Yeah, come on lets go!

Mike hops down off the work bench and moves Shane aside to watch through the doorway. Shane looks up at him curiously.

BOBBY

What're you doin'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nothing. MIKE

Come on Mike! JORGE

They're only saying that so- BOBBY

-Maybe not. MIKE
Maybe they wanna make
friends with me.

In the street, Victor and Carlos are throwing a football back
and forth. Mike is weakening fast.

CARLOS
We need a extra player, lets go
Mike!

Bobby hops off the work bench, grabs Mike by the sleeve.

BOBBY
But what about me-

Mike jerks his arm away from his brother. He steps outside
the clubhouse.

MIKE
You don't know. They could be cool,
you don't know.

BOBBY
But-

Betraying his brother, Mike heads for the street.

MIKE
-Just stay here Bobby.

Mike jumps the fence and rushes out front to his new friends.
He hops on the back of Victor's bike and the group rides away
down the street. Bobby watches from the clubhouse doorway,
his feelings aren't hurt, they're ruined. Shane sits next to
him.

BOBBY
(to Shane)
What?
(beat)
No, just let him go.

EXT. BRANFORD PARK - DUSK

The bikes are scattered on the grass. Out on the football field, Mike is trying to fit in with the neighborhood punks.

VICTOR
So Mikey, you ever play Kill The Carrier?

MIKE
(he hasn't)
Yeah, sure.

VICTOR
You sure? It's the same as Smear the Queer.

MIKE
I know. Yeah I'm sure.

Victor looks to the others - they're holding back mean smiles.

VICTOR
Okay Mikey, you're it.

He stuffs the ball in Mike's gut, extracting a guff of air - Mike winces.

VICTOR
(pointing)
Sidelines and endzones are free.
If you get there you're safe.
(beat, glancing around at the others)
If you get there.

The punks surround Mike. The terrifying thought that this may have been a set-up dries his mouth out.

MIKE
Wait, I think we play it different where we come from. It ain't like this-

VICTOR
-You better run sissy.

CHAD
Smear The Queer!

Just as Mike turns to run, Victor smashes him to the ground, hard as hell. Jorge and Jesus get in late backspearing hits. Mike yells out in pain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VICTOR
Oh, sorry Mikey.

Mike struggles to his feet. The second he's standing upright, BOOM! Victor and Big Raymond blast into him. Mike flies back ten feet. There's already blood dripping from his nose.

MONTAGE - CROSSCUT

BOBBY, sitting in the backyard with Shane. A car pulls up out front. The kitchen light comes on. Bobby retreats into the clubhouse.

KITCHEN, where The King's hand switches on the broiler, then retrieves a pack of bacon and a dozen eggs from the fridge.

BRANFORD PARK, Mike is trying to reach the sidelines. His nose is bleeding good now. There's panic in his eyes. Suddenly, Ferdie hits him high, little Raymond hits him low. He goes down with a crunch.

KITCHEN, clouds of black smoke leaks from the broiler. The King kicks the door open. His bare HAND reaches in and pulls out the singed and blistered electrical cord.

BRANFORD PARK, Mike's crying freely - scraped, bruised and hurt bad. He tries to reach free territory. He makes it to within a yard of the endzone and Carlos elbow-stabs his plexus - winding him bad. He draws impossible empty breaths. The ball pops out of his hands. Victor picks it up and stuffs it back in Mike's gut.

VICTOR
You're still it pinche, get up!

BACKYARD, Shane is barking maniacally. Loud crashing from inside the house. The legs of a kitchen table chair erupt through the back door. The dog scratches madly at the door handle.

BRANFORD PARK, Mike limps as fast as he can toward the sidelines. Chad runs full steam into a flying tackle, but Mike moves on instinct and the boy goes sailing into the metal of a sideline bench face first, drawing blood from his forehead.

BACKYARD, Shane is almost frothing at the mouth. Beside him, one of The Kings hands comes smashing through the window. In a heart beat, Shane mauls the living shit out of it. The King draws his hand inside, bloodied and torn. But, Shane's given

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

enough time to stumble out the back door. Terrible damage has been done. Mike got off easy compared to this. Bobby falls across Shane and the dog carries him to the clubhouse. Inside, Bobby locks the door under tremendous pain and blacks out.

BRANFORD PARK, Mike makes it to the sidelines, free territory, he's safe. He drops the ball, stands there breathing heavy and crying. Victor shoves him back hard, knocking him to the ground with a thud.

VICTOR

Fuckin' cheater!

He bullets the ball at Mike, it bounces off his gut, winding him again. Mike gets up. Victor kicks him down. Mike gets up, Victor slaps him down. Suddenly the others no longer have "mob-frenzy" -they're scared.

LITTLE RAYMOND

Okay, Victor man, leave him alone.

Victor moves to beat Mike, Jorge grabs his arm

JORGE

Hey man, that's enough!

Victor tears loose to continue beating Mike, the others stop him, wrestling Victor to the ground.

CHAD

(to Mike)

Get outta here man! Run!

Beaten bad, Mike groans to his feet and staggers away across the field.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DUSK

All is quiet as Mike comes up the block. All except the soft Jazz seeping out of the open garage. Mike goes...

INT. THE HOUSE - DUSK

...inside and finds the place empty. He looks out back and sees the clubhouse door open to the world. He dashes out...

EXT. BACKYARD - DUSK

...back and a dread feeling comes over him:

Bobby!

MIKE

The whisper of a small wind draws Mike around, as if he's heard a voice. Shane is there.

MIKE

I know. (in answer)

I won't. (beat)
I won't ever leave him again.

(beat)
Did Mom get home?

(beat)
Where'd she go?

In answer, another wind blows through the backyard.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Mike and Mary are standing at the front desk. Officer Dougherty comes over with a stack of papers.

DOUGHERTY

Mary, just fill these out and we can keep him here till he goes to court and you won't have anymore trouble.

MARY

I'd really just like to go back to the hospital.

DOUGHERTY

It won't take a couple minutes and I'll drive you over myself.

MARY

(hesitant at best)
Couldn't I do this later, I really-

DOUGHERTY

-You do want to swear out a complaint against him, don't you?

Mary has a lot of trouble here, she can't say anything, or rather doesn't know how to say what she means.

Don't you?

DOUGHERTY (CONT'D)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY
I can't.

DOUGHERTY
He almost killed your boy!

MARY
And if I swear out a complaint
against him, next time he will!
You don't understand. He'd never
let us alone.

DOUGHERTY
(easing up)
I can only hold him forty eight
hours otherwise..

MARY
I know.

Officer Dougherty comes around the counter.

DOUGHERTY
Come on then, I'll give you a ride
to the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY ROOM - NIGHT

Officer Dougherty delivers Mike and Mary to Bobby's room. Mary
goes in and Officer Dougherty holds Mike back a second.

DOUGHERTY
Son, have you still got the card
I gave you?

MIKE
Yes sir.

DOUGHERTY
Good. If you need me, I'll be
there.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mike and Mary are at Bobby's bedside. They're both crying.
Bobby's face is swollen and bruised. His ribs are wrapped in
a tight bundle of bandages.

MARY
Sweetheart, I'm so sorry. I'm so
sorry he did this to you. I promise
it'll never happen again. We're
gonna move away.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY (Cont'd)

We're gonna move back home, back
east again, would you like that?
Would you be happier back there
Bobby?

Bobby squints up at his mother through swollen eyes.

BOBBY

We don't have to do that Mom. It's
gonna be alright. Don't worry.

Bobby's bravery puts a big lump in her throat.

BOBBY

Could I talk to Mike for a minute?

MARY

Sure. I'll be right outside.

She kisses Bobby ever-so-gently on the forehead. She goes
outside leaving Mike and Bobby alone. Mike stands close to
the bed and the brothers consider each other's battle scars
for a long moment. Understanding passes between them - Mike
doesn't have to apologize, Bobby knows he's sorry.

BOBBY

Is the money okay? Did he find the
secret hiding place?

MIKE

No, it's still there.

BOBBY

Good. It won't be long now, I can
feel it.

MIKE

For what?

BOBBY

Can't tell you yet. But it won't
be long.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

A couple weeks after the "accident." Mike and Bobby still
retain some residual bruises etc... They're sitting in the
back as usual, sucking "Pixie Sticks" through wax-lips.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The marquee reads: The 7th Voyage of Sinbad. Mike and Bobby exit the bus and buy tickets. The TICKET TAKER, a kindly older man, in deference to their battle scars, waves them in for free.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The guys sit down front in an otherwise totally empty theater. They've got Milk duds and cokes. The movie starts up - a 1958 Diorama masterpiece of claymated Cyclops, Minotaurs, Giants and Monsters.

NARRATOR

We went to see Sinbad on 3 consecutive Saturdays and since, back then, they never made you leave after the movie was over, we ended up seeing it 12 times. We got to know every single part of the movie, every monster that threatened Sinbad and most importantly every trick he used to beat them.

Mike and Bobby revel as Sinbad thwarts monster after mutant. The showing ends and Sinbad and the Princess fly away on a magic carpet.

BOBBY

watches this part most closely.

MIKE

notices; looking back and forth twixt the movie screen and his brother.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - SUNSET

The guys head home on foot along a sidewalk lighted up by shops and stores. Shortly, they're walking through

EXT. A PEACEFUL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

lit up intermittently by the street lights they pass beneath. In the windows of the homes they pass, they can see families sitting down to dinner, watching television and doing other familial things.

NARRATOR

It was a long, long way back and it took us about two hours.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The sun goes down, the moon comes out and the stars twinkle the sky with gentle dots of shining light. Mike looks pensive as he considers the vast sky above him.

NARRATOR

It was a crystal clear night and the stars were shining like diamonds. Bobby and I thought a lot, but did not talk on the way home.

(beat)

It was then, when I was thinking about life in general and about home, the punks on our block and mostly about Bobby and The King that I got the greatest, scariest, best idea any kid in the history of all time ever had.

(beat)

That's when I got "The Big Idea."

As Mike gazes heavenward, he passes under a street lamp and the white light washes across the screen becoming...

CUT TO:

...another classic TITLE CARD, reading:

THE BIG IDEA

"When your heart is in your dreams,
no request is too extreme..."

-Jiminy Cricket

EXT. MINIATURE GOLF COURSE & TRAMPOLINES - DAY

Only Mike and Bobby and the old PROPRIETOR are here today. They pay their 10 cents and hop onto the big rubberized tramps in their stocking feet. They bounce up and down smiling. It isn't long before Bobby is bouncing higher than Mike. Mike rises IN and OUT OF FRAME in perhaps one second. Bobby however, stays airborne longer... and longer, until it's a full ten seconds before he is RE-ENTERING FRAME.

Mike and the Proprietor watch on in disbelief.

NARRATOR

Before anybody ever loses the innocence of youth, there are magical things - impossible in later life - that can still happen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (Cont'd)

The reason these things are lost to the grownup world is at once simple and incomprehensible: in the quick second between the age of 12 and your 13th birthday, the great secrets to them all are replaced in your mind with thoughts of the opposite sex.

(beat)

It is not like the nagging forgetfulness of old age, it is as if the great secrets never existed and are therefore, ever after, doomed to be denied.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Bobby is on his belly watching Samson munch an apricot, nose to nose.

NARRATOR

There are seven of these lost secret fascinations and abilities and they are: That animals can talk-

Samson stops chewing momentarily, cranes his head up to look at Bobby eye to eye, and burps.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM - DAY

Bobby throws his blanket over his head. Mike is holding a tiny souvenir "Dodger bat" at arm's length.

NARRATOR

Your favorite blanket is woven from a fabric so mighty, that once pulled over your head, it becomes an impenetrable force-field-

Mike bonks Bobby on the head with the little bat. Bobby tosses the blanket off and smiles - it worked! Mike stuffs the bat in his back pocket and head out of the room. Bobby follows. When Mike can't see, he rubs his head (just a little).

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mike is wearing the stars n' stripes blanket as a Superman cape. He's squatting behind Mary's VW and trying to lift the car at the bumper. Bobby's verifying the feat at the asphalt, trying to shove a ruler under the tire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

Nothing is too heavy to lift with
the aide of a red cape-

Veins are standing out on Mike's forehead. Bobby pokes and shoves the ruler, trying desperately to detect some space between the tire and the ground. He manages to wedge it under and signals Mike to relax. Mike shakes it off and checks his bicep for muscle gain.

EXT. BACK FIELD - DAY

Tin cans at 20 paces. Mike and Bobby have their hands in their pockets like gunslingers.

NARRATOR

Your hand, held forefinger out and
thumb up, actually fires bullets-

Mike and Bobby draw. BLAM! BLAM! The cans go flying. Amazed, they hold their hands up to inspect the impossible - their fingers are smoking.

EXT. BACK FENCE - DAY

Bobby is balancing on top with an open umbrella in one hand, perhaps six feet up.

NARRATOR

Jumping from any height with an
umbrella is completely safe-

Bobby jumps off the fence. The umbrella blows taught against the down draft. It works! He floats to the ground like Mary Poppins. Mike is astounded, Bobby shakes the umbrella out and folds it up - second nature.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Mike and Bobby and Mary and The King are at the breakfast table. Mike and Bobby eat with their heads down. Although we cannot see him, it's obvious that The King is staring at Bobby.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Monsters exist and can both be seen
and done battle with.

(beat)

And the greatest, most special and
regrettable loss of all-

INT. L.A. COUNTY NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - DAY

A school field trip. Mike and Bobby tag along at the end of the pack. The TEACHER leads the group of ELEMENTARY SCHOOLERS through the Bird exhibit. Stuffed Vultures, Eagles, Owls and Hawks... all seem to watch them as they pass, from behind glass display cases.

Bobby is drawn to the largest glass case. In it, a massive American Bald Eagle is displayed with its wings spread a full 5 feet. The once proud bird looks out through the glass with steely eyes and seems as if at any moment it may just take wing.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

-the ability to fly.

Bobby's got that far away look in his eyes again.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY

He has it here also, while he's polishing the Radio Flyer. Mike is counting the loot. The Soaring Sam styrofoam glider is parked on the work bench.

BOBBY

Whadda you think, you think you can fly?

Mike balks - it's the toughest question a kid could ever get.

MIKE

Yeah... I guess... Probably.
(dangerous territory)
You ever done it?

BOBBY

(offhand)

A'course. Couple times.

MIKE

When?

BOBBY

Some times.

MIKE

How?

BOBBY

With the Soaring Sam of course, but it ain't big enough. Can't go too far.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Mean you didn't just do it like Superman?

BOBBY

No dummy, Superman's only in comic books, he ain't real. Ya can only do it in some kind of Flyer.

MIKE

Mean like a plane?

BOBBY

Naw, don't need a plane, just a Flyer.

MIKE

What's the difference?

BOBBY

Geez Mike, whatsa matter with you? A plane's a plane. A Flyer's a Flyer. Plane's need all that plane stuff. Flyer's don't need nothin'.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby is asleep. Mike is staring up at the ceiling in deep thought. Something suddenly occurs to him and he bolts upright.

MIKE

(to himself)

Oh man...

Mike shakes Bobby awake.

MIKE

Bobby? Bobby, wake up it's important. Come on.

Mike grabs his flashlight and Bobby follows him out sleepily. They sneak out to the

INT. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

Mike shines the beam on the wagon.

MIKE

Who's the greatest Flyer of all time?.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
The Red Baron.

MIKE
What color is it?

BOBBY
Red...

MIKE
(from the Chair)
Bobby? What's it say on the side
of the wagon?

Bobby kneels down slowly, close to the side of the wagon,
running his finger tips over the name label.

BOBBY
R-a-d-i-o F-l-y-e-r.

MIKE
F-l-y-e-r...

NARRATOR
When it was all finally clear to
him, he looked up at me, wondering
why after he'd done some flying and
I hadn't that I had gotten the idea
before him. But he knew. He knew
I loved him. And since I was two
years older, it was right that I
had thought up The Big Idea.

Bobby stands up and hugs his brother.

BOBBY
Thanks Mike.

INT. BURBANK AIRPORT - DAY

The King walks down the gangplank and gets on a plane. Mary,
Mike and Bobby wave behind his back. He doesn't wave back.

NARRATOR
The next day someone died. The King
went away for a long time. He went
so far away that he had to take a
new kind of plane called a 747.

EXT. BURBANK AIRPORT - DAY

As they head back toward the parking lot, Mike and Bobby look
up suddenly as a 747 roars overhead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

Even though it was gigantic and could carry hundreds of people across entire oceans, the 747 was no Flyer.

(beat)

It could go up in the air.

(beat)

It could fly.

(beat)

But eventually, sometime, no matter what, it had to come down.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Mary comes out with a small bag. Gets in the VW bus and hands it to the guys. They open it and crack up. It's a big jar of peanut butter and a box of saltines. The dig in and drive away - all smiles.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Mike isn't paying attention. The TEACHER'S VOICE sounds far away and garbled like the adults in a "Peanuts" cartoon. Mike's finishing the last entry to a list, across the top of the elementary school notebook paper he's written, "THE BIG IDEA." (Note: See attached)

Mike is suddenly racked with hopelessness.

MIKE

Oh no...

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Mike and Bobby are on their way home. Mike's reading from the list to Bobby, who's listening intently.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(stressed)

...a lot, that's how much. Listen, two Cox airplane engines and two kites with tails-

BOBBY

-but, Mike-

MIKE

-wait, and some donuts and postcards and... and some bike wheels, and... and... no way, I'm sorry, I thought it was a good idea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
(almost laughing)
Mike?-

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Bobby empties the Yuban can and takes out the 22 dollars.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
-I told you it wouldn't be long.

MIKE
(amazed)
That's why you didn't want to spend it.

BOBBY
No, I just knew we shouldn't.
(points up)
-He knew why.
(beat)
It's all for the Big Idea.

MONTAGE - COLLECTING PARTS

GARAGE, Mike and Bobby carefully enter the forbidden place. It is practically empty except for an old ratty recliner, a small phone company wire-spool-table, an old hi-fi set with a stack of Jazz albums, a battered old fridge, and a big tool box.

NARRATOR
Using The King's tools was suicide,
but we didn't have a choice;
besides, we figured to be finished
a full day before He came home.

The guys nab a selection of tools from the tool box and hurry out.

CITY DUMP, Mike dismantles a baby stroller and takes the seat and front tires.

GO-CART TRACK, Bobby pays a dollar for an old go-cart steering wheel.

JUNKYARD, Mike buys an old face-plateless motorcycle helmet.

HOBBY SHOP, Bobby buys two cox airplane engines, two paper kites and a huge ball of twine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITCHEN, Mike gets a Yuban can out of the garbage.

BACKYARD, Mike and Bobby dismantle their bikes, taking the sprockets, chains and rear wheels. And, the sissy bar from one bike.

REAR FIELD, While Mike dismantles a bunch of the wooden palates, Bobby jimmies the lock on the construction shed and drags out the lawn mower engine they discovered when they first explored back here.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. CLUBHOUSE - SIX DAYS & NIGHTS CYCLE

As Mike and Bobby carry the last of the supplies from The Big Idea list inside. Shane follows them in. The boy scout lantern quickly fills the tiny work shop with soft light. We hear the constant, diligent sounds of construction from within.

NARRATOR

It took six days to build the Flyer.

Finally, ONE NIGHT, Mike and Bobby come out of the clubhouse looking haggard but pleased. They slap a master lock shut on the door.

NARRATOR

On the seventh day, we ran out of wood.

(beat)

That left four days before the 747 brought him back.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby break out a big bowl, sugar, flour, eggs, mixer, baking powder, cook book etc...

MIKE

(checking watch)

Crap, we gotta hurry.

Bobby fires up the oven. Mike dumps everything in the bowl. Hits the mixer and disappears in a cloud of flour. Bobby greases to cake pans, up to his elbows in Crisco. Mike tips the bowl to pour the mixture in the pans - it crawls out in a semi-solid lump. Bobby scissors it in half.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The cake balances precariously on the table in the dark, like two inflated Chef's hats stacked together. Mary comes into

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

the darkened house. Mike and Bobby throw the lights on.

MIKE/BOBBY
Surprise! Happy birthday!

SAME - MINUTES LATER

Mary and the boys are at the table. They hand her a present.

MIKE
We went together on it.

MARY
You did? What is it?

BOBBY
Open it.

Mary does. The small box inside is addressed to Mike and Bobby from "The Magic Depot, N.Y.C., New York."

BOBBY
We sent away for it, that's why our names are on it.

MARY
Oh.

Mary opens the box and pulls out a tiny resin encased 4-leaf clover on a chain.

MARY
Oh, guys, it's beautiful.

Mike and Bobby put it around her neck.

MIKE
It's so you'll be safe when He gets home.

The utterly mature significance of the charm brings tears to Mary's eyes. She hugs them both tightly, squishing air out of them.

BOBBY
(windy)
It's not supposed to make you sad Mom.

MARY
I'm not sad guys, these are happy tears. Now, lets have some of that- that- ah big cake you whipped up.

INT. MARY'S ROOM - LATE

Mike and Bobby appear in the doorway and halt, seeing their mother -just home from work in her waitress uniform - kneeling to pray at her bedside holding a very old and precious ring.

NARRATOR

Mom prayed a lot when The King was gone. She would hold her mother's special ring and pray to Saint Ann that on the plane flight home, The King would think about the funeral of his own mother that he'd went to and be changed for the better when he came back.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

While Mike sets up the pup tent in front of the clubhouse, Bobby slips into the rear field and grabs some more 1 by 4s from the palates.

NARRATOR

Three days before His return, the Flyer still needed safety rails.

From across the wall, Chicky Erskine spies Bobby carrying the wood into the clubhouse. Her sour face lights up in the window.

EXT. MIKE & BOBBY'S BLOCK - DAY

WIDE as we hear a phone dialed. Another phone rings then picks up:

FAT WOMAN (VO)

Hello, what is it?

CHICKY ERSKINE (VO)

This is Mrs. Erskine from across the street?... The two brats that live next to me? Well, let me tell you that I saw them stealing...

Another phone rings. Another picks up.

MEXICAN WOMAN (VO)

Hola?

FAT WOMAN (VO)

Mrs. Hernandez? Mrs. Pugh here, Mrs. Erskine just told me that she saw those two new kids, you know down at the alcoholic house...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All their voices fade b.g. as phone after phone rings and is answered. It's a goddamn conspiracy.

NARRATOR

We never knew for sure who started the rumor, but we figured it was Chicky Erskine.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Mike and Bobby and Shane have posted sentry at the clubhouse. Soon, in the street out front, Chad, Ferdie, the Raymonds and the Hernandez brothers are amassing on their bikes like flies.

NARRATOR

Anyway, the word got out about "something those new kids are building in their shed..." and we had to start standing guard at the clubhouse all day and all night.

NIGHT FALLS, and still the scavengers circle out front. Victor and Carlos attempt a late night scaling of the fence. Shane chases them away.

DAY DAWNS, and Jorge and big Raymond offer Mike and Bobby baseball cards from the fence. B.g. CHAD and FERDIE'S MOTHER, a monstrosly bovine woman encourages them on from across the street like The Humongous in The Road Warrior.

AFTERNOON, the punks blitz. Three of them make it to the clubhouse -hopping up and down to see in the shaded windows. Shane herds them back with vicious growls. As they scramble over the fence he takes bites at their butts. Mike and Bobby thwart the rest through the chainlink - poking them back with their spears.

Shane has had enough, he leaps over the fence into

EXT. THE FRONT YARD - STREET -- DAY

and gives chase. The Hernandez' split up the block, the Raymonds go down the block, Chad and Ferdie go straight across the street into

EXT. CHAD & FERDIE'S HOUSE - DAY

and slam the door just as Shane gets there with a SNAP! The dog lingers, listening in. Shortly he hears:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAT WOMAN'S VOICE

Oh they sicked their dog on you did they? Well, yes, okay, then we'll see about that.

(dials phone)

Give me the police.

Shane sprints back across the street.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Mike and Bobby sit side by side on the patio, fretting. Shane comes around the side of the house panting.

BOBBY

Hey Shane, did ya get 'em-
(pause as Shane says something)

The familiar light wind blows through the backyard and Bobby and Mike snap to their feet like Jack-in-the-Boxes.

MIKE/BOBBY

She called the COPS?!

BOBBY

If they find it, they'll tell The King when He comes home.

(starts to cry as he says it)

And we used his tools, and we took that engine, and even though it was in there a million years, and the owner's dead, and no one else on the whole planet knows it was in there he'll call it stealing, and... and...

(thorough pause)

...he'll kill us.

As NIGHT FALLS on them...

DISSOLVE TO:

...the cub scout lantern lights up the inside of the

INT. PUP TENT - NIGHT

Mike, Bobby, Shane and Samson huddle together in a war conference.

MIKE

Okay, we gotta hide it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

If we move it now, somebody might see it.

MIKE

We don't have a choice, we have to take the chance, because if the cops do come they'll find it anyway.

BOBBY

But where?

MIKE

(a revelation)

The mine shaft.

BOBBY

That's perfect, then it'll be right there when we go up to The Wishing Spot.

MIKE

Right. Okay Shane?

The dog nods.

BOBBY

What about the test flight?

Mike unpockets The Big Idea list. Everything's crossed off except the entries Donuts, Postcards, Gasoline.

MIKE

No time. We still gotta get the donuts and postcards and gas after school tomorrow. 'Sides you done it before right?

BOBBY

Yeah. Then tomorrow night I can go?

MIKE

Naw, I think the next day, Saturday, that way nobody'll notice you missing from school. Plus we still gotta write the note to Mom.

BOBBY

But Mike! He'll be home then, tomorrow night even!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

It'll be okay, it ain't gonna be here anyway so he won't be able to find it. After school tomorrow we go get the rest of the stuff. Then we come home and act normal. Saturday we go see Sinbad again and come back late and eat dinner. Then we go to bed early and then sneak out and go to The Wishing Spot and do The Big Idea.

BOBBY

Yeah, okay, I guess that'll work pretty good.

MIKE

It will, here-

Mike holds both pinkies up. Bobby locks fingers with him.

MIKE (CONT'D)

-I double pinkie promise that I won't let anything go wrong.

EXT. BACK YARD - LATE

Bobby latches Samson's chain to the clothes line pole.

BOBBY

Don't worry, I'll be back for you.

Carrying the lantern in front of him, Mike checks the backyard and out front. It's clear. He carefully unlocks the clubhouse door. Goes inside and the windows light up with the lantern glow.

He sets a plywood ramp out the door to the ground. Bobby goes in and helps Mike pull it outside. It rolls out soundlessly - as smooth as a frictionless bearing. In the light of the cub scout lantern - as if it were emerging from a Northrop hangar - we see it for the first time:

The Radio Flyer. It stands at a rakish angle - purely aerodynamic.

A home-built, heavily modified 1968 Radio Flyer sidewalk special. Upgraded with: bike wheels and sprocket cranks, a lawn mower engine, baby-stroller-seat n' sissy bar plywood cockpit, go-cart steering wheel, two paper kites on U-joints with furled rag tails above two small Cox airplane engines, Soaring Sam styrofoam glider wing across the top.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Truly a Spanky MacFarlane jalopy, if Spanky had been an aerospace engineer. The little wooden cargo trunk is stuffed with a Disneyland map, Highlight's magazines, a pin-hole camera, the Yuban can string telephone, Map-o-America Coleman sleeping bag etc...

NARRATOR

No other kids in the history of the world had ever had a better idea. And if they did, they never built it. The Radio Flyer was gonna soar.

EXT. REAR FIELD - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby pull the Flyer through the secret fence-door, Shane follows. They start out through the dark suburban wilds toward San Fernando blvd. in the distance, under a full moon.

NARRATOR

It suddenly became clear to me why Bobby always got those far away looks when he stared at the Radio Flyer. He had known something I didn't, he could see right through the metal of it and imagine the way it should've been. It wasn't just the bright red paint, or the logo that was written so it looked like the words were gonna fly right off the sides - it was what the wagon represented.

(beat)

It meant escape.

(beat)

Who The King of Terrors couldn't see, who he couldn't look into the soul of and who he couldn't get his hands on, he couldn't hurt.

(beat)

Bobby was going, away to far away places where The King could never hurt him again.

(beat)

That was what the Flyer was for, and that, pretty much, was The Big Idea.

EXT. SAN FERNANDO BLVD. - NIGHT

The guys appear from under cover of the field and stop just short of the light from a street lamp. Cars pass as they wait for the right moment to cross.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

We gotta camouflage it. Take off
your jacket.

They drape their jackets over the Flyer. Take off their shoes
and removes their socks, fitting them over the tips of the
styrofoam wings. Mike ducks out to the curb and checks down
the street.

HIS POV - PANNING

as the far away traffic lights turns red, stopping traffic from
both directions.

MIKE & BOBBY

pull the Flyer out of cover.

MIKE

(loud whisper)
Come on, this is it.

They tow it quickly across the street, bounce it up the
opposite curb. Just as they make the crossing WONK! WONK!
a train appears down the

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - NIGHT

which they must now cross in order to get out of sight. Its
massive headlight gets closer, a white sun in the night. Both
traffic lights behind them turn green. The cars approach.

They haul! The Flyer rolls smoothly over the loose gravel up
to the tracks. Shane leaps across the barks back at them to,
"Hurry up!" The front wheels bounce over the first track - then
the back wheels. The Flyer's dead center-track now - a sitting
duck. They check

THE TRAIN

and it's 25 yards away, looming, shining its beam on them like
a 5 foot interrogation lamp.

MIKE & BOBBY

panic. They yank and the front wheels clear the second track.
But, the back wheels jam up tight. On the street

CARS

are almost within sighting distance - 5 seconds and they'll
be discovered.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE TRAIN

is 10 yards from impact.

BOBBY

pulls so hard his grip slips and he tumbles backwards down the gravelly hill. 5 yards and the Flyer is a pile of scrap.

BOBBY

Mike get it!

MIKE

jams his heels into the rocks - squats and hauls backward with all his might. He comes loose - flailing ass over teacups, landing near Bobby and Shane.

THE TRAIN

rumbles past on the track with thunder. As the dust clears

MIKE & BOBBY

look up and there it is, unscathed - The Radio Flyer.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - MINE SHAFT - NIGHT

Mike wedges a claw hammer into the plywood board-up. He rips back and the whole thing falls at his feet with a big airy WHOOF! He and Bobby venture a few feet inside and disappear into a dark void.

Seconds later a sound like millions of two pound butterflies has them sprinting out again and hitting the dirt face first. Bats! The creatures flow up into the night like a black river defying gravity.

INT. MINE SHAFT - NIGHT

They tow the Flyer inside, shining their flashlights up ahead. It's just an old abandoned mine shaft - dusty and cobwebbed - an old ore cart and a few rusty tools.

BOBBY

Pretty cool place.

MIKE

Yeah... we should do an expedition in here sometime.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

Yeah... there's probably treasure
and stuff way back in there.

They reach a fork in the passageway. Each of these tunnels
goes back for what may be miles.

MIKE

Okay, this is good here. Around
the corner.

The stash the Flyer and head back out.

EXT. MINE SHAFT - NIGHT

Bobby holds up the plywood boarding and Mike is about to hammer
it back in place:

BOBBY

Wait a second, how're the bats gonna
get back in?

MIKE

I dunno.

BOBBY

We can't lock 'em out, it's their
house.

MIKE

How'd they ever get out before?

BOBBY

Maybe they never did, maybe they
ain't coming back either. Maybe
we did them a favor and set them
all free.

MIKE

Yeah, I bet they're glad to be outta
there.

Mike pounds the nails back in.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

As Mike and Bobby are heading home under the cottony light of
the full moon.

BOBBY

Hey, Mike, you think those bats had
a Big Idea too?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

You mean like someday getting out
of the mine and flying away?

BOBBY

Yeah.

MIKE

Sure, they probably got monsters
in there too.

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

A cereal bowl of malted milk balls on Mike's dresser. Bobby's finally peacefully asleep. No thrashing. No dreaming. Mike is, as usual, staring up at the ceiling. He looks over at Shane - the dog is asleep and dreaming - his legs twitch and his ears flatten - he's having a bad dream.

Mike's eyes grow heavy. His lids slowly close. Just as he seems asleep, a strange and heavy breathing sound fills the room - like organic exhaust from the nostrils of some huge beast. As he looks again at Shane, the dog is gone and in his place - virtually filling the room - is the big one from Geronimo Bill's Buffalo Farm.

The buffalo glances at Bobby, then steps toward Mike and lowers his massive head to eye level.

BISON'S VOICE

You've done well, Michael.

MIKE

Yeah, he's going away. He won't
dream the bad ones anymore.

The buffalo eyes the milk balls.

BISON'S VOICE

May I?...

Mike offers him the bowl. The beast inhales the candies. Mike looks closely at the Buffalo, reaches out and actually touches the animal on the snout - he's really there.

MIKE

Who are you?

BISON'S VOICE

I come from deep within you.
Goodbye... I am glad to have known
you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike closes his eyes...

BISON'S VOICE

(echoing away)

And Michael... Beware The King.

..when he opens them, it is Shane - not the Buffalo - who is staring him in the face. The dog's eyes show deep and threatened terror. He's shivering uncontrollably. Strange and far away VOICES rise in the room. Mumbling. Louder. Closer. Ethereal voices somewhere close o.s.

SAME - DAY DAWNS

through the windows and Mike bolts awake in bed. The voices are clear now. They're in the backyard! It's loud whispering. Mike jets to the window and throws it open. The Hernandez brothers trying to open the clubhouse. Mike kicks Bobby's bed and wakes him instantly.

MIKE

Shane! Get 'em!

The dog jumps to his feet and leaps through the open window into the backyard barking and snarling menacingly.

BOBBY

Whatsa matter?

MIKE

They're trying to bust into the clubhouse!

BOBBY

So what, the Flyer ain't there nomore.

Mike digs in a pile of dirty clothes for something. Finds a pair of pants. Rifles through the pockets for an object. Finds it - Officer Dougherty's card.

MIKE

Yeah, but if they look in there and they don't find nothing, then they're gonna wanna know what was in there and where it is now, and then they're all gonna go looking for it!

Bobby jumps out of bed and throws on his clothes. Mike grabs up the phone in

THE HALLWAY

and dials.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Shane has chased the Hernandez brothers back over the fence - he's holding the mob (including Chad and Ferdie's Mother and Chicky Erskine) at bay through the fence with a dazzling show of fangs. The punks are taunting him. Mike and Bobby are guarding the clubhouse. Beyond the heckling punks

THEY SEE

Officer Dougherty rush up the front yard to the side fence and grab Victor and big Raymond by the shirt collars and jerk them away from the fence.

DOUGHERTY

That's enough! Knock it off right now or heads are gonna roll boys!

The punks quiet. Shane stops growling, but stands his ground.

C & F'S MOTHER

Officer, Officer I absolutely insist as a citizen that you investigate that shed for stolen property.

CHICKY ERSKINE

Ditto. I've seen them. At night. Late. Hammering away. They're little thieves!

JORGE

It's TV's man!

LITTLE RAYMOND

And stereo 8-tracks!

DOUGHERTY

Shut the hell up, all of you.
(to Mike & Bobby)
Guys... Does he bite?

MIKE

Only bad guys.

The dog does not take his eyes off the cop.

DOUGHERTY

You sure?

MIKE

Yep.

Officer Dougherty hops the fence cautiously. As he approaches Mike and Bobby, Shane tracks his every move like a well trained patrol K-9. At

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE CLUBHOUSE

he looks down at the boys. Still half in their pajamas they're a pitiful sight. Shane parks beside Bobby.

DOUGHERTY

Well guys, what're we gonna do here?

MIKE

Make them go away.

DOUGHERTY

We will. But, the two ladies there say-

BOBBY

-They're lyin'.

DOUGHERTY

So, they're saying it just to get you guys in trouble?

MIKE

No, they're saying it because they don't like us.

The truthfulness with which Mike admits this has its affect on the big man.

DOUGHERTY

Can I just peek inside?

BOBBY

No sir. There ain't nothing in there.

DOUGHERTY

I'll make you a deal. You let me look inside and even if there is something in there I won't tell anybody, not even them.

Mike and Bobby shake their heads slowly.

DOUGHERTY

This is silly boys, I'm sorry I have to check in there.

As Officer Dougherty reaches for the door knob - Bobby clamps his teeth around the cop's palm, biting hard. He jerks his hand back and Shane steps between him and the boys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUGHERTY

Ah! Sweet mother of-

He considers the boys for a pensive moment. Something about them -the patent desperation in their young eyes - softens him immediately. He drops to one knee.

DOUGHERTY

Listen, this is what we'll do. You guys stand aside and act like you're letting me look inside, and I'll fake like I'm peeking, but I'll have my eyes closed and I won't really look.

(motioning back)

They'll think I did and I'll tell them there's nothing in there. Okay?

Mike and Bobby consider each other. They nod.

BOBBY

Okay. But no peeking. Pinkie promise.

Bobby holds his little finger up and Officer Dougherty locks pinkies.

DOUGHERTY

Promise.

They move aside and Officer Dougherty opens the clubhouse door. He winks at Bobby and closes his eyes. Sticks his head in the doorway and feigns inspection. He closes the door and turns back to the crowd.

DOUGHERTY

I think you all owe these boys a big apology.

Before he starts away, Mike grabs his arm.

MIKE

Thank you.

DOUGHERTY

That's okay. I've got a couple boys at home about your ages. Maybe when your Dad comes home I'll ask him about letting you come along on a fishing trip with us. Whadda you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mike and Bobby choke back fearful tears as long as they can. But it's no good, their cheeks are drenched.

BOBBY

No. Please don't.

MIKE

We don't like fishing, sir.

The big man wipes their tears away with his handkerchief.

DOUGHERTY

Hey, take it easy, I won't ask him anything. Don't worry, he'll never even know I was back here. Okay?

Bobby nods. The big man smiles and disperses the crowd. Mike, Bobby and Shane sit together on the

EXT. BACK PATIO - DAY

where they prop up their chins on their palms.

MIKE

Whadda you think Shane, you think it'll be okay?

The dog looks off in the distance - far away.

BOBBY

Shane, whatsa matter?

MIKE

Whadda you mean, nothing?

BOBBY

Is it about The Big Idea?

Shane tilts his head in the classically curious dog pose.

BOBBY

Don't gimme that, you understood what I said.

The luffing wind blows through the backyard again. The boys listen as Shane apparently talks to them.

MIKE

(to Shane)

He's coming back tonight. Why?

BOBBY

What's gonna happen, Shane?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

What was the dream about?

Shane gets up and walks away across the yard. Stops halfway, turns back (and says something).

BOBBY

We love you too, but what was your dream about?

He continues on and the boys follow him to behind the barbecue cabinets, where they find the dog lying down sorrowfully.

MIKE

Shane, if you'd just tell whatsa matter-

Shane barks loudly, cutting Bobby off.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING (SAME)

Mike and Bobby are at the table eating Oatmeal. Mary, just home from the graveyard shift is making coffee. Shane is under the table. Bobby slips him the oatmeal and the dog inhales it. Mary comes in with a cup of coffee and sits with them.

MARY

Bobby? Where's your oatmeal?

Shane burps under the table.

BOBBY

He likes it Mom, specially the Karo syrup.

Mary smiles, but the smile fades as quickly as it comes.

MARY

Guys? What happened this morning?

Bobby stares at the table top.

MIKE

Nothing. Some kids wanted to get in the clubhouse and Officer Dougherty made them go away, that's all.

Mary looks back and forth between her sons for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

I know you guys have been spending a lot of time out there the last three weeks. And I know you've been building something.

Mike and Bobby snaps look up at their mother, looks that say, "Oh Crap!"

MARY

Don't worry, I never peeked. I don't know what it is. I know you wouldn't do anything you're not supposed to, but... please, whatever it is, can you tell me if it's going to upset Him if he finds out?

Mike and Bobby think a minute.

MIKE

No. It won't.

MARY

Promise?

MIKE

Yeah, I- We promise. It's not even gonna be around long enough for Him to find out about it. Don't worry Mom.

MARY

Okay-

She gets up from the table and starts toward the bedroom, yawning as she goes.

MARY (CONT'D)

-get your stuff, you're gonna be late for school.

A grave realization grips Bobby - he panics.

BOBBY

MOM!

Mary stops and turns back abruptly. Bobby can't get it out.

MARY

What, Bobby?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bobby stares across the room at his mother, a great and immutable homesickness in his eyes.

BOBBY
(finally)
I love you Mom.

MARY
I love you too sweetheart.

Mary continues to her room. Mike and Bobby gather their things and go out the front door, leaving the house strangely quiet and empty.

NARRATOR
As it would turn out later, that was the last thing Bobby ever said to Mom. I figured it was a pretty good thing for a last thing.

EXT. MONTGOLFIER ELEMENTARY - PLAYGROUND - DAY

Lunchtime. Mike and Bobby sit by themselves eating baloney n' cheese on Wonder in silence. As Bobby swallows his hand jumps to his stomach. He grimaces and rubs away a passing tummy ache.

EXT. MONTGOLFIER ELEMENTARY - DAY

The bell rings. School's out. Mike and Bobby head for the boulevard. They're both holding their stomachs now. It's a fast rising nervous pain that hasn't reached its apex yet.

BOBBY
We should go home Mike.

MIKE
I know, but we gotta get the donuts and postcards first.

BOBBY
Something's wrong. My stomach hurts. We should go home right now.

INT. CITY BUS - TRAVELING - DAY

Mike and Bobby hold their school books tight against their guts. Mike reaches up to the "Stop" line and pulls it. The bell dings and the bus stops.

EXT. CARD SHOP - DAY

As Mike and Bobby come out, Bobby doubles over in pain. Mike puts his arm around his brother and helps him along - he can hack the pain a little better.

MIKE
Come on, we're almost finished.

BOBBY
It hurts, Mike... It feels scary
like that time.

MIKE
What time?

BOBBY
At the Frog Lady's...

FLASHBACK:

EXT. FROG LADY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Mike knocks cautiously. Bobby's holding a bucket of bison frogs. The Frog Lady answers the door in all her horrid glory. Behind her coke bottle glasses, her eyes are squashy rotten plums. She takes one look at the bucket of frogs, and:

FROG LADY
Oh, sweet Mary! Those are juicy
amphibs, aren't they...

She eyes the boys meanly. Digs into her frock pocket and pulls out two mouldy dollar bills.

FROG LADY
Here. Dump 'em, then git!

She slams the door.

EXT. FROG LADY'S BACKYARD - DAY

Mike and Bobby brave the eerie, 'willow strewn side path to the backyard and reach the crusty frog pond. It's empty.

BOBBY
Mike? Where's the others at?

MIKE
I dunno. Come on-

Mike dumps the new frogs in. As they turn to flee, the back door flies open and the Frog Lady steps out - wincing in the thin strand of sunlight she strikes her face through the canopy of rotting trees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FROG LADY
Frogs in the pond?!

Mike and Bobby nod fast.

FROG LADY
Then git!

The boys hit mach 6 out of the backyard. And then strangely...

EXT. FROG LADY'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

...skid to a halt in the gravel.

MIKE
We gotta know.

BOBBY
Okay...

EXT. SIDE OF THE HOUSE - DAY

The boys creep secretly up to the kitchen window dip-stepping over a bed of leaves like a mildewed trampoline. They squat down below the window and Bobby almost jumps out of his skin - A potato bug!

BOBBY
Ahhhhh!

Mike slaps his hand over Bobby's mouth, drops the bucket upside down over the bug and sits on it. The bucket rattle underneath Mike - the beefy insect is trying to escape. He takes his hand away from Bobby's mouth.

BOBBY
Jesus, it's a mutant!

MIKE
I know! Shut up. Lets just peek inside and split.

The boys slowly crane their necks up to see in the window.

THEIR POV

(beneath the drawn window shade) of the Frog Lady moving suspiciously about her bleak kitchen. Suddenly, the shade furls with a fast SNAP!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE & BOBBY'S

eyes crank wide like scooter pies. They see it all now - FROGS! Dead frogs. Live frogs. Badly taxidermied frogs. 20 gallon glass aquariums brimming with croakers. And a massive gumbo pot on the boil. Bobby stammers incoherently.

MIKE

Shit! She's a frogaholic!

The Frog Lady grins hideously at the boys. She pulls a choice green croaker from one of the aquariums. It squiggles. Mike and Bobby's voices have left them - they're scared shitless. In one deft move from her withered frame, the Frog Lady "hook-shots" the frog. It flips in the air. Belly flops with a big SPLASH into the boiling pot.

BOBBY

NOOOO!

Mike grabs Bobby and hauls him away.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. DONUT SHOP - DAY

Bobby's curled up against the wall, rocking back and forth, trying to shake the pain in his gut. Mike comes out of the shop with a dozen mixed glazed and jelly fillings under his arm. He squeezes at his solar plexus - it's getting worse.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

The bus roll up. Bobby jumps aboard, almost in tears. Mike digs in his pockets for change. No good, he's broke.

MIKE

(crushed)

Bobby, we're out of money.

EXT. OSBORNE BLVD. - DAY

Mike reaches the first intersection and has to wait for Bobby to catch up. Mike's lips are trembling. Bobby's crying freely now. He digs his fist into his side like a Marathoner with a monumental cramp. They continue on - Mike waiting for Bobby at each corner.

EXT. THE BLOCK - DAY

Mike and Bobby round the corner and can see their house from here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLOW MOTION:

The guys start forward and, by their dumbfounded awareness at the snail's progress they make, we know they've been caught in a real live "running-away-from-a-monster-dream."

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Mike reaches for the doorknob. His hand is shaking uncontrollably.

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

All is quiet. They move through

THE KITCHEN

to the back door. Mike has to flex his fingers to get them to close around the knob. He opens it slowly. They step out into

THE BACKYARD

and march straight to

THE CLUBHOUSE

bypassing the rest of the yard. They check the master lock - it remains untouched. The cardboard shades are still in place. Bobby is bawling with pain now, Mike's whole face shakes within unknown terror. With their backs to the yard, they hear it...

...Jazz. From the garage, soft and horrifying. Together, they turn slowly to face the backyard. The mighty wave of disbelief that crashes over them tears their mouths open with stark fear.

WHAT THEY SEE

is hellacious. The lawn's been torn to ribbons. Fence boards split and shattered. Big patches of dirt raked away. The redwood barbecue cabinets smashed to bits. Several long furrows started and left unfinished at the fence base.

END SLOW MOTION.

MIKE & BOBBY

start forward - stumbling in shallow-dug holes. Drawn inexplicably to

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE

by fear and necessity. They have trouble making the turn. They hear flies buzzing. They're both crying and pounding at the ache in their stomachs. As they finally round the side, Bobby falls to his knees in an anguished heap at what he sees. The ache instantly leaves them, and their crying turns to the mournful kind.

SHANE

is dead. The heavy tow chain he was beaten to death with lies in a pile beside him.

THE REAR GARAGE DOOR

BANGS open and The King's boots step out. Dave Brubeck's "Camptown Races" lilts through the air. Terrific bite wounds lace The King's arms and legs. Shane went down fighting.

BOBBY

springs to his feet and matches the man's stare measure for measure.

THE KING

Hey guys? Don't ever use my tools again.

And with that, the monster recedes back into its lair and slams the door, muffling the Jazz.

MIKE

Bobby? You gotta go tonight.

BOBBY

I know.

EXT. REAR FIELD - DUSK

Mike and Bobby have buried Shane and made a cross with their Genuine American Indian rubber tipped bamboo spears. They lay a huge bunch of big sunflowers and a Hostess fruit pie on the grave.

NARRATOR

We buried Shane in the rear field.

(beat)

Later I told Mom that he just ran away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Mike and Bobby slip back through the loose fence boards into their backyard, night falls. Against the darkness of Shane's grave another...

CUT TO:

...silent film TITLE CARD appears, reading:

THE FLIGHT (?)

"If God had meant man to fly,
He woulda given him wings..."

-A Pessimist

INT. MIKE & BOBBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jazz still jams from the garage. Bobby's stuffing his soap-box backpack frantically; couple underwears, some socks, few shirts. Suits up: tiny long-rider's flight coat, canvas gardening gloves, welder's safety goggles around his neck, Davy Crockett coon skin cap, soap-box backpack.

Mike licks and seals the envelope he's just stuffed a note in. Grabs his jacket and soap box backpack.

MIKE

Ready?

Bobby only nods.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mike sets the envelope on the dinner table, propped up against the little "Friar Tuck" figurine salt and pepper shakers. Bobby grabs a head of lettuce and his Snoopy lunch box from the refrigerator.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

The boys double lift Samson into a rickety wooden crate with a towel inside. Bobby drops the head of lettuce in. They close the lid over.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

Mike digs The Big Idea list out of the secret cubbyhole. They go through a pre-flight check - dead serious.

MIKE

Coffee cans?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY
On board.

MIKE
Snoopy lunch box and thermos.

BOBBY
Check.

MIKE
Socks, underwear, shirts, pants?

BOBBY
Check. Check. Check. Check.

MIKE
Highlights magazines, pinhole camera, rabbit's foot, Disneyland map, donuts and postcards?

BOBBY
On board. On board.
(pats his pocket)
Check. On board. Check.
(pats other pocket)
And check.

MIKE
Soda bottles and peanut butter jar?

BOBBY
Right here.

Mike puts those in his backpack and turns his eyes to his watch.

MIKE
Mickey says 8:45. Lets go.

EXT. REAR FIELD - NIGHT

They squeeze through the secret fence-door, carrying the wooden crate with Samson in it. They make their way carefully through the darkened field, toward the boulevard in the distance.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The King stumbles in and jerks the fridge open. Grabs a cold six-pack. Slams the door back over, and exits, never having noticed the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ENVELOPE

on the table:

MIKE (VO)

Dear Mom, we went to The Wishing Spot with the Radio Flyer. I will be back but Bobby wont. Dont worry, hill be OK. We took Samsin, please dont git mad. Your son, Mike.

EXT. GAS STATION - STREET CORNER - NIGHT

The ATTENDANT stares down oddly at Mike & Bobby standing side-by-side, hopefully offering six soda bottles and the empty peanut butter jar. The Attendant shrugs and accepts the bottles and fills their jar with gas.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby move along in single file. Their resolve is clear now; nothing's gonna stop them.

EXT. AIRPORT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

They carry on, heading up the roadway toward the airfield. Plane engines are running low b.g.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - NIGHT

They head around the outfield, sticking to the shadows, toward the mine shaft entrance. Suddenly, an ascending plane barnstorms them. They drop Samson and suck dirt. They stand brushing themselves off. Mike checks his watch.

MIKE

9:15. They're still taking off.
You'll get a good launch window.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby arrive.

MIKE

9:20. On time.

Mike drops his backpack and fishes a hammer out of it. Mike stares at the hammer sorrowfully - it's how The King knew they used his tools. He looks to Bobby, who takes the hammer slowly from him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

It's okay, Mike, it wasn't your fault.

Bobby wedges the hammer into the boards and cranks them off. He and Mike stand waiting for the bats to fly out with their arms across their faces. They bats never appear.

MIKE

They didn't come back.

BOBBY

Naw, they're free now.

They enter the mine shaft carrying the wooden crate.

INT. MINE SHAFT - NIGHT

Shinning their flashlights ahead of them, they make their way quickly back deep in the shaft to the

TUNNEL FORK

where still sits the Radio Flyer. They get to work; prepping the Radio Flyer like a couple jet mechanics. Wheels oiled. Chain greased. Kite "wings" brought to the fore (rag tails still furled). Gas up the lawn mower engine. Load Samson's crate on the back - tied down. Tiny "Cox" engines topped off. Pull cords wrapped tight round all engine pulleys. All stuff stowed neath cockpit.

Bobby links the lucky rabbit's foot on the steering wheel. Mike punches holes in the bottom of the coffee cans and knots the ends of a long ball of string into each one. The comm-set is ready. They test it (but the string is still all wound up).

MIKE

(muffled into can)

TESTING! TESTING!

BOBBY

Yeah. Works great.

EXT. MINE SHAFT - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby tow the Radio Flyer out into the moonlight. And somehow, here in the night, in all its hodgepodged glory, it is reborn to do something other than ply the sidewalks... something wonderful.

Mike dusts the top of the mine shaft, clearing away rocks and dirt. Hops down next to Bobby. Grabs hold of the handle with his brother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE

It's clear, lets go.

They take one step up the big hill and - SCREECH! - freeze dead in their tracks, paralyzed with fear - The King is here. They look back slow toward the baseball diamond parking lot, but...

...there are no headlights.

SCREECH! from high above them now. Up at The Wishing Spot, perched on the phone pole, feathers gleaming even in the night, are the Red Tail Hawks.

BOBBY

They're telling us to hurry up.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

as Mike and Bobby struggle up the slope, towing the Radio Flyer behind them, they kick rocks and sticks out of the take-off path.

EXT. THE WISHING SPOT - NIGHT

They crest the hill out of breath. Turn the Radio Flyer around, facing down the slope at the precarious edge. Chock the back wheels with rocks. Light the little cub scout lantern hanging off the back sissy bar.

MIKE

9:55. Five minutes.

They sit down at the slope's edge, legs bent, arms around their knees, and stare out into space letting their breathing catch up with them.

NARRATOR

As we sat there, looking out across the whole valley to the mountains at the edge of the world that night, Bobby made the last wish he would ever make at The Wishing Spot. A wish that would never come true.

Without taking his eyes off the endless space in front of them:

BOBBY

I wish Shane was here.

MIKE

Me too.

EXT. REAR FIELD - NIGHT

As we DRAW IN CLOSE on Shane's peaceful grave, the mellifluous strains of Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" float out of the garage, through the fence boards, and silence every chirping CRICKET in the underbrush.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The envelope is open. The note inside has been read and crumbled and cast aside. The FRONT DOOR CLOSSES o.s. Then, an engine.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

The garage door is open. The hi-fi still plays "Take Five," and the garage is empty except for the many crushed beer cans. In the distance, the car engine ROARS away from us.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Mary looks tired. The late night rush is over. The MANAGER collects her order tickets.

MANAGER

Go on home Hon. It's slow enough.

MARY

Thanks Bill.

EXT. RUNWAY - NIGHT

Three planes taxi, one after the other, toward the end of the tarmac.

EXT. THE WISHING SPOT - NIGHT

Mike and Bobby are still sitting, staring out into space. The night grows suddenly quiet here also. Even the small breeze stops blowing. "Take Five" reaches The Wishing Spot. The music alerts Mike. He gets up and checks the runway far below. The first plane in the flight line takes off.

MIKE

Bobby... it's time.

Bobby buttons his coat. Mounts up. Cinches down the seat belt. Braces his sneakers against the wagon's cockpit lip and flexes his oversized-gloved fingers around the wheel. He and Mike watch seriously out to

THE RUNWAY

where the second plane takes off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIKE & BOBBY

each take hold of their ends of the Yuban telephone. They're swallowing hard now, their throats thick with anxiety. Mike moves to the rear of the Flyer, ready to kick the rock-chocks away. Waiting for the third plane to take-off, they suddenly begin to cry - they'll never see each other again.

MIKE

What're you cryin' for?

BOBBY

I ain't cryin', you are.

MIKE

No I ain't, you are.

BOBBY

No I ain't, you are.

Mike unpockets four postage stamps and hands them to Bobby. Their eyes are wet with the tears of their imminent, final separation.

MIKE

Oh- I almost forgot, here, for when you send me the postcards.

(beat)

10 a clock. You gotta go Bobby.

BOBBY

I'll see ya Mike.

MIKE

Yeah, I'll see ya.

Bobby holds on tight. Mike gathers courage, and draws his foot slowly back to kick the chocks loose. Just as he's about to follow through: SCREECH! They look up to the

PHONE POLE

for the Red Tail hawks. They're not there.

THEY

look down again, toward the baseball field, with instantly mounting terror, in time to see

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KING

crash through the backstop and skid out onto the infield. He stumbles from his car clutching a beer can in one hand and the murderously burnt remains of ole trusty in the other.

THE KING

Whuur arr you?! Run'wy
Sonsofblaches, Dadz here!

The King sees them. Staggers across the field viciously swiping at the air in front of him with the electric cord. He RANTS and RAVES as he runs.

MIKE & BOBBY

move more slowly than forming stalactites. Their muscles have fear-atrophied.

THE KING

tops the mine shaft. Scrambles up the loose dirt of the slope. The beer can and ole trusty make it difficult, but he won't let them go.

MIKE & BOBBY

are still moving like ice forming in the desert. Mike is kicking ferociously at the rock-chocks. They won't budge. He stoops behind The Flyer, bending into it with all his might.

Bobby's pawing at the dirt with his sneaker, trying to help get it rolling forward. No good. It's stuck solid; the extra weight of Bobby and the supplies has caused an inertia vacuum. Mike sprints to the hill's edge.

WHAT HE SEES

is The King, now half way up the slope. And then, several more cars roaring into the parking lot. A police car. Mary's car. Chad and Ferdie's mom's car. And, the neighbor-Hoods on their bikes. Officer Dougherty focuses his spot light on

MIKE & BOBBY

and they squint.

DOUGHERTY

(thru bullhorn)
Come on down now boys!

MIKE

We can't! He's coming!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BASEBALL FIELD

Chad and Ferdie and their Mom point and stare. The Raymonds and the Hernandez kids throws rocks up the hill at Mike and Bobby. Mary hollers for them to come down. Officer Dougherty dashes to his car and barks something into his radio mike.

THE WISHING SPOT

Mike picks up a big rock and raises it over his head unsteadily.

MIKE

Bobby, hang on, I'm gonna smash the chocks loose!

Bobby grips the wheel tightly, and leans forward in aerodynamic take-off position. Just as Mike is about to heave the rock forward

THE SUN

comes out. Mike and Bobby and the Radio Flyer are suddenly as bright as the day.

ECHOING VOICE

(from above)

Just stay where you are! Don't move! Freeze goddamnit or we'll fire!

Mike drops his rock. He and Bobby throw their hands up like two junior felons and stare into the light from above. It isn't until Mike feels

THE HAND

around his ankle that they realize 1) it is a police helicopter spotlight and not the sun that has come out, and 2) that

THE KING

has made it all the way to the top of the hill.

MIKE

jerks his foot loose. The King stands up from his crawling position, covered with dirt and out of breath. He reaches back and swings ole trusty at Mike with all his drunken might. Mike ducks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE KING

tumbles forward under his own momentum, fall to the ground where his

HEAD

bounces off the rear wheel rock-chock, knocking him out cold, and freeing

THE RADIO FLYER

which begins to creep slowly forward over the edge leaving thin wheel tracks in the dirt.

MIKE & BOBBY

look at each other one last time. Bobby re-grabs the steering wheel, slaps his helmet on over his coon skin cap. Goggles down. Mike reaches out at the last second and grabs hold of the lawn mower engine start cord. He doesn't even have to pull it - the line unwinds in his hand as the Radio Flyer crests the hill-edge.

The ENGINE starts.

The REAR WHEELS dig in.

Mike clamps the YUBAN CAN over his ear to listen.

Bobby's in the slot. Everyone down on the

BASEBALL FIELD

freezes solid in stark awe.

The YUBAN TELEPHONE string unwinds fast, whipping out behind the Radio Flyer like a rapidly sinking anchor line.

BOBBY

holds tight, the speed rattles and jolts him mercilessly. He rolls hopping down the grade, trying desperately to keep a straight fall line toward the

MINE SHAFT RAMP

which is approaching like a bullet.

THE WHEELS spin, kicking up thin dirt-roosters high above him.

THE LAWN MOWER ENGINE, whines crazily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE CUB SCOUT LANTERN swirls in loopy circles, but stays lit.

THE PAPER KITE-WINGS snap and slat almost to the point of tearing.

MARY

hides her face against Officer Dougherty's shoulder. Chad and Ferdie and their Mom and the Hernandez kids and the others look on slack-jawed and wide eyed.

BOBBY

crosses his fingers and compresses down under heavy G-force as

THE RADIO FLYER

hits the launch ramp. Dust and tiny dirt clods blast into the air as if someone had suddenly struck the old wood with the flat side of a shovel. The front wheels clear the air.

THE KING

staggers slowly to his feet and stares down the hill and can't believe his eyes.

THE RADIO FLYER

is airborne. It climbs. Up. Higher. Ascends 150 feet above the baseball field.

MIKE

smiles, success.

BOBBY

has his jaw set tight. Grim determination. The lawn mower engine still whines wildly. The rear wheels spin like crazy in mid air. Just as

THE RADIO FLYER

soars to above the pitcher's mound, it apexes. Hovers for a split second in the quick instant of motionless transition from up...

...to down. It falls. The fore section dips gently with gravity and suddenly it's nose diving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY'S

hands jumps to her face. She clutches tightly to her special ring.

BOBBY

clamps the Yuban can over his mouth.

BOBBY
Miiiiike! Help me! I'm falling!

MIKE

takes the Yuban can away from his ear. Sprints up close to the hill's edge in terror - he's helpless. Then he remembers - wedges the can over his mouth. Screams into it:

MIKE
Bobby! The Cox engines! Start the Cox eng-

Before Mike can finish, the telephone string snaps.

THE RADIO FLYER

is 40 feet from impact.

BOBBY

lets go of the steering wheel. Reaches back with both hands and fumbles for the start cords to the two small Cox model airplane engines mounted under the paper kite-wings. Finds the cords. Grabs them both. Closes his eyes tight.

BOBBY
Please God, I believe. I believe.

Bobby yanks them forward. The tiny combustion chambers cough and sputter. Tremble and quake. Whine and finally... turn over. ZING!

The LITTLE PROPELLERS whir to life.

The PAPER KITE-WINGS brace out against the night air.

Their RAG TAILS unfurl, trailing out far behind the falling Flyer. 10 feet from the pitcher's mound. Just as

MARY

faints. And Officer Dougherty turns his eyes away from the imminent impact. Just as all seems lost,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE RADIO FLYER

pulls up. Hovers there a moment - sort of shaky in its new environment - until Bobby opens his eyes and regains control. He switches the lawn mower engine leaving only the comforting buzz of the Cox engines. Then, he pulls back on the wheel and climbs slowly into the air above the baseball field.

The Radio Flyer crests the runway fence just as the third plane finally takes off.

THE BEER CAN

in The Kings hand, drops to the ground, tumbles down the hillside and comes to a dented halt, spilling a foamy exclamation in the dirt.

MIKE

runs down from The Wishing Spot, sprints across left field past everyone and up onto the pitcher's mound. He gazes into the sky with wondrous tears streaming down his cheeks.

MIKE

Ha! Robert Radio Flyer is the King
of Pacoima!

NARRATOR

The King never drank again.

(beat)

Mom and Officer Dougherty, and
everyone who was at the baseball
diamond that night, never believed
what they saw.

BOBBY & THE RADIO FLYER

are finally swallowed up by the cloaking safety of the night sky. The tiny cub scout lantern becomes just another pin dot star in the heavens. Except, this star is traveling in a wondrous arc to points unknown. The stars all blink out at once, leaving us a...

CUT TO:

...black TITLE CARD, reading:

LONG DISTANCE

"If dreams were lightning,
And thunder were desire,
This old house woulda burnt down
A long time ago..."

-John Prine
Angels From Montgomery

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary, Mike and The King sit watching TV. The King is obscured by late afternoon window glare. Mary seems distant and empty. The news cast announces the fall of Saigon.

NARRATOR

In the couple years before I turned thirteen, I had tried explaining to Mom what had happened about a hundred times, but - being a grownup - she could never recapture the frame of mind needed to really understand.
(beat)

Nine years went by before she finally accepted that Bobby wasn't coming back. In those nine years... she never once said a word to The King.

EXT. PACOIMA JR. HIGH SCHOOL - 1972 - DAY

The announcement board reads: "Welcome New Jr. High Students."

INT. PACOIMA JR. HIGH SCHOOL - COURTYARD - DAY

The first day of school. MIKE is now 13-years-old. His eyes are drawn at once left and right by the many, passing pretty GIRLS.

NARRATOR

The day I turned thirteen, I lost all knowledge of the seven great abilities and fascinations. It stayed that way for a long, long time. It was no wonder.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - 1978 - DAY

Graduation day. MIKE is now 18-years-old. He shakes hands with the PRINCIPAL and graduates from high school. The many GRADUATES stand and toss their hats in the air.

Mike finds Mary and The King. He hands a FRIEND his kodak instamatic to take a snapshot of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

When I graduated from High School,
any remaining semblance of a family
dissolved in the lingering acid of
ambiguity about what had really
happened to Bobby.

The Friend clicks the picture. FREEZE FRAME on Mike and his
mother. The image of The King dissolves away and fades from
the shot.

NARRATOR

What they didn't know was, that
everyday, for nine years after the
flight of the Radio Flyer, I ran
home after school and grabbed the
mail before anyone got home.
(killer beat)

So, I got the postcards.

EXT. HARVEY'S LAKE, PENNSYLVANIA - DUSK

Two BOYS (9 and 11) are struggling to bail water out of their
rubber raft. They're sinking fast.

NARRATOR

The first one I got was postmarked
Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, the
small town where Bobby and I were
born. I got the postcard the same
time I heard a news report
concerning two boys, brothers of
9 and 11-

The boys suddenly look into the sky and see something.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

-who claimed they were rescued from
drowning in Harvey's Lake by a boy
in little UFO..

The Boys are safe on a dock now. Their wondrous faces watch
the same something in the distance moving away over the lake.

EXT. OLD GAS STATION, NORTH CAROLINA - NIGHT

The 80-year-old OWNER is locking the station up for the night.
Suddenly, with his back turned toward the pumps - the summons
bell DINGS. He turns around slowly, and his old eyes peer
above his bifocals in wonder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

The second one was postmarked Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Three days after I received this one, one of the national tabloids carried a story that hailed from a small gas station about eleven miles from Kill Devil Hill, where the Wright Brothers first flew.

The Owner slowly approaches the pumps. TWO SMALL HANDS ENTER FRAME, and hold up 6 empty pop bottles. The Owner takes them in awe.

NARRATOR

The 80-year-old owner claimed that late one night as he was closing up shop, a boy in a coon skin cap pulled up to the ethyl pump, in what he termed, "...the damndest flyer I ever saw."

(beat)

He said he traded the boy 40 cents worth of gas for 6 large pop bottles. Then-

AT THE ROAD, The old man looks on stupefied as something pulls away down the deserted highway with sound like a tiny engine that runs on soap bubbles. His gaze moves slowly up, as if he were watching the something ascend into the air.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

-he swore, to his eternal discredit, that the boy and his vehicle, pattered away down the interstate, bounced along the divider line for a hundred feet, and finally lifted smoothly into the air in exactly the same way he, as a 6-year-old boy, had seen Orville and Wilbur do it in the Kitty Hawk in 1903.

EXT. BEACH - CAPE CANAVERAL, FLORIDA - NIGHT

In the sand beyond the Kennedy Space Center launch pad. Ten ENGINEERS, carrying cases of testing equipment, walk toward a figure silhouetted against the shimmering still ocean b.g.

NARRATOR

The third one was postmarked Cape Canaveral, Florida, near the Kennedy Space Center.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (Cont'd)

The date on the postmark was April 12th, 1976, about five years before the launch of the first space shuttle.

The Engineers are stunned into speechlessness at whatever they're looking at just o.s. (about knee height). They chuckle nervous laughs.

NARRATOR

Although the reports were sketchy at best, and the incident was immediately cloaked in a classic blanket of military denial, it is believed that the head designers of the space shuttle gathered together one night on the outskirts of the famed launch pad and met with someone; a small boy, and something; an odd vehicle.

With their host of equipment, the Engineers probe and wiggle and measure and test whatever sits before them.

NARRATOR

They were said to have analyzed the vehicle known to the boy only as, "The Flyer." When, after exhaustive study, the designers were completely baffled as to how "The Flyer" actually flew-

The Engineers stand up from their examination with strained looks, and furrowed brows. A SMALL HAND ENTER FRAME, and holds out a crumbled sheet of paper to them.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

-the boy is said to have left them a list of materials from which they gratefully cribbed invaluable advice and technical data.

The Engineers watch dumbfounded as something travels away from them and out over the ocean, leaving thin wheel tracks in the wet sand of the beach.

NARRATOR

And although they denied everything, sometime later a retired aerospace engineer, who wished to remain anonymous, and who claims to have

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (Cont'd)
been at the secret meeting that night on the Cape, said that the title of the paper the infamous list was supposed to have been written on was, "The Big Idea."

INT. COLLEGE APARTMENT - 1984 - NIGHT

On the wall over the bed, there's a map of the USA. Next to the thumb tacks in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida and California are grainy b&w high-altitude photos of each place Bobby visited (taken with a pin-hole camera). Above the maps, displayed like ancient warrior antiques, are the Genuine American Indian Rubber Tipped Bamboo Spears.

NARRATOR
The fourth postcard, the last one I got, was postmarked Mainstreet USA, Disneyland California.

MIKE is now 24-years-old. He's hunched over his computer in the otherwise darkened room. We CIRCLE AROUND Mike slowly, toward the phone near him.

NARRATOR
I went to college after that and rented a small apartment near the campus where I wrote my way through the tuition and struggled for a while to beat a step-hereditary inclination toward addiction in one form or another. But that, like my knowledge of and belief in the seven great abilities and fascinations, came and went and came and eventually slipped far enough into the past until, like the legend of Fisher, they became no more than cloudy memories that slowly broke apart and floated away.

We STOP ON the phone as it RINGS. Mike picks it up. He has trouble hearing, the line's full of static.

MIKE
Hello? Hello...

NARRATOR
All my demons were exorcised one night when the phone rang. It was long distance from an Airforce base in Altus, Oklahoma.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (Cont'd)

A place, as it turns out, very close to a place called the Geronimo Bill Buffalo Farm and Wild Adventure Souvenir Shop.

(beat)

It took the operator a good while to connect the call through. When the connection was made, it was full of static and crackles.

MIKE

Hello?...

VOICE ON PHONE

(static ridden)

Hey, Mike?...

MIKE

Yeah...

VOICE ON PHONE

Hey, Mike, someone wants to say hello to you...

Mike's eyes widen.

NARRATOR

It was Samson. Turtles, especially the hearty desert variety I read somewhere once, because they carry their homes with them wherever they go... live a long, long time.

EXT. THE MALL, WASHINGTON DC - PRESENT - DAY

An ocean of Pigeons take flight revealing the entrance to the

EXT. NATIONAL AIR & SPACE MUSEUM - DAY

The dedication plaque is dated 1976.

INT. NATIONAL AIR & SPACE MUSEUM - DAY

The cavernous halls of the nation's depository for the preeminent artifacts of flight. At the end of the

HALL OF ARTIFACTS

past all of the ceiling suspended aircraft that changed the course of history, are MICHAEL (our Narrator), now in his 30's, and his two boys ORVILLE (5) and WILBUR (7). They're standing at the last display.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two boys are absolutely motionless, they've been listening to the story from the beginning.

NARRATOR (MICHAEL)

And that's the whole story.

Michael steps o.s. and does something that we cannot see, but, which enthralls his boys.

He reappears and leads them away, back through the hall of artifacts, underneath the KITTY HAWK, the SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS, the X-1, the spaceship FREEDOM 7, and a mock up of the SPACE SHUTTLE COLUMBIA. As they leave, their voices echo slightly:

ORVILLE'S VOICE

Daddy? Do you know what makes it fly?

MICHAEL'S VOICE

Hope, Orville.

WILBUR'S VOICE

But... What's holding it up in the air?

MICHAEL'S VOICE

Dreams, Wilbur.

As Michael and his boys exit the hall, we come face to fender with

THE RADIO FLYER

on display in mid-air, supported by nothing, no wires, no cables, no platform, slowly turning round as if proud. One of the coffee cans is still in the wooden trunk box. The other, the one that Michael just reattached, slowly sways at the other end of the string. The bronze information plaque reads:

THE RADIO FLYER

Designer/Builder: Unknown. Powered by: Unknown.

Flight Specs: Unknown.

Historical Importance: Rumored to have been instrumental in the design of the first Space Shuttle, Columbia.

(CONTINUED)

"Radio Flyer"

-127-

Draft 11/7/89

CONTINUED:

Beside the plaque, in a glass case, is a single sheet of elementary school note book paper. The title of the old and faded list says:

"THE BIG IDEA"

FADE OUT

THE END.

THE BIG IDEA

1. Pliwood and some 2 by 4s.
2. 2 frunt weels frum a baby stoolr
3. A seat frum a baby stoolr
4. 1 bysicle sissee bar
5. 2 back bysicle weels
6. The Soaring Sam wing
7. 1 go-cart sterreng weel
8. 2 Cox airplain engens
9. The lawn moower engen in the shed
10. 2 bysicle chains
11. A lot of tape
12. A lot of glue
13. a mile of string
14. 1 xtra yuban can
15. 1 mootrsicle helmit and sum googels
16. 2 paper kites with long tales
17. My Snoppy lunch box and thrmus
18. 2 pares of sox and underwheres and Bobby's warm jakit
19. Some "Highlights"
20. Sum doonuts and postkards
21. Samson and some lettis
22. Our pin hole kamra
23. My luky rabbits foot
24. Bobby's Davey Croquette hat
25. My Dizneeland map
26. Nales and skroos
27. THE RADIO FLYER