

TEACHER'S LOUNGE:
THE LAST FIRST DAY

Written by

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INT. BILL'S CAR - INTERSECTION - MORNING

BILL MURPHY, 57, balding with a paunch, wears cheap sunglasses and sits at a RED LIGHT in a '99 Toyota. He takes a sip of COFFEE from his thermos and groans.

BILL

(practicing conversation)

Hi, yes, Principal Hannigan - good
to see you too. Why thank you, yes -
pilates.

He grabs a bottle of IBUPROFEN sitting on the passenger's seat and pours 3 PILLS into his mouth. He swallows them with a swig of coffee. Also on the passenger's seat: a pile of travel books: "Idiot's Guide to backpacking Southeast Asia", "Australia for Dummies", "Seriously? You're Thinking About Going To The Middle East?"

BILL (CONT'D)

I've actually bee making a lot of
changes, Principal Hann - oh,
alright - Alison - and, I'd like to
talk to you about next year - my
year - the future - my future here
at Fillmore - [re: present] Oh
great...

The light has turned GREEN, but a HOMELESS MAN begins crossing, pushing a shopping cart full of aluminum cans.

BILL (CONT'D)

(back to practice)

As you know, Alison, I haven't left
Akron - or Fillmore for that matter
- in, I think, 20 years ... [to
himself] Jesus, Bill, 20 years ...
[back] And I think it's time for me
to, y'know - [to the Homeless Man]
Godammit! Just leave 'em!

The homeless man has spilled some CANS into the crosswalk and is slowly groping to pick them up. The light is still green. The homeless man is startled and looks at BILL.

Beat.

HOMELESS MAN

Bill?

Bill is startled. The homeless man, toothless and sooty, walks over to Bill's window, smiling manically. Bill rolls the window down in disappointment. He recognizes the homeless man, too.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

Bill! How ya doin' pal?

BILL

Hiya, Pete. Sorry I didn't recognize you. You've really let that beard grown out, huh?

PETE

Oh, yeah. Well I hardly saw you outside the Jewel Osco this summer. Thought I could always count on you for a weekly 50 cents worth of beer bottles!

He gestures to his shopping cart. People are honking at PETE, who is unaware of them.

BILL

Yeah, I spent a lot of time on my computer htis summer. Researching. Uh, Pete? Wanna move your cart out of the street? People are trying to get to work.

PETE

Ohh, thank god - you can hear 'em too? Finally, it's not just me - progress!

Pete walks to his shopping cart jauntily and gathers the bottles as Bill hangs his head and rolls up his window. Pete rolls his cart off, waving at Bill. Bill waves back.

BILL

(to himself)

I've gotta get the fuck out of this town.

Bill picks up his coffee and steps on the gas. The light immediately turns red. He slams on the brakes and his coffee spills all over his shirt and dashboard.

INT. COMMUTER'S CAR - MORNING

Bill's muffled screaming and expletives can be heard while a DAUGHTER, holding a CHOCOLATE BAR, in the car next to Bill's looks on.

DAUGHTER

What's wrong with that man, Mommy?

MOMMY
(distracted, tired)
That's what happens when you eat
candy for breakfast.

Daughter's eyes widen in fear as she holds up her chocolate bar and looks at it as though it's betrayed her.

ROLL OPENING CREDITS

EXT. MILLARD FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Bill pulls into the MILLARD FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH parking lot.

INT. BILL'S CAR -CONTINUOUS

He parks his car and takes off his sunglasses. His eyes look slightly bloodshot. He closes them and rubs them.

BILL
(to himself)
Anyways, Pr - Alison - Principal -
Principal Alison - Pr - anyways,
it's been a great couple decades,
but I really don't seem to be going
anywhere at this school. I've saved
up some money now, and I'm ready
for the next chapter of my life...

Bill begins pouring more Ibuprofen into his hand when MELVIN CURTAIN, 51, the lonely, over-eager, bespectacled choir teacher, smashes his face up against Bill's window.

MELVIN
(muffled)
Hello Bill!

Bill is so startled, he spills his Ibuprofen all over his car. He looks up, ignoring Melvin.

BILL
Two for two, God.

EXT. MILLARD FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Bill opens the car door, terrible coffee stains on his sweater vest, holding a briefcase. He starts walking to his classroom. Melvin follows like an excited puppy.

MELVIN

Happy New Year, Bill! Haha I say that even though it's September, because, for us, it's a -

BILL

Gets funnier every eyar, Melvin.

MELVIN

- new year of school! How was your summer, Bill? I only ask cuz I invited you to 7 of my barbecues and, I think, 3 movie nights ...

BILL

Hmm, don't think I got your invites-

FLASHBACK TO:

Bill sits at his computer, browsing a website for ziplining in Costa Rica. An email pops up from Melvin. Subject: "PARTY ALERT LOL!" Bill deletes it within seconds of its arrival. He goes back to browsing.

CUT BACK TO: PRESENT

MELVIN

Know what? Makes sense - there must be something wrong with my email cuz no one actually came to those.

BILL

It's a mystery!

MELVIN

I'll make an appointment at the Genius Bar. Anywho, I've been meaning to ask you, and I'd love to discuss this over coffee if you're free later -

BILL

Dentist appointment -

MELVIN

Well, maybe after that -

BILL

Cavs are playing -

MELVIN

Maybe tomorrow -

BILL
Dentist again -

MELVIN
Well at some point -

BILL
Relative is dying -

Bill, mid-stride, has found a crumpled McDonald's receipt in his pocket and uses it to dab at the stains on his shirt.

MELVIN
We need to discuss how Fillmore is going to get that Blue Ribbon of Excellence this year! Our TFA recruits seem pretty solid - we've got one from Oberlin!

BILL
How about that! Twist my balls and toss 'em in a blender.

Melvin laughs uncomfortably.

MELVIN
See there - that's that Murphy charm all the students love. This is what I want to discuss over coffee -

BILL
There's a gas leak -

MELVIN
I want to explore how you're able to harness that raw sense of comedy that connects with the youth.

BILL
Honestly, I haven't thought too much about it, Melv.

MELVIN
Ah! Of course: spontaneity, off the cuff. That's where the true brilliance lies: Improvisation! Ah, I wish there was more room for those kinds of antics in my courses.

BILL
You teach drama and band, Melvin.

MELVIN

Exactly! If only there was more
room for tomfoolery in those
disciplines -

BILL

Uh huh.

Bill gets to the school entrance and opens the door.

INT. MILLARD FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY

The hall is bustling with students, backpacks, books. Teenagers walk around, hang at lockers, talk, throw paper airplanes - it's mayhem. Bill continues to walk with purpose, Melvin in tow. Students pass by, acknowledging Bill with a "Hey, Murph!" "Hi, Mr. Murphy," etc. and virtually ignore Melvin.

MELVIN

I don't take my job lightly - and I
know you don't either. What year is
this for you, by the way? 20? 21?

Bill arrives at a door that says 'Teacher's Lounge', grabs the handle, and looks at Melvin.

BILL

(sarcastic)

It's not polite to ask a lady her
age.

MELVIN

Hahaha [beat] wait, what?

Bill enters and closes the door in Melvin's face.

SUPER: "FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. 7:30 AM."

INT. MILLARD FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH - TEACHER'S LOUNGE

The teacher's lounge is a large open room with multiple bookshelves, comfortable chairs, kitchen equipment and a large white board. Thirty TEACHERS are packed into the room. Every comfortable seat is taken and teachers are standing against the walls.

Bill strolls to the other side of the room where 3 teachers sit: JAMES DUNLAP, a 2nd-year TFA English teacher who fancies himself a novelist, MEREDITH BENNETT, algebra teacher, and RICO GONZALEZ, the Puerto Rican head custodian.

DUNLAP
Hey, Murph.

RICO
William.

BILL
Hey guys. Meredith.

MEREDITH
Bill. [She holds up her mug]
Another goddamn year.

MELVIN
Hi Merdith!!

Melvin waves at her violently. Meredith winces and nods in Melvin's direction.

MEREDITH
(to Bill, Dunlap & Rico)
12 ignored invitations and he still
hasn't gotten the message.

BILL
Oh you got 12? He must like you.

DUNLAP
(trancelike)
Another year. How time crawls...

Dunlap takes a long pull of coffee, trance unbroken.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)
How do you weather this slog?

MEREDITH
(matter-of-factly)
Ritalin.

RICO
Jimmy, you're still a 2nd year TFa
newb. You can't whine about your
sentence until you've served as
many years as Bill has. Or even
Meredith. [To Meredith] By the way,
congratulations on year 7.

He holds up his coffee mug, and she holds hers back up.

DUNLAP
It never ceases to amaze me, the
tabs you keep on everyone here.

Rico leans back in his chair.

RICO
I'm the head custodian, genius. I
know everything.

MEREDITH
Don't test him.

FLASHBACK TO:

Meredith and Rico are sitting at a lunch table, Meredith looks fascinated as Rico points at different people - teachers and students alike - and names their weights.

RICO
115 pounds, 184 pounds, 133, 256,
210, 130, 127...

Rico finally gets to Meredith. She makes an 'I dare you' face.

BACK TO PRESENT:

MEREDITH
I think it took three weeks for
your eye to heal, right?

RICO
(mumbles)
But I was right...

VICE PRINCIPAL EUGENE CHONG, 31, enters the Lounge with PRINCIPAL ALISON HANNIGAN, 35, sexy. Chong stands in front of the white board and starts clapping to command attention.

CHONG
Hey, are we awake, guys?! Day one!
Let me hear you guys say 'Day one!'
If your'e awake! One, two, three!

RANDOM TEACHER	CHONG
Fuck you!	DAY ONE!

CHONG (CONT'D)
That's not what I said to say! Who
said that?!

Beat.

A RUBBER BAND hits Chong's face.

CHONG (CONT'D)
Who did that? Who did it? Couldn't
have been Bill, I was watching him
the whole time!

Bill turns around and looks at JAVONDRIS WALLER, the hulking science teacher, who stands near the back. Bill winks and Waller nods with a grin, while CHONG's angry pleas can be heard in the background. Bill turns back around.

BILL
(to Meredith)
His aim is improving.

MEREDITH
Year four. You've taught him well.

CHONG
Well I hope you show our principal
a bit more respect.

CHONG sits down angrily with his arms folded on a stool behind ALISON, who addresses the faculty.

ALISON
Welcome back, everyone! This is our
year, Fillmore: the Blue Ribbon of
Excellence. Really pushing for it
this year. I'm looking for people
to show leadership. We're focused
on better attendance, test scores,
physical fitness, I'm lookin' at
you, Coach Smitz.

Alison shouts at the dangerously obese COACH SMITZ, who is nodding off in an armchair in the back corner of the room. He wakes and grunts in response.

ALISON (CONT'D)
On that note, I'd like to introduce
you to our newest TFA recruit:
She'll be teaching 6th grade
English, Miss Emily Barton.

Previously unnoticed, EMILY, sweet, blonde with adult braces, waves at all the teachers to weak applause.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Emily, would you like to say
anything?

EMILY

I'm really excited to work hard
with you guys to change these kids'
lives and make a true difference.

RICO

(to Dunlap)

Remember that bright-eyed, innocent
face you used to sport, James?

DUNLAP

It's like a whisper to me now.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT -- MILLARD FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH (MFJH) -- ENGLISH CLASS

SUPER: Last year, first day of class

Bell rings, and DUNLAP stands at the front of the class, hair
gelled, shirt ironed, radiating excitement.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)

Hellooooo class! Welcome to the
first day of English! I hope, by
the end of the year, I'll be able
to touch you as deeply as you've
already touched me just by being
here!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT -- MFJH -- ENGLISH CLASS

SUPER: 2 months later

A bell is heard and DUNLAP is sitting at his desk, a
cigarette in his mouth, shirt rumpled, building a ship inside
a bottle. Students walk past Dunlap to their desks.

STUDENT

Hey, Mr. Dunlap, are you still
thinking up ways to touch us?

Dunlap doesn't even look up from his ship.

DUNLAP

(unshaken)

Detention.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

DUNLAP

Bastards.

ALISON

And Mr. Chong will be filling in as the Computers teacher until we can find a replacement for Mr. Jukes, since last year didn't end on a high note for him...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH - COMPUTER LAB

MR. JUKES sits serenely at his desk while students talk, eat, play tag & ignore their computers. Mr. Jukes quietly gets up and picks up a backpack filled with books. He holds up the backpack to the class.

MR. JUKES

Whose is this?

No one hears him. He nods to himself, turns around, walks to the window of the classroom (on the 3rd floor) and throws the backpack out of the window. The crash startles all the students.

GIRL STUDENT

Hey, where's my backpack?!

MR. JUKES

(sitting back down)

Where's my goddamn respect, Cindy?

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

ALISON

So, that'll do it for the announcements today -

MELVIN

I'd just like to take this opportunity to reiterate how excited I am to begin this Blue Ribbon year -

ALISON

Great, and that'll wrap this up -

MELVIN
Oh, and I also want to invite -

ALISON
No, no, this is not the place -

ANGLE ON: Bill's crew, seated in the lounge.

MEREDITH
(quietly)
Come on, Alison, hang in there.

RICO
Stay strong, girl.

BACK ON: Alison and Melvin.

MELVIN
I'd like to invite everyone to my
house this Saturday for a barbecue.

Everyone in the room groans.

MELVIN (CONT'D)
I'll be serving Pabst Blue Ribbon
in honor of this special year.

ALISON
Alright.

MELVIN
Now you've all heard me invite you.
So you all know. So I'll see you
guys. At my house. Saturday. Noon.

Disappointed silence.

ALISON
And now, that's it for the
announcements.

Teachers begin to get up and leave.

ALISON (CONT'D)
OH, I almost forgot! Sit back down,
SIT BACK DOWN!

Teachers do so reluctantly. More groans.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Today marks the 25th year one of
our teachers has been with us in
this lounge.
(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)
He's an asset to Fillmore and the
backbone of our curriculum: let's
have a round of applause for Bill
Murphy, everyone!

Everyone applauds heartily, patting Bill on the back.

ALISON (CONT'D)
We're all looking forward to the
schemes you pull this year, Bill!

Applause continues. DUNLAP, MEREDITH and RICO laugh. Bill
swallows his own vomit.

Everyone exits and Bill jogs up to ALISON.

BILL
Hey, Principal Hannigan - Alison,
hi, I -

ALISON
(busy)
Bill!

BILL
Hi! Yes, I just, uh, wanted to make
sure you remembered our meeting
after school today.

ALISON
Of course, Bill. Looking forward to
discussing your future here.

BILL
Well, that's what I - I don't -

Alison is almost out the door, a bunch of papers in one arm,
her coffee in the other. She holds out her coffee.

ALISON
See you at 2. Here's to the next 25
years!

BILL
But I - I -

The door closes.

BILL (CONT'D)
(to himself)
- I - I'll just shove that thought
right up my ass then.

SUPER: "11:30 AM. LUNCH BREAK."

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

Bill and Meredith eat lunch quietly. Dunlap sits across from them, fuming.

BILL
How was it?

Dunlap looks up at them, bags under his eyes.

DUNLAP
Nightmare.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. DUNLAP'S CLASSROOM - EARLIER

DUNLAP
Alright guys, this year, class is going to be different, okay? Last year's jokes are last year's jokes.

JAVON, 13, a student, raises his hand.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)
Yes, Javon.

JAVON
Will there still be touching -

DUNLAP
There will be no touching! No references to touching! Am I clear?

JORDAN, 13, another student, raises his hand.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)
Jordan.

JORDAN
But what if our attendance inspires you? What will you do -

DUNLAP
I will fail you before teh year's even started, Jordan. That's what I'm gonna do. Are you happy? [to the class] Are you all happy?

Class mumbles and 'Yeah, Jordan sucks' can be heard.

Dunlap breathes steadily and leans on his desk.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)
Alright. This can be a great year,
guys. It's possible. We'll all just
be civilized to each other, right?
We'll all learn together, and -

He he speaks, he turns around and pulls down the map at the top of the chalkboard. Taped to the map is an "UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU" poster with DUNLAP'S FACE imposed on Uncle Sam, and "to touch" is carroted in between "wants" and "you". The whole class erupts into laughter.

DUNLAP (CONT'D)
You're all starting with F's and
working your way up from there.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Bill and Meredith are bent over laughing. Dunlap's defeated.

DUNLAP
Shoulda seen it coming...

BILL
Rookie mistake.

MEREDITH
Gotta rule with an iron fist, kid.

DUNLAP
Yeah, but how?

MEREDITH
Took me a while to figure it out,
too. Trial and error.

SUPER: "2009"

INT. MEREDITH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Meredith is wiping down her whiteboard. She gets out a marker and writes: "MISS BENNETT".

SUPER: "2012"

INT. MEREDITH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Meredith has written "MISS BENNETT", looks at it, erases "MISS" and writes "MS".

SUPER: "2014"

INT. MEREDITH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Meredith has written "MS. BENNETT", looks at it, erases "MS." and writes "PROF".

SUPER: "AN HOUR AND A HALF AGO"

INT. MEREDITH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Meredith has written "PROF. BENNETT", looks at it, erases it and writes "SHUT UP OR DETENTION."

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

Bill holds up a fist and Meredith pounds it without looking.

MEREDITH

Sure, I don't get any Christmas cards from my students, but I don't get any shit from 'em either.

BILL

Fair trade

DUNLAP

(to Bill)

How was your first class, Mr. Taciturn?

BILL

Nothin' I couldn't handle.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

Bill sits at his desk. He opens his drawer and grabs a stack of papers that say "SYLLABUS 2015". He whites-out the "5" on 2015 and writes in a "6". He's startled when ANNE-JANETTE SCHUSTER, 11, walks in. He watches her as she sits in the front, center desk.

BILL

Well hi there. Uh, class doesn't start for another -

He checks his watch, still holding white-out in one hand and a pencil in the other.

ANNE-JANETTE
Twenty-five minutes. I know. I'm
Anne-Jannette Schuster. I'm new.

BILL
Hm. [beat] Do you ... need help?

ANNE-JANETTE
Nope! I already found my seat.

She sits stone still, staring straight ahead.

BILL
Uh huh.

He takes out the CLASS ROSTER and goes down the list of students' names. Some students have an ADJECTIVE next to their names from over the years for reference. "LOUD, SMART, SHY, ASIAN, etc." He finds ANNE-JANETTE's name and writes next to "NEW," "WEIRD". Bill puts the roster away. He and Anne-Janette look at each other. Bill smiles.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

MEREDITH
Watch out for those ones.

Bill waves his hand nonchalantly.

MELVIN walks into the Lounge and goes to the refrigerator for his lunch. Dunlap sees him.

DUNLAP
So will Melvin be heartbroken come
Saturday when no one attends his
barbecue?

BILL
He'll be waitin' for you, Mere,
above all people.

MEREDITH
Oh no he won't. I've taken care of
it.

DUNLAP
How?

MEREDITH
Preying on the weak.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Meredith is exiting her classroom and runs into EMILY, the new, bubbly TFA teacher.

EMILY
Hi, Meredith! What a wonderful
first day of class, huh? Everyone
here is so welcoming!

MEREDITH
(trying to walk away)
Boy, are they ever.

EMILY
It makes me that much more excited
for Saturday.

MEREDITH
Saturday?

EMILY
Melvin's barbecue! What should I
bring?

Meredith's face brightens a thousand-fold. She has an idea.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

MEREDITH
Told her to get there early, bring
ginger snaps and a card. To show
Melv how much their relationship
means to her, of course.

BILL
After 7 years, you've finally found
a way to pawn him off on some other
poor, unsuspecting innocent.

MEREDITH
Hey. No one told me. World's cruel.

DUNLAP
Truer words, never spake. [Looks up
furtively.] Uh-oh. Incoming.

THREE TEACHERS, stuck up, walk to the other end of the lunch
table. They're the Advanced Placement teachers: DEB DALEY,
41, plump, science teacher; MARCIA LEVEY, 35, gaunt, math
teacher;

LYDIA SNEELUM, 67, the leader of the group and trying way too hard to look young, lascivious, English teacher. They all sit.

LYDIA
Are these seats taken? Great.

MEREDITH
(to herself)
Yes, please, ruin this afternoon.

LYDIA
Oh, Meredith. I almost didn't notice you. You're more ... pale.

MARCIA
Usually people tan in the summer.

DEB
'Cause of the sun. The sun gets them tan.

MARCIA
Duh, Dub -

MEREDITH
So that's how it works. No wonder you teach the 'advanced' classes -

LYDIA
(ignoring Meredith)
So this is the year MFJH gets the Blue Ribbon, huh? The year we all change it up?

BILL
That's what they're saying -

LYDIA
Oh, Bill you're a riot. So what do you have planned this year, huh? Chaperoning prom as Mother Teresa? Pantsing Chong at the pep rally? Then raising his pants from the flag pole.

BILL
Nah, I try not to do the same things twice.

MEREDITH
The only way that'd get us a blue ribbon is if he used one to tie Chong's pants up.

Bill chuckles.

MARCIA
Oh, you're hilarious, Meredith.
What was your algebra class'
average ast year? 73%? I got my
class to a 96.

MEREDITH
Ew, a 69?

MARCIA
A 96.

MEREDITH
Ew, why are you trying to get your
kids to 69, Marcia?

LYDIA
(ignoring Meredith)
James.

Lydia reaches across the table to touch his arm.

LYDIA (CONT'D)
Let me know if you want to get
together and discuss teaching
techniques for The Great Gatsby.

DUNLAP
(very uncomfortable)
Okay...

LYDIA
Mhmm. Alright, ladies I believe we
have students to meet. Our students
sometimes request lunchtime study
sessions.

MARCIA
They love learning.

DEB
And lunchables.

Marcia and Lydia look at Deb, disappointed.

DEB (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
For eating, not for learning.

MEREDITH
Thanks for clearing that up.

They get up and leave.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)
And to think Deb teaches AP
Physics. [to Bill] Hey, you were
pretty silent there just now. I
feel like I was throwing out all
the zingers.

BILL
I'm done fighting back this year.

DUNLAP
Hm. Very Nietzsche. You know, I
just read his -

MEREDITH
(ignoring Dunlap)
Well that's no fun! So you're just
gonna allow yourself to sink into
numbness and oblivion?

BILL
No, Mere. Actually, I've been
meaning to tell you - to tell all
you guys, actually - I think this
is gonna be my -

RICO walks up to the table, calmly excited.

RICO
You need to see this.

Rico plops a MANUSCRIPT on the table. The title page reads
'It's Only Love: A novel by Eugene Chong.'

DUNLAP
Chong wrote a novel?

Meredith grabs the manuscript and fans through the pages.

MEREDITH
I feel like I'm holding the third
testament. Rico, this might be your
best work since you downloaded that
copy of Coach Spitz' Blues album
from his desktop.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. AV ROOM - DAY

Dunlap, Meredith, Bill and Rico are all sitting in a circle in the AV Room drinking beers while terrible blues music is played over the speakers.

BILL
How many tracks you say there were?

RICO
Twenty-three.

BILL
We're gonna need harder alcohol.

Meredith pulls a gigantic bottle of absinthe from her purse.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

MEREDITH
How'd you get your hands on this?

RICO
(nonchalant)
I was cleaning Chong's office at recess, he left his computer unlocked, this was on the screen. Flash drive, printed in the library, boom.

MEREDITH
Well done. Well, well done. [turns to Bill] Alright, what's the plan?

BILL
What do you mean, what's the plan?

MEREDITH
Well we can't just stumble across this oil well and not drill, right?

Dunlap is already skimming through the manuscript.

DUNLAP
Yeah, I mean, Bill, this is just horrendous. I'm two sentences in, and I already know that the main characters are named Rodeo and Julianne. They own a failing horse farm.

Rico jangles his janitor's keys.

RICO
I got all the resources you need.
You just name the plan, and I'll -

BILL
No, guys!

Bill stands up. Dunlap, Meredith and Rico are stunned.

BILL (CONT'D)
How old are we? Honestly. I'm 50-
goddamn-7. You know? It's time for
us to act our age, start the next
chapter of our lives. Not just sit
here pulling the same, immature
shit year after year.

MEREDITH
But it's always new shit - keeps
'em guessin' -

BILL
But it's still shit!

BELL rings. Bill quickly grabs his briefcase and lunchbox.

BILL (CONT'D)
I'm ready to move on. Hell, maybe
even give it all I've got this year
and actually try for that Blue
Ribbon. You guys should too.
Because you know what? This is
gonna be my last year here.

Silence.

BILL (CONT'D)
Yeah, I said it. It's my last year
here, and I might as well go out
with a bang before I get out there
and travel - see the world!

BILL exits. Dunlap looks stunned. Meredith and Rico are unfazed. Rico looks at Meredith.

RICO
Think this'll be the year?

Meredith grabs Chong's manuscript and puts it in her purse.

MEREDITH

Nah. I think he's got a couple more left in him.

DUNLAP

What do you mean?

MEREDITH

Every few years, Bill gets restless and makes like he's gonna leave the school and do some vague 'travel' thing.

RICO

And every year we come back and he's here. Just more angry.

MEREDITH

(correcting him)

More lovable.

DUNLAP

That's ... depressing.

MEREDITH

(correcting him)

That's Fillmore Junior High.

SUPER: '3:00 p.m. End of school.'

INT. BILL'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Bill sits at his desk, his feet on the table, as KIMMY, 15, a student, throws a dart at a large POSTER of DONALD TRUMP'S FACE that Bill has taped up on the bulletin board.

BILL

Excellent aim, Kimmy. And what do we call this, class?

CLASSROOM

Civil disobedience.

BILL

Yes, just like Thoreau wrote about. Very good. Who's next?

Students raise their hands and shout to be next, but right then, a BELL rings. Class is over, but students don't want to leave. They clamor to throw more darts.

BILL (CONT'D)
Guys, that's it for today! I'm
sorry, I'm sorry - I'll see you all
tomorrow.

The students groan, but start putting their things away. Bill becomes more nervous, rearranging his desk mindlessly.

BILL (CONT'D)
Great job, guys. Couldn't have
asked for a better first day.
[quietly, to himself] Great last
first day.

Bill closes his eyes, composing himself. Students file by.

STUDENT
See ya, Mr. Murphy.

STUDENT 2
Thanks, Mr. Murphy.

STUDENT 3
You rock, Murph.

Bill nods at them. JEREMY, 12, a student, walks up to him.

JEREMY
Hey, Mr. Murphy.

BILL
Oh, hello there, Jeremy.

JEREMY
Just wanted to say, I'm so excited
to finally be in your class.

BILL
Hm?

JEREMY
Well, you taught my older brother's
before me -

BILL
Oh yes, Max and Evan. How could I
forget those troublemakers.

Jeremy chuckles innocently.

JEREMY
Yeah, well, they've told me for
years how cool you are.
(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I couldn't wait to have you as my teacher, and finally get to tell stories about the pranks you pull not just listen to 'em.

BILL

How nice to hear. See you tomorr-

JEREMY

They couldn't have been more right about you. Now I'll get to make my little brother excited for your class.

BILL

(disappointed)

Oh, well that's just -

JEREMY

And he's excited to tell our other younger brother -

BILL

(dismayed)

Jesus, are you guys a bunch of Mormons over there?

ALISON

Uhh, Mr. Murphy?

Alison is at the door, looking at Bill expectantly.

BILL

Oh hi! Alison! Alright well, Jeremy, I'll see you tomorrow.

JEREMY

Awesome! See ya, Mr. Murphy!

Jeremy exits. Alison smiles at Bill.

ALISON

Well, if you aren't the biggest hit with these kids.

Bill shrugs uncomfortably.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Walk with me, Bill.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Students are at their lockers, packing up and leaving. Alison and Bill walk down the hallway to her office.

ALISON

I must admit, I was really surprised when you asked to meet with me.

BILL

You were?

ALISON

Of course! I know how long you've been working here, Bill, and I'm so glad you're finally taking steps to move up the ladder here.

BILL

What? That's -

ALISON

You know, Bill, I never took you for the ambitious type, but I'm happily mistaken! How'd you know I'm planning to leave this year?

BILL

What? I -

ALISON

(laughs)

It's okay, you don't have to play dumb. I know I've only been here 3 years, but I'm not looking to make this my career, you know? I'm applying to law schools. I just turned 30, I'm making life moves here!

BILL

Yeah ... I actually wanted to talk about -

They arrive at ALISON'S OFFICE. She opens the door and waits for Bill.

ALISON

After you!

BILL

Thanks ...

INT. ALISON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Alison sits at her desk and motions for Bill to sit down.

ALISON

Anyways, I get it, you have the most seniority here. And I like you, Bill. You're smart, you're an obvious pick for principal.

BILL

(astounded)
Principal?

ALISON

The Dean and the President of MFJH have been looking closely at Chong just cuz he's so far up everyone's ass it's impossible not to turn around and go, 'Hey, what's that sneaking up my asshole?'

BILL

Alison, I -

ALISON

But I want you to know, Bill. I'm on your side, here. I'll be putting in good words for you. And if you put in some effort, keep your head down and show us some drive, you have a good shot of sitting right here this time next year. Hell, you could be here forever!

BILL

Principal Hannigan! Alison - let me just stop you for a second. This is all very flattering - thank you for ... that. But I was actually thinking that this would be, you know ... my last year here at Fillmore.

The cheer drains from Alison's face.

ALISON

What?

BILL

I was thinking I might, you know ... Move on from Fillmore. Retire. Travel some.

Alison looks confused.

ALISON

You want to retire, right now? You want to 'travel'? Where? Where do you want to travel?

BILL

I don't know. South America?

ALISON

And get some zika, huh? You just want to travel down there and get yourself a disease? Or do you want to be shot by a cartel? Which one? Do you have a death wish, Bill?

Bill is shocked.

BILL

Uh ... no, well, I guess, maybe not South America. But it's a big world! I don't know. Maybe Europe?

ALISON

Oh, you just want to hop on over to Europe, with all the Brexiting, Grexiting and the fascist leaders rising to power? France: antisemitic. They're about to elect a Holocaust denier. Germany: just banned burkas. Italy: collapsing into its own asshole. And don't even get me started on Eastern Europe.

BILL

Well, I guess I hadn't thought of it that way. I don't know, I've just been feeling for a while like I want to move on from here -

ALISON

And leave your job? Do you know where our economy is headed over these next 4 years, Bill? Directly into the shitter. Do you know how lucky you are that you have a job? Do you know how many graduates with PhDs are going to be clawing and scratching each other to death just to get jobs as janitors? And here you are, looking at a promotion, and scoffing at it?

Alison gets up, flustered, and starts gathering her things.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Not to mention all the students
that love you! What're you gonna
do, turn your back on them, when
it's never been more important that
schools have teachers that inspire?
What're you, trying to win the Most
Selfish Human Award? Bill, I hear
you. But you had better think long
and hard about the decision you're
making here. I'll give you another
week to chew on it. I hope you've
come to your senses by then.

Alison heads to the door and opens it.

ALISON (CONT'D)

I trust you know how to let
yourself out?

She exits. Bill continues to sit there, dumbfounded.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Bill walks down an empty-ish hallway. Some kids are still
there talking, waiting to be picked up. Bill turns into a
classroom. It's Meredith's. Meredith is sitting at her desk,
legs up, reading Chong's novel intently.

BILL

You finished your syllabus for this
year yet?

Meredith is startled when she notices Bill. She turns around
and faces him, taking her feet off the desk.

MEREDITH

Huh. I thought you'd be halfway to
Zimbabwe by now.

BILL

If we're gonna win that Blue
Ribbon, we'll have to update our
syllabi.

MEREDITH

Oh come on, Bill. I don't want to
hear it.

BILL

We've gotta work harder, Mere. I have a suggestion for the book you should start your kids with this year.

MEREDITH

Oh my god, Bill. Go f-

BILL

It just hit the shelves. Have you heard of, 'It's Only Love,' by a young up-and-coming author, Eugene Chong? Might make for some great essay topics. Maybe a midterm?

Meredith slowly realizes her friend is back, and looks at the novel as though it holds the meaning of life.

MEREDITH

I'll update the syllabus immediately, Mr. Murphy. See you tomorrow?

BILL

(sighs)

And tomorrow and tomorrow.

Bill continues walking down the hall, head down, smiling weakly at everyone he sees. Students wave excitedly at him and he nods back.

EXT. MILLARD FILLMORE JUNIOR HIGH - ENTRANCE

Bill walks down the steps to his car and notices a STUDENT spraying graffiti on the cement. He taps the student on the shoulder, who immediately recoils, fearing he's in trouble. Bill crouches down to the student's level.

The student has written, so far, "CHONG IS A DOOSH".

BILL

Hey there. You might want to erase that.

STUDENT

I'm sorry -

BILL

It's spelled D-O-U-C-H-E. Fine work otherwise.

Bill pats the student on the back and walks off to the parking lot in a blaze of glory.

Murphy's back.

END CREDITS.