

A GREATER HONESTY

by

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INT. BLOCK 6 (STAIRS) - AFTERNOON(04:00PM)

We're at the end of August. Richard Levin (27) and his son, Danny Levin (8), are coming up the stairs of this old, rundown apartment building - block 6 of a midtown Los Angeles public housing complex. They hold a few grocery bags in their hands, and both of them are lurching their way up. Richard leads in front. We can hear two dogs barking somewhere above them in a very aggressive tone.

As they step onto the fourth floor, one of the dogs, - the closest to them - increases the viciousness of it's barking. He scratches violently at the door as Richard passes by. The other dog continues to bark a floor above. As Danny moves through, he approaches the door, and still with bags in hand, he kicks it with force. The dog ups the volume even further.

Richard stops in place and glares back at Danny.

RICHARD

Hey, don't fuckin do that!!

Danny doesn't seem to pay him much attention and just continues to walk. Richard waits for him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

...i told you already, didn't i?

Danny stops and looks at his father.

DANNY

(bickering)

He's mean to Jeffrey.

They start moving.

RICHARD

And do you know why?

DANNY

No.

RICHARD

Well, me neither. You gotta let'em work it out.

DANNY

How?

RICHARD

...I don't know. And if they don't, then that's the way it is. Don't butt in.

They reach their floor. Jeffrey whimpers a bit as Richard opens the door.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN) - AFTERNOON(04:00PM)
- CONTINUED

Jeffrey does a few victory laps around Richard and Danny as they move into the kitchen and place the bags on the table. We can see a couple of unwashed dishes on the sink, an open cabinet door above it; a couple empty glasses on the table.

Danny takes out a pack of cookies out of one of the plastic bags. He opens it as Richard puts some things in the freezer.

Jeffrey,- who is almost as big as Danny -, immediately gets next to him, picking his nose up in the air, doing his best to get to the cookies. Danny takes one out of the pack but throws both his arms away from Jeffrey, turning his back to him. He stands around watching Richard and eating cookies.

When Richard finishes putting the things away, he takes the pack of cookies from Danny and eats a couple. He gives them back.

RICHARD
Don't eat them all.

DANNY
(pondering)
Hmm...

RICHARD
Let's go?

DANNY
I don't know...

RICHARD
What're you gonna do?

Danny shrugs as he puts another cookie on his mouth.

RICHARD
Let's go. C'mon.

Jeffrey follows them out of the kitchen.

RICHARD
Go put'em in the fridge.

Danny returns into the kitchen and put the rest of the cookies inside the refrigerator.

EXT. PROJECTS - OUTSIDE OF BLOCK 6 - AFTERNOON(04:15PM)

We see them exiting the building. There's almost nobody around. Two or three people walk along the sidewalk. We can see some of the other blocks in the public housing complex. The sun shines on the tarmacked road and on a few patches of grass.

EXT. PROJECTS - OUTSIDE OF BLOCK 6 - AFTERNOON(04:15PM)
- CONTINUED

Richard opens the front passenger seat of an old, paint worn sedan and grabs a pair of sunglasses out of the glove compartment. Danny trots to the other side of the road, calling out a passing yellow cat.

EXT. PROJECTS - SELLWAY'S - AFTERNOON(04:15PM)

Richard and Danny cross the tiny front yard of yet another block tower and make their way up a graveled path, approaching a place called Sellway's.

Further along the path, in between buildings, there's a cemented basketball court with goals on each end, fully enclosed in a tall fence. Danny looks, but there's nobody inside. They pass by a couple of discolored plastic tables, and several equally discolored plastic chairs. We can hear children shouting nearby.

They enter Sellway's.

INT. SELLWAY'S - AFTERNOON (04:15PM) - CONTINUED

An old couple sits at one of the tables, looking at the TV; a few more people hang around, not paying much attention to anything. Gerry (29) and Elias (34) are perched up against the counter, nursing their respective beer bottles. Antonio (49) is on the other side of the counter with a newspaper in hand. Everybody knows everybody. Richard approaches Gerry, appearing to put an end to the flickering remnants of an ongoing conversation.

RICHARD
My people... Hello.

Richard helps Danny sit on a stool. He then sits on one next to his.

GERRY
How's it going..?

DANNY
Hi.

RICHARD
(to Antonio, pointing to
Danny)
It's this guy's birthday- he's
turning eighteen today, and i want
him drinking a man's drink.
What'a'ya got?

ANTONIO
Well Danny, wha'd'you want?

DANNY
(looking at the booze rack)
Uhm..

Beat.

RICHARD
Yeah?

DANNY
I want an ice cream.

Antonio scoffs.

RICHARD
Well, he's been hungover all day
long- a brake'll do him good...

GERRY
You can't drink that.

Gerry is a bit liquored up.

DANNY
That's okay.

Antonio comes out from behind the counter and Danny leaps off the stool.

RICHARD
Get me a beer, Tony.

ANTONIO
Wait a damn second...

Richard turns towards the mounted TV above the entrance. We can hear the clang of glass against glass and the slap of billiard balls coming from the backroom. Elias gets up from his stool and starts walking towards the sound.

RICHARD
Where you goin, you moron? I just got
here...

ELIAS
I'll be right back.

Antonio slides the ice cream freezer door with a thud. Danny unwraps the ice cream on the spot.

INT. SELLWAY'S - AFTERNOON(05:00PM)

Richard has an empty beer bottle in front of him and is holding another. Danny's ice cream is long gone.

GERRY
(frustrated)
We're such losers...

RICHARD
Why do you say that?

DANNY
(bobbing up and down in the
stool)
I'm a winner!

GERRY
Well, because i drink all day, and i
don't have a job, i don't have a
girlfriend... i'm just down, man.

RICHARD
You drink all day and you don't have
a job... and you call yourself a loser.
(covering danny's ears)
Sounds pretty winning to me.

Richard uncovers Danny's ears.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Anyway, speak for yourself. I've got
my bearings in order, and at the
moment life has just the right amount
of structure i need.

GERRY
And what's that mean exactly?

RICHARD
Danny, what's that mean?

DANNY
Uh... I wasn't listenin.

RICHARD
You see, he picked up on it, he just
wasn't able to structure it properly-
doesn't mean he doesn't get it...

Antonio arrives from the kitchen with a sandwich. He puts it in
front of Richard. He takes a bite out of it.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I think that was almost an analogy.

Gerry stays silent.

Danny's body language is pretty restless by now, and he leaps off
the stool. Richard doesn't pay him much attention.

RICHARD
You wanna come drop some chips in
tonight? Fred's comin with me.

GERRY
I'm pretty broke.

RICHARD
(shrugging)
Whatever- you just tag along with us.

Danny slides in to Richard's side.

DANNY
Dad! I'll be outside playin ball.

RICHARD
Okay.

Danny rushes towards the exit.

RICHARD
Danny! Where?

DANNY
I'll be in the basketball court.

Richard nods and turns back to the counter, continuing to eat.

RICHARD
You're comin or what?

GERRY
...I gotta consider it.

Richard laughs in a derisive tone.

RICHARD
What the fuck? Mr. President.

Gerry manages to look even more depressed. Richard continues laughing, chewing.

EXT. PROJECTS - SELLWAY'S - AFTERNOON(07:00PM)

Richard comes out of Sellway's walking languorously. Dusk is settling, drowning every color in a deeper hue.

A young couple are already having dinner on one of the tables outside, while on the other, three middle-aged guys drink some beers and make a decent amount of noise.

We can see a group of kids/teenagers playing in the basketball court.

EXT. PROJECTS - BASKETBALL COURT - AFTERNOON(07:00PM)

Richard sits on the inner stone wall. He observes Danny playing soccer with a few other boys. Kids his age; older, younger... Danny has taken notice of him, but that doesn't seem to brake his concentrated efforts.

Somebody happens to kick the ball in Richard's direction. He gets up swiftly, reaches it with his feet and runs towards the goal on

the other side of the court. He gives it a powerful shot. Although Richard misses the target, the kid playing the goalie cowers away from incoming ball. The kids jeer. Danny watches him miss with an engaged smile on his face. Richard smiles too as he turns back.

EXT. PROJECTS - OUTSIDE OF BLOCK 6 - EVENING(08:00PM)

Richard and Danny are walking back home. There's a woman with them, Rachel (35). The sun has fully set. The road is insufficiently lit; most of the illumination is coming from the apartment windows above. Clothes are still hanging in the clothes lines. A pre-made lasagna is dangling from Richard's hand, and Danny is hugging a big bottle of soda. Rachel carries a couple grocery bags.

RACHEL

...momma Suzy got it in her head that
the old lady was stealin from her.

Rachel laughs. Her good-natured charming ways always leave Danny with a smile on his face.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

What the hell does she have that's
worth stealin?

RICHARD

She say what is was?

RACHEL

She talked about a crystal cup that
belonged to an ancient set the
husband had bought her years ago, and
she said the woman stole two cans of
sausages, a bottle of gooseberry--

RICHARD

-that went downhill quick...

RACHEL

...Meaningless crap like that. But she
wasn't stealin.

RICHARD

How do you know?

RACHEL

(chuckles)
I know... c'mon.

DANNY

Momma Suzy's carazyyyy.

RICHARD

When you get old like her you'll be
carazy too.

RACHEL

You're gonna get old, Danny?

DANNY

I guess...

RICHARD

Well, let's hope so, you know?

Danny plays with the bottle of soda, making it stutter-jump in his hands.

INT. BLOCK 6 (GROUND FLOOR) - EVENING(08:00PM)

Richard and Danny enter the building. The door slams hard, echoing throughout the stairs. The dogs start barking. They pass by a broken down elevator.

INT. BLOCK 6 (STAIRS) - EVENING(08:00PM) - CONTINUED

Same thing as before: the dog on the fourth floor is making a terrible racket, which gets louder and louder as Richard and Danny step onto the landing. This time we can hear a teenager's voice coming from inside the house; a distant voice, screaming at the dog to be quiet.

Once more, Richard leads the way and Danny follows in his trail, closely behind. Danny bangs the soda bottle on the door: not too loudly, but strongly enough to be heard above the barking and scratching.

RICHARD

(vehemently)

Danny!!! Goddammit...

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN) - EVENING(08:15PM)

Jeffrey is doing his usual welcoming festivities around the both of them. They cut through the living room like a knife through butter. We could briefly make out a couch, a la-z boy, a big TV set, a table and four chairs, an open laptop on the table...

DANNY

(melodiously)

Laaasaagnaa. LaaasaagnaaAAAAA.

(to Jeffrey, singing)

It'll be for uuus, not for youuuu,
cause you got your fooood, n' we got
ourrrss.

Richard puts the lasagna in the microwave.

DANNY

(normal, upbeat voice)

Sorry sorry, that's the way it goes.

The microwave hums. Richard grabs Jeffrey by his fur collar and careens his head from side to side.

RICHARD
Such a good, good doggy hey? Huh?
Huh?

He lets him go. Jeffrey is as happy as happy can be.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM) - EVENING(08:30PM)

Danny is seated at the living room table with half a plate of lasagna in front of him. The TV is turned on. We hear Richard sitting down in front of Danny. He follows his dad with his eyes.

RICHARD
All right.

Danny seems to be waiting for something. He winces in anticipation. We hear a sudden "phhump", followed by a fizzling exultation of air.

RICHARD
(fumbling about)
Ah, Shit! Damn it. Fuck...

Danny's face alleviates into a smile. He laughs.

RICHARD
(from the kitchen)
Yeah, you laugh it up!

Richard comes out of the kitchen with a towel. He throws it at Danny.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Here, you clean it.

DANNY
Why?? I'm hungry.

RICHARD
Good. Let's go, c'mon. Clean it.

DANNY
Why me? You did it.

RICHARD
All the way home you've been dancin
around with that thing, and that's
why it happened. It's your fault, so
you clean it... let's go.
(beat)
The food's gonna wait but it's gonna
get cold Danny.

Danny looks at Richard without moving.

RICHARD
(pointing to the soda)
It's going in the sink.

Danny caves in and grabs the towel.

DANNY
(grunting)
Okay...

RICHARD
Good boy.

DANNY
Stop!

Richard sits down, watching Danny doing a half-assed job.

DANNY
Done.

RICHARD
Lose the attitude, you got nothin to
be upset about.

DANNY
I'm hungry.

RICHARD
All right then, let's eat.

Danny sits. They dig in. Richard checks his laptop as he eats.

RICHARD
(to the lasagna)
Hmm.

The TV talks about the news. Danny watches.

RICHARD
You know Garfield?

DANNY
(normal self again)
What's that?

RICHARD
It's a cat.

DANNY
Whose cat?

RICHARD
It's a cartoon cat. That's an old
one. Dude liked lasagna a lot. A fat
old cat. Talks like... Gabe and Penny...

Richard laughs.

DANNY

He talks?

RICHARD

Yeah... with like a stoner's voice,
like with this slooowwww, smooth...
drawwwl...

DANNY

What's a drawwwl.

RICHARD

(thinking)

...Uhm... this was more of a hunch.

DANNY

A what?

Beat.

RICHARD

I'm not so sure about the word, so i
kinda took a stab at it Danny, you
know like a hunch. Took a guess at
it. At the meaning. Probably fits.
Well... It's not like i'm very well
read... you sometimes gotta force words
into contexts that might not apply,
and you know, sometimes you even end
up impressing people with the things
you seem to know- the problem is
those people gotta know less than you
do for it to work, but at least in my
case i guess that's not so hard to
come by. Not that i'm so smart or
anything... but yeah... The thing is is
that it's also a probable root cause
for a lot of misunderstandings
between folks in general, when they
don't know how to express themselves
properly. Jesus.

DANNY

What are you talking about dad?

RICHARD

(scoffing at himself)

Folks...

(pointing at Danny)

You see? That's what i'm talkin
about.

DANNY

What?

RICHARD

Are you impressed?

DANNY

No.

RICHARD

(laughs)

Tough crowd.

Danny makes a face.

RICHARD

Danny, drawl's like a... southern
drawl- like a- an affectation for the
word, almost like an accent- like

(slowly)

you taalk laiike thiiiiss.

DANNY

(doing the drawl)

Jeffreeeeeyyy.

RICHARD

Kinda like that, yeah. But that's
talkin like a moron, so don't do that
too much.

DANNY

(still doing it)

Jeffreeeeey dawwg.

Danny chuckles.

RICHARD

Yeah.

Beat. Richard plays some music on the laptop. Folksy; mellow.

DANNY

Dad, i knew that was gonna happen.

RICHARD

What?

DANNY

The...

Danny mimics the bottle cap getting flung in the air.

RICHARD

Then why didn't you say nothin?

DANNY

I wanted to see it.

Beat.

RICHARD

Well thanks for the honesty, i
appreciate that.

Beat.

DANNY
Dad, play something else.

RICHARD
No, i like this.

DANNY
Dad.

RICHARD
That's how you should act... you know?
With honesty. You're not sorry, are
you?

DANNY
(shrugging)
No.

RICHARD
'Course not. Why should you be? You
just wanted to see it. Was it fun?

Danny shrugs again.

RICHARD
It was okay, at least. Right?

DANNY
(not very convinced)
Yeah.

They continue eating. Danny looks without much interest at the
TV.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN) - EVENING(09:45PM)

Richard rinses the plates in the kitchen sink without putting
detergent on them, and piles them on top of the ones that are
still waiting to be washed from lunch.

Danny is on the La-z boy watching some kind of reality show.
Jeffrey is next to him.

Richard wipes his hands in a rush and hurries into the living
room.

RICHARD
Danny. I'm goin out. You watch
Jeffrey, make sure he doesn't wreck
anything, and he doesn't eat anything
he shouldn't.

DANNY
Okay.

RICHARD
Watch the house too. This is yours
tonight, all right?

DANNY
All right.

RICHARD
Danny! Look at me.

Danny looks.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
You goin to continue to watch that?

DANNY
I don't know.

RICHARD
That's crap. Watch cartoons, they're
better for you. Or play xbox.

Danny thinks.

DANNY
I'm gonna make popcorn.

RICHARD
You know how, right? Three minutes in
the microwave or a bit less than
that, so they don't burn. Okay?

DANNY
Yep.

Beat.

RICHARD
Here, you go put 'em on now. I wanna
watch. C'mon Danny, i gotta go.
C'mon.

Danny gets up and follows Richard into the kitchen.

We see Danny unwrapping the plastic from the instant popcorn, and
placing the pack inside the microwave.

RICHARD
That's it.

DANNY
Where are you going dad?

RICHARD
I'm gonna hang around with Fred and
Gerry. Look, i don't want you in bed
too late. I'll be home around one
o'clock- you have to be in bed
already. And don't make too much

noise cause Jeffrey'll want to be asleep by then.

DANNY
I think me and him are gonna go online on the xbox.

RICHARD
Does he like that?

DANNY
He does.

RICHARD
That's cool. Not too many dogs like that, i bet.

Jeffrey is walking around, smelling the popcorn.

RICHARD
Smells great...

EXT. PROJECTS - OUTSIDE OF BLOCK 6 - NIGHT(10:00PM)

Richard walks in a brisk step along the sidewalk with his cell phone in his ear; he waits for somebody to pick up.

We can see how dreary the whole place looks in the dead of night. A trash container is forgotten near the middle of the road; bags of trash trail it from the sidewalk. Illumination is sparse. A group of older teenagers hang out in the stairs of the next block, smoking and talking loudly.

RICHARD (ON THE PHONE)
Hey. I'm out. Where are you?
(Beat)
Is Gerry there?
(Beat)
Huh, all right. I told him to go with us. Fuck it.
(Beat)
...You call him.

EXT. PROJECTS - SELLWAY'S - NIGHT(10:00PM)

From the graveled path going to Sellway's we can see a few people talking and drinking and smoking under the bright lights placed above the front door. There's Fred (24), Elias, Gabe (27) and a couple other young guys.

They see Richard coming up.

RICHARD
Where is that fucker?

FRED
...Still no idea.

A revolving cloud of smoke dances around them.

RICHARD
(greeting)
How's everybody?

GABE
(very stoned)
If i give you ten bucks, will you
make me a hundred?

Richard looks perplexed for a second.

RICHARD
...Sure Gabe.

OTHER GUY
(mocking Gabe)
Gabriel...

RICHARD
(entering Sellway's)
I'm gonna get a beer first.

FRED
Why don't you come with us, man?

GABE
(Very slowly)
Because i don't like those types of
places.

INT. SELLWAY'S - NIGHT(10:00PM) - CONTINUED

Richard moves towards the counter without breaking stride.

RICHARD
Hi Tony, get me a beer please.

Richard sits, looks at the TV. A basketball game is on. We hear the blare of a horn, the cheer of the crowd... We can read a certain sadness on his face.

INT. CASINO (BAR) - NIGHT(00:00AM)

Richard and Fred sit on the bar of the casino, fully engulfed in red light. There is a mirror on the far wall, between the liquor rack and the mixing counter. The place is bustling with movement and anxiety. We can hear the noise of the slot machines somewhere in the background. Fred is quite drunk. Richard went for the whiskey, so he's getting there as well.

Fred's stupid drunken laughter seems endowed with a sort of ubiquitous character.

RICHARD
(cupping his hand
suggestively)
You know what has big pink lips and
hair all around?

Beat. Fred chuckles like a man possessed.

FRED
What?

RICHARD
An albino monkey! You know what sits
on your lawn all day and looks brown
and shinny in the sun?

FRED
What?

RICHARD
An eggplant.

FRED
(chuckling away)
What's that?

RICHARD
You know what has a long neck and a
head the shape of a mushroom?

FRED
What?

RICHARD
Your mother's cock.

Richard's face strains with laughter.

RICHARD
You know what's bald, round, and
can't sing?

FRED
What?

RICHARD
Your mother's balls. You know what
has a hole the size and the girth of
the second street tunnel?

Richard gulps down the remaining whiskey. Fred's chuckling has
toned down considerably.

FRED
What?

RICHARD
L.A. You know wha--

INT. CASINO (ROULETTE TABLES) - NIGHT(01:30AM)

Richard looks at the electronic board above the roulette table. There, the last fifteen prized numbers are on display. He tries in vain to figure out some type of pattern. Fred stands with arms-crossed to the side. He is wide-eyed and seems out of it. Richard is holding a nice looking stack of gambling chips.

The ball spins around furiously. It bounces around into position. The croupier removes some chips from the table, slides in others to the surrounding gamblers.

Richard looks at Fred. Fred looks back. Richard shrugs his shoulders and makes a face. Richard distributes all his chips across the table with heavy, unsteady movements. He now has upwards of 200 dollars in play: 40 dollars on the number 8, 10 on the number 3 80 dollars on red, 20 dollars on 28, 20 dollars on 5, 30 on the first 12th and 20 on the third 12th.

The ball spins. Richard feels a sudden surge of sobriety. It lands on the number 8.

For a second his mouth splits in disbelief. He starts nodding his head like he's listening to a fast paced punk track. His eyes widen.

RICHARD
(trying to contain himself)
Fucking shit!

Fred comes closer to the table. The croupier removes the chips.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Fu-cking shit man!

Two or three people look at him with sleepy faces.

FRED
What???

Richard doesn't know what to do with his feet. He jumps tree times, barely lifting both his feet off the carpeted floor. The croupier replaces the chips.

RICHARD
(to the croupier)
How much is that?

CROUPIER
You have a profit of around 1500
dollars, sir.

FRED
(mouth agape)
Oh man! Oh man, that's alot of fuckin
money man.

Richard gathers the chips in a near frenzy.

RICHARD

I don't wanna say it cause that
shit's probably bad luck, but i've
be- ...fuck it: i've been on a fucking
good lucky streak lately, man.

Fred lifts his hands to his head, clearly still very drunk.

FRED

Oh man...

Richard suddenly reflects on what he said.

RICHARD

That's stupid what just came out of
my mouth.

FRED

(aloof)

What are we gonna do?

RICHARD

I'm gonna cash out, that's what i'm
gonna do. You do what you want.

Richard goes to find the cash out booth. Fred follows him in a
trance, after snapping out of a moment of pure inertia. He bumps
into an older women, knocking her champagne glass onto the floor.
Her husband flinches back.

FRED

Oh shit, i'm so sorry lady. I'm sorry
sir.

He picks up the glass. Richard stops and looks back, but quickly
turns around.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT(02:00AM)

Richard enters the house. All the lights are off; Danny must be
asleep. Jeffrey trots around him, waving his tail. He gets
shushed. Richard goes to the laptop on the table and turns it on.
We can hear it booting up.

INT. BLOCK 6 (DANNY'S ROOM) - NIGHT(02:00AM) - CONTINUED

The door to Danny's room opens slowly. Richard peeks in. He walks
to the side of Danny's bed and sits on it.

RICHARD

(whispering)

Danny, wake up... Danny! Danny!

DANNY

(drowsy)

...What?

RICHARD

You wanna go on a trip before school starts? Huh?

Danny slowly posts up on his elbow.

DANNY

With you?

RICHARD

Yeah! Who else?

DANNY

(thinks for a second)

Yeah!

RICHARD

I made some big money tonight, and we're gonna have fun.

DANNY

...Where did you get the money from, dad?

RICHARD

The casino, playing roulette. You know what that one is?

DANNY

The one with the ball, right?

RICHARD

Yyyuup. Dad made 1500 bucks in it-BAM, just like that!

DANNY

WHOA!

RICHARD

I bet like 40 bucks on the number 8 and the number 8 was the prized number and dad made 36 times that money. 40 times 36 man--

DANNY

Whoa!

RICHARD

-plus i doubled like 80 dollars on red, and some other stuff.

DANNY

Uau!

RICHARD

That's right!

Beat.

DANNY

When do we go?

RICHARD

Well, we can go to- no, we can go after tomorrow.

DANNY

Can we take Jeffrey with us?

RICHARD

Of course. We can't leave him here alone- he'd starve.

DANNY

Why can't we go tomorrow?

RICHARD

Because i wanna have the money with me for a little while before we go.

DANNY

Why?

RICHARD

So i can pay a few drinks to the guys at the bar before we leave. You gotta do nice things for other people sometimes, you know?

DANNY

(alarmed)

...but don't spend it all!

RICHARD

Don't worry, i won't- *WE* buddy, we're gonna spend it all.

Danny frowns slightly, thinking about what his dad said.

DANNY

But... but maybe we shouldn't do that.

RICHARD

What do you want the money for?

DANNY

To... buy stuff with.

RICHARD

And we *will* buy stuff with it, but eventually money runs out, and we gotta make more.

DANNY

In the casino..?

RICHARD

You can make money there, but what happened to me tonight doesn't happen very often.

DANNY

Hmm.

RICHARD

We gotta look for other ways to make money...

DANNY

Ok, like a job...

RICHARD

Yeah, well, i can see you were having a very conscientious dream.

(smiling)

Welfare helps, and grandma too.

DANNY

Yeah... You smell like alcohol dad.

RICHARD

(laughs)

Yeah, i got pretty drunk tonight. But i'm okay now. All right, go to sleep.

DANNY

I won't be able to sleep now.

RICHARD

Sure you will.

(calling out)

JEFFREY! JEFFREY!

We hear some shuffling and panting. Jeffrey comes in the room.

RICHARD

Jeffrey, lie down. Lie down over there.

(He does)

I'll get his bed. You'll both fall asleep in no time.

DANNY

You woke everybody up...

RICHARD

Yeah, sorry, i'm excited. All right!

Richard gets up; Jeffrey gets up with him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

No, stay there! Stay there. I'll get your bed.

Richard leaves Danny's room. Jeffrey is unsure of what to do, so he just stays in the same spot, wagging his tail.

DANNY

Jeffrey, lie down! Lie down.

He is not usually allowed to sleep in Danny's room, so he lies down very awkwardly, very aware of his surroundings.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM) - DAY(11:00AM)

Birds are chirping outside of the living room window. Distant screams reach us: children are playing, dogs are barking. Danny is in the kitchen feeding Jeffrey. We can hear the dog chow dropping into the plastic bowl.

Richard barely opens his eyes before contorting his face in pain. He is laid out on the living room couch; the open laptop underneath him, on the floor. He tries not to move his body before completely figuring out where all the sounds are coming from. He is confused and hungover. He looks towards the kitchen and shuts his eyes again.

INT. BLOCK 6 (KITCHEN) - DAY(11:00AM) - CONTINUED

Danny prepares his cereal. An excellent mood written all over his face. Jeffrey blasts through his food.

DANNY

Don't eat it all too fast. You'll get
in-di-ges-tion.

INT. BLOCK 6 (HOME/LIVING ROOM) - DAY(11:00AM)

With cereal bowl in hand, Danny watches his father from the tiny hallway next to the living room. Richard's feet stick out from the couch. He still has his shoes on. They are not in good shape.

Danny drops in the La-z boy. Turns the TV on. Changes channels, looking for something good to watch.

Richard gives up.

RICHARD

(sounding very annoyed)
Jesus Christ, Danny.

He sits. Danny continues to chew his cereal. He just landed on the right channel. Cartoons. Richard looks at him with a vacant expression. Then at the TV.

DANNY

(chipper)
What are we gonna do today?

Richard blinks heavy eyelids. Tries to force a burp out. He gets up.

RICHARD
I'm going to sleep.

He goes into his bedroom, shutting the door with a thud.

After a couple of seconds, we hear him coming out and going into the bathroom. The toilet lid bangs against the cover. A dribble of pee.

INT. BLOCK 6 (RICHARD'S BEDROOM) - AFTERNOON(02:30PM)

We find Richard leaning against the bedhead; thrusted sideways against the upright pillow. He has earbuds on. He listens to music and wanders through the internet on his cell phone. Plenty of light comes in from the window. His room is a bit of a mess: clothes are scattered about; we see a piano keyboard in vertical position next to the window, a surf board, a globe on a desk, some books piled up against the wall; an old microwave on the floor, a worn couch. Etc, etc. His face shows the concentrated expression of one who cannot focus on anything. He slides down along the pillow, laying down again.

Danny appears at the door. He looks at his dad's head peeking out from under the green sheets.

DANNY
Dad.
(Beat)
Dad!!

Richard takes an earbud out and looks at Danny.

RICHARD
What?

DANNY
What's for lunch?

RICHARD
You had breakfast an hour ago...

DANNY
No i didn't.

Richard looks down at his phone.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(making a point)
"Slick slam"'s over already.

RICHARD
(to himself)
...past two a'clock.
(looks at Danny)
Jesus. What do ya wanna eat?

Danny's short on ideas.

DANNY
Hmm. Lasagna?

RICHARD
(scoffs and scowls)
No way kid. Let's get something else.
(beat)
You want pizza? Shit, we're up to our
knees in money today, let's go
somewhere.

DANNY
Yeah!

RICHARD
Okay, go get dressed Danny, hurry.

Danny rushes out.

DANNY
(shouting)
GETTING. SO. DRESSED.

Richard's pulls himself out of bed with effort.

INT. BLOCK 6 (BATHROOM/RICHARD'S ROOM/LIVING ROOM) -
AFTERNOON(02:45PM)

Richard is brushing his teeth in the bathroom. Jeffery's in the doorway, looking at him.

RICHARD
(bumping against Jeffery)
Fuck off, Jeffery.

Richard slides into his bedroom in mid-brush. He takes most of the money from the casino out of his wallet, and puts it in a box in the closet. We hear the TV playing cartoons in the living room and Danny talking indistinctly to his toys.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM) - AFTERNOON(02:45PM)

The front door is open, they're ready to go.

RICHARD
(pointing to Jeffery)
You fed him?

DANNY
Yeah.

EXT. PROJECTS - OUTSIDE OF BLOCK 6 - AFTERNOON(03:00PM)

Richard and Danny are walking towards the car.

RICHARD
We might as well eat healthy today,
Danny.

DANNY
What's that?

Richard looks at him with an inquiring expression.

RICHARD
(smiling)
You makin a joke or what?

DANNY
(smiling back)
No.

Richard laughs.

RICHARD
Well, we're gonna put food in our
bodies that's better for us than the
usual stuff we eat.

DANNY
Like what?

They get to the car.

RICHARD
Let's go to a chinese place. You like
that.

DANNY
I want pizza dad.

RICHARD
Not today.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (DOWNTOWN) - AFTERNOON(03:15PM)

They are driving around town. Traffic is sluggish.

RICHARD
We'll go to a Japanese restaurant. I
know where there's one. You never had
that.

DANNY
I won't like it.

Beat.

RICHARD
Danny, say Wootah.

DANNY

(dry)
Wootah.

RICHARD

(loud)
WOOTAH!!

Danny laughs.

DANNY

WOOTAH!

RICHARD

Let's go fuckers, we're hungry.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON(03:30PM)

Ornate screens of pierced wood divide the tables. The restaurant is somewhat fancy and Richard feels good about it.

RICHARD

Doesn't it smell good at least? This is kinda like chinese food, but we get a bigger variety here.

DANNY

(tantrum)
I'm hungry and you make me eat things i don't like.

RICHARD

I'm not making you eat anything. I think you should try at least, to see what's up with it- that's what you always should do- if you have the possibility you should try different things, or else when you die someday you look back and you see your life's been the same thing over and over again.

DANNY

What if i don't like it? What am i going to eat?

RICHARD

If you don't like it, you should still try and eat it man. Never doing stuff you don't like makes you weak. This food'll make you strong then, if you don't like it and you still choose to eat it.

DANNY

...You never do things you don't like.

A young japanese waitress approaches their table.

RICHARD

What do you know about that?
(looks at the incoming
waitress)
Oh, she's so pretty...

WAITRESS

(smiling)
Hello, have you decided yet?

RICHARD

No, not yet. What do you recommend
for people who've never had Japanese
food?

Danny is sulking, looking at the table.

JAPANESE WAITRESS

(slight accent)
Well, you can try the shrimp and
vegetables tempura, in which we use a
quick deep-frying method on the
ingredients, so that their flavor is
maximized... or the chicken teriyaki,
which is basically chicken meat
grilled in a special soy sauce. I
suggest a bowl of egg rice to
accompany. Everybody is always very
pleased with one of those choices.

RICHARD

Do you have the blowfish?

She keeps smiling.

JAPANESE WAITRESS

No, we don't.

RICHARD

That was a joke. A reference, more
like... All right, we can do what you
suggested. The shrimp sounds good.

JAPANESE WAITRESS

For you both?

RICHARD

Yes.

JAPANESE WAITRESS

And to drink?

RICHARD

...Two iced teas please.

JAPANESE WAITRESS

Okay, the waiter will be right over
with your food and your beverages.

She leaves. Richard has a benign, tranquil smile on his face.

RICHARD

What do you think of me having a
japanese girlfriend? Huh?

DANNY

(bickering)

Why did you say i wanted ice tea?

Richard arches his eyebrows, widens his eyes, takes a moment to answer.

RICHARD

We can change it Danny. Relax...

Every sound inside the restaurant is a whisper.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE (FRONT) - AFTERNOON(05:00PM)

Richard has stopped the car in front of a nice looking lower middle-class house. Danny seems to be in better spirits.

He opens the corrugated iron door leading to the front yard. There is a pink flamingo sculpture stuck on the lawn; another sculpture of a sunflower; a row of boulders on both sides of the cement path... Richard trails behind. Danny runs to the front door, rings the doorbell.

After a little while, an elegant but tired looking woman opens the door. GINNY(51), Richard's mother.

GINNY

Hey, guys.

Danny throws himself on her legs.

DANNY

I'm hungry...

She looks at Richard.

RICHARD

We tried to eat something different
today. He didn't like it. Put in his
head he didn't like it...

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (HALL/KITCHEN) - AFTERNOON(05:00) -
CONTINUED

They move through the hall and into the kitchen.

GINNY

You didn't have lunch, Danny?

DANNY

No. The food looked weird and i'm not gonna eat things that look like that.

RICHARD

You ate some of it man, you're just playing the victim now. You ate the shrimp.

GINNY

What do you wanna eat?

DANNY

Yogurt and cereal and cookies, grandma.

GINNY

(motioning to the table)
All right, go sit over there.

DANNY

Yes.

Danny does, all smiles. Ginny takes the stuff out of their respective places while Richard looks at his phone.

RICHARD

(lifts his head)
Hey, i'm gonna- we're gonna go on a trip. Me and him.

GINNY

A trip? Where?

RICHARD

Don't really know yet. I gotta plan an itinerary. We'll figure it--

GINNY

(harsh)
-You're goin on a trip on whose money?

RICHARD

It's mine, don't worry about it.

Beat. She looks at Richard mistrustfully.

GINNY

You're in no position of being squandering any money on something like that.

RICHARD

I got some more comin in, some extra money, so don't worry.

Cereal drops in the bowl.

GINNY
(she stops)
What have you gotten yourself into,
Richard?

He laughs.

RICHARD
Oh my.. Whatever drugs i buy, they're
for me, ok? I'm not selling anything
to anybody yet.

She groans.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Danny keeps the stash safe in his
room from any possible visitors. Him
and Jeffery.
Don't you?

DANNY
Yeah, they're safe cause nobody goes
in my room. Except for Dominick and
Ruth, and sometimes Henry.

RICHARD
That's right. Those don't count.

Ginny mixes the cereal and the yogurt and places the bowl in
front of Danny.

GINNY
(to Richard)
You do what you goddamn want Richard,
it's always like that.

Beat. She leans on the counter.

GINNY (CONT'D)
I wish you were honest.

RICHARD
(frowning)
You wish i was honest? What, like in
general? I'm an honest guy, i think...

GINNY
(gesticulating)
Then this conversation, Richard.. i
don't know if you're messin with me
or not. Are you really going
somewhere?

Danny gets up from the chair and pours himself a cup of soda from
the fridge.

RICHARD
Yes, we are. We came here to say
goodbye to you- i plan on being gone

for like two weeks or something-
we'll come back before his school
starts.

GINNY

But where'd you get the money to do
something like that? You got a job
since last time you were here? Cause
your tune was a different one last
time we talked...

RICHARD

No, i didn't get a job.

It's hard for him to talk about the casino, for some reason. She
glares at him.

RICHARD(CONT'D)

...I went to the casino last night and
made 1500 bucks playing the roulette.

She scoffs. Her knee-jerk reaction is one of distrust.

GINNY

Right...

Beat.

RICHARD

I don't know what i did to you for
you to have such a fuckin lousy
opinion of me.

DANNY

Gramma, it's true...

She looks at Richard for a moment, clearly conflicted.

RICHARD

I'm gonna make a phone call.

He leaves the kitchen, takes a right at the doorway.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (HALL/LIVING ROOM) - AFTERNOON(05:15PM)
- CONTINUED

He makes his way across the hall and into the living room. The
house is clearly overstuffed with objects and paraphernalia. He
opens a sort of ramshackle door into the long backyard.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE (BACKYARD) - AFTERNOON(05:15PM)
CONTINUED

Richard steps out with his phone already pressed against his
face. We see a lean rectangular backyard with about a dozen fruit
trees and a small shed at the end.

RICHARD (ON THE PHONE)

Hey...

CELIA (36) picks up, a friend/past hookup of Richard's.

CELIA (V.O.)

Hey Rich.

RICHARD

You off work yet?

CELIA (V.O.)

I'm in town, i'm doin some shopping.

Beat.

RICHARD

Look, i wanna-- let's have dinner tonight. I'm payin.

CELIA (V.O.)

(laughs quietly)

Ooh la la... Something happened?

RICHARD

I'll tell you about it afterwards.
I'm at my mother's- i'm leavin Danny here and we can both go somewhere.

A small pause.

CELIA (V.O.)

...All right. It's... 5... 18. Where do we meet? I gotta cook dinner for Alex first...

RICHARD

I'll pick you up in a couple of hours. Sound good?

CELIA (V.O.)

Uhh... meet me at Sammy's close to eight, ok?

Richard throws a right hook to the tree trunk near him.

RICHARD

All right. I'll call you when i get there.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - AFTERNOON(05:15PM)

Richard steps into the kitchen; words ready to shoot out of his mouth. He finds Ginny waiting for him with a heavy expression on her face. In a split-second, Richard gets a hunch of why she's looking at him that way.

GINNY

...You left him alone while you went out? Are you nuts? Have you forgotten where you live Richard?

Richard is like a deer in the headlights. He takes a couple seconds to come up with something.

GINNY (CONT'D)

Huh? Why didn't you bring him here?

Danny looks at his father with regret in his face.

RICHARD

I-- it was a last minute thing, i didn't just wanna drop him off here like that...

He remembers what he just told Celia, and can't help but smile at himself; a smile loaded with irony.

GINNY

What's the problem with being last minute?- me and Eric were home, Richard. Besides, you can call me and ask...

(harshly)

you will not leave Danny alone in that place while you go and get drunk with the people you hang out with, doing god knows what.

RICHARD

(sarcastically)

All that judgment is killing me mom. Seriousl--

GINNY

-It's killing you because you can't deal with responsibility and because you know i'm right.

RICHARD

(talking over her)

-about me, about the place, and the friends an what i do where we go what i am...

(beat)

It's not good if you're always sheltering your kid like a baby...--

GINNY

-He's eight!

RICHARD (CONT'D)

--he's eight, i trust him, he's got the dog with him and the place's fine. Everybody knows us there and

nobody's gonna brake in or whatever
it is you think that can happen--

GINNY

(loudly)

But it's really not safe Richard-
he's eight, he doesn't have any
impulse control yet, if something
happens--

RICHARD

-Enough of this... STOP.

GINNY

--you'll have no way of knowing..

RICHARD

Stop. stop...

Ginny gets quiet.

Richard strains to find a good segue.

RICHARD

(smiling)

Look, can Danny stay here tonight?

She scoffs, laughs. Richard nods his head.

RICHARD

Right...

GINNY

Well, what do you think? I just
figure it's funny...

RICHARD

It is a bit funny.

Danny looks at Richard with a sorry expression on his face.

RICHARD

You wanna sleep here? I got some
stuff i gotta do before we go. Some
things i gotta buy for the trip, and
i'm gonna go have dinner with a
friend.

Danny shrugs.

RICHARD

Can he sleep here?

(approaches Ginny, talking
low)

I got a date.

Beat. She begrudgingly accepts.

GINNY

All right.

Richard looks at Danny again.

RICHARD

I'll pick you off tomorrow early.

GINNY

Early Richard, i mean it.

RICHARD

Don't worry.

(to Danny)

All right? Talk dude, what is it?

DANNY

(annoyed)

All right!!

RICHARD

There- OK.

RICHARD

(smiles)

Bye.

He leaves.

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER (SAMMY'S) - EVENING(08:00PM)

It's close to dusk. We see a line of cars parked along the sidewalk; traffic grinding to a halt in the road beside them. Richard is on foot, still wearing his sunglasses.

Almost immediately after turning a corner, he finds a small group of people talking underneath the spotlights of Sammy's bar. Celia is on the far side of the group, leaning against a shop window. She is a bit plump but good-looking. You can tell she's older than Richard. He goes around the group of people and approaches her. She greets him with a smile.

RICHARD

How's things..?

CELIA

It's been a little while, huh?

He goes in for a hug. A split-second and she responds in equal measure. Nearly effortless. You can tell they're close, or have been close by the duration of the hug.

CELIA (CONT'D)

How's Danny?

RICHARD

Fine. Where do you wanna go?

CELIA

Well, how much do you wanna spend?

RICHARD

We're good tonight.
(grabs her hand)
Come on, car's over there.

She lets him steer her forward. He goes to her side, his arm coasts on her shoulders; he kisses her cheek. We don't hear what they're saying.

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING(08:30PM)

She laughs as she takes another drag out of the cigarette. They're outside the restaurant, talking a bit.

CELIA

...I'll have to be up early tomorrow,
all right? Damn it.

RICHARD

Don't really have to... It's a choice
you make.

CELIA

(clears her throat; laughs)
I won't be taking that sort of advice
from you.

RICHARD

Why?

CELIA

Well... you're too lenient with your
choices- i wouldn't be able to
function the way you do.

RICAHRD

Are you saying i slack too much?

She's got a very easy going smile.

CELIA

You do, Richard...

RICHARD

I'm not hurting anybody.

CELIA

And i'm not judging too much i hope.

RICHARD

Besides, that wasn't advice.

CELIA

Yeah...

They keep smiling, having a good time. She's actually happy to see him again.

CELIA (CONT'D)

You wanna come see the tournament tomorrow? You can bring Danny.

RICHARD

Nah, that shit's too boring. But maybe we could come by after and swing a few balls around.

CELIA

You can't. They don't allow anybody who's not a player to use any of the practice spaces. The place'll be crawling with... golf people all day long.

Richard just remembers what he has been saying to Danny.

RICHARD

Shit, what am i talking about? I promised to take Danny on a trip tomorrow.

CELIA

Oh yeah?

RICHARD

Yeah... you could come if you want...

CELIA

You know i can't.

He nods.

RICHARD

Next time me and you are going- i'll leave Danny with my mom.

CELIA

Where is it that you wanna take me?

RICHARD

We'll go places, baby...

She laughs.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

We're goin places...

CELIA

We'll have a little getaway and i'll leave Alex at your mom's too. He and Danny'll put up with each other--

RICHARD

-He's like twice Danny's age, right?

CELIA
He's sixteen.

RICHARD
What a fucking combo that would be:
your adolescent kid and my child kid,
my mom and Eric-the-weekend-hoarder.

They laugh hard.

CELIA
That house'd be in ashes by the time
we come back.

RICHARD
The amount of evil smoke all that
toxic shit'd produce would be enough
to finish burning a hole through the
ozone.

CELIA
Is it that bad?

He shrugs slightly and makes a face.

RICHARD
Eh. Bad enough. Good thing the guy's
allergic to cats or else the place'd
be filled with'em, and then he and my
mom would get toxo, and Danny would
get it too...

CELIA
Toxoplasmosis?

RICHARD
Yeah. Like a big percentage of people
with cats has it, like a ridiculous
amount. Hey, speakin of smoke,
(motioning to the
cigarette)
hurry up with that crap. C'mon.

She takes a long last drag.

CELIA
Pushy pushy.
(flicking it up)
Bup!

They enter the restaurant.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING(09:00PM)

The place is busy and somewhat noisy, but they don't seem to pay
it any attention. The two of them eat with lively expressions on
their faces.

CELIA

...You know, a friend of mine, he works with air conditioners, and he was asking me if i knew somebody who'd have some technical knowledge, who could give him a hand- assist him in the shop. He's hiring.

Richard doesn't really like where she's going with it.

CELIA (CONT'D)

With your background... you could work that in, right?

RICHARD

I guess so. But since i left school i never did anything with it. Most of what i learned i forgot. Your friend'd kick me out really fast.

CELIA

I don't think he would... But talk to him, Rich. Tell him the truth and let him decide. Maybe he'd re-teach you those things you forgot.

RICHARD

We'll see. I'm good for money now, you know? I have been since i sold the car.

Beat.

CELIA

How'd you mother take it?

RICHARD

What?

CELIA

That you sold the car.

RICHARD

(shrugs)

She bitched about it, but that's her knee-jerk thing she always does, stays there in her back pocket-ready to pop. It wasn't about my dad or anything, she couldn't have cared less about him... What would have i done with two cars, Celia?

CELIA

Hmm...

RICHARD

I don't think he'd give shit about it if he knew i was gonna sell it...

Beat.

CELIA
What did Danny say?

Richard snickers.

RICHARD
What, about me selling the car? He's got the ego of a child, what'd you expect him to say?

CELIA
He associates the car with his grandpa, and then you sell it, i don't know...

RICHARD
Yeah, but he doesn't... that didn't seem wrong to him, all right? He understood that we didn't need two cars, and so if i was gonna sell one, i should sell the one that'd give us more money- that's all it was. And *that's all it was*, right? I mean, the old man's dead, who cares about the stupid car or its symbolic value or whatever it is, i don't care about it. And if my dad should've cared about it, well too bad, cause he's dead, and he didn't really care enough while he was alive.

CELIA
Sorry to be bringing that up...

RICHARD
(smiling)
That's fine- doesn't bother me.
(beat)
What i wanted to tell you... last night in the casino... i made 1500 fucking dollars spinning the roulette.

CELIA
(gasping)
Really..? Oh, so that's what this is...

RICHARD
...Yeah, in part, but that's not very fair of you--

CELIA
-I'm gone order seconds and gold dig you a little bit.

RICHARD
You don't need seconds...

CELIA
(faking offense)
What're you saying, asshole?

RICHARD
...I'm saying we should get boozed up
and see where it goes from there.

A happy-birthday is sung somewhere.

CELIA
I know where that goes...

RICHARD
Yeah, me too, but be careful not to
get too.. spinny and the bottle with
me,
(she laughs)
cause you gotta take good care of
wealthy people tomorrow and they'll
think bad things of you if you throw
up all over their golf shoes.

CELIA
I won't get too carried away...

She winks at him. A small silence; he smiles.

CELIA
You said you were gonna take Danny
somewhere.

RICHARD
Yeah.

CELIA
Where?

RICHARD
I don't know yet. Maybe we won't go
anywhere exactly, we'll just go...
drive around and see places and eat
food, and camp on the way probably...

CELIA
That's a very kid like thing...

RICHARD
Why's it a kid like thing?

CELIA
You know, because of the adventure of
it- it's an adventure: it's very...
structurless. But i'm not saying you
shouldn't enjoy it.

RICHARD
I think Danny will like it better
this way... An i don't know if i agree

with that. May just be your grownup perceptions are a bit wrong, or misguided. Manuals should be ignored from time to time, for everybody.

Glass shatters; somebody howls like a dog.

CELIA

I didn't say grownups couldn't enjoy it more like that. Or that they shouldn't. I said that kids usually do...

RICHARD

I bet most of us adults hate the structure- we just don't wanna talk about it, or we hide the fact that we hate it. I know a good deal of them who're like that.

CELIA

You're reaching for bigger things Rich, i'm just talking about an unplanned trip, not how we deal with life or jobs or pressure or what-have-you. But most of us do better with something being thought about and considered ahead of time, before you actually do it.

RICHARD

...Think about how boring that becomes for most people when they don't brake from it once in a while.

CELIA

That's what vacations are for...

RICHARD

Well, like an unplanned trip...

Beat.

CELIA

(insinuating, smiling)
Yeah, but you...

RICHARD

What?

CELIA

(mischievous smile)
I'm just talkin...

RICHARD

I think you're drunk already.

CELIA

I think i'm gonna order a Margarita.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT(12:00PM)

Richard has music playing on his computer. It's placed on a small center table between them and the TV; hooked up to it. They've just finished watching a movie.

He is laying down on the couch, feet hanging out, pressed against her side; the top of his head fits the curvature of her neck. Celia has a coffee mug in her hands and drinks the content in small sips.

RICHARD

Now i kinda don't feel like doing it.

CELIA

What don't you feel like doing?

RICHARD

Going tomorrow. I feel good here with you.

CELIA

We could do this more often...

He kisses her neck. She bends a little; smiles. He grabs his own mug from the table and returns to the same position. He drinks. Heavy eyes; a bit drunk.

CELIA

But you have to go if you promised him.

RICHARD

I know.

(beat)

An i involved my mom... Should have just called her. The woman hates me. But then we wouldn't be able to be here with him around.

CELIA

We wouldn't?

RICHARD

It wouldn't be the same thing...

He kisses her again on the same spot. They look at each other in the eye. He slides his arm in between her back and the couch and tries to get her to stretch alongside him. She does. They make out for a little bit.

RICHARD

(mid-kiss)

You wanna move in, is that it?

CELIA

I got my own home, mister.

They laugh quietly and continue to make out. He rubs her crotch with his hand.

RICHARD

I think i like you very much...

CELIA

Oh, you think you do?

RICHARD

Yes, very much...

We hear him grunting with effort as he unbuckles his belt.

INT. BLOCK 6 (LIVING ROOM/HALL) - NIGHT(00:30AM)

Jeffrey scratches Danny's bedroom door from the other side. He's locked in. We hear somebody walking into the bathroom. The light from the bathroom illuminates the hall as it opens, for a moment. The toilet lid bangs against the cover. A dribble of pee.

Celia is sitting on the couch in the near dark, looking at the coffee mug. The only light in the living room comes from the TV screen, which still displays the same background. She starts gathering her stuff. Richard leaves the bathroom, she gets up from the couch. They meet near the door.

RICHARD

You're going already?

CELIA

I have to...

They hug for a bit. You can feel their bodies tightening up hard against each other. They kiss.

RICHARD

Thanks for hangin out with me tonight.

(beat)

When do you wanna do this again?

CELIA

You can tell me how it went with the trip when you come back. We'll go get a coffee, or dinner or something like that.

RICHARD

All right.

CELIA

All right.

She opens the door and gives him a prolonged kiss.

CELIA

Bye.

RICHARD

Bye...

She leaves.

INT. BLOCK 6 (HALL/LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT(00:30AM)

Richard is exiting Danny's room holding Jeffrey's bed in one arm and his cell-phone in his hand. The dog follows him, wagging his tail, happy to leave the room. Richard drops the bed near the sofa. We see a text he got from his mother: "Eric leaves at 8 for work. Pick Danny up before he leaves."

He sits on the couch and unhooks the computer from the TV. The screen goes black. The faint sound that was coming from the TV is now coming from the computer: it's a song playing. Richard changes songs and ups the volume a little. He opens an internet browser.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (SUBURBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD)
- MORNING(08:30AM)

We find Richard driving his car, turning a corner on a suburban road not far from where Ginny lives. Jeffrey's in the back seat, watching the road. Richard's phone rings for the second time. This time he answers.

RICHARD (ON THE PHONE)
(very annoyed)
Jesus Christ, what?
(small beat)
Well i texted you, didn't i?
(Beat)
Tell him to fuckin leave, then!!
What do you think is gonna happen,
huh mom..? Jesus Christ...

He hangs up.

RICHARD
Fucking crazy, man...

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE (FRONT) - MORNING(08:45AM)

The car stops to a halt in front of Ginny's home. Richard exits the car in a hurry. We can hear Jeffrey whimper. As Richard opens the gate, ERIC (56) opens the front door and comes out with Danny. Eric's hair is completely gray, and he looks worried and anxious.

RICHARD
(to Eric)
Hey, good morning- i'm sorry i'm late
man.

ERIC
All right, your dad's here now. I
have to go.
(passing Richard by)
Hello Richard.

Eric hurries out the gate.

RICHARD
Byyye...
(to Danny)
We good?

DANNY
Yeah.

RICHARD
All right, let's go.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (GINNY'S NEIGHBORHOOD) - MORNING(08:45AM)

They drive away from Ginny's house.

RICHARD
Look, i packed the clothes you need,
i got some of your toys, i got
Jeffrey's things, i got the laptop,
food and bought things for us to go
camping. How's that sound?

DANNY
Okay.

Richard looks at him through the rearview mirror.

RICHARD
Are you mad at me?

DANNY
No.

RICHARD
Then what is it?

Danny shrugs his shoulders.

DANNY
I don't know.

RICHARD
Are you still sulking because of
yesterday?

DANNY
No!

RICHARD
What did gramma say?

DANNY

Nothing.

RICHARD

Danny!

(beat)

Did she talk about mom?

DANNY

No...

RICHARD

You sure?

DANNY

Yeah.

LONG BEAT.

RICHARD

You don't wanna go anymore?

(beat)

You don't?

DANNY

I do!

RICHARD

Then cheer the hell up man. You're too young to be depressed.

DANNY

You got Koalie?

RICHARD

Yeah, he's in the back.

They drive in silence for some time. Danny plays with Jeffrey, who's by his side.

RICHARD

I thought we should go south and drive near the beach for a while, and then we head east. And try to stay away from cities for the most part. I bought us a camping stove and cans of fuel so we can eat while we camp. They probably have that stuff wherever we end up stayin but we gotta go prepared.

DANNY

We'll be camping the whole time?

RICHARD

Well i don't think they'll let Jeffrey stay with us if we get a room, so we gotta do it this way. But it'll be fun...

(beat)
What'd you do last night?

DANNY
(still in a mood)
I watched TV, with gramma. And Eric.

RICHARD
You sleep in my old room?

DANNY
Yeah.

RICHARD
What did you eat?

DANNY
Uhh... fish.

RICHARD
That's it?

DANNY
And mash.

RICHARD
What type of fish?

DANNY
I don't know.

RICHARD
Did it have a head?

DANNY
No.

RICHARD
Was it like a steak?

DANNY
Kinda.

RICHARD
What color was it?
(beat)
Was it pink?

DANNY
It was more like orange.

RICHARD
Was it salmon?

DANNY
I don't know the name of it.

RICHARD

It had to be. Those fish swim upstream.

DANNY

Swim upstream?

RICHARD

Yeah, up the river. Instead of down the river.

DANNY

(interested)

Why do they do that?

RICHARD

So they can get eaten by bears.

DANNY

(scoffs)

They wanna be eaten by bears?

RICHARD

Yeah, some of them want to- the ones who're suicidal. Bears don't go down the river cause the water's too cold down there, so the salmon who wanna check out swim upstream to meet them. And the bear's like "oh, you jump right into my big mouth, i'll give you a little squeeze my little baby"--

DANNY

-You're tricking me...

RICHARD

No i'm not- when you go into college later on, one of the things you might wanna be is a psychologist, and in psychology you have this discipline called "how to save a salmon with an inferiority complex", because think about it, they're pink inside, and the males just feel too girly around other fish, and so some of them develop this self-esteem problem, and figure the only way out of that is to jump inside a bear.

(Danny laughs)

They're strange and complex creatures Danny, and they are very, very messed up in the head, all because they're pink on the inside. But this is just the males, cause the girl salmon love it.

DANNY

We're red on the inside.

RICHARD

Yeah, pretty much. Red is a passionate color- means we're intense creatures. It fits the bill.

DANNY

Dad, let me get Koalie.

RICHARD

All right. Let's get something to eat too.

(loud)

-And if you've eaten already, you'll eat again, cause we got enough money to go to the moon and back!

Danny laughs, clearly enjoying himself now.

DANNY

Yes, that's right!!!

EXT. DIRT LOT - MORNING(09:30AM)

Danny eats a bagel wrapped in brown paper. He has a soda in his other hand. The sun hits his face. He looks at Jeffrey and Richard, who are on a grassy patch on the edge of an empty dirt lot. Jeffrey's body is bent in a smooth curve as he defecates on the grass. Richard holds the leash. He finishes; his body straightens.

RICHARD

All done! Let's go! Let's go!

Richard runs towards the car, holding Jeffrey's leash; he runs at his side. Danny tries to catch up. The dog jumps inside the car.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (INTERSTATE) - MORNING(09:45AM)

Music is playing on the radio. They've just passed a toll booth. Danny slurps the remaining contents of the soda and plays with the straw in his mouth. He looks at the road. He has Koalie with him, a stuffed koala bear. We can see the early morning haze above the not too distant coastline.

DANNY

Are we going to the beach?

RICHARD

You want to?

DANNY

Yeah. Did you bring my swim shorts?

RICHARD

I did.

Danny half-sings, trying to accompany the rhythm of the song playing:

DANNY
I wanna go to-the-beach. I want TO go
TO-THE-BEACH.

RICHARD
We can go to --- or to ---. Which one
do you want?

DANNY
Aahhhhhmmmm.. AAHHHHHHMMMMM..

RICHARD
Let's go to ---. It's more on the way
for us.

DANNY
OK.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (BEACH ROAD) - MORNING(10:15AM)

They roll along a not too busy road on the coast. We can see the sand over the protecting stone wall, and the ocean stretching along the horizon. They find an empty parking space.

EXT. (BEACH ROAD) - MORNING(10:15AM)

Richard takes a beach umbrella out of the trunk, two pairs of shorts, beach towels, and sandals for himself. Danny already has his on his feet.

Richard looks around and takes his pants off on the spot.

RICHARD
(passing him his shorts)
Put these on Danny.

DANNY
Here?

Richard surveys the surroundings with his eyes once more and quickly takes his boxers out, replacing them with the shorts.

RICHARD
Yeah, come on. Look, you can go in
the car if you want, but that's what
a salmon would do.

After a weak considerative effort, Danny does the same thing.

RICHARD
Hurry man.

Turns out Danny doesn't really care.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING(10:30AM)

Jeffrey describes a wide circle in the sand, sprinting madly with his own strange feeling of unconscious liberation; tongue flaps about, sand flies everywhere. Danny runs after him laughing. Richard kicks a football. The long coastline is mostly empty, but small groups of people congregate here and there. They move closer to the water and drop the stuff on the sand.

RICHARD
Let's see how cold it is.

DANNY
I think it's gonna be very cold...

Beat.

RICHARD
(smiling at Danny)
But we gotta do it.

Danny doesn't seem very willing.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING(10:30AM) - CONTINUED

Jeffrey walks around, wetting his paws without much concern; his nose straight in the air. The shoreline is calm. Richard runs at the incoming wave and dives right in without missing a beat. Danny recoils a bit and lets the wave settle around him. We can see the discomfort in his face.

Richard approaches him like a predator would approach a prey animal. Danny recognizes it.

DANNY
STOP!!

With both arms, Richard shovels water at him, doing his best to hit Danny full on.

DANNY
(getting hit)
STOP!!!

Danny tries to run sideways, falls. He struggles to stand up.

DANNY
(angry)
It's cold!!!

Richard has a big grin. Says nothing. Run outs after Jeffrey, - who has not adventured himself into going further into the water than he already has, - and tries to grab him.

DANNY
RUN Jeffrey!!!

Jeffrey tries to shirk away from Richard, but gets caught by a hind leg. Richard picks his 70 plus pound body up in the air and envelops him tight against his chest. He walks a dozen steps and throws himself and the dog into the water. Danny laughs and screams in a state of pure cathartic exuberance.

Jeffrey fumbles around but seems happy nonetheless. We follow him out of the water.

DANNY

We are red sharks, that's what we are!

RICHARD

Red sharks??

EXT. BEACH - MORNING(11:00AM)

We find Danny laying on his beach towel, on his side, hoisted by one elbow. Richard tries to sleep next to him. Jeffrey pants noisily, looking completely aloof. The shade of the small umbrella is getting shorter and shorter. The sun is piercing.

Danny thinks of something to do. He is bored. There is a bar some 130 feet from them.

DANNY

Dad.

(Beat)

Dad!!

RICHARD

(barely there)

Hmm...

DANNY

Can i go buy an ice cream?

(Beat)

Dad...

Richard lifts his head. All he wants to do is sleep.

RICHARD

...Wallet's in the car.

DANNY

I'll go get it.

Richard shakes his head no and stuffs it in his arms again.

DANNY

Dad, c'mon...

RICHARD

(muffled, annoyed)

Let me sleep, Danny.

Danny knows it's difficult to get Richard to budge when he's like that. He gets up and kicks the ball forward, taking it with him. Jeffrey goes too.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING(11:00AM) - CONTINUED

Danny walks towards the water with the ball. He wets his feet. Passes Jeffrey the ball, but the dog just jumps away from it.

DANNY

Jeffrey, *i think you know* how this is done...

The ball is spinning and jumping in the braking of the wave. Danny kicks it towards the sand again. You can tell he's bored and anxious to leave. He looks at Richard. Decides only good things can happen if he actually manages to hit him with the ball.

DANNY

Jeffrey, come here.

The dog approaches cautiously.

DANNY

(smiling mischievously)

I think it's time for payback...

Danny gets close, - but not too close, - to Richard. He kicks the ball. It hits the canvas of the umbrella, displacing it in the sand. Richard jolts awake.

RICHARD

(angry)

Danny!! Are You fucking kidding me!?

Danny doesn't move. Richard glares at him.

DANNY

Sorry...

Danny moves slowly towards him.

RICHARD

(still angry)

Do you wanna leave?

DANNY

There's nothing to do here...

RICHARD

Well fuckin let's go, then- Christ...

Richard gets up and flings the sand off his towel.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Come do this to yours!

EXT. BEACH ROAD - MORNING(11:15AM)

Richard drops everything in the trunk of the car. Danny stands around, eating an ice cream.

RICHARD

...i think it's great that we can just go in the car, start it off, and just drive wherever we want to, without having to worry bout the usual stuff we always worry about: like where to go, what to spend or not to spend, what time we gotta be in this or in that place, what to eat, what to do, where to pee, where to poo... none of that's more concerning to us right now than the clothes we have on our bodies.

Danny agrees; he particularly liked hearing Richard saying "poo". They enter the car.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (BEACH ROAD) - MORNING(11:15AM) - CONTINUED

RICHARD (CONT'D)

That's the peace of mind money can give you, if you know how to use it, and at the same time, if you don't pay it too much attention, so it doesn't become too much of a big thing in your life... otherwise it just becomes, like..- well, first it becomes this big, almost abstract point of focus, and then it becomes something like a... a big heavy burden- whether you have too much of it, or too little of it.

DANNY

I'd like it better if we had too much of it.

RICHARD

Yeah, me too.

They drive along the road at a leisurely pace.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

But that wasn't the point of what i was sayin.

DANNY

It'd be so great if we could do this all the time.

RICHARD

Yup.

Beat. Richard lost the buzz.

DANNY

Where are we gonna go now?

RICHARD

Have you not been listening, boy?
I'll just drive until one of us says
something like, "hey i'm kinda
hungry, let's go have lunch", and
then we'll find a place and have
lunch.

DANNY

...But we gotta do something good, we
can't just drive around all day...

RICHARD

Good things will come to us Danny.

Beat.

DANNY

Yeah.

RICHARD

You don't believe me?

DANNY

I do.

RICHARD

All right.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (INTERIOR ROAD) - AFTERNOON(03:00PM)

Danny rides next to Richard now, in the front passenger seat.
They've already eaten lunch. They're driving through the
outskirts of some small town, towards the hills in the distance.

RICHARD

Danny, why did you say that... that i
left you alone in the house the night
i went to the casino? You don't know
what your grandma's like? You want us
to be fighting or what?

DANNY

But i didn't say nothin...

RICHARD

...she guessed it.

DANNY

She asked... she asked what time did
you go, and then she asked where i
was when you'd gone.

RICHARD
(laughing)
So you told her.

DANNY
No! She asked. It's not the same thing...

RICHARD
Well, but you didn't deny it or anything.
(beat)
Look, i'm not telling you to lie to her, but you gotta start considering what things you can talk about, and what things you can't. Things like that will end up causing arguments with your grandmother, so we gotta avoid it, understand? And with Eric's the same thing.

DANNY
But- but then what do you want me to say to her? If she asks me...

RICHARD (CONT'D)
...You could have told her that you- that Rachel was taking care of you, or that you were at one of your friend's house, that you were spending the night or something--

DANNY
-but that's lying, and you're saying you're not telling me to lie.

Richard thinks.

RICHARD
I guess you're right man, but you know already that sometimes lying can be excused in order to... make life easier or- you know, avoid stuff like this... The make life easier part is sketchy, because that's a hard distinction to make, but... you know, for you, it's part of growing up, like everything else. You gotta learn how to use it properly.

DANNY
Lying?

RICHARD
Yeah. You be careful with it so you can use it when you really have to and without hurting anybody...

DANNY

Everybody says that lying's not good.

RICHARD

Not everybody says that *all the time*. It depends Danny. On how you use it and why you use it. If you do it to prevent something bad then it can be a good thing. You gotta be malleable in life, so you can adapt and steer away from bad stuff. But this is a hard thing to manage sometimes, you know, what's right and what wrong- when you're a kid, your sense of morals is practically non-existent- you mostly mimic other adults, and it's almost always excusable when you decide for the shitty option, but when you grow up, you become accountable and you gotta be careful... you understand?

Danny is looking at Richard with a concentrated expression. Richard catches his stare and smiles.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Life's still really easy for you.

(beat)

But the bottom line is, you don't fuckin lie to me.

Richard laughs at Danny's confused expression.

EXT. GAS STATION (DINER) - EVENING(08:30PM)

The car is by parked by an air pump. Danny and Jeffrey are looking towards the other side of the road, where we can see a rusted out, wheel-less car amidst the shrubbery. Cats are gathered around it, inside it; their makeshift home and commune settled in the dirt, like a sculpture. Danny is managing to hold back Jeffrey's advances. The sun is very low now; the earth is golden and musty.

Richard comes out of the diner holding two plates with burger and fries.

RICHARD

Danny!

EXT. GAS STATION (DINER) - EVENING(08:30PM)

They sit at one of the small steel tables just outside the diner. They're alone. The foot of the chair is going through Jeffrey's leash. Richard looks at Danny intently.

RICHARD

We'll camp out in the car tonight.

DANNY

In the car?

RICHARD

Yeah.

DANNY

That's not camping.

Beat.

RICHARD

It almost is.

DANNY

Dad, i'm sick of being in the car.

Richard appears to be quite tired.

RICHARD

I know... We'll look for a proper place to camp tomorrow morning and stop driving. We're very far already from all the places you've ever been in your life... Think about that.

DANNY

How far?

RICHARD

Well, we drove like five or six hours overall. That's far... You've probably covered more ground today than in half of your life combined.

DANNY

Half of my life!?

RICHARD

Yeah, or more than that...

Danny thinks about it.

DANNY

You're exaggerating...

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (WOODS) - NIGHT(10:00PM)

The door to Richard's side is wide open to the black surrounding woods. They're watching a standup act playing on the laptop. The audience laughs. Richard drinks his third beer and Danny eats cookies. Danny laughs along, despite having already seen that one. You can tell his laughter is somewhat unconsciously brought forward by his father's close presence. Richard is quite softened by the demands of the day, so the alcohol feels to him like it carries a bigger swell. He feels content.

RICHARD
Do you wanna sleep in the tent?

DANNY
That's okay...

RICHARD
I can go put it up Danny... if you want.

EXT. WOODS (BY THE CAR) - EVENING(10:00PM)

Richard is hammering the steel poles into the ground. He is illuminated coarsely by the car's headlights. We can hear Jeffrey sniffing around somewhere; tiny movements produced continuously. The audience laughing distantly.

INT. TENT - MORNING(9:00AM)

Danny turns in his sleeping bag. Richard breathes heavily next to him. Jeffrey is curled up in a corner, by their feet. Noticing that Danny is awake, Jeffrey starts slapping his long tail against the side of the tent. Richard comes to, with effort.

EXT. CAMPSITE (ENTRANCE) - MORNING(11:00AM)

We see them driving through the wide open gates of the --- state park.

Richard parks the car next to a large log cabin. Several other cars are parked there.

INT. CAMPSITE (RECEPTION AREA) - MORNING(11:00AM)

Richard and Danny approach a wooden counter, with a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (40~) sitting behind it.

RICHARD
Hi.

RECEPTIONIST
Good morning!

RICHARD
We're planning on spending a couple of nights here, me and him. We got a dog with us...

RECEPTIONIST
That'll be no problem. You just have to keep the animal on a leash at all times, all right?

RICHARD
Yeah.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING(11:15AM)

They've moved further along into the camp, and we can now see caravans, rv's, pickup-trucks, dispersed around the trees; around the green areas.

Two women and a young child stroll by their spot. Jeffrey is still inside the car, and he looks and whimpers, anxious to get out. A group of young people talk nearby, indistinctly; one of them is strumming the chords of an acoustic guitar in an aimless manner.

They set the camping supplies on the ground, a few meters away from the car.

RICHARD
Here's good, right?

DANNY
Dad, where is this place?

RICHARD
What?

DANNY
Where we are...

RICHARD
We're in ---.
(stoner's voice)
It's still part of the same country,
man. The US-and-A, man. You've heard
about it?

Danny pretend-giggles.

EXT. CAMPING SITE - MORNING(11:15AM)

Richard puts the leash on Jeffrey's harness, and motions him to jump out of the car.

RICHARD
They want us to keep him tied up all
the time, and holding on to him?

The dog looks around all wide-eyed and frantic.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
These people know nothing bout this
dumb beast, how hard that's gonna be...

Jeffrey yanks the leash, ready to run forward. We can hear a young woman calling him. She's part of the group of young people that are camped out close to them.

DANNY
We can't be holding on to him all the
time. We gotta tie him up somewhere...

RICHARD

Yeah, you understand... No, what we do is we walk him around for a while so he gets used to the place, and then hopefully he calms down and he doesn't wanna run away anymore, to meet his kind.

DANNY

...Those people keep calling him.

RICHARD

Yeah. We'll say hi.

EXT. CAMPSITE (DUTCH CAMPSITE) - MORNING(11:30AM)

Richard and Danny walk Jeffrey along a dirt path that closely circumvents the spot where the young women was calling Jeffrey from. We can see three women and a man sitting at a table, and another man sitting on the steps of a big caravan, facing the other four. They are all young (25~) and healthy looking; outdoorsy-types. There is a pickup to the side, a tent, a small pile of wood, a cooking barrel, etc... They look European, and they're all drinking beers. Some of them are smoking cigarettes; maybe a joint. The guy at the table, GUNNAR, has the acoustic guitar in his lap. Jeffrey keeps pulling towards them. They notice it and they smile and call him. Richard lets himself get dragged along. Danny follows.

The woman, ELLIE, springs out of her folding chair to meet Jeffrey, kneeling and petting him effusively. They smile and laugh and talk to each other in a foreign language. Richard smiles, while Danny hangs back.

RICHARD

(pulling Jeffrey)

Alright man, that's it, c'mon...

ELLIE

What is his name?

The accent not as thick as one might imagine.

RICHARD

Jeffrey.

ELLIE

(still petting him)

Hello Jeffrey... you're so nice...

He tries to pull Richard towards the table, where another woman JOANNA, - the closet to them -, is now calling him by his name as well. Richard gets dragged once more.

ELLIE

In the past we traveled with a cat,

(pointing to the guy in the
steps, ANTHONY)
his cat, but she got too old and she
couldn't do it anymore.

DANNY
He likes cats.

ELLIE
He does?

RICHARD
It's more like he doesn't know what
to do with them, so he just stares
when he gets near one.

Jeffrey bumps the table, and one of the beers gets knocked over,
spilling some content and rolling to the ground.

RICHARD
Oh shit, i'm sorry.

GUNNAR
(picking it up)
No no no, that's okay, that's okay.

The others laugh.

ELLIE
What is your names?

RICHARD
I'm Richard and this is Danny. And
you?

ELLIE
I'm Ellie. And this is Joanna, Sandy,
Gunnar, and Anthony.
(motioning to Danny)
He is your son?

RICHARD
Yes.

ELLIE
Hello Danny.

DANNY
(smiling)
Hi.

ANTHONY
(from the steps)
You want a beer man?

RICHARD
Uh... that's okay, thanks, we gotta
finish walking him around first, so
he calms down.

ELLIE
He is not used to traveling?

RICHARD
No, not really...

GUNNAR
(in dutch)
Give him one, he'll calm down.

Gunnar motions to a plate of cookies on the table and the others laugh and jeer at him. Richard notices the cookies, and so does Danny.

ELLIE
He is saying he could eat one of those and he would relax.

Gunnar smiles at Richard.

GUNNAR
(thick accent)
I'm joking.

Sandy says something to Gunnar in Dutch.

RICHARD
They're pot cookies?

ELLIE
Yeah.

ANTHONY
I wouldn't give'em to a dog though.

RICHARD
(to Danny)
You listenin? Not for you and not for him, all right?

ELLIE
No no no, they're too young and small.
(to Danny)
Only when you are older.

Danny looks a bit embarrassed.

RICHARD
(pulling Jeffrey)
All right, let's go. We're over there.

ELLIE
All right.

The group says goodbye to them. They walk off.

EXT. CAMPSITE (BROOK) - DAY(12:00AM)

They walk along a narrow, secluded dirt road deeper in the woods. Jeffrey moves around without a leash. To the side of the road there is a line of trees, and next to it a small brook flowing by.

RICHARD

How long do you think they've been traveling like that?

DANNY

A LOOONG time.

RICHARD

Do you think they need a shower?

DANNY

(unsure)

...Yeah.

Richard makes a derisive face.

RICHARD

I think we need a shower.

Beat.

DANNY

Where do you think they're from?

RICHARD

Uhhh- they look european, like german or something.

DANNY

They're from *europe*?

RICHARD

Yeah. They seem like it.

DANNY

What are they doing here?

RICHARD

I don't know... What's the big surprise with that? They probably got money... or you know, maybe they don't, but they figured out that going around the world seeing places is a good way to live, even if you have to live like that, without being too comfortable and with your home following you around.

DANNY

They brought the caravan from Europe?

RICHARD
(scoffing)
No man, they rented it here or
something. Or stole it.

DANNY
Stole it?

RICHARD
Maybe they're criminals...

DANNY
(shakes his head)
...I don't see it.

Richard laughs.

DANNY
What do we do now?

RICHARD
I guess now we cook and eat, and then
we drive around the area and look at
it.

DANNY
We just look?

RICHARD
Hmm.. actually, we gotta find a place
to spend all this money.

EXT. CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON(01:00PM)

Richard is working on the small camping stove. There is a plate with meat and sausages next to him. Danny is sitting on a picnic towel with the laptop in front of him. He's watching cartoons and eating chips.

We can see Richard focusing on the dutch group on the other side of the small clearing. They're gathered at the table, drinking, eating, talking. Richard focuses on Ellie and Joanna with particular interest. We can tell he's somewhat anxious to mingle.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (WOODS) - AFTERNOON(02:00PM)

They're driving by a lakeside road. Danny notices a couple of people fishing in the lake.

DANNY
There's people fishing over there.

Richard looks.

RICHARD
We gotta do that some day. Your
grandfather and me used to go when i

was a kid, but now i don't remember
how you do it.

DANNY

You put the worm and the line in the
water and you wait for the fish to
bite, and then you pull him up,
(rambling)
and then you take it home if it's a
good one, and you cook it and eat it,
or if it's not a good one you throw
it back in the water and let it go,
so it can join it's family and tell
all the others not to bite floating
worms, cause that might not be such a
good idea after all.

RICHARD

(grinning)

Well thanks for the instructions
Danny, but what i don't remember is
how you set up the line, the weights,
the knots, all that stuff... Your
grandad was the man for that.

DANNY

You have to learn.

RICHARD

...I agree.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - AFTERNOON(06:30PM)

We see Richard through Danny's eyes. The blue sky in the
background. The sun is now lower. Loud music is coming from the
car; the doors are open.

Richard is looking at the mountain pass beneath them. He's eating
a big sandwich and drinking a beer. A road winds its way down
through the sea of trees. They can see for miles ahead. Danny
eats a sandwich and drinks his second yogurt. There's a pack of
open cookies between the two. Richard glances back at Danny.
Takes a second. Looks forward again.

RICHARD

Are you bored man?

DANNY

Hmm... Nah.

RICHARD

Well, i like this, i value this type
of freedom. I value when my senses
are being raised without feeling
afterwards like i've just been
pummeled.

(beat)

But you don't realize non of what i just said, because for you everything's still kinda new, and so you can go for the stronger things all the time, without needing a brake. Which is fine, but when you get my age i hope you feel the need to take that brake once in a while, because if you don't, then that's a bad sign, and it'll most likely mean that you've lost touch with a couple really important things.

DANNY

What things?

RICHARD

Like that you've lost touch with yourself and with what you really need. It's either that or you've become a really balanced person and there's really no need to take a brake. But that's hard to accomplish... for everyone. Like- look, you're very lucky just to be here - i told you that already. If me or your mom zigged when we shoulda zagged before you were born, you wouldn't be here... Or- if ANYBODY ELSE in the history of the world did ANYTHING AT ALL different from what they did you wouldn't be here as well.

DANNY

(dry)

Whooooooooooooooooaaaaaaa...

He dunks the rest of the yogurt. Richard laughs.

RICHARD

You get what i'm saying?

DANNY

Uhhhhh- nuh huh.

RICHARD

Well, i kinda put you on the spot there, didn't i?

Danny thinks for a moment.

DANNY

You're saying... that... if you or mom did anything different at all i wouldn't have been born.

RICHARD

That's right!

DANNY

And then, like, if ANYBODY ELSE- if like a kid like me skipped school before i was born, i wouldn't have been.

RICHARD

That's pretty good thinking there kiddo.

DANNY

I'm never gonna skip school again...

RICHARD

Yeah, you shouldn't. Maybe some kid that oughta've been born didn't, because you were off skipping school with your buddys.

(beat)

But... maybe, maybe if YOU WERE in school, some other kid wasn't born, because you WERE in school and not skipping. Maybe for THAT kid to have been born, YOU had to skip school.

DANNY

Uhhh...

RICHARD

(laughing)

I lost you again?

Danny's smile displays a slight tinge of embarrassment.

EXT. CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON(07:30PM)

We find Richard setting up the tent.

Danny is talking to two YOUNGER KIDS (6~) on the other side of the dirt path next to their spot. The kids are sitting inside a toy car: it's like a Flintstones car; the bottom has been pulled out. Jeffrey walks around unattended, the leash dragging behind him.

We see Joanna approaching.

JOANNA

Hi!

Richard straightens up.

RICHARD

Hey.

JOANNA

Do you want to have dinner with us?
You and your son.

Richard looks over at the group.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
They're grilling food. You can come.

RICHARD
Uhh... yeah, sure. Now? You're eating now?

A smile dawns on Joanna's face.

JOANNA
(slowly)
Yes...

Richard flusters a bit.

JOANNA
(walking away)
You can come when you want.

Richard looks over at Danny. He's looking back. The two other kids are driving away.

EXT. CAMPSITE (DUTCH SITE) - EVENING(08:30PM)

A fire burns inside a medium-sized folding barrel. Ellie and Anthony stand by it and tend to the meat. They pass a joint to each other. Richard, Joanna and Gunnar sit close to them, at the table. They have chips, peanuts, beer, wine, whiskey, vodka, cola, bread, cheese, salame, etc... Nobody's very selective about what to ingest.

Danny is close by, playing by himself with the football and eating potato chips from a pack. Jeffrey doesn't really know what to do, so he mostly hovers between Danny and Richard, in hopes of getting something.

ANTHONY
(to Richard)
You've never been to Europe man?

Like Ellie, his accent is not as noticeable as with the others.

RICHARD
No, but... that's not a bad idea... for the future.

ANTHONY
Don't go to Amsterdam with your son.

They all find the remark funny.

RICHARD
(ironic)
Why, what's in Amsterdam?

ANTHONY

When a man from another country goes
to Amsterdam he turns into a child,
and so if you already have one with
you... it won't be so good.

ELLIE

(in dutch)

These are done done!

She picks out some of the meat onto a plastic plate.

Joanna passes Richard the joint. They sit close to each other. He
is enthralled with her wild good looks.

RICHARD

(hushed)

What's in this?

JOANNA

It's just cannabis. It's not too
strong.

GUNNAR

(to Richard)

You can have a cookie if you prefer.

Gunnar is noticeably high.

RICHARD

No man, thanks.

Ellie puts the plate on the table.

ELLIE

Here you go...

Gunnar approves. He is the first one to go for it.

JOANNA

(to Richard)

He made them, and he wants everybody
to eat them.

GUNNAR

They always come out very well.

RICHARD

You had one today?

JOANNA

Later i will.

Danny approaches the table.

DANNY

I want coca-cola dad.

Richard gets up, pours him coca-cola into a plastic cup. He makes Danny a sandwich. Sandy comes out of the caravan with a big bowl of salad. Joanna and her try to make room for it at the table.

RICHARD
(to Danny)
Here...

Anthony makes himself a sandwich.

ANTHONY
(to Richard)
But when me and her
(motions to Ellie)
came to live here we didn't find it
all that different from Europe, like
everyone says.

Danny walks off to do what he was doing before.

RICHARD
Right...

ANTHONY
The difference is in the people. I
think here you have a... a bigger
dynamic range when it comes to the
personality- the worst and the best
is more apparent here, you understand
what i mean?

RICHARD
...Yeah, but that'll depend on what
country you're talking about in
Europe, right? Can't all be the same.
You've got that range over there too,
somewhere...

ANTHONY
Maybe, yeah... for sure.

EXT. CAMPSITE (DUTCH SITE) - NIGHT(11:30PM)

Gunnar is yet again playing the guitar, deeply absorbed in the sound. A little instrumental he's composed. Music coming from the caravan is playing over him. Sandy has her head rested on his back. She is smoking a joint. Ellie is playing a card trick on Danny. He's not very responsive and she's trying to cheer him up. Richard is seated next to Danny, but all his attention is geared towards Joanna. He just finished filling both their cups with vodka. He clicks his against hers, and slowly counts to three while nodding his head at the same time. They pick their cups and try to down them as quickly as they can. Joanna mostly throws the vodka at her face. She is very stoned and he is very drunk. They laugh and giggle like mad. Sandy passes her the joint. Joanna shakes her head no, her whole body stiff with laughter. Sandy laughs back. Richard takes it from her and takes another drag.

JOANNA
 (her voice breaking and
 aloof)
 ...I am... a twenty-five year... old, still
 young.. women, and we have the
 rights... to be... in a happier life than
 the lives... we were given-

She is grabbed on to Richard and the laughter still hasn't died down.

RICHARD
 --You're such a genius, *really* Joan,
 without hesitation... i can see it...

Ellie laughs at them.

JOANNA
 (rambling)
 -although i love my life and i love
 everybody here dearly,- you are
 MISBEHAVING AND LYING!

Sandy starts singing to Gunnar's song in an off-key manner.

ELLIE
 (to Danny)
 They're fine, don't worry.

Danny's looks worried and somewhat fearful.

JOANNA
 (to Richard)
 DON'T LIE TO ME!!

RICHARD
 You are a genius, and so am i, i'm so
glad we met...
 (to her ear)
 Now the truth, are you really alone
 here?

JOANNA
 Yes...

RICHARD
 But i can't believe you... i don't
 believe you.

Anthony steps out of the caravan, still buckling his belt and almost tripping on the stairs on his way out. He tries to catch Jeffrey's hind legs but the dog just runs away over to Danny.

JOANNA
 Why?

Anthony grabs a beer and a big piece of cheese and goes over by the fire.

RICHARD
You're just too beautiful...

ANTHONY
(calling out, drunk)
Ellie!!

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (CAMPSITE) - NIGHT(00:30AM)

Danny is inside the car, in the dark. He's watching cartoons on the laptop. Jeffrey's in the back seat, asleep. Richard and the others are still partying outside. Danny looks over. He is gloomy and resented.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (CAMPSITE) - MORNING(08:00AM)

Danny wakes up next to Jeffrey, feeling sore from the uncomfortable position. There's nobody to look over at by the dutch table.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING(08:00AM)

Danny carefully approaches the unzipped tent vestibule. He peeks inside. He finds Richard and Joanna asleep next to each other. Danny walks away with a disgruntled look on his face.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY(11:00AM)

Richard emerges from the tent. Looks for Danny. From afar, we can see Ellie and Anthony seated at their table, eating.

Danny's sulking in the passenger seat of the car. The battery from the laptop is long gone.

Joanna comes out of the tent after a little while. Richard and her look tired and hungover. Richard moves towards the car and Joanna walks back to her camp. They give each other a look, but don't say a word.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (CAMPSITE) - DAY(11:00AM)- CONTINUED

Richard sits at the wheel of the car and closes the door. Danny doesn't look at him.

RICHARD
Danny...

DANNY
I wanna go home.

Richard scoffs gently.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(more assuredly)
I want to go home.

RICHARD
Why?

DANNY
I want to go home.

Beat.

RICHARD
Look, what happened, happened because
i didn't think, all right? I'm sorry
Danny... I wasn't thinking...

DANNY
(holding back tears)
You left me alone the *whole time*...

RICHARD
I'm sorry...

DANNY
I don't wanna stay here. I wanna go
home.

RICHARD
We can leave right now, but let's go
on with the trip.

DANNY
NO, i wanna go home!

Richard finally raises his eyebrows in acceptance.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY(11:15AM)

Richard is picking up and folding the tent poles from the ground and gathering them. Ellie and Anthony are looking over from their table. Richard waves them a feeble goodbye. We can see them talking to each other before returning him the wave with a smile.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (CAMPSITE) - DAY(11:30AM)

Richard shoves the last duffel bag inside the trunk of the car and goes towards the driver's door. He enters.

He takes a moment to look at Danny. Danny looks back with a resolute expression.

RICHARD
I just think you're gonna regret goin
back like this.

DANNY
That's okay.

Beat. Richard starts the car.

RICHARD
(scowling)
Yeah, good for you. You're growing up, right? Pretty soon you'll become just as inflexible and dumb as everybody else who acts like that, like what you're doing right now- that's fantastic, man...

They drive away. Danny stays silent.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
When somebody says sorry, Danny, you should listen to them and try to understand the real reasons of why they acted the way they did... I didn't do it to hurt you...

LONG BEAT.

DANNY
I wanna go to grandma's house.

RICHARD
You're gonna have the both of us fighting, right? Hmm?

DANNY
NO, i just wanna see her.

RICHARD
Whatever, doesn't matter... i'm used to it...

They drive towards the camp's exit.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (CITY ENTRANCE) - AFTERNOON(06:30PM)

We see Richard texting something on the phone while he drives. He glances at Danny through the rear-view mirror. He's asleep in his chair. They're entering the city.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (GINNY'S HOUSE) - AFTERNOON(06:45PM)

Danny is still sleeping as Richard pulls up at Ginny's house. Jeffrey gets up in the back seat, wagging his tail.

RICHARD
Danny...

Danny wakes up.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON(06:45PM)

We hear the doorbell ring. Richard and Danny wait in silence. Richard is on his phone, texting. Ginny opens the door. Danny snaps on to his grandmother's legs. She looks sternly at Richard.

GINNY
What happened?

DANNY
(to Ginny)
I wanna go inside...

GINNY
You will...

RICHARD
(holding his breath)
...He'll tell you about it. I'll pick
him up after dinner, all right? I
have to go.

Richard walks back to the car.

EXT. PROJECTS (SELLWAY'S) - AFTERNOON(07:30PM)

Richard is seated outside of Sellway's, looking at his phone. Gerry is close by, on his feet, drinking a beer. Fred and Elias come out of the bar to join them. Fred is holding three beers. He sets two of them on the table.

ELIAS
...wherever i go she follows and the
novelty's wearing off, so i don't
know.

RICHARD (ON THE PHONE)
Why don't you wanna have dinner with
me?

Gerry finishes his with speed and picks another, looking sideways at Richard.

FRED
But not here...

ELIAS
No, here's my safe spot.

RICHARD
I'll meet you in an hour then, at
your place. All right?

FRED
Dump. The bitch.

ELIAS

...I'll dump an elbow on your face
cunt, if you don't behave.

FRED

(smiling, stepping back)
Or you pass her over to us.

Elias reaches and slaps Fred jokingly on the face, not too hard.
Fred kicks him in the thigh with some force. They move away from
each other and laugh.

ELIAS

Fucker...

RICHARD

We'll walk- i wanna talk to you.
(beat)
All right. Bye.
(hangs up, picks up a beer)
You assholes make the most of it
while you can.

FRED

You're goin already?

RICHARD

In a bit.

ELIAS

Can i get something to eat?

RICHARD

Yeah. And bring me something too.
Bring me a burger.
(motions to fred)
And him too.

FRED

I'll go. I wanna choose.

RICHARD

(referring to Gerry)
Don't bring him nothing, he didn't
wanna go with us so now he eats shit.

Gerry's eyes are heavy and bloodshot. The guys looks at him to
gauge his response. He takes a couple seconds. You can sense some
tension between him and Richard. Fred sets his beer on the table
so he can light up a cigarette.

GERRY

I don't want nothin...

RICHARD

Except for the booze, right? Those go
straight down the pipe without even
asking your permission...

Gerry takes a beat before kicking the foot of the table, knocking over Richard's and Fred's beer.

FRED
(straightening it back up)
What are you doin man??

RICHARD
(smiling, getting up)
What, you wanna fight me? Huh?

GERRY
I don't wanna fight anybody.

RICHARD
You wanna fight sobriety, that's who
you wanna fight...

Fred laughs.

ELIAS
Hey Gerry, what do you wanna eat?

RICHARD
I told you he doesn't get anything.

GERRY
I don't want nothing.

ELIAS
(sharply)
He can get what he wants dude, if he
doesn't have the money, i'll pay.
What do you want?

GERRY
(annoyed)
Nothing, man...

Richard sits back down.

RICHARD
It's just like my kid.

FRED
Your kid doesn't drink as much as
him, does he?

Elias goes inside.

RICHARD
No, but he takes my money without
showing me appreciation, like he
does.

Fred laughs and looks at Gerry.

GERRY
You have money from gambling.

RICHARD
(shrugs)
Better that than nothing.

Fred goes inside.

GERRY
I got money.

RICHARD
(condescending)
I know you do.

Beat.

GERRY
Does your girl know you were in jail?

Gerry sets the half-emptied beer bottle on the table.

RICHARD
Why?

GERRY
I don't know...

RICHARD
What's that matter?

GERRY
I just wanted to know.

RICHARD
...well, you don't know, you wanted to
know... you don't know *nothing* bout
that.

GERRY
Okay.

Gerry goes inside. Richard scoffs.

RICHARD
(loud, angry)
You can go fuck yourself, dude.

EXT. PROJECTS (SELLWAY'S) - AFTERNOON(07:45PM)

Fred comes out of Sellway's eating a sandwich. He hands Richard his burger. Gerry's half-emptied bottle is still in the same spot.

FRED
Here you go...

He goes back in. There's two older men smoking just outside the door. We can hear a football game playing from the TV inside Sellway's. Richard eats alone at the table.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (DOWNTOWN) - EVENING(9:30PM)

Celia looks out the passenger window at the moving sidewalk. She looks at Richard.

CELIA
What do you have planned?

RICHARD
I told you i wanted to walk with you,
i wanted to talk...

Beat.

CELIA
So the trip wasn't a success?

RICHARD
Not really. He got mad at me and
wanted to come back.

CELIA
Why?

RICHARD
(hesitating)
He... uh- we drove a lot. We did a big
stretch right from the start, and we
were both tired. I wasn't in the best
mood, and then we argued about where
to go next. It was stupid... Anyway...

CELIA
(frowning)
Why didn't you just go along with it?

Richard wants to drop the subject. He shakes his head; raises his eyebrows.

RICHARD
You wanna get food?

CELIA
No, i had dinner.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (DOCK) - EVENING(9:45PM)

They're parked on the edge of a dock. We can see the water glinting quietly after the drop. Richard is eating another hamburger. He and Celia share some french fries.

RICHARD
I wanna... i wanna do this thing with
you, i wanna try it.

CELIA
What?

RICHARD

We've been going out for more than a year--

CELIA

-We've been going out?

RICHARD

Haven't we?

CELIA

We've been hooking up... Occasionally.

RICHARD

Yeah, but we like each other... right?

CELIA

I like you.

RICHARD

I like you too.

(beat)

Do you wanna move in- do you wanna try that?

Beat.

CELIA

...Are you serious?

RICHARD

Yeah.

CELIA

Really?

RICHARD

(laughs)

Yeah...

She tries to wrap her head around it.

RICHARD

I'm gonna get a job- i wanted to talk to your friend, the one you'd told me about, see if he'd help me or not...

CELIA

I don't know if i can do that right now, Rich... Isn't this, like, you just being super impulsive?

RICHARD

...Sure, but it'd be good for us, and for the kids. Wouldn't it? I thought about it before, this isn't just me, like... being *super* impulsive, like you say.

CELIA

I don't know... I'm not-- i can't move
into your place...

RICHARD

(trying to charm)
Well, can i move into yours?

Celia exhales some type of uneasy laughter.

RICHARD

We'd have fun together... really.
I'll get a job, i promise you- i know
i need to... We'll do a trial- i'd keep
my house for a month, or something
like that, and then at the end we'd
reassess, and if it wasn't working
out, i'd go away- or even before
that, if you thought it wasn't going
well or if we got bored of each
other, i'd just move back in, without
any issue...

CELIA

Alex barely knows you...

RICHARD

You said he doesn't like being an
only child- or that he wanted a
brother or something...

CELIA

...That's true Richard, but..-

RICHARD

--They'd get along... Danny needs
something like this. We like each
other. Me and you.

LONG BEAT.

CELIA

If they're okay with it, i guess we
could try... but... keep the house, and
we'll try to live together for a
while, see if we can put up with each
other. Cause it's different when--

RICHARD

-I know that. I want that difference...

He gives her a peck on the lips and fishes a frie out of the pack
she's holding, with his mouth.

CELIA

I didn't know this side of you.

RICHARD

...You didn't see it in me?

CELIA

What?

RICHARD

This side. You didn't think i was capable of it?

CELIA

...Everybody's capable of doing what you're doing right now, Rich...

RICHARD

Thanks.

CELIA

(laughs)

Yeah... I'm being realistic. Let's see how it goes, but, you know... careful... and... strings attached this time.

RICHARD

Sure. Give me your friends number. I'll talk to him tomorrow.

She hands him the pack of fries and gets the phone. He slaps the steering wheel twice, in a quick motion, honking the horn. She gets startled. He laughs.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (ENTRANCE/LIVING ROOM) -NIGHT(11:30PM)

We see Richard pass the hallway into the living room. Ginny leads the way. Eric is on the couch watching TV.

RICHARD

Hey.

Eric turns his head and acknowledges Richard. The main source of light is the TV screen. Richard treads carefully so as not to bump into anything in the overstuffed room.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (HALL/BEDROOM) - NIGHT(11:30PM) - CONTINUED

Richard peeks into his old bedroom, where Danny is currently sleeping. We can distinguish Danny's shape under the thin linen sheet. We can make out a big closet to the left and several other objects strewn around, (mostly old toys). Richard brings his head back and leaves the door ajar. He looks at Ginny. Her expression doesn't tell him much.

RICHARD

Can he stay here?

GINNY

...Yeah.

He passes her by, walking towards the kitchen.

RICHARD
Do you have coffee made?

GINNY
I'll make some.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE (BACKYARD) - NIGHT(11:30PM)

Richard and Ginny descend the small set of steps into the backyard. The light above the door is turned on, illuminating the first handful of meters. They stand near the door, drinking coffee.

RICHARD
Tomorrow i'm gonna talk to somebody
about a job.

GINNY
You're gonna do an interview?

RICHARD
No, he's... a friend of a friend, i'm
just gonna talk to him. I'm gonna try
to arrange for that.

GINNY
So it's not guaranteed?

RICHARD
No. When's it ever guaranteed?

GINNY
It could be a friend of yours, i
don't know...

RICHARD
I told you he's not...

Ginny sits down on the steps, sipping the coffee.

RICHARD
How was Danny?

GINNY
He's trying to hide something from
me...

Richard represses a smile.

GINNY(CONT'D)
And i'm sure you'll do the same.

Beat. He lets the smile go.

GINNY(CONT'D)
I hate secrets. I hate those types of
secrets...

RICHARD

Oh, don't start man... Just drink the coffee.

GINNY

It'll hurt your relationship with him.

RICHARD

What're you talking about?

GINNY

Keeping secrets from him about important things.

LONG BEAT.

RICHARD

That doesn't have anything to do with anything right now- Jesus, you don't miss a beat... When he's older, we'll talk about that, and then i'll assume all the responsibility you want me too. But... don't.. screw around with that. That's for me to decide.

GINNY

You should think about him, what it's gonna be like for him.

RICHARD

I am thinking about him. He's still too young...

GINNY

You're always giving him so much credit for how...

RICHARD

For what?

GINNY

For how much he should be able to take from the.. the negative aspects of life- from the place where you live, and from you telling him no on so many things, and the people you go around with- that'll do him good for the future, and all that..watching and knowing...

(he knows where she's going)

but on this you cop out, cause it's hard for you Richar--

RICHARD

-It's so easy to pounce on others as soon as you get the chance, right? I see what it is with you, why you need

to do that, but mother mine, let's
not go once again where we've gone on
so many unfortunate occasions, ok?
It's been a long day...

GINNY
(still not raising her
voice)
One of your problems is--

RICHARD
(laughing)
-Jesus...

GINNY(CONT'D)
--that you hang around all day with
people who are stupider than you, and
nobody calls you on your bullshit.
That's what it is...

RICHARD
That's kind of a compliment.

Ginny looks dejected and unhappy. She doesn't look at him in the
eye.

GINNY
But it's the truth. You do exactly
what you want all the time.

RICHARD
And you actually help me do that.

GINNY
Yes. I know it's my fault and your
father's fault... i know that--

RICHARD
(ironic)
-But.. but i took a part in the
outcome too, right? Or was it all you
guys?

GINNY
Yes, it is you, too- you like it,
being a big child, and i enable you--

RICHARD
-with your elusive allowance, right?
Or you taking care of Danny
sometimes.

GINNY
(finally snnaping)
YEAH! And you keep acting like that,
and that elusive allowance won't
reach your hungry little hands
anymore, you got that? Job or no job.

Richard nods. Ginny barely breaks stride.

GINNY

Oh, what the fuck am i saying, i don't even put it past you using Danny for something like that- you know it'll keep coming cause you got him--

Eric shows up ready to light a cigarette.

RICHARD

-Hey, watch that shit, watch that venom coming out of your mouth, cause you know that's not true!

GINNY

(mildly sarcastic, toning down)

Yeah, i know...

Ginny gets up to let Eric pass and to get away from Richard. She walks along the edge of the light, holding the mug.

RICHARD

Cliché mother.

(to Eric)

Give her a cigarette, see if she calms down...

ERIC

You want one?

He laughs. Richard smiles. Ginny doesn't smoke.

RICHARD

(to Ginny)

I'll be moving out of that house as soon as i get the job.

Ginny stops and turns to him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

But don't tell him nothing yet. Don't.

Her expression is one of resentment.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

That's what you wanted...

ERIC

You got a job?

RICHARD

Yeah, maybe...

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (RICHARD'S OLD BEDROOM) - NIGHT(00:00PM)

Richard gets quietly undressed near the bed, in the near dark. Danny continues to sleep. We can hear Ginny and Eric speaking indistinctly outside of the bedroom.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (RICHARD'S OLD BEDROOM) - MORNING(07:30AM)

Richard awakes to find Danny climbing over him in bed. He leaves the room. We can faintly hear Eric saying "good morning". There's a window right next to the bed. A gray morning outside. Barely any light seeps through the blinds.

Richard's old bedroom: remnants of his youth and young adulthood are preserved with a careless touch; toys, a desk with an old computer and several notebooks, a big closet with old clothes stacked away, board games, a shelf with a big fat TV, wood carvings, etc etc.... dusty and silver in the gray morning light.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING(08:00AM)

Danny is seated at the kitchen table. He prepares himself breakfast.

Richard is leaning against the sink, waiting for the toaster to pop. A door bangs somewhere around the house.

RICHARD

What do you wanna do today?

Danny looks at his father with some expectation in his eyes. He takes in a big spoonful of cereal.

DANNY

(dry)

I don't know.

RICHARD

We gotta get home first of all, we have to feed Jeffrey dog..

The toaster pops. Richard picks up both slices of bread and sits at the table. Heavy, sleepy eyes.

RICHARD

(referring to the slices)

Is one of these for you?

DANNY

Yeah.

INT. BLOCK 6 (BALCONY) - MORNING(11:00AM)

Richard is on the small balcony just outside the kitchen. He's looking down at nothing in particular. He has a decent view of

the surroundings and a beer in hand. He glances at his wrist watch.

INT. BLOCK 6 (BATHROOM/HALL/LIVING ROOM) - DAY(11:30AM)

Richard is shaving his four day beard. He wipes his face with a towel and inspects his neck. We hear the sound of the TV coming from the living room. He steps out into it.

RICHARD
I'll be back in an hour.

Danny doesn't answer him. He leaves the house.

EXT. DOWNTOWN (SHOP) - DAY(12:00AM)

Richard crosses the open gate of the air conditioner place Celia told him about. The shop is several feet in length, and we can see various sorts of electric equipment throughout. They're up against the walls, on top of counters, etc... Two guys are tending to a large refrigerator in the back.

He knocks at the window of a little reception booth. The MAN(30~) inside it lifts his eyes.

RECEPTION GUY
Yes?

RICHARD
Mr. Edgar?

RECEPTION GUY
(pointing)
Go up the stairs, he's having lunch.

RICHARD
Thanks.

Richard climbs the steel stairs next to the booth.

INT. DOWNTOWN (SHOP) - DAY(12:00AM) - CONTINUED

We can see MR. EDGAR (50~) on the other side of a large window, eating alone at a small table. Richard knocks.

RICHARD
Mr. Edgar?

MR. EDGAR
Come in. You're Richard.

RICHARD
(stepping through)
Celia's friend. Thanks for seeing me so soon.

MR. EDGAR

We need two guys, Richard. She told me you got a degree.

RICHARD

Well, it's not a degree...

MR. EDGAR

But you got experience though? She told me you knew how to work with equipment.

RICHARD

What i know is from school, from a few years ago...

MR. EDGAR

You wanna work?

RICHARD

...Sure.

Beat.

MR. EDGAR

(sharply)

I'll put you here on trial, and we'll see how it goes. You'll be working mostly with air conditioners for now. I'll teach you what needs to be taught, and then you're on your own. Good?

I/E. RICHARD'S CAR (DOWNTOWN) - AFTERNOON(12:30PM)

Richard is driving away from the shop. He's writing a text to Celia at the same time. We see the following: "employed is my middle name. let's have dinner tonight, try to bring your kid please i'll bring mine." He sends the text. He looks thoughtful and tense.

EXT. PROJECTS (BASKETBALL COURT) - AFTERNOON(05:00PM)

Richard is seated inside the basketball court. He drinks a beer and watches Danny play with the other kids. He looks over at Sellway's. We can see Gerry, Elias, Fred, Gabe and a few other outside; moving in and out of the bar.

RICHARD

Danny!!

He waves him over. Danny comes.

RICHARD

You're staying here?

DANNY

Yeah.

RICHARD

I want you home before seven. I'm gonna go.

(beat)

We're gonna have dinner with Celia tonight, we're gonna go uptown. You'll meet her kid, Alex.

DANNY

Why?

RICHARD

(hesitates)

I got a job... and... i think some things are gonna change, between all of us.

DANNY

What things?

RICHARD

We'll talk later about that.

(beat)

You're having fun?

Danny senses the inconspicuous change in subject, but he's still amped up from running, and goes along with it.

DANNY

Yeah. You have a job?

Richard blows out a scoff. The idea doesn't please him.

RICHARD

All right.

Richard picks himself up and pets Danny on the head. He leaves.

EXT. PIZZERIA - EVENING(08:30PM)

Richard and Danny walk up to the pizza place. Celia and ALEX(16) are already waiting for them outside. She's smoking a cigarette. They're both leaning against the long window sill of the pizzeria; illuminated from behind by the strong white lights coming from inside. Alex is a big kid for his age, tall and well proportioned. You can tell he's a teenager by his face, but he can certainly pass for someone older than he is. He has sharp, confident eyes.

CELIA

Hey guys!

RICHARD

(kissing her quickly on the lips)

Hi.

Richard shakes Alex's hand.

RICHARD
Hey, man... Jesus, you're freakin tall.

CELIA
(leans down to kiss him)
Danny, hi!

ALEX
Yup.

DANNY
Hi.

Alex has a big grin on his face. You can tell he's quite prepared for the meeting.

RICHARD
Danny, this is Alex, you guys haven't met still... but here you are.

ALEX
Hey.

Alex extends him his hand for a shake. Danny complies.

DANNY
Hi.

Celia smiles. She's a bit nervous and unsure, but her face is full of warmth.

RICHARD
Ok, it's done- let's go inside. Let's eat.

They move towards the door.

CELIA
(whispering to Richard)
I already told him..

RICHARD
Yeah?

Celia answers him with a smile.

RICHARD
(to Alex)
You eat alot, right? I'm sure you do.

ALEX
I could eat more...

CELIA
You eat more than enough.

INT. PIZZERIA - EVENING(08:45PM)

The place is nearly empty. It's a self-service restaurant. We see Danny picking out a couple of slices with Richard by his side. Celia and Alex are already seated. Richard picks his share and goes towards the table, leaving Danny alone.

INT. PIZZERIA - EVENING(08:45PM)

They sit at a rectangular table: Danny by Richard's side; Alex by Celia's. They eat.

CELIA
(dragging the words)
Pizza for us kids...

RICHARD
You like it.

CELIA
(mildly sarcastic)
I love it!

RICHARD
Your mom doesn't like pizza?

ALEX
She likes everything...

CELIA
I like food too much.

RICHARD
But it doesn't show.

CELIA
Thank you.

ALEX
Hey, it's not like i'm calling my mom fat, but she does buy a lot of clothes...

CELIA
What's that imply?

ALEX
That you like clothes.

CELIA
They're all the same sizes, buddy...
Gotta work on your roasting skills.

Danny's smiling along with them.

RICHARD
Your pants are the same size as your shirts... and blouses?

CELIA

Ha ha.

Alex laughs. Richard's feeling good about it.

CELIA (CONT'D)

Change the subject.

RICHARD

Okay.

Beat.

RICHARD

Hey, what's school like for you?

ALEX

What's school like?

RICHARD

(correcting himself)

What year are you going to?

ALEX

Sophomore, in high school. It's fine... Where does your so-

(to Danny)

Where do you go to school?

DANNY

(timid)

--- elementary.

ALEX

It's not close to mine... How old are you?

DANNY

Eight.

Danny drinks soda from a straw.

CELIA

Hey Danny, i heard you went on a trip with your father recently...

Richard stiffens up; looks at Danny.

DANNY

Yeah.

CELIA

Where did you go?

DANNY

(tentative)

...We went to the beach, then we.--

RICHARD

-we drove mostly. We slept on the car on the first night, and then on the second day the idea was to go camping on an actual campsite and look around the area for something good to see, or do... you wanted to go fishing, right?

DANNY

No.

RICHARD

But you said we went by that dude fishin in that lake, and you said you wanted to.

DANNY

I said i was seeing him.

RICHARD

Oh, i thought you wanted to fish.

CELIA

(to Danny)

You didn't end up doing anything?

RICHARD

We drove alot.

DANNY

...No.

CELIA

That's no fun...

RICHARD

(to Alex)

You know how to fish?

ALEX

Not really. I know the idea is to snatch the fish out of the water, but i--

RICHARD

-Then you get the point at least.

ALEX

--was never really into doing that.

RICHARD

We can all go sometime.

CELIA

Yeah.

ALEX

(shrugs)

Sure. Are you one of those guys that just throws 'em back in there? In the water?

RICHARD

If you're fishing in the sea, then they should be good to eat, but the ones you catch from the rivers, and the lakes, they're not so good...

DANNY

You never go fishing.

RICHARD

I used to go a lot with your grandpa. Nowadays i don't.

DANNY

(annoyed)

You don't even know how to fish.

RICHARD

(playing it off)

That's what you think, man... i do, i'm a... decent fish catching guy.

Danny's starting to get upset at his father.

CELIA

Danny, you have the fishermen, and then you have the fish catching guy...

INT. PIZZERIA - EVENING(09:00PM) - CONTINUED

Alex returns to the table with more pizza for everybody. Richard pulls two slices off his plate, giving one to Danny.

CELIA

So... buddy.

Richards looks at her, knowing what her tone means: it's time they talk about main reason for the gathering. Still, he doesn't say anything.

CELIA (CONT'D)

What's up?

(beat. She grins.)

I spoke to Alex about what me and you talked yesterday, and since we've know each other for quite a while now, and i like you, and i like Danny, i'm willing to go forward and try it.

Danny's face shows apprehension. Richard feels Alex's eyes pierce him right through.

ALEX
(to Richard)
You're not a psycho, are you?

CELIA
Easy there, detective...

RICHARD
If i was, we would've gone to an
opera or something...

ALEX
(laughs)
I'll take my girlfriend to an opera
someday...

RICHARD
You're saying you're a psycho?

ALEX
Nah. But i don't know what i'll be
when i get older, like when i get to
be your age.

Celia's not very amused. She looks at Danny and gathers from his
expression that he isn't aware of what's going on.

RICHARD
Right.
(beat)
What do you think of all this?

ALEX
Ahmm... She's the boss, right?
Honestly, I just hope you're a good
guy, and you two get along... in two
years i'll be outta there, so...

RICHARD
(impressed)
You're a cool kid...

Alex half-acknowledges it with a nod of the head.

RICHARD
Danny, me and Celia have known each
other for some time,- and we like
each other... And, i've been thinking
about this for a while now- we talked
about it, and decided it'd be good
for all of us if we moved in
together. I wanted us to have dinner
like this so we could speak of it at
the same time, to you and Alex, so
you two could be on an equal footing
with it, but apparently he knows
already--

CELIA

-sorry.

RICHARD

That's okay. You're both gonna start school soon, and it's good to have somebody else around to help, and to take care of you, and you also got grandma and Eric, and that just makes us a bigger family this way, which is great.

Beat. You can tell Danny is very uncomfortable.

DANNY

(forcing words out)

They're gonna come live with us?

RICHARD

No, they're no--

CELIA

-Danny, we thought it'd be better if you two come live with us. We have a lot of room in the house, we got three bedrooms- one is Alex's room and another one'll be for you. And you can bring all your stuff, okay?

Beat.

RICHARD

...Me and him aren't going through the best couple of days right now, so, maybe this wasn't very well timed, but... Danny, she's an awesome person- i like her a lot, and i know you like her too, and Alex seems awesome as well, so it's gonna be great, i promise you. She even lets us bring Jeffrey...

Danny doesn't look at his father.

ALEX

Who's Jeffrey?

CELIA

Jeffrey's their dog...

ALEX

(excited)

Hey, you got a dog? What kind of dog?

RICHARD

(to Celia)

You didn't tell him?

ALEX

I'm just surprised you let them bring
a dog into the house...

CELIA

You've had dogs all your life, Alex.

ALEX

But after dad took Doctor with him i
thought you didn't want any animals
anymore--

CELIA

It's not what's gonna make it or
break it- it's fine...

RICHARD

(trying to be charming)
That's how much she likes me...

ALEX

What type of dog is it?

There's an unusual kind of fatigue in Celia's voice that Richard
doesn't seem to notice. Danny stopped eating a while ago, and has
just retreated into himself.

RICHARD

He's a mix. He's a large dog, like
about this size.

ALEX

Cool. That's cool.

INT/EXT. RICHARD'S CAR (DOWNTOWN) - NIGHT(10:00PM)

Richard and Danny are driving home from the pizzeria. Danny is
visibly upset.

DANNY

You don't care about me.

RICHARD

...That's your grandmother talking.

DANNY

No, it's me saying it!

RICHARD

You gotta deal with it, Danny.
You're gonna like it.

DANNY

You don't care about me!

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON(4:30PM)

Three weeks have past. We're at the middle of September. We find Ginny and other parents waiting for their young by the school gates. We see Danny emerging from the top of the stairs along with other kids. They're all quite animated.

She walks with him to the car on other side of the street.

INT/EXT. WORK VAN (DOWNTOWN) - AFTERNOON(5:00PM)

Richard and a co-worker, Collin(54), are returning to the shop in the company's pickup-truck. Richard is on the passenger seat looking quite aloof. After they turn a corner, the entrance to a small bar grabs Richard's attention.

RICHARD

I need to drink something...

COLLIN

What?

RICHARD

(sharper)

I need something to drink.

COLLIN

Hang on...

Collin grabs a water bottle from the back seat and passes it to Richard.

RICHARD

No man, i'm saying a beer or
somethin. Hey, stop for a second...

COLLIN

We have to get the truck back.

RICHARD

We got time...

COLLIN

No, I wanna be done with this first.

Richard takes a quick drink from the bottle.

RICHARD

I feel fucking oppressed...

COLLIN

You tired?

Richard leans forward in his seat, looking distraught. The sun is blazing.

EXT. DOWNTOWN (SHOP) - AFTERNOON(05:15PM)

Collin backs the pickup towards the open gate. One of Richard's coworkers is washing his car just outside, to the right. Richard gets out of the truck and slides the gate down.

EXT. DOWNTOWN (SHOP) - AFTERNOON(05:30PM)

Richard heads for his car, carrying his lunch bag. He enters and drives off.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON(06:00PM)

We see Richard drinking his third beer at some bar near the work place. He sits alone at the counter, looking at his phone. Nobody's paying him any attention.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (HALL/LIVING ROOM) - AFTERNOON(07:30PM)

Richard and Danny enter their new home. Celia's three bedroom apartment is elegantly laid out and well furnished. Jeffrey greets them at the door. Richard and Danny have been much quieter to each other ever since the relocation.

Alex is in the living room watching TV. Danny heads straight for his bedroom.

RICHARD

Hey.

ALEX

Hey.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (KITCHEN) - AFTERNOON(07:30PM) - CONTINUED

We see a long rectangular kitchen with a small subdivision at the end. Celia's smoking in there, by the window. Richard places his bag on the counter and walks to her. He slides the glass door to the side.

RICHARD

Hey...

They kiss. He joins her by the window.

CELIA

I'm making soup.

RICHARD

Are you working on Saturday?

CELIA

Yeah. Till three o'clock.

RICHARD
What about Sunday?

CELIA
Same thing.

Richard frowns.

CELIA (CONT'D)
I got Tuesday and Wednesday off.
We've got a tournament this weekend.
Why do you ask?

RICHARD
I was thinking of going someplace...

CELIA
Where?

RICHARD
We could get out of town, you know,
spend a night... anywhere.

CELIA
(smiling, insinuating)
Are you antsy?

RICHARD
Maybe. It's not the life with you,
it's just... i gotta get used to all
these changes.

CELIA
It's been two weeks...

RICHARD
Is that a long time?

She shakes her head no and rests it on his shoulder. She sniffs him.

RICHARD
I'll take a shower.

CELIA
No, you're good...

He smiles and leaves.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (LIVING ROOM) - EVENING(09:00PM)

Everyone is gathered at the table for dinner. Alex is eating a big sandwich. The others are having soup. We can hear the news on the TV.

Jeffrey hangs around the table. Alex takes a piece of ham out of his sandwich and feeds it to him. Danny glances briefly at Alex with a look of reproach. Alex notices.

RICHARD

Alex, don't do that. He doesn't eat our food, we talked about it man.

ALEX

You really never give him anything?

RICHARD

No, he becomes annoying. Don't feed him stuff.

Alex looks at Jeffrey's pleading eyes with curiosity.

CELIA

There's something we should've done better with our dogs- give'em a little more discipline.

Alex catches Danny looking at him with some antipathy again.

ALEX

Our dogs were happy. And they were disciplined dogs.

RICHARD

That one's happy too...

ALEX

(to Danny)

Is something the matter with you?

DANNY

(off-guard)

No...

ALEX

You're looking at me like you wanna say something.

(beat)

You're always moping...

CELIA

Hey, Alex, shut up.

RICHARD

He's moping cause this wasn't an easy change for him...

ALEX

It wasn't an easy change for me neither.

CELIA

(scowling)

How old are you? Huh? You know better...

ALEX
(to Danny, a bit
sarcastically)
Sorry.

Danny keeps silent. Celia's done with the soup and she goes into the kitchen with her plate. Richard is looking at Danny.

RICHARD
Danny.

INT. DOWNTOWN (SHOP) - MORNING(10:00AM)

Richard is listlessly spraying the coils of a large window air conditioner. He's paying more attention to his phone. He stops altogether for a few seconds. Mr. Edgar is looking at him from a distance. Collin is near Richard. He watches Mr. Edgar watching Richard.

MR. EDGAR
(shouting)
Hey!!

Richard flinches and drops his phone on the floor. He locks eyes with Mr. Edgar, and for a second, his expression betrays a sudden urge to quit and leave the place.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (RICHARD'S OLD BEDROOM) - AFTERNOON(07:00PM)

Ginny follows Richard into the bedroom.

GINNY
You smell like a barstool, Richard..

Richard ignores her. Danny's playing on the floor with his toys.

RICHARD
You ready to go?

DANNY
Can i stay here?

Beat.

RICHARD
No, you can't.

DANNY
I don't like it over there.

RICHARD
You don't like *them*, that it? You
don't like Celia?

DANNY
No.

RICHARD
That's bullshit.

DANNY
It's not bullshit!

RICHARD
Yes, it is, you like her. Let's go!

GINNY
She's not his mom..

RICHARD
Quiet! It's not about that. Let's go
Danny.

GINNY
Don't tell me to be quiet.

DANNY
No!

Richard walks over to him and picks him up off the floor. Danny whines and resists.

RICHARD
(sharply)
You're gonna get over it man, trust
me. *Don't be like me-* fortify your
character. Fuck...

INT. CELIA'S HOME (DANNY'S ROOM) - (09:30PM) - EVENING

Danny is playing videogames in his bedroom with Jeffrey by his side. We hear Alex calling out for him. Jeffrey stands up but Danny holds on to him, preventing him from moving.

DANNY
(softly)
Stay here... Stay...

INT. CELIA'S HOME (LIVING ROOM) - EVENING(09:30PM) -
CONTINUED

Richard and Celia are making out on the couch. We hear Alex calling for Jeffrey once more. He peers inside the living room, looking for the dog. Richard notices him and they stop kissing.

ALEX
I'm going out. Where's Jeffrey?

CELIA
I don't know... Hey, Richard's cooking
lunch for you tomorrow. I'm gonna be
working.

ALEX
(shrugs)
Okay...

RICHARD
What do you wanna eat?

ALEX
...Whatever you decide, anything's
good... I'm goin.

Alex leaves.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (DANNY'S ROOM) - EVENING(10:00PM)

Celia knocks gently on the door to Danny's room.

CELIA
(entering)
Danny...

He's still playing videogames. Jeffrey immediately stands up and goes to her. She sits down next to Danny and watches him play for a moment.

DANNY
...What?

CELIA
Would you rather watch your favorite
movie fifty times in a row, or watch
your least favorite movie ten times...
in a row.

Danny thinks.

DANNY
Least favorite movie.

CELIA
Why?

DANNY
...Because i don't wanna become sick of
watching my favorite movie, and if i
watched it fifty times i think i
would.

CELIA
That's it!!

Celia smiles warmly at Danny. Danny glances at her and smiles back.

CELIA
Come and help me and your dad choose
a game to play. Or a movie to watch...
What do you prefer?

DANNY
I wanted to keep playing this...

CELIA
We're really out of ideas Danny.
I'm serious. We need your help.

Danny stays silent.

CELIA
You sure you don't wanna come?

DANNY
Can i keep playing this a little
while longer?

CELIA
Yeah, of course... that's okay.

Celia gets up. She leaves the room disappointed.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (ALEX'S ROOM) - DAY(12:00AM)

We see Alex in his room, sitting in front of the computer.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (LIVING ROOM) - NOON(12:00AM) - CONTINUED

Next we see Danny in the living room, watching some reality TV show.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (MASTER BEDROOM) -NOON(12:00AM) - CONTINUED

We hear Richard snoring faintly in his room.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (KITCHEN) - AFTERNOON(01:30PM)

Alex is heating some leftovers on the microwave. Richard enters the kitchen, still in his pajamas.

RICHARD
Good morning.

ALEX
Hey.

RICHARD
You're eating already?

ALEX
Yep.

RICHARD
I was gonna make lunch...

ALEX

I got hungry.

Richard leans on the counter, looking at Alex. He then opens the cupboard and takes out a mug.

INT. CELIA'S HOME (LIVING ROOM) - AFTERNOON(02:30PM)

Alex is on the couch, looking at his phone. The TV is on. Richard and Danny are having lunch on the table.

Danny slips Jeffrey a piece of chicken while Richard isn't looking. Richard hears Jeffrey eating off the floor. He looks at Danny. Alex notices this. Richard notices Alex noticing him. They keep silent. But Alex can't contain himself.

ALEX

That wasn't my fault.

RICHARD

Yeah, i saw it.

Beat.

ALEX

But you're not gonna say anything?

RICHARD

Don't worry bout that.

ALEX

I'm not worried.

Richard gives him a mixed look.

RICHARD

(shrugging)

It's our dog...

LONG BEAT.

ALEX

Is it my mom's dog too?

RICHARD

No, i don't think it is.

ALEX

Oh, ok...

RICHARD

It's not your mom's dog yet, or your's... Just like this house isn't ours either.

ALEX

But that's like, your idea, right?

RICHARD

That was the original point, yeah- i wanted us to share a place together.

ALEX

Original? So it's not anymore?

RICHARD

It still is.

ALEX

(bit sarcastic)

That's great.

RICHARD

You think it's great?

ALEX

Sure.

Beat.

RICHARD

Yo- you like conflict, right Alex?
You-

ALEX

(laughs)

-When the time's right.

RICHARD

-seemed a bit different a while ago,
lemme tell you.

(laughing back, scoffing)

What's that mean? When the time's
right?

ALEX

When it's time for a conflict to
happen.

RICHARD

Are you talking about right now?

ALEX

Is this like a conflict for you?

RICHARD

It sure seems like you're making it
one...

Alex laughs.

ALEX

You sound younger than what i thought
you are- how old are you, really?

RICHARD

Way older than you, know what that means?

ALEX

I... do, but it doesn't mean *that* every time.

RICHARD

It doesn't mean *what* every time?

ALEX

What you're sayin...

RICHARD

What am i sayin?

ALEX

(scoffing, jeering)

Now i know you don't deserve my mom-sorry, man...

RICHARD

Hey kid, what the fuck do you know about us? My relationship with her?

DANNY

Dad...

ALEX

I know what i see.

RICHARD

(aggressive)

Oh yeah, what do you see? Huh?

ALEX

I see this...

RICHARD

This what!?

Beat.

ALEX

Man, chill out, seriously. This isn't your home, like you said, so you chill out, i'm tellin you...

RICHARD

Oh shit, you're tellin me? Don't do something you'll regret kid, i mean it.

ALEX

What am i gonna regret? Huh? What?

RICHARD
Don't take this a step further,
that's all i'm sayin...

ALEX
You're threatening me, right?
(beat)
Huh?

RICHARD
Just be done with it.

ALEX
(stands up)
Don't threaten me, and then give me
fucking orders, man.

RICHARD
You better sit the fuck down.

Alex steps forward towards Richard.

ALEX
Look, you're nobody here, i'm not
afraid of you...

Richard stands up and circles the table through Danny's side. He looks very alarmed.

DANNY
(timidly)
Dad, stop...

RICHARD
(getting close)
What's this- what do you wanna do?

ALEX
Honest to god i can kick your fuckin
ass...

RICHARD
Yeah!?

Richard throws his right arm forward with force, hitting Alex's torso and causing him to trip against the low center table behind his feet. He falls back and hits his ribs violently on the outer edge of the table. He screams in pain and gasps for air. Danny startles back.

Richard stands about, waiting for Alex to get up. He shuts his eyes heavily, with a look of regret and fatigue.

Alex finally stands, without being able to breathe properly. His eyes are filled with tears.

ALEX
(seething)
Fuck you...

He heads for the door, holding on to his ribs. He leaves the house. Danny is looking at Richard as if shellshocked.

RICHARD
This was so fucking stupid..
(beat)
Go get dressed Danny.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON(03:30PM)

Richard and Danny are side by side at the bar near his workplace. His cellphone is placed on the counter. He sips from a beer and glances at it. It finally vibrates. Richard picks it up and heads for the door.

EXT. BAR - AFTERNOON(03:30PM) - CONTINUED

RICHARD (ON THE PHONE)
Yeah?

Celia says nothing for a handful of seconds.

CELIA (V.O.)
I want yo-- you need to go, Richard.

Richard hangs his head, exhibiting a painful expression.

CELIA (V.O.)
I'm at the emergency with him, you asshole! You stupid fucking asshole!

RICHARD
(pitifully)
I only pushed him forward Celi--

CELIA
-No, you pushed him backwards, you stupid idiot!! That's what you did!

RICHARD
I didn't mean for him to fall...

CELIA (V.O.)
You got in a fight with a sixteen-year-old... He's my son!

RICHARD
It wasn't a fight! He told you what happened before?

CELIA (V.O.)
Yes, he did, and i trust him!

RICHARD
What did he tell you?

CELIA (V.O.)
(screaming)
Don't argue!!

Beat.

RICHARD
...Please don't press charges on me.

CELIA (V.O.)
...No, i won't press charges on you.
But you need to go now. Get the
movers immediately if you need them,
and leave.

RICHARD
It's just Danny's bed...

She hangs up.

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON(03:30PM)

Richard sits back in the bar stool scoffing at himself and
shaking his head bitterly.

RICHARD
We have to leave the house... At least
you got what you wanted.

DANNY
We're leaving?

Richard nods.

DANNY
When?

Beat.

RICHARD
...we're not going back to the
apartment though. I had to give that
one up.

DANNY
Why?

RICHARD
I-- i thought we didn't need it
anymore... I screwed up Danny...
(murmuring)
This was all so stupid...

DANNY
(taken aback)
...What do we do now?

Although Richard doesn't want to speak anymore, his face lightens a bit. We can sense a lot of mixed feelings in him.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON(06:00PM)

Richard is taking out pieces of the bed from the trunk of the car. Underneath, we see bags filled with belongings crumpled tight against each other. The mattress is already outside, leaning on the car. Danny is walking with another piece of the bed to his grandma's house. The front door is open.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - EVENING(08:30PM)

We find them all at the kitchen table, having dinner. Danny is in very good spirits, laughing at Eric's made-up stories.

ERIC
I was home schooled!

DANNY
No you weren't!

ERIC
I'm telling you i was...

DANNY
Grandma, he wasn't, right?

ERIC
Your grandma wasn't alive at the time- she doesn't know.

GINNY
--I wish.

Richard looks quite dejected. Ginny glances at him while she eats.

ERIC
I loved Wednesdays, because on Wednesdays i could have my classes in bed, and then i could eat whatever i wanted throughout the day.

DANNY
(laughing)
No you couldn't- is he lying grandma?

GINNY
I don't know...

RICHARD
(moody)
You're very naive sometimes, Danny.

Danny stops laughing for a second. They all look at Richard.

DANNY
I'm not listening to what you say.

ERIC
That's right, ignore him.

The good mood is resumed. After a while, Richard shakes his head and smiles sarcastically at himself.

RICHARD
(to Ginny, softly)
Yes... i'm pretty stupid.
(gets up slowly)
I'm goin out.

He walks out of the kitchen.

DANNY
...I don't like him anymore.

ERIC
That's not true Danny.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE (FRONT) - EVENING(08:30PM) - CONTINUED

We follow Richard to the car. He enters. He stares vacantly ahead. Finally, he starts the car and drives off.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (RICHARD'S OLD BEDROOM) - MORNING(11:00AM)

Richard wakes up. Danny is no longer in bed. He stares at the ceiling for a moment.

Parallel to the bed is a big old closet with a full-sized mirror on the door. Richard rises with effort, placing his feet on the floor. He glances at the mirror for a second, but then tracks back and stops there. He sees and focuses on the following: his hair, completely disheveled; his old red autumn pajamas, still too large for his body; his old toys, scattered around on the window sill behind him - some of them are on the floor as well; Danny's koalie at the foot of the bed... Something in him clicks. Again we see him scoffing and grinning at himself. At last, he sees a big child.

INT. GINNY'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - MORNING(11:30AM)

Richard and Ginny are seated in front of each other at the kitchen table. He's showered, dressed, and eating breakfast.

GINNY
What's next Richard?

RICHARD
...I'll apply for another apartment.

GINNY

You can't afford rent on a different place?

RICHARD

I don't know. I don't think so... i don't wanna have to keep leeching off of you.

(beat)

Plus i hate that fucking job!

Beat.

GINNY

(frustrated)

...Can you see that you always force me into this position, Richard!? What do you intend to do, huh? If it's not a job, or taking money from me, what do you intend to do? What?

RICHARD

You know, i hate working, that's what it is... feels pointless!

(cutting her off)

--i got it, i got it. Relax, i understand... I got it, I'll stop bitching.

Beat.

GINNY

(mellower)

...You need to grow up...

We see his whole body tightening up, trying to repress an urge to burst out against his mother.

INT. SELLWAY'S - AFTERNOON(02:30PM)

Danny has just returned to Sellway's. He walks to the counter, to his father. Gerry is sitting a few barstools away from Richard, drinking by himself.

DANNY

There's nobody yet...

RICHARD

We've got a ball in the car...

DANNY

But I don't feel like playing alone.

RICHARD

Tony, get him an ice cream.

ANTONIO

Which one, Danny?

Danny shuffles towards the ice cream arc. Richard looks at Gerry sideways. Gerry looks back at him, but averts his eyes after a couple seconds. Richard lingers. Danny returns with the ice cream, unwrapping it eagerly.

DANNY

Thanks.

LONG BEAT.

RICHARD

Hey, let's go see mom.

Danny bites in.

EXT. CEMETERY - AFTERNOON(03:00PM)

Richard and Danny look at the grave in silence. Her name was Sarah Marie Levin. Danny has sort of a blank look on his face.

RICHARD

You didn't feel like Celia could become a mother to you? You didn't like her?

DANNY

...I liked her.

RICHARD

You were saying you didn't.

Danny looks at his father with a smirk.

RICHARD

I thought so...

(beat)

Look Danny, you have to help me.

DANNY

I gotta help you? With what?

RICHARD

You know... with, taking care of you. We have grandma, but we gotta think about living a life more independently.

DANNY

(sarcastic)

Do you want me to go to work?

RICHARD

Course not... but- like with Celia, don't you think you need somebody like her, don't you think you need a mom?

DANNY

(thinks)

Not really... But i dind't do anything!

RICHARD

I know you didn't, i *did*- i fucked up...

Richard pauses. He seems to be struggling; he squats and looks at the grave again.

RICHARD

Y'know, this morning- today...
everything felt painful.

(beat)

An i think i know why that is- it's not just one thing... all of it put together Danny... like, the way my mind works.

I guess it's not coherent with a lot of things, there's a lack of direction, a lack of something really important... D'you think i'm honest? With you at least?

DANNY

Not all the time...

RICHARD

(chuckles)

Yeah, not all the time. But i think i am though, i try to be. I know how important that is. But maybe i'm not that way with myself- though i'm smart enough to see that- always have been... i don't care, that's what's going on... It feels confusing.

DANNY

Are you saying that because of what happened?

RICHARD

Off course i am... But it's something else too.

DANNY

What?

RICHARD

...I dont know- It's like... my life, Danny. The way i am. I think i'm no good.

Danny's not smiling anymore. He looks concerned.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I'm your father first, that's the first thing i am, and that's great. I

even think i'm good at it- but not all the time- i'm not good at a lot of other things, and so sometimes i can't be what i should to you, you understand?

(beat)

I'm gonna tell you something. And i hope i'm not screwing up even harder-- no caveats now--

DANNY

-What?

RICHARD

When you were... i guess, seven months old Danny.. i got put in jail, and then i stayed there for two years--

DANNY

(disbelief)

-You were in jail?

RICHARD

Yeah Danny, be quiet.

(beat)

Grandma took care of you during that time.

Beat.

DANNY

What did you do?

RICHARD

...I got in a car accident. Me and mom got in a car accident. You weren't there, you were at grandma's house. And.. an i'd been drinking, a lot, and i crashed the car, and your mom died because of it. And they sent me two years to jail. Because i was responsible for it.

DANNY

(disbelief, confused)

You told me mom was in a car crash but somebody crashed into her and she died.

RICHARD

That's not what happened.

DANNY

So you lied.

RICHARD

Yes.

DANNY
(growing angry)
So you're a liar.

RICHARD
Not all the time. But i accept this one. I lied for a reason- and i promise you i'll never tell you what that reason is- you'll have to understand it for yourself.

DANNY
You lied because it's easy for you.

RICHARD
Maybe that's one half of it... yeah.

Danny looks with heavy eyes at his mother's grave. Richard tears up while he watches him.

RICHARD
I'm not amoral Danny... but i'm not very demanding with myself. That's not what i want for you, you understand? Cause I know that's not the way to go.

DANNY
...I wanna go home.

Beat.

RICHARD
No, let's stay here a while. Let's go through this here.

DANNY
(starting a tantrum)
Go through what!? Let's go home.

RICHARD
It's just what i'm saying kid, it's important to face things! And really, you aren't too young for that.

Danny starts walking away towards the exit.

EXT. GINNY'S HOUSE (BACKYARD) - NIGHT(10:00PM)

Richard and Ginny are seated in the steps drinking coffee. Eric smokes a cigarette by the trees. Richard shows his cell phone to Ginny.

RICHARD
That's what she sent me.

The text reads "you broke his fucking rib Richard, Jesus Christ". Ginny lets out a slight guffaw.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Don't laugh silly woman, i could get
into real trouble.

LONG BEAT.

GINNY
I think you did well with Danny.

RICHARD
...Thanks.

GINNY
I guess it'd be harder for him if he
remembered his mom..

Richard nods, annoyed by her conclusion.

Danny and Jeffrey come running out of the doorway. Richard gets up in order to make way for them to pass. We see Jeffrey sniffing the ground, following some kind of scent into the dark cluster of trees. Danny sits next to his grandma and hugs her. Ginny hugs him back and kisses him. He looks pleased, for some reason.

Out of the blue, we hear a yelp coming from the trees. It's Jeffrey. They all give a start and look in expectation. Jeffrey produces another fearful yelp. Richard looks back at Danny and Ginny with a startled expression.

RICHARD
(whispering, waving him in)
Danny!

GINNY
(tense)
Richard...

Danny advances gingerly towards Richard. They disappear into the trees. Ginny and Eric tread carefully behind them.

END