

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

MILES CALHOUN, a scrawny thirteen year-old boy with shaggy, cowlicked hair and pre-braces teeth, sits at his desk with his back turned to us. His laptop sits open, glowing blank.

His bedroom is decorated with his many achievements. Vibrantly colored art projects hang on the walls. Intricate dioramas depicting great battles in history rest on shelves.

A poster of the Wu Tang Clan hangs over him on the wall. Behind him, a PlayStation 2 makes violent, exploding sounds of a war game having been left on.

Miles wears an ill-fitting suit with a clip-on tie. We hear the sounds of his fingers typing rhythmically.

MILES (V.O.)

Dear mother and father. I want to thank you. Without you I would not be here and none of this would be possible.

He lifts a bottle of what can only be his parent's Merlot, and takes a long, desperate swig, leaving his lips stained crimson.

After a moment, he spits the red wine into a plastic Clippies cup nearby, disgusted by the taste. He empties the rest of the wine into the cup, and refills the bottle with grape juice.

MILES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

However, I feel compelled to write to you, to put my thoughts down on paper. I wish we could speak like adults, but clearly you are both incapable of such an act.

The voice of a MOTHER can be heard somewhere down the hall.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Miles, go to bed!

Miles grabs a stack of thick, hardcover books off his shelf and heaves them at the door. Then, continues.

MILES (V.O.)

Consider this a means of trying to communicate with you as a last possible resort.

(MORE)

MI LES (V. O.) (CONT'D)  
 Maybe the following words will help  
 you understand that I am a  
 complicated person. A human being  
 with...  
 (thinks)  
 ...incredible depth.

He sips some more Welsh's wine, and continues.

MI LES (V. O.) (CONT'D)  
 Or, in a worst case scenario, this  
 document shall serve as evidence of  
 a boy trying to be heard.

FADE OUT.

TITLE CARD: **A HISTORY OF FOOLS**

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miles taps his fingers on the desk pensively, sighs, and resumes typing.

MI LES (V. O.)  
 I understand that in the basic  
 biological sense, you 'made' me.  
 Though I also understand that in  
 the basic biological sense, it  
 doesn't take a genius to do so.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - DAY

TIGHT on the FINGERS of a BOY as they dip into various colors of cheap acrylic paint. PINKY in midnight blue. RING FINGER in sunburst yellow. A THUMB splashes in a glob of fire-engine red.

The fingers belong to a SEVEN YEAR-OLD MI LES, sitting in front of a large white canvas.

MI LES (V. O.)  
 Besides, surely I am deserving of  
 most of the credit.

He turns to MRS. WHITE, his eager teacher. He gives her a confident nod, and with an innocent voice:

SEVEN YEAR-OLD MILES  
A little motivation, maybe?

Mrs. White nods obediently, and glances over her classroom of SEVEN YEAR-OLDS. Some students watch with great curiosity. Others pick their noses.

Mrs. White drops the needle on a plastic toy record player and we hear these timeless lyrics:

*Puff the magic dragon, who lives by the sea... Frolics in the autumn mist in a land called Hano-I Lee...*

Miles takes a deep breath, inhaling the cosmic dיאatribe. He stares deep into the blank canvas with furious determination.

And in a flash, Miles' hands wave rapidly over the canvas. His fingers SWIRL and SWOOP and SLASH until his work is complete. He turns the canvas to reveal...

A COLORFUL MASTERPIECE

Brightly abstract. Chaotically-themed. Mysteriously elusive.

Mrs. White and her students share a collective AWE of amazement.

GARY AND MEREDITH CALHOUN, Miles' caring, supportive parents, watch from the door. They beam with pride.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A packed house, yet eerily silent. Hundreds of parents, many armed with digital cameras, blinking red-lights everywhere, stare forward with anticipation, for on-stage, holding an upright bass twice his size, is Miles -- and the bass is so large we can only see the top of his head. Nothing but a cowl i ck.

With style, precision, and even a clever sense of mockery, Miles plucks through the jazz classic "Blue Monk". Somewhere, somewhere, Thelonious Monk is listening in awe.

The audience is enthralled. In the front row, the Calhoun's are impressed.

MILES (V. 0.)  
I am only dangling on the precipice  
of puberty...

CUT TO:

## MILES' REFLECTION

As he gels his hair into a perfect crest in the mirror, and almost winks.

MILES (V.O.)  
... and am already at the top of my game.

## INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

The sun beams through open blinds, illuminating wall to wall bulletin boards covered in colorful, though disjointed art projects.

DRI FT OVER the rows of STUDENTS. Some hard at work. Others staring off in odd directions, catatonic.

But not Miles, writing furiously. Feverishly pressing lead. A stack of pages as high as six phone books is gathered off to his side.

## INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Students in suspenders mingle with teachers in their finest corduroy. It's the elementary literary elite. MR. SCHAFFER, head of the English Department, commands attention.

MR. SCHAFFER  
It is my distinct honor to present  
this years' Best New Author  
Award...

In front of bookshelves dotted with the classics, the three 13 year-old candidates sit in metal fold-out chairs: a smug little BRUNETTE GIRL, a terrified INDIAN BOY, and Miles, patiently awaiting his prize.

MR. SCHAFFER (CONT'D)  
For his powerful short story, 'The  
Bully Inside', fellow faculty and  
honored students, Miles J. Calhoun.

Respectable golf claps abound. The brunette girl bursts out of her chair.

BRUNETTE GIRL  
Mongoloids!

She stomps out. Miles looks at the crowd with a we-know-better smile, and approaches the podium.

MI LES

Wow, this was totally unexpected.  
Okay, let's be honest... it wasn't.  
Seriously, did anybody read the  
third act of Vaghars' "If My Dog  
Could Talk?" Entirely void of  
realism. An unintentional farce.

VAGHAR, the terrified Indian boy, turns bright red.

MI LES (CONT'D)

I think if his dog could talk he'd  
politely ask him to put the pen  
down.

Around the room, uncomfortable silence.

MI LES (CONT'D)

In conclusion, I would like to  
quote one of my inspirations, W.C.  
Fields. 'I am free of all  
prejudice. I hate everybody  
equally.'

He holds up his hand-bound book and smiles, dignified as  
flashbulbs erupt.

MI LES (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And tonight, the very night of my  
eagerly anticipated Bar Mitzvah...

INT. SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT

The most highly-attended Bar Mitzvah in Jewish history.  
FRIENDS and RELATIVES in horribly clashing outfits look on  
with pure enlightenment as Miles chants his Torah portion --  
the Hebrew sung in a beautiful, somewhat-feminine staccato.

MI LES (V.O.)

...I think even God was in awe. In  
fact, I know he was.

Miles walks over to the Ark, and with the Rabbi's stern,  
dramatic nod, pulls it open -- BATHING US IN WHITE LIGHT.

CUT TO:

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miles now has his jacket off, his collar hanging open loosely.

MILES (V. O.)  
 Technically, and now made official  
 in the eyes of our entire religion,  
 I am now a man.

The voice of a now-furious FATHER is heard somewhere down the hall.

FATHER (O. S.)  
 Damn it Miles, turn the goddamn  
 lights out! I'm trying to sleep!

He grabs another stack of hardcovers -- Che Guevara's various biographies -- pauses in mid-throw, and calms himself down with a long, deep breath.

MILES (V. O.)  
 . . . and with that comes  
 responsibility. Therefore, in this  
 hereby document I am relinquishing  
 you of any and all responsibility  
 for what I have done in the past,  
 and for what I may do in, what is  
 certain to be, a very bright  
 future.

He takes another pull from the wine bottle of Welch's grape juice, sighs, and closes his laptop.

FADE OUT.

SUPER:

**Fool** (fool) *n.*

1. **One who is deficient in judgment, sense, or understanding.**

FADE IN:

A FOR SALE SIGN

As the wooden stake breaks the surface of a neatly manicured lawn.

**EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY**

It's early morning in affluent Calabasas. San Fernando Valley's Laguna Beach. Miles, always in his freshly ironed suit, shoves a FOR SALE sign twice his size into the lawn with all the strength he can muster.

## INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Miles sprays and scrubs the counter tops, the oven range, and the breakfast table.

## INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

He vacuums, and as he passes framed photos of himself with his parents, he turns them over or tosses them face down into drawers.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Miles makes the bed with disgust.

## Derelicts. MI LES

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

He fishes brown leaves out of a kidney-shaped swimming pool with a net.

## MI LES Slum Lords.

## INT. HOUSE - DAY

He walks through each room for final inspection. The house is spotless, glowing to perfection.

## INT. MILES' BEDROOM - DAY

Miles sits at his desk, an open manila folder in front of him. He sorts through a handful of documents. A MY SPACE page with the photo of a YOUNG TEEN GIRL on it. She's sixteen and gorgeous. GOOGLE searches are printed off the internet, all under the name LAYLA GARDNER.

He folds the envelope closed and slides it into his desk drawer. Locks it with a key.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Reflected in the mirror, Miles gels his hair into a perfect crest, and as is his routine, considers winking.

Instead, he pulls out his red striped, clip-on tie from his inner-coat pocket, clips it onto his collar and adjusts it so it's just right. Satisfied, he turns and leaves. Even shuts the light out.

Then, he turns around and flips the light back on, slides a bluetooth cell phone earpiece behind his ear, and now, entirely impressed by what he sees, gives a full, obnoxious wink.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

A Lexus sedan pulls to a stop in front of the house. A lovely couple, CRAIG and SUZANNE GARDNER, get out of the car.

The back door opens, and out steps the most beautiful girl Miles has ever seen. She wears a little cotton skirt and boy's converse shoes. This is LAYLA GARDNER.

Miles approaches the family, his hands held together in a sophisticated fashion.

MI LES

I just love that crisp morning air, don't you? I'm sorry, and you must be the Gardners?

SUZANNE

Well hello there, young man. Where are your parents?

MI LES

Wow. My parents. Huh. I haven't thought about them in a while. To tell you the truth, I... I guess I don't really know.

CRAIG

You don't really know?

MI LES

(shakes his head)  
Never actually met them.

(MORE)

MI LES (CONT' D)  
 I'm told my mother didn't want the pregnancy and escaped the hospital just hours after she birthed me. Actually ran from the building, still in her hospital gown.

SUZANNE

Oh. My.

MI LES  
 So, where are my parents? Mr. And Mrs. Gardner, you find them, you tell them to give me a call, okay?

SUZANNE  
 I am so, so sorry.

MI LES  
 Listen, we live, we learn, and in the end, we accept.

Miles nods solemnly, feigning emotion. Layla watches him, intrigued. He extends his hand to Craig, professionally.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
 Miles J. Calhoun. I'll be showing the house.

Suzanne and Craig share a perplexed look.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
 Oh, I work for the realty company. In exchange for school credit.

He flashes a winning smile.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
 Shall we?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

They enter the freshly-cleaned house. Craig is visibly put off by the thirteen and a half year-old realtor.

MI LES  
 I understand that you're new to the neighborhood. Let me tell you, it's a fantastic place to raise a family. Very little crime. Not a child molester on the block.  
 (to Layla)  
 I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name?

She looks away.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Miles continues the tour. The Gardners walk around the master bedroom.

MILES

Two bedrooms, two and a half baths,  
brand new wall to wall carpeting,  
hardwood floors, central heating  
and air...

Layla overturns a picture frame. It's a shot of a seven year-old, grinning Miles and his parents posing happily among local RASTAS on a family trip to Jamaica. Miles catches her in the corner of his eye, and she turns the frame back over.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

They all hold frosty glasses of Lemonade.

MILES

Tile floors and counter tops, state-of-the-art range and oven, laundry area attached...

SUZANNE

Miles...

MILES

Suzanne.

SUZANNE

You've done a fantastic job. I'm very impressed, young man.

She glares at Craig. Reluctantly, Craig pats Miles on the back.

CRAIG

Yeah. Super job, pal. Bang up.

MILES

You're a complete tool, you know that?

CRAIG

(stunned)  
Wait, what did you just call me?

Miles gestures to his bluetooth earpiece. He's on a call.

MI LES

First you waste my time. Now you tell me you can't clear escrow? Listen closely and follow these instructions. Scroll down to the number on your cell phone that correlates with the name Miles J. Call him, and press delete. You're dead to me. That clear? Dead. To. Me.

(turns, whispers)

Hi, grandma.

Miles gives Layla a little inside wink. She looks away, with the slightest hint of a grin.

Suzanne and Craig step aside for a private conversation.

CRAIG

(to Suzanne)

... because there's no way I'm going to buy a house from a pre-pubescent broker, that's why. And I'm sorry, but I don't think I'm being unreasonable here!

SUZANNE

Well I love this house. For the record.

CRAIG

Let the record reflect.

Miles paces, appearing stressed by the phone call.

MI LES

... if you can't put a couple of dolars together and make a decision like an adult, then we have nothing more to discuss, entiende?

He presses a button on his earpiece, ending the call.

CRAIG

Busy, huh?

MI LES

(nods)

It's a buyer's market.

CRAIG  
You must be racki ng up those school  
credi ts.

MI LES  
Oh, I don' t do i t for that, Cra ig.

Mi les flicks an ice-cube into his mouth, chews.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
Look, take all the time you need.  
But she' s going to go quick, so I  
suggest you --

MOTHER (O. S.)  
Mi les, who' s car is that out front?

Mi les races out, leavi ng the Gardners in the ki tchen alone.

MOTHER (O. S.) (CONT' D)  
And why is there a For Sale si gn on  
my goddamn lawn?

Craig and Suzanne share a confused look. Layla grins, amused.

EXT. FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

MEREDI TH, Mi les' mother, walks the Gardners to their car. We see Mi les in the background, sitting on the porch, resi gned.

MEREDI TH  
He thi nks he' s so clever. I 'm gonna  
put his head in the washin g  
machi ne.

SUZANNE  
Wait, so he' s not an orphan?

CRAIG  
Big shock, hon.

Layla lingers from the group, and turns back to Mi les.

LAYLA  
Hey, I 'm Layla.

She smi les, and wal ks back to her parents, not awai ting a  
response.

MI LES  
(to hi msel f)  
Hello... Layla.

Layla stops, and turns back around.

LAYLA  
Yeah, howdy. Hi there. Didn't I just cover all that?

MI LES  
Yeah, I mean... bye.

She slips into the back seat of the Lexus, leaving Miles stung.

Meredith walks past Miles without breaking stride, and slams the screen door.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
Thanks. I had a sale.

The Gardners drive away. Out the back window, Layla looks back at the house, and the strange yet intriguing boy sitting on the steps.

INT. MI LES' BEDROOM - DAY

A loud hip-hop beat rattles shelves. Trophies click together. Pri zed dioramas jostle this way and that.

Miles is playing the bass-line on an electric bass. A drum-machine is jerry-rigged to his laptop. Two large speakers are set on either side of the desk.

Two fourteen year-old black kids, KEYSION and NATE, sit across from him. Keyshon's got a shaved head and prominent buck-teeth. Nate is overweight, built like a lineman with a protruding belly. Oddly, an unlit joint hangs from his lips.

KEYSHON  
Hot, kid. Hot.

NATE  
Like that Timbaland shit and shit.

KEYSHON  
Take that joint out of your mouth, and shit.

NATE  
My brother said it'll make us more creative. Plus, it makes TV better.

MI LES  
 Nate, I don't need any drugs to  
 create. Besides, you're not even  
 going to light that.

NATE  
 You think I'm scared, partner?  
 Watch a brother spark one up.

Nate sparks the joint, and inhales deeply. He coughs harshly, and falls back to the ground, dizzy.

NATE (CONT'D)  
 Dawg... this feels... weird.

KEYSHON  
 Creative yet?

NATE  
 Nauseous.

Miles and Keyshon laugh hysterically.

MI LES  
 (shaking his head)  
 A real life public service  
 announcement.

KEYSHON  
 Miles, that beat though...

MI LES  
 Yeah, what about it?

KEYSHON  
 Too much bounce. Hot in the club,  
 but I'm no clown rapper. I want  
 that laid back boom-boom-BAP shit.

NATE  
 Word.

Nate runs his fingers through the carpet.

NATE (CONT'D)  
 Boom-boom-BAP!

KEYSHON  
 Feel me?

MI LES  
 Feel this.

Miles holds up his finger, pauses dramatically -- and when he lowers it, a spine rattling Southern-style hip-hop beat erupts from the speakers. Walls shake. The earth shifts.

Keyshon smiles, loving it. Nate bobs his head.

MEREDITH (O.S.)  
Damnit, Miles! Turn that godawful noise down!

KEYSHON  
(over the music)  
Your mom's always trippin', kid.

MI LES  
Trippin'? The woman has no culture.  
(re: poster)  
You think the Wu Tang Clan had their mothers shouting at them every time they made a beat?

NATE  
A: Wu Tang probably didn't even know their mothers, and even if they did, they sure as hell didn't live in a nice house in the suburbs like you do.

MI LES  
Ha. Nice house in the suburbs. My entire life is a front.

KEYSHON  
And B: your mom, she let's you have a recording studio in your bedroom! She supports you in everything you've ever wanted to do. That's a wonderful woman out there.

MI LES  
I still struggle. Every artist does. Every day of my life.

KEYSHON  
Maybe you do, maybe you don't, but that mom of yours... now there's a good woman.

NATE  
For real. A good, good woman.

MI LES  
(defensi vel y)  
Call my mom a woman again.

There's a KNOCK at the door. They quickly open a window, allowing the smoke to escape.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
In a meeting!

Meredith opens the door anyway.

MEREDITH  
Sorry boys. Know any James Taylor?

Miles buries his head in shame.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)  
(to Miles)  
Honey, I've got a migraine. My hormones are going AWOL. I'm hot, I'm sweaty, my entire body is on fire.

MI LES  
First, James Taylor. Now my friends are forced to hear the sordid details of your hot flashes? Sit in the freezer. Figure it out.

MEREDITH  
(appeasing)  
Just a little quieter, okay.

She leaves.

NATE  
Hot flashes? Wow.

KEYSHON  
That's some serious shit. No joke.

Miles pops a CD out of his computer and slides it over to Keyshon.

MI LES  
Next time we'll talk about distribution.

They pound fists.

Miles notices the barely smoked blunt in the trash can, and slides it into his desk drawer.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Meredith sits on the couch, draped head-to-toe in blue gel ice packs and reading US WEEKLY. Miles sits on the other side of the couch, jotting feverishly in a composition book.

MEREDITH  
Why'd you sell the house today?

MILES  
Doesn't matter.

Miles turns a page. So does Meredith.

MEREDITH  
You don't like this house, is that it?

MILES  
I'm sitting here, aren't I?

MEREDITH  
Seriously, Miles, you don't like our home?

MILES  
It was a lousy investment. I don't know why you and dad bought it. Nobody consulted me.

MEREDITH  
You were six.

MILES  
And even at such a young age I knew this place was a pass. Not to mention the interest rates are going up and you and Dad decided ingeniously on a three year fix. Brilliant.

Meredith goes back to her reading. Miles writes some more.

MEREDITH  
Dad and I read your letter. No matter how many documents you ask us to sign, you're our son and we're your parents, and that makes you our responsibility.

MI LES  
Let's agree to disagree.

Meredith closes her magazine.

MEREDITH  
You know, Miles, as smart as you are, you're still a little boy. My little boy.

MI LES  
Where are you going with this?

MEREDITH  
You can't just wake up and sell our house because the interest rates are going up. You don't make that decision. I was embarrassed today.

Miles puts down his composition book.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow you're going to stay home all day, wash the dishes, do the laundry, and whatever else I can think of, and I am going to think as hard as I ever have.

MI LES  
I'll out-source, I swear. Maybe even turn a profit.

MEREDITH  
Listen to me, Miles... As long as you live under my roof you'll abide by my rules.

MI LES  
That's really what you're going with? That... cliché?

Meredith furiously throws the magazine down.

MEREDITH  
Do you understand me?

Miles' looks like Che on the eve of the revolution.

MI LES  
Yeah. Yes, mother. I understand you.

He grabs his composition book and storms out of the room, fueled for battle.

INT. MERCEDES E-CLASS - NIGHT

GARY CALHOUN drives. He looks stressed, worried, even a bit sad. We notice a few white file boxes in the back seat.

He flips around on the radio, unable to settle on a station. Finally, he just leaves it on depressing, rainy-day jazz.

EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - NIGHT

The Mercedes pulls into the driveway. Gary is immediately met by Meredit, looking concerned.

MEREDIT  
You're home early.

GARY  
Yeah.

He pulls the white file boxes from the back seat.

MEREDIT  
Gary, what happened?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gary and Meredit sit at the kitchen table. The white boxes are stacked along a nearby wall. The fridge is plastered with happy photos of Calhoun Family vacations.

GARY  
The firm's official position is  
that I've been laid off due to  
economic restructuring.

Gary takes a large swig from a glass of red wine.

MEREDIT  
Okay, I see. So it's not like you  
were...

GARY  
... fired? No, honey, I told you, I  
was laid off.

MEREDIT  
Right. Laid off.

GARY

As if that's better? At least when you're fired it's because you messed up or made a serious mistake, and then, you're fired. Simple as that. But when you're laid off, they're telling you 'we have no use for you anymore. You're just a body. A useless one at that. Thanks for your time, but we'll need your office and oh please understand how hard this is for us to do. We're really gonna miss ya, pal. It's like losing a member of the family.'

Gary finishes his wine.

GARY (CONT'D)

Assholes.

MEREDITH

Like that, our lives change.

Meredith sighs, and rests her head on her hand.

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miles runs hard on a treadmill at a ridiculous incline while watching FOX NEWS. The digital timer reads: 48:50, 48:51, 48:52...

On the wall behind him is an 8 x 10 sheet of white paper that reads, in dark black letters: ***As long as you live under my roof you'll abide by my rules.*** -- the obvious source of his cardiovascular motivation.

As he runs, he presses a button on his earpiece.

MILES

Evening Di ego, I'm on house arrest. I know, I know, I can't believe it either. That's exactly what I said! Communism.

He shoots cold, bottled-water into his mouth without missing a step.

MILES (CONT'D)

Listen to me. Your talents, well, you've proven your worth to me. The subject was in my house, Di ego.

(MORE)

MILES (CONT'D)  
 In my house! And if I'm not  
 mistaken, she practically fell in  
 love with me on the spot!

He drinks some more.

MILES (CONT'D)  
 No, I'm not mistaken. Yes, I got  
 'the look'. What do you know about  
 girls anyway, tough guy? Listen,  
 I'd like to retain your services.  
 Another job.

The treadmill BEEPS three times and slows to a halt. Miles steps off and stretches his neck from side to side.

MILES (CONT'D)  
 So, you game?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Meredith pours herself a glass of wine. She reads a legal document. An open envelope sits on the table in front of her.

GARY  
 Right now, we have nothing to worry  
 about, you know, as far as our  
 finances are concerned.

MEREDITH  
 For a couple of months, at least.

GARY  
 The severance package is reasonable  
 and we have plenty in our savings.  
 Mer, we have money. And I'll get  
 another job. We have to be patient.

MEREDITH  
 I can start seeing patients again.

GARY  
 No, no. I don't want you to --

MEREDITH  
 I'll set up an office here at home.  
 The extra income won't hurt, and  
 this way I can keep an eye on  
 Miles.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Miles, soaked in sweat with a white towel draped around his neck and a blender full of green protein shake in hand, stops walking, intrigued by what he's overhearing.

GARY (O. S.)  
Keep an eye on Miles?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gary paces, wine glass in hand.

MEREDITH  
He's been acting strange lately.  
This morning he tried to sell the house.

GARY  
Yeah, right.

She looks at him, dead serious.

MEREDITH  
I wonder what he was asking for.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Miles proceeds cautiously, careful not to miss a word.

MEREDITH (O. S.)  
Don't worry, I punished him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gary sits down, his wine-glass empty.

GARY  
Next time, wait for me. It would have been the day's only joy.

Miles' little head appears from around the corner, entirely unnoticed.

MEREDITH  
Get your resume together, send it out to every firm in the area, and we just wait, and cross our fingers.

GARY

Why? Because I'm a mediocre lawyer?  
Who'd hire Gary Calhoun? Should we  
just move on to prayer?

MEREDITH

I never said that, Gary.

GARY

Thinking it is worse. This is  
temporary.

MEREDITH

Don't get mad at me. This wasn't my  
fault.

GARY

But it was mine? Mer, I got laid  
off!

MEREDITH

I told you to stay on your toes  
around there. It's like a boys  
club, that place.

GARY

Fuck their little boys club.

MEREDITH

That little boys club was paying  
you. A lot.

GARY

I'm only as valuable as my salary?

MEREDITH

I never said that.

GARY

Thinking it is worse.

Miles recollects. He's never heard his parents fight before.

He regains his composure, and drags the white file boxes away  
like a lion collecting his kill. Meredith and Gary are  
oblivious.

GARY (CONT'D)

Twelve goddamn years. You don't  
just 'let someone go' after that  
kind of commitment. I have a  
family. I have a life.

MEREDITH  
Gary, let's go to bed.

GARY  
Yeah. Okay.

Meredith turns out the kitchen light as they walk out.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gary walks towards his bedroom, head looking at the ground.

MILES (O.S.)  
Hey, Dad.

Gary stops at Miles door. He opens it.

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miles is at his desk, his laptop in front of him.

GARY  
What, Miles?

MILES  
I heard, you know, what happened.

GARY  
Don't worry, Miles. We'll be --

MILES  
There's this quote by the great 6th  
Century philosopher Heraclitus...

GARY  
Heraclitus? We should allow you to  
watch more MTV.

MILES  
He said, 'There is nothing  
permanent except change'. Think  
about it, is all I'm saying.

Gary does, touched by his son's concern.

GARY  
Go to bed, pal. It's late.

Miles crawls under the covers. Gary turns off Miles' light,  
and shuts the door.

## INT. PARENT'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Meredith, wearing her nightgown, brushes her teeth in the mirror.

MEREDITH  
... it's just scary, you know, not  
knowing where the next paycheck  
will come from.

GARY (O.S.)  
We'll be fine.

She spits, and brushes some more.

MEREDITH  
Car payments, mortgage, health  
insurance...

## INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gary is in bed. Meredith climbs in.

MEREDITH  
... property taxes. Life is so damn  
expensive, Gary? You know?

She leans over and finds Gary asleep, facing his side. She turns out the light and rolls over to her side, leaving them back-to-back.

DRI FT OVER to Gary, who lies there, his eyes now wide open.

THROUGH A CRACKED DOOR - Miles has been spying the whole time.

## INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

The white file boxes have all been opened. The contents -- law papers, journals, written arguments -- are laid out on the desk. The room is bathed in darkness, but for a desk light illuminating a stack of law books that Miles is intensely studying. The clock reads 4:30am.

He looks at the framed photo of he and his parents in Jamaica. Looks like good times. Better times. Miles shakes it off, and goes back to the books.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. GARAGE/LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Miles is carelessly throwing whites and colors in together. The whole task is beneath him. He slams the lid shut.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Miles cautiously makes his way down the hall.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Under the cover of darkness, he gets to the front door and turns the knob.

GARY (O.S.)  
What, no good-bye?

A light is turned on. Gary, in stretched-out boxers and a food-stained T-shirt, sits on the couch with a steaming mug of coffee.

MI LES  
Dad! Hey, didn't see ya there, you know, setting an example... of how to be a... laid off guy.

GARY  
What do you want?

MI LES  
Oh, just going over to Di ego's house for a little while.

GARY  
Di ego. Never heard of him.

MI LES  
He's only my best friend.

GARY  
The fat one?

MI LES  
Judge a book by his cover. Life lessons, from father to son.

GARY  
I thought his name was Elliot.

MI LES  
Be back soon.

GARY  
Forget it. You're not to leave the house today. Mom's instructions.

MI LES  
Whatever she's paying you, I'll double it.

GARY  
You don't have any money.

MI LES  
That makes two of us.

GARY  
Easy. I'm not above fighting a kid.

MI LES  
Want to repeat that for Child Protective Services?

Miles presses speed dial on his cell phone and holds it up for his dad to see. They lock eyes.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
I'm glad we had this talk.

Miles walks back to his room, victorious in his own mind.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

He scrubs a plate in the sink, paying no attention. Leaving the faucet on, he walks into...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gary is on the couch watching TV. A phone is wedged between his shoulder and his ear.

GARY (INTO PHONE)  
(irritated)  
I know, Meredit. I know. I'm going to take a week to relax and get my life in order. Is that allowed? Is that acceptable to you?

Miles peeks his head around the corner.

MILES  
The woman's a dictator, right?

Gary covers the mouthpiece.

GARY  
Even Ahmadinejad has a sensible  
side.

They laugh quietly, so as not to be heard on the other end of the phone.

MILES  
Good one. I'll go get the paper.

Miles walks out the front door.

GARY (INTO PHONE)  
Have I ever not been able to provide for you? Tell me that. Have I? These things take time. Listen, no, stop shouting. Stop shouting for one fucking second!

Gary calms down, sips his coffee, and then he realizes something.

EXT. STREET - DAY

He barges out of the house and spots Miles up the street, running away. Gary rushes after him, gaining. With a burst of speed, Gary dive-tackles Miles and the two roll onto the front lawn of a neighbor's house.

MILES  
You're in terrible shape. I can actually hear your body age.

GARY  
(out of breath)  
Go to your room. Forever.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gary opens the door, and a sweet, little-old GRANDMA enters with a basket of muffins.

GARY  
 Thanks for coming, Ma. I've got to  
 run to a meeting with my accountant  
 and I've --

GRANDMA  
 Gary, please. A chance to spend  
 some time with my grandson?

GARY  
 He doesn't leave the house. In  
 fact, he doesn't even look out the  
 windows.

Miles appears.

MI LES  
 Grandma! Grandma!

They hug. A kid after all. Gary grabs his briefcase.

GARY  
 I find out you did anything wrong  
 and I'll slap the eyes out of your  
 head.

MI LES  
 Infantile, dad. Just... infantile.

Gary raises a hand as if to throw a slap. Miles doesn't even flinch as he pops a fresh, blueberry muffin into his mouth.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A teapot whistles. Miles takes it off the stove and pours boiling hot water over loose tea leaves. He watches it seep, and a strange smile grows on his face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grandma is sitting in a chair reading the New Yorker. Miles presents her with a mug of freshly-brewed green tea.

GRANDMA  
 Such a sweet boy. And I hear you're  
 doing so well in school?

MI LES  
 Ah grandma, it ain't hard.

GRANDMA  
It isn't hard.

MI LES  
It isn't hard.

She rubs his head, lovingly.

INT. MI LES' BEDROOM - DAY

Miles enters his room, and in SLOW MOTION he flicks an empty pill bottle into the garbage can as though it were a spent bullet shell.

CLOSE ON the prescription: *Meredith Calhoun, Ambien*.

Miles grabs a copy of Charles Bukowski's NOTES OF A DIRTY OLD MAN, and lays on his bed with his hands behind his head, incredibly proud of himself.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Grandma is in a deep, Ambien-induced sleep on the couch. Half her body is slumped off the cushions. Her dress rides up in an unflattering way, revealing an intricate pattern of varicose veins on her upper thighs.

Miles is at the door, dressed in his crisp suit. He takes her pulse, and, satisfied with his diagnosis, flips off the light, and walks out the front door, a brown bag in hand.

EXT. CALABASAS STREETS - DAY

Miles walks up the block holding the brown bag. He approaches a BOY leaning against a street sign and eating from a melted box of whoppers. He's a pasty-white, chubby ball of a teenager with thick glasses, whose name is actually ELLIOT.

MI LES  
Afternoon, Diego. Shall we?

Elliot shrugs and they walk up the block, enveloped in the hazy sunshine of the West Valley.

ELLIOT  
How's detailment?

MI LES  
Introspective. Sometimes, Diego, a man needs his solitude. But my parents, holy Christ...

ELLIOT  
What?

MI LES  
They're at each other's throats. All the time.

ELLIOT  
Mine too. What are your parents fighting about?

MI LES  
My dad lost his job.

ELLIOT  
Ouch. And the unemployment rate this month was like, some kind of high percentage or something. Not good, is my point.

MI LES  
Got it. Thanks.

ELLIOT  
What if they get a divorce?

MI LES  
They're not going to. Okay?

ELLIOT  
Okay.

MI LES  
Besides, I can take care of myself even if they did.

They walk some more, suburban their backdrop.

ELLIOT  
Hey, Miles...

MI LES  
What?

ELLIOT  
It's not your fault.

MI LES  
What i sn' t?

ELLI OT  
Your parents, you know, fighti ng.

MI LES  
(sul len)  
Yeah. Yeah, I know.

Elliot slaps Miles on the shoulder. They wal k on.

INT. CALABASAS STREETS - DAY

They approach a gated-communi ty. Elliot gives Miles a boost over the fence. Elliot throws himself over, but his pants get caught on a metal rod at the top. He desperatel y extends his hand, covered in chocolate.

ELLI OT  
Gi ve me a hand!

MI LES  
Not even i f you were hangi ng off a  
cl i ff.

Elliot wildl y propels himself over and lands hard on a hedge. He wi pes the di rt from his clothes wi th his hands, repl acing the di rt wi th large smears of chocolate.

MI LES  
Good look, Di ego.

They make thei r way up the Cul -de-sac.

ELLI OT  
Can we stop usi ng code names now?

MI LES  
You actual ly want to be cal led  
Elliot?

ELLI OT  
My mom says i t makes me sound  
smart.

MI LES  
She al so said you were handsome.

ELLI OT  
And?

MI LES

And, we have a credibility issue here. The woman has established a terrible pattern of lying.

ELLIOT

In your opinion.

MI LES

Yeah. In my opinion.

They approach a large, Mediterranean-style house. It looks like the owners have just moved in. The FOR-SALE sign is still wedged in the lawn.

ELLIOT

This is it. I'm sure.

MI LES

You trust your sources?

ELLIOT

I carpool with them.

Miles knocks, and waits. Nothing. He looks at Elliot with doubt. Then, the door opens, and standing across the threshold is Layla Gardner.

LAYLA

What are you selling today? Junk bonds? High interest loans? Thanks anyway.

MI LES

(off-guard)

No. Hi. Hello. I mean, I was just, um... I came to --

Miles hands Layla the brown bag. She pulls out a half-filled bottle of Merlot, with a cork plugged in it.

MI LES (CONT'D)

Apologetic.

LAYLA

(re: wine)

I think this has been opened.

MI LES

It's my father's finest Merlot. Very expensive. Wonderful light, mid-bodied, yet you can really taste the grapes.

She takes a sip.

LAYLA  
Wow. You're right. This is amazing.

ELLIOT  
Since when do you know anything about wine?

Miles elbows Elliot, who keels over in pain. Layla laughs, her eyes sparkling.

LAYLA  
Well, apology accepted.

And she shuts the door, leaving Elliot and Miles standing outside.

MILES  
Thanks. You've been a great help.

ELLIOT  
(mocking)  
Hi. Hello. I mean, I was just, um... I came to --

MILES  
Yeah? And how are you with women?

ELLIOT  
Me? Please. Incredible.

Miles looks at him skeptically.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)  
I know my way around one, if that's what you're asking.

MILES  
Okay, that's what I'm asking.

ELLIOT  
Then you have your answer.

MILES  
Right. I guess I do.

Miles holds a doubtful look.

ELLIOT  
Whatever.

MILES  
Yeah, whatever.

The door opens, and Layla stands there giggling.

LAYLA  
Are you coming in or not?

She turns around, and walks inside.

Miles fixes Elliot's hair. tries to crest it. It falls miserably around his ears.

MILES  
Don't embarrass me, Diego.

ELLIOT  
Please, I'm an excellent wing-man.

Elliot smiles. His teeth bl ackened by chocolate.

MILES  
You're more like an improvised  
explorative device.

INT. LAYLA'S HOUSE - DAY

Miles and Elliot follow Layla through a plush, modern home. As she walks, she kicks off her boy's converse and pulls her dress over her head revealing a tiny, black bikini underneath.

EXT. POOL - DAY

A crystal blue pool sparkles under the hot sun. A handful of freshly tanned, good-looking TEENAGERS splash in the water and lie back on lounge chairs.

Layla does a perfect dive right into the deep end, the water gently parting for her. She emerges right in front of Miles, her dark, brown hair glistening.

LAYLA  
Come here.

MILES  
Where?

LAYLA  
(gesturing pool-side)  
Here.

MI LES  
Sure. I mean, I was going there,  
you know, here, anyway.

ELLIOT, feeling out of place, sits down on a lounge next to BETH, a freckled-skinned girl with large, intimidating black Gucci sunglasses.

ELLIOT  
Hey, I'm Diego.

She doesn't respond.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)  
Do you play Medal Of Honor on  
Playstation 2?

She takes off her sunglasses.

BETH  
Ohmygod, I so do. Level five is  
like totally impossible! I keep  
getting lost in that terrible  
minefield.

ELLIOT  
Me too! But check this out, there's  
a trick. You just press X three  
times, toggle the joystick and --

BETH  
I was lying, half-right.

ELLIOT shatters in every possible way. Beth slides her sunglasses back on.

ELLIOT  
That was just so, wow...  
unbelievably mean.

Miles is crouched down at the edge of the pool, near Layla. His suit is getting wet.

LAYLA  
How old are you, anyway?

MI LES  
According to the Torah? A man.

LAYLA  
The Torah?

MI LES  
You want to argue with the man  
upstairs, be my guest.

Layla laughs. Her entire face lights up.

Meanwhile, over on the lounge chair, Elliot hasn't moved, baffled by the cruelty of the world.

ELLIOT  
Seriously, why did you do that?  
It's just... cruel behavior. Cruel  
behavior, nothing more. What is  
gained by that? What did you  
accomplish?

Beth turns over, annoyed. Elliot just shakes his head.

LAYLA  
(to Miles)  
How about you fetch that bottle of  
wine?

MI LES  
I thought you'd never ask.

He winks, and turns away.

LAYLA  
Did you just wink?

MI LES  
Huh?

LAYLA  
You winked.

MI LES  
Wink? What? No. Sorry, no wink.

LAYLA  
Yeah, no... actually you did. Sure  
of it.

MI LES  
Sun was in my eyes.

He walks away, quickly.

## INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Miles walks into the kitchen, where Elliot is working his way through a bag of cheddar-flavored goldfish, leaning against the sub-zero, contemplating the problems of the world.

ELLIOT

You know what, women are heartless, evil creatures.

MILES

Better you learn that now, my good friend. Better you learn that now.

ELLIOT

The hell you so chipper about?

MILES

L-O-V-E, Diego. A little thing called L-O-V-E.

Miles pats Elliot on the back, grabs the bottle of, well, grape juice, and walks away with an irritating bounce in his step.

ELLIOT

I can spell, a-s-s-h-o-l-e.

## EXT. POOL - DAY

Miles pulls open the sliding glass doors and spots Layla, now in the center of the pool, now floating on a raft, and now making out sloppily with a TAN GUY with a rippling six-pack.

Miles drops the wine bottle. It explodes against the concrete like a grenade.

CUT TO:

## EXT. CALABASAS STREET - AN HOUR LATER

Miles and Elliot stand on the street corner.

ELLIOT

Attention. That's what that was all about. To women, it's like oxygen.

Miles nods solemnly. They pound fists, and walk their separate ways.

## EXT. STREET - DAY

Miles approaches his house. He walks around towards his window. A Speech-And-Debate trophy has been wedged in the sill. He slides his fingers in and pulls the window pane up as quietly as possible.

## INT. MILES' BEDROOM - DAY

He rolls in -- onto his bed. He walks over to his mirror and studies himself, wondering why a girl would ever reject such a face. Confused, he walks out into...

## INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

... where Grandma, practically comatose, is draped across Meredit and Gary on the couch, a hot towel resting on her forehead.

GARY  
(in shock)  
This is my mother.

MEREDITH  
What were you thinking?

GARY  
This is my mother.

MEREDITH  
Are you out of your mind?

GARY  
This is my mother.

MILES  
Covered that, dad.

GARY  
And you, you drugged her! You  
drugged my fucking mother!

MILES  
For four to six hours. And you just  
said fu --

MEREDITH/GARY  
(in unison)  
You're grounded.

IN SLOW-MOTION, Miles stumbles backward as though he were just rattled with a thousand bullets.

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Meredith and Gary are going through his things. He stands aside and watches in anguish, like a prisoner having his cell tossed. Meredith fishes a cell phone from his desk drawer.

MEREDITH

What does a thirteen year-old boy need with a cell phone?

MILES

I bought that with my own money.

GARY

Money we gave you for school lunch.

MILES

What I do with my finances is my business.

She throws the cell and accompanying earpiece into a box, along with a keyboard, recording equipment, and a laptop computer.

MILES (CONT'D)

You break it you buy it.

MEREDITH

We bought it in the first place.

He documents everything on a ledger he holds in his hand. Gary rolls the treadmill out into the hallway.

MILES

Yeah, I don't need that. It's just my cardiovascular system.

Meredith and Gary look around the room. Empty, but for a desk, a chair, and a bed.

MILES (CONT'D)

So, this is what it's come to? A hostage situation.

They walk out, shutting the door behind them.

MILES (CONT'D)

You can expect an insurgency!

He bangs his fists on the door for a long, long time. Then he retreats to his desk, knowing a strategy must be formed.

CUT TO:

GRAINY VIDEO FOOTAGE

MILES, looking like a prisoner, sits on a mattress with no sheets. It's the middle of the night.

MILES

(into camera)

I am being held against my will.  
Day and night have merged. To say  
that I am frightened is to state  
the obvious. I can only pray to a  
higher power for mercy, though I  
here...

(with a whisper)

...I fear that one does not exist.

He swallows, and begins his Torah Portion. The first few Hebrew words are sung in a beautiful soprano. But then something happens that's never happened to him before.

His voice cracks.

Confused, he starts again. And again, his voice cracks. PULL BACK to reveal...

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

He turns off the video camera that has been set on a pile of books, pops out the tape in frustration and tosses it into the garbage can.

He sits at his desk, his father's law books everywhere.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He sneaks down the hallway, passing...

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

And notices his mom and dad, sleeping BACK TO BACK.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He continues on into the...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

And fishes his mother's cell phone from her purse, and dials.

MILES  
(into cell, whispering)  
Keyshon, sorry to wake you. I know  
it's late. Listen, your father's an  
attorney at law, right?

Miles listens, jotting down notes.

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Miles and Gary sit in the waiting room. Miles coughs harshly and blows his nose loudly into a tissue. It's disgusting. PATIENTS recoil. He shows the contents of the tissue to Gary.

MILES  
Bird Flu.

GARY  
We'll get the doctor to confirm  
that you're faking, and then it's  
straight back to your room.

MILES  
And the award for Most Nurturing  
Father goes to...

Gary smacks Miles on the back of his head.

MILES (CONT'D)  
That make you feel good?

GARY  
You have no idea.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Miles sits on an exam table with a thermometer sticking out of his mouth.

NURSE  
Something must be going around. My daughter is home, sick as a dog.

MI LES  
Oh God!  
(gagging)  
Bathroom? Bathroom?

Miles leaps off the table in a panic.

NURSE  
Down the hall to the left!

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Miles rushes down the hall, pushes a LITTLE GIRL with a massive arm-cast out of the way, and slips into a nearby elevator.

EXT. VENTURA BOULEVARD - DAY

He walks at a quick pace down the sidewalk. After two blocks he enters a tall, glass office building.

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Out of breath, he scans the directory and lands on the title: **ARCHIBALD, BAUMAN AND FOX, ATTORNEYS AT LAW.**

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Miles sits in a plush leather chair in a sky-rise office suite overlooking the smog-coated San Fernando Valley. Across from him, seated behind a massive oak desk in a crisp Armani suit and silk bow-tie, is CORNELL ARCHIBALD III. Archibald, early-fifties, dapper and refined, is a Southern black man morbidly addicted to success.

MI LES  
I've read your bio. Pretty impressive. Defended rappers charged with possession of firearms, celebrities caught with transvestites, politicians taking bribes from lobbyists with links to terrorist organizations...

ARCHI BALD

It's a good time to be an attorney,  
son.

Archi bald wi nks. Mi les takes noti ce.

MI LES

Sir, I like your styl e.

Archi bald smi les, i mpressed by the kid. He walks over to his bar, pours two gl asses of his finest scotch, and offers one to Mi les. He quickly pulls it away, real i zing that Mi les is a ch i ld -- be i t a ch i ld in a suit.

MI LES (CONT' D)

If I said that Cornel Archi bald the Third does not pass judgement on potential clients, no matter who they are or what they have or haven't done, woul d that be a true statement?

ARCHI BALD

I'd be out of a job i f i t weren't.

MI LES

Are there any cases you won't take?

ARCHI BALD

I suppose so. Depends, I guess. Why? Keyshon said you wanted to interview me for a school proj ect. What i s all this, son?

MI LES

See, sir, Keyshon was mi staken.

Mi les pulls an authentic Cohiba from his inner-coat pocket and hands i t to Archi bald. He sits back down.

MI LES (CONT' D)

I'd like to begin a case agai nst my parents.

Archi bald recl i nes i n his leather chair. Sparks the Cohiba, and bl ows out a ring of smoke, contempl ating opportunity.

FADE OUT.

SUPER:

**Fool** (fool) *n.*

## 2. One who acts unwisely on a given occasion.

FADE IN:

INT. BUNK - DAY

MORRIE, a nineteen year-old hippie-ish kind of guy with thick horn-rimmed glasses, and five-o'clock shadow left there for style purposes lies on a noisy cot with his hands behind his head.

MORRIE  
(I abored breaths)  
And the painted ponies - oh, wow!  
They go up and down, cause we're  
captured on an ohmygod - ohmygod -  
carousel of time...

A HAND with purple-polished fingernails runs through the hair on Morrie's chest. It is followed by a pony-tail and we see that it belongs to Layla Gardner, on top of him in only her underwear, grinding.

CAMPER (O. S.)  
Morrie, everyone is waiting for  
opening circle! You okay in there?

They freeze.

EXT. OUTDOOR PAVILION - DAY

Morrie, exceptionally glowing, strums an acoustic guitar as he paces around a large circle of irritably HAPPY CAMPERS and their PARENTS, connected at the hands.

MORRIE  
(singing)  
*We can't return, no, we can only  
look, behind from where we came,  
and go round and round and round in  
the circle game.*

CUT TO:

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

THROUGH THE BACK WINDOW, Miles watches the campers sway and sing. He's horrified.

MI LES  
I need to brush up on the Geneva Convention, but is this technically torture?

GARY  
(still in shock)  
You drugged my mother.

MI LES  
And this is how you repay me?

Meredith stifles a laugh. Gary notices.

MEREDITH  
Miles, you've got to do something with the summer. Camp will keep you out of trouble. You'll have fun here, you know, with all your friends. You'll see. You'll make life-long memories.

Miles opens the back door, steps out, and slams it behind him, leaving Gary and Meredith alone.

GARY  
You're babying him. You always have.

MEREDITH  
Have I, Gary? Have I?

GARY  
There's a time in every man's life when he must stop behaving like a boy and start behaving like a man. Don't stand in the way of that.

MEREDITH  
(re: him)  
Yeah, I'm trying not to.

She glares out her window, seeing. Then, the back door opens and Miles slides back in, holding a formal-looking document in hand.

MI LES  
Sign this release form and I'll be on my way.

GARY  
But you wrote this. It's not even...

MEREDITH  
Just sign it, okay?

Annoyed, both Gary and Meredith sign.

MORRIE (O.S.)  
(singing)  
*We can't return, no, we can only  
look...*

CUT TO:

### MI LES SKINNY LEGS

Draped in knee-high black dress socks that poke out of a pair of checkered shorts. He wears a short-sleeve shirt and his clip-on, red-striped tie. He holds a briefcase in hand and walks in SLOW-MOTION towards the assembled camp, like an IRS agent about to issue an audit.

MORRIE  
(singing)  
*...behind from where we came, oh  
yeah, and go round and round and  
round in the circle game.*

Miles stands next to his BUNK-MATES. Among them are Elliot, Nate, Keyshon, and a few other, AWKWARD BOYS.

ELLIOT  
Look on the bright side. At least  
the counselors are screaming hot.

Miles finally notices that all his bunk-mates are staring across the way at Layla -- wearing little mesh short-shorts and a tight, cotton tank-top. Miles is awe-struck.

NATE  
I'd tap that ass two times.

Miles stares at Nate, defensively.

NATE (CONT'D)  
You know, not just once.

MI LES  
Right. Why just once, you know?

CAMPER #1  
My brother stuck his tongue in her  
mouth last summer.

MI LES  
That's here-say.

CAMPER #2  
No, so did mine.

MI LES  
Probably coercion.

CAMPER #3  
And mine.

MI LES  
You serious?

Everyone looks to the last camper in line, VAGHAR, the tiny little Indian Kid.

VAGHAR  
(Indian accent)  
And mine as well.

Miles shakes his head in disbelief.

EXT. CAMP GROUNDS - DAY

Rows and rows of barrack-style, ransacked, old wooden bunks in danger of being condemned. It sits on San Fernando Valley acreage that has the pleasing terrain of Syria.

Miles paces the grounds like a Vietnam War journalist with a long-lensed Nikon around his neck. He SNAPS black and white photos of dilapidated walls, filthy common bathrooms, and insects of all kinds infesting the establishment.

Morrison walks out of the bathroom.

MORRIE  
Hey bud, what's up?

MI LES  
Excuse me, did you even wash your hands?

MORRIE  
Huh? Yeah, man. Of course.

MI LES  
Why didn't I hear the water running?

MORRIE  
No idea. Weird.

MI LES  
Bizarre.

Miles studies him intensely.

MORRIE  
Hey, I don't think we've met, bro.  
I'm Morrie, head counselor.

Morrie extends his hand. Miles doesn't take.

MI LES  
What'd you dry them with?

MORRIE  
Dry what with?

MI LES  
Your hands?

MORRIE  
Oh. A paper towel. Paper towels.

MI LES  
Paper towels?

MORRIE  
Paper towels.

MI LES  
Odd.

MORRIE  
Odd?

MI LES  
I was in there five minutes ago. No  
paper towels.

Morrie doesn't respond, beaten.

MORRIE  
Make sure to drink plenty of water.

MI LES  
Oh, I will.

They stand there for a moment, staring at each other. Then Miles SNAPS a photo right in his face and runs away.

## EXT. ACTIVITIES FIELD - DAY

Girls do their little hand-slapping cheers and dances and rope-jumping crap that little girls in summer camp do. A GIRL sprains her ankle. She HOWLS in pain.

Miles snaps a series of photos of the incident.

ELLIOT (O.S.)  
Last summer was like so cool I  
couldn't even believe it. I'm  
telling you, this place is like a --

Miles lowers the camera, revealing Elliot standing there, happy as can be, a basketball in hand.

MILES  
A labor camp, Elliot. It's a labor camp.

Miles snatches the basketball and launches a textbook three-pointer. Swish. The ball is passed back to him and he drills another three. And another. And another. Even does a turnaround and it sinks beautifully through the net.

ELLIOT  
Boy Miles, you've got quite a shot.

MILES  
It's just physics, you lump.

ELLIOT  
Oh.

Miles snaps black-and-white photos of loose rocks, cracks in the concrete -- any and all potential safety hazards.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)  
Remember I showed you my memory book signed by all the senior counselors last year? Are you making a memory book also?

MILES  
Something like that.

ELLIOT  
If not, than why are you taking pictures?

Nate fires a bounce-pass to Miles who catches it, dribbles it between his legs, and buries another shot.

MI LES  
Evi dence.

Mi les wal ks away, leavi ng Ell i ot confused.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Sl ops of mush somewhat resembling food are fl ung onto plates. Campers shovel it in by the spoon-load.

Mi les refuses. He takes a sample of the mush and drops it into a petri -di sh, which he slides into his backpack.

An enthusiastic CLAP is heard. It echoes across the dining hall.

MORRI E  
 (as he claps, sing-songy)  
 One. Two. Three. Clear! One. Two  
 three. Clear!

The entire camp j oins in. They scrub and scrub and dry and dry and pass their di shes down, cl apping like tri ned seal s. Ell i ot cl aps and si ngs the loudest.

MI LES  
 What. In the hell. Are you doi ng?

ELLI OT  
 Cl eari ng.

MI LES  
 (soundi ng i t out)  
 Cl ear...i ng?

ELLI OT  
 Cl eari ng i s somethi ng we do, as a  
 camp.

Mi les i s not convi nced.

ELLI OT (CONT' D)  
 Everybody does i t.

MI LES  
 Said the SS Offi cer before he  
 rai sed hi s pistol and decimated my  
 ancestors.

Ell i ot looks gui lty, and stops cl eari ng immedi ately.

MI LES (V. O.) (CONT' D)  
 ' The revolution is not an apple  
 that falls when it is ripe.

INT. BUNK - NIGHT

It's the middle of the night, and Miles is the only camper awake in a bunk-full of slobs. He can hardly bare the symphonic sounds of snoring coming from every corner of the bunk. He writes a manifesto with an ink-pen, by candlelight.

MI LES (V. O.)  
 You have to make it fall', said the  
 great Che Guevara.

Elliott snores the loudest from the top bunk. He flips over in his sleep, rattling the San Andreas Fault.

MI LES (V. O.) (CONT' D)  
 Today I must ask you, fellow  
 campers, help me shake the tree.  
 Take a moment and consider, are the  
 conditions in which we are living  
 up to the basic standards of a  
 civilized society?

Elliott farts loudly. Miles kicks the top bunk with serious aggression. Elliott sleeps right through it.

MI LES (V. O.) (CONT' D)  
 I shall take the opposing position.

EXT. CAMP GROUNDS - NIGHT

Miles wears all black as he moves under the cover of darkness.

MI LES (V. O.)  
 Our parents drop us here to labor  
 and sleep so that they can enjoy  
 two weeks of solitude away from us.

He slips into a bunk.

INT. BUNK - NIGHT

He slides his manifesto under the beds of every camper.

MI LES (V. O.)  
 I can now sympathize with the  
 interned Japanese...

INT. ANOTHER BUNK - NIGHT

He covertly distributes more copies of his manifesto.

MI LES (V. O.)  
 And can only hope to maintain my  
 dignity as well as they did.

A TINY KID tosses and turns, deep in a disturbed sleep.

TINY KID  
 Mommy? That you? Is it you, Mommy?

Miles stuffs the manifesto into the kid's open mouth.

MI LES  
 (shakes his head)  
 A lifetime of therapy. Guaranteed.

EXT. CAMP GROUNDS - NIGHT

Miles hides from tree to tree as he makes his way across camp.

MI LES (V. O.)  
 I say it's time we revolt.  
 Opposition to tyranny is our only  
 hope. Therefore, I ask each and  
 every one of you to --

Suddenly, a flash-light beam illuminates Miles. He freezes in mid-stride, his hands up.

LAYLA  
 Don't even move.

MI LES  
 Sorry, pardon me?

LAYLA  
 You're busted.

MI LES  
 Seriously? You're gonna --

LAYLA  
 Seriously. You're in trouble.

MI LES  
(approaching, hands kept up)  
It's Layla, right?

She nods.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
Authority, Layla. That make you  
feel good?

LAYLA  
Euphoric, actually.

MI LES  
I bet.

Miles lowers his hands slowly, as though she may shoot.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
Can we at least talk about this?

INT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Miles and Layla sit on the swings, lit only by moonlight.

MI LES  
Point is, you overlook this little  
transgression and I'll unionize the  
counseling staff and personally  
guarantee an immediate increase in  
wages.

LAYLA  
Interesting proposal. I'll give you  
that.

MI LES  
And... I won't tell anybody about  
you and Morris. Head counselor.

LAYLA  
(shocked)  
Who told you about that?

MI LES  
I never burn a source.

LAYLA  
That's over, anyway.

She kicks her legs up and soars OUT OF FRAME.

LAYLA (O. S.) (CONT'D)  
 And I'm not a slut, if that's what  
 you're thinking.

Layla swings BACK IN FRAME.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
 Camp psychologist said I was just  
 'acting out'.

Miles kicks his legs and now he swings OUT OF FRAME.

MI LES (O. S.)  
 Oh, is that what they're calling it  
 these days?

He swings BACK IN FRAME.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
 And what are you acting out  
 against?

LAYLA  
 I'm a sixteen year-old girl. What  
 do you think?

Miles shrugs, having no idea.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
 Uh... everything.

Miles holds his swing steady with hers.

MI LES  
 Can I tell you something? You might  
 get mad.

LAYLA  
 Now I really want to know.

MI LES  
 I think I'm... kind of, in love  
 with you.

Miles kicks his legs up and swings OUT OF FRAME as quickly as he can. He swings back down, digs the toes of his shoes into the sand, and comes to a stop.

He eagerly awaits a reaction. She just looks away, avoiding eye contact.

MI LES (CONT'D)

It's not like I'm lustning over you or anythi ng, if that's what you're thi nking. So get that idea out of your head, the sooner the better. I don't even care. I barely even thi nk about you. This is the first time, actual ly. Now I'm done. The subject bores me. Anyway, I only said 'I thi nk'.

Mi les gets off the swing, and wal ks out of the playground.

LAYLA

Tell your friends I'm not a slut.

MI LES

Young girl. Acting out. I'll put out a press release.

Layla leans on the swing, and gazes up at the sky.

EXT. CAMP GROUNDS - NIGHT

Mi les hikes back to his bunk, passing through shadows. Layla catches up, lighting him up with her flashlight beam.

LAYLA

Look, it's nothing personal .

MI LES

Sorry, what's not?

LAYLA

This whole thi ng.

MI LES

Oh. . .  
(points to himself and her)  
. . . this whole thi ng? Yeah, this whole thi ng's over.

LAYLA

Mi les, I want to be friends, okay?

He continues up the dirt path. She still trails him. He pauses at the back door to his bunk.

MI LES

I didn't even want to come here. My parents made me.

LAYLA  
Yeah, well what are you going to do.

MILES  
What am I going to do?

LAYLA  
Yeah. I mean, you're here now so, my advice, make the best of --

MILES  
No, no. I'm going to sue them.

Layla laughs hard. Real hard. Miles does not. She stops cold, realizing he's serious.

CUT TO:

INT. PARENT'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Gary is brushing his teeth.

GARY  
It's just a rough time, honey. The economy is in a downward spiral. Nobody's hiring. Hell, I don't even know if I want to work at another firm right now anyway, you know?

He spits, and shuts the light off.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gary crawls into bed. Meredith is lying on her side.

GARY  
I mean, I'm not even sure I want to be a lawyer anymore. Maybe this is an opportunity for me to explore something new. Something entirely different. Something exciting. What do you think?

Meredith doesn't respond.

GARY (CONT'D)  
Honey?

Gary leans over her, and sees that her eyes are closed. He shuts his light off, rolls over, and goes to sleep.

DRI FT OVER to Meredi th, who lies there, eyes now wide open. They roll.

EXT. DINING HALL - NEXT MORNING

There's an awkward silence that hangs over the crowded hall. Meals have been eaten and dirty plates rest in front of still-hungry campers.

MORRIE  
(clapping)  
One. Two. Three. Clear! One. Two  
three. Clear!

Staff members push around carts that hold plastic bins for dirty dishes, anti-septic squirt bottles, and dish towels.

From around the room, campers watch Miles, awaiting a signal. He picks up his plastic plate and bangs it on the table over and over, in a rhythm. The entire camp joins in, like a prison uprising.

Miles nods to Nate, who rises to his feet, leans back and sings out loud. Surprisingly, he's got a deep, soulful voice, like a teenage Isaac Hayes.

NATE  
*Go down Moses. Way down in Egypt's land, oh yeah. And you just tell that old Pharaoh to... to let my people go.*

For a second, the camp sits in silence. Campers and counselors stare each other down.

Then, Miles nods and all at once campers bang their plates on the table over and over like quarter notes on a snare drum. Campers sing a haunting, spiritual harmony.

NATE (CONT'D)  
*When Israel was in Egypt's land...*

CAMPERS  
*Let my people go.*

NATE  
*Oppressed so hard they could not stand...*

CAMPERS  
*Let my people go.*

NATE  
*Go down Moses, way down to Egypt's  
 Land and you, you tell that old  
 Pharaoh to...*

CAMPERS/NATE  
*Let my people go.*

They continue to sing and Morris has no idea what to do. Layla's eyes find Miles reclining in his chair, glowing with accomplishment. She hides a grin.

A COUNSELOR walks up to Morris and hands him a wrinkled copy of Miles' manifesto.

Morris glances around the room until he finds Miles, who darts out the back door.

EXT. DINING HALL - MORNING

Layla catches up, cornering him.

LAYLA  
 Dead man walking.

MILES  
 (shrugs)  
 Depends where you come down on free  
 speech.

He winks and walks away, leaving a trail of confidence behind.

MILES (O. S.) (CONT'D)  
 And therefore, in conclusion...

INT. CAMP DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Miles is speaking to Morris and two older CAMP DIRECTORS, a hippie man with a goatee and Birkenstocks, and a face-lifted woman whose tight skin is in a perpetual fight with gravity.

## MILES

I argue that, though John Stuart Mill's Harm Principle clearly illustrates the danger of yelling fire in a crowded theater, tonight I was doing nothing more than airing my views and expressing my grievances, a privilege extended to us all as you most certainly know, by our beloved Bill Of Rights. I can only hope that you agree with this point of view. As Americans. During a fearful time. When our country is at war. At home. And abroad. With an enemy we do not know.

Morrise rolls his eyes.

MILES (CONT'D)  
The terrorists.

The camp directors share a look of utter exhaustion.

CUT TO:

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Miles gazes out the backseat window as the summer camp passes by. A dirt path becomes a one-way road which becomes a city street which becomes the busy 101 freeway.

In the front seat, Gary and Meredithe are enraged.

GARY (O. S.)  
Alcohol, drugs, sex . . .

EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - NIGHT

The Mercedes pulls into the driveway. The engine turns off.

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

They sit in the car, idle.

GARY  
. . . all somewhat understandable reasons for a kid to get himself kicked out of camp. But not you.

MEREDI TH  
No. Not our Miles.

GARY  
No, our Miles starts a revolution.

MI LES  
It was either that or arts and crafts.

MEREDI TH  
Dad and I have discussed this.  
You're going to get a job.

Miles makes the sound of a rim-shot with his mouth, as though Meredi th just delivered the punch-line to a joke. Gary and Meredi th turn in their seats to glare at him.

MI LES  
I know money is tight and all because dad got fired --

GARY  
Laid off.

MI LES  
But seriously? This is a joke, right? A tasteless, offensive joke?

GARY  
The feeling of earning an honest buck. How's that sound?

CUT TO:

A 9MM PISTOL

Col d, black steel pointed right at US. Three loud rounds of fire spit right out the nose.

INT. NORTHRIDGE GUN CLUB - DAY

Miles aims the pistol, squints his left eye through a pair of yellow safety goggles, and squeezes off five BLASTING rounds.

MI LES  
(to himself, possessed)  
'The hour of Emancipation is advancing. This enterprise is for the young.'

He loads another clip, fires off seven more rounds, and proudly lowers the weapon.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
 'For those who can follow it up,  
 and bear it through to its  
 consummation'.

Miles yanks off his goggles and fires one last, piercing shot, gangster-style with his hand cocked sideways.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
 I will not let you down, Mr. Thomas Jefferson.

Next to Miles, a large, tattooed GANGSTER shakes his head.

GANGSTER  
 I heard all that, you know.

MI LES  
 Oh. Okay.

GANGSTER  
 Shit was gay, man. A speech to yourself.

Miles clicks the safety on, and tucks the gun in the back of his suit pants.

GANGSTER (CONT'D)  
 I mean really, really gay.

MI LES  
 Yeah, thanks. I've heard your stance on the issue.

Miles walks into the shop and slides the gun across the counter to a Mexican SALESMAN with a shaved head.

SALESMAN  
 Told you bro, she got a serious kick. You break a rib, little man?

MI LES  
 Little man. That's cute.

He slides over a leather-bound folder.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
 Your thesis. Spell checked and everything.

(MORE)

MI LES (CONT' D)  
 You'll graduate from junior college  
 at the top of your class, and  
 you've probably got a decent shot  
 at the Pulitzer. Thanks for the  
 shells.

SALESMAN  
 Always a pleasure, homes.

They pound fists and Miles walks out, a backpack slung over his shoulder.

EXT. NORTHRIDGE GUN CLUB - DAY

Miles shoves his i-pod earplugs into his ears and cranks up a gritty, thumping bass-line. "Hip-Hop", by Dead Prez.

EXT. VALLEY STREETS - DAY

He walks against traffic like he's the only person on earth. He passes liquor-stores, 7-11s, and a school holding fenced-in kindergartners. Eventually he comes upon a large, brick synagogue.

INT. SYNAGOGUE OFFICE - DAY

RUTH, a secretary far past 80, peels off her bifocals as Miles enters.

RUTH  
 Where have you been, young man? You  
 were to be back from lunch at one  
 o'clock. It's nearly one-thirty!

MI LES  
 Forty years in the desert, Ruth,  
 don't rush me now.

RUTH  
 Rebecca is waiting for you in the  
 sanctuary.

He walks out the door.

RUTH (CONT' D)  
 (under her breath)  
 Hitler.

He pokes his head back in.

MI LES  
You have to live with that.

Ruth sighs, caught.

INT. SANCTUARY - DAY

The same sanctuary in which Miles was Bar Mitzvah'd. Stained glass windows bathe the room in glorious, blushed colors.

REBECCA, a tiny and timid little twelve year-old, stands up on the bimah. She chants her Torah portion and it's just horrible -- sounds like cats burning.

Miles sits in the front row with his arms draped over two chairs, as though this were theater auditions.

REBECCA  
(chanting)  
*Ve' havtah, et Adonai el ohei cha,  
v' chol levavcha, v' chol  
navshecha...*

MI LES  
Stop. Stop stop stop.

REBECCA  
*Uk-tov-tom le-yot al yadecha...*

MI LES  
Stop. Stop stop. Stop stop stop.

REBECCA  
*Vchai -yu- l' tofot bei nenecha...*

MI LES  
Stop!

Miles beams his pencil at her. She has to duck to avoid a serious eye injury.

REBECCA  
(frightened)  
What? What'd I do?

MI LES  
You know how God created the world  
in six days and on the seventh he  
rested?

REBECCA  
Uh-huh. So?

MI LES  
Seems like he had a little work  
left to do, now doesn't it?

She bursts into tears and runs away. Miles sighs, and then spots the RABBI standing off in the corner, watching.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
(startled)  
Jesus Christ!

EXT. CALHOUN HOUSE - NIGHT

The menacing Volvo pulls into the driveway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gary is on the phone, sorting through files in front of him. Meredith enters with a sullen Miles in tow.

GARY  
What happened?

MEREDITH  
He got fired. And we'll probably  
have to find another congregation  
for High Holidays this year.

GARY  
You got fired?

MI LES  
(shakes his head)  
Laid off.

Gary charges after Miles, who makes it to his room and slams the door, fending off the attack.

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

He flips down the Wu Tang Clan poster, revealing a white dry-erase board hanging on the wall. On it are the words:

**Abandonment: Camp Okeebogee. Imprisonment: Grounded. Abuse:**  
Now, with a black sharpie, he writes **Mental**.

GARY (O. S.)  
(yelling, through the door)  
No television, no radio, no  
internet, no telephone, no fucking  
breathing unless I say to!

Miles opens his closet and we see boxes and boxes of legal briefs. He fetches his mini tape recorder, clicks it on and speaks right into it.

MILES  
Can I breath now, papa? I'm turni ng  
red! I'm turni ng red!

He slides the tape recorder across the carpet with an evil grin, in listening range of the door.

GARY (O. S.)  
Open this goddamn door right now.  
I'm going to take your tonsils out  
with my bare hands!

MILES  
(to himself)  
This is good audi o.

He crawls into bed, pulls the covers over him, and casually begins a new page in his composition book, as Gary continues to yell obscenities.

EXT. CALABASAS NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

It's painfully early, and Miles is hard at work at his new job, mowing lawns. He mows and mows with determination.

Down the block he notices the garage door to his house open, and his father's Mercedes pulling out.

A MOTORCYCLE COP is waiting around the corner, a speed-trap. Miles rushes over in a panic.

MILES  
Excuse me, offi cer?

COP  
Yeah?

MILES  
You see that car over there? You  
know, the silver one?

COP  
I see it.

MILES  
The man dri ving tried to sell me  
marijuana. And I'm really scared.

Miles' innocent face is reflected in the cop's mirrored aviator sunglasses.

MI LES (CONT'D)

See, I know drugs are bad for me and all, and that I should stay far away from them, but this man, he made such a compelling case and now I want to try them all.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The cop pulls up behind Gary's Mercedes. His siren roars.

INT. MERCEDES - MORNING

Gary spots the swirling red-light in his rear-view.

GARY

Shit.

He rolls down the window.

GARY (CONT'D)

There a problem, officer?

Without answering, the cop yanks open the door, pulls Gary out, and cuffs him on the sidewalk in one impressive motion.

GARY (CONT'D)

What do you think you're doing? You can't just pull a man out of his car like this!

The cop reaches into the center console and finds the blunt that Nate painfully sampled, and Miles ingeniously saved.

GARY (CONT'D)

I have rights! I'll have you know I'm a lawyer!

MI LES (O.S.)

Was a lawyer!

Gary instantly looks for the body connected to that voice. Miles dives down behind a Volkswagen next to Elliot, who holds a digital camcorder.

ELLIOT  
Awesome footage. I'm going to put it on the internet.

MILES  
Not until after the trial.

We DRI FT ABOVE Mi les and EI li ot until we are hi gh enough to ANGLE DOWN and, when we do, we see that Mi les has carved the words JIHAD in the lawns of the nei ghborhood.

INT. DEN/MEREDI TH'S OFFICE - DAY

Meredith, on the phone, sits at her desk across from SHARON, a mi ddl e-aged housewi fe.

MEREDI TH  
(into phone)  
I tol d you the j udge woul d di smi ss i t. Di d they at least let you keep the pot? That was a joke, Gary.  
Don' t take yoursel f so seri ousl y.  
Excuse me? Now why woul d you say something I like that? Look, I have a patient. Can we talk about thi s later?

Meredith hangs up, perturbed.

MEREDI TH (CONT' D)  
I'm sorry, Sharon. Where were we?

SHARON  
Oh, okay. Well, I spend all day in the house. I vacuum, I clean, and then there I am, all alone, in a clean, vacuumed house with nothing to do, and nobody to do it with.

MEREDI TH  
Uh-huh. Go on.

SHARON  
Latel y, I've even begun tal king to mysel f.

MEREDI TH  
More common than you' d thi nk.

SHARON  
Mostly sex stuff.

MEREDI TH  
Sorry, what?

SHARON  
Like role-playing, but with myself.  
Sort of like a child using his  
imagination to create an  
alternative world, only this world  
consists of dark, twisted thoughts.

MEREDI TH  
I'm not following.

SHARON  
Sometimes I imagine the FedEx guy  
knocking on my door with a special  
delivery. I sign for it and the  
next thing I know he's got me bent  
over the hood of my station wagon  
with his hands sliding down my --  
Well, I won't go on. Unless you've  
got the time?

MI LES (O. S.)  
Oh, see... time we've got.

All eyes go to Miles, leaning against the door post.

SHARON  
Okay, great. So, then he radios in  
and gathers up some of his buddies,  
like, other FedEx guys and stuff  
and they come over with their --

MEREDI TH  
Miles, get out of here! Can't you  
see I'm working!  
(to Sharon)  
Sharon, I really apologize.  
(to Miles)  
Counting to three. One...

Miles walks over, and takes Sharon's hands in his.

MI LES  
Lady, I don't have a Ph. D. And I'll  
let you in on a little secret,  
neither does my mom. But I know  
this... you're really messed up. I  
mean it. Total whack job. Can I  
give you some advice?

SHARON  
Please. Anything. I'm losing my  
mind!

MEREDITH  
Two.

MI LES  
Vi codin and Oprah.  
(gesturing to Meredith)  
It works for her.

MI LES/MEREDITH  
Three!

Meredith bursts out of her chair and slaps Miles right across the face -- he dramatizes the blow as though this were a Western. He throws himself over Meredith's desk, knocking over everything, and flings himself into the bookcase. Self-help paperbacks fall all over him.

MI LES  
Wow, that was surprisingly violent.  
(to Sharon)  
Ma'am, did you see that?

Sharon, in complete shock, nods. Miles pulls out a document and an ink pen.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
Great. Then if you'll just initial  
here, here, here and here.

She does, out of reflex.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
Well, I'll leave you two to your...  
whatever.

Miles winks at Meredith, and walks out.

INT. MI LES' BEDROOM - DAY

Miles races in, shuts and locks the door. He catches his breath and smiles victoriously. He walks over to his dry-erase board and writes: **Abuse: Mental And Physical**.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

Miles walks into the den, where Gary sits in front of the family computer, intensely surfing employment web-sites.

MI LES  
Hey there, pop.

GARY  
(wi thout turni ng around)  
What can I do for you, Dr. Mengal e?

MI LES  
Can you check the internet? I heard  
the Presi dent just declared war.

GARY  
Another one? Just what we need.

Gary cl icks on the internet logo and a shocki ng amount of  
graphic pornography appears on the computer. It's a si de-  
show of raw flesh in incredi bl y raw si tuati ons.

Mi les pul ls out a di gi tal camera and SNAPS. The FLASH goes  
off.

MI LES  
A woman havi ng sex wi th a horse?  
That's your thi ng?  
(shrugs)  
Hey, j udge not lest ye be j udged.

Gary expl odes out of hi s chai r and turns to decapi tate hi s  
son, when -- FLASH!

INT. MI LES' BEDROOM - NI GHT

A photo of Gary wi th hi s fist extended appears on Mi les'  
laptop. Mi les grins, ear-to-ear.

EXT. CALABASAS COUNTRY CLUB - DRI VI NG RANGE - DAY

Mi les is working hi s new j ob -- carrying buckets of gol f  
bal ls over to GOLFERS. He smi l es cordial ly as he pl aces bal ls  
in front of swi nging iron.

He spots hi s father a few tees down, swi nging next to a  
di sti ngui shed bl ack man named RUSSELL.

RUSSELL  
(teei ng off)  
How's that lovel y wi fe of yours,  
Gar?

GARY  
 Ever since I got laid off, we, I  
 don't know, we argue, non-stop. And  
 by non-stop, I mean I'm getting  
 yelled at in my dreams, then I wake  
 up and get yelled at for that.

Gary smacks a golf ball with a 3-wood.

RUSSELL  
 Women want security, pal. A woman's  
 husband gets fired --

GARY  
 Laid off.

RUSSELL  
 And what do you expect?

GARY  
 Support. Instead, we battle. I  
 don't know what I'm going to do.

RUSSELL  
 Don't start with that.

GARY  
 With what?

RUSSELL  
 An exit plan. Not when it comes to  
 marriage.

Gary thinks about that for a moment, and drives another ball.

GARY  
 Well, I hear Nate had a great time  
 at camp.

RUSSELL  
 I had an even better time with him  
 gone.

Gary laughs. Russell swings. A beautiful 200-yarder.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)  
 And your kid? My wife tells me he  
 got the boot for organizing some  
 sort of rebellion?

GARY  
 I'm trying to get him enlisted in  
 the Marines but they say he has  
 flat feet and asthma. That, and  
 he's thirteen.

RUSSELL  
 I say give the boy a medal for  
 speaking his mind.

MI LES (O. S.)  
 And I concur.

Russell and Gary turn to see Miles on the green next to them, a club in his hand and a ball lined up on the tee.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
 (to Gary)  
 Here's a tip, no charge.

Miles slices a picture-perfect drive nearly 300 yards.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
 You're rushing the follow-through.

Gary drops his 3-wood and races after Miles. Miles, avoiding a sure death, darts out onto the driving range. Golf balls drop like mortars all around them.

Gary catches Miles near the 150-yard mark and dive-tackles him. The two roll around on the grass.

GARY  
 Sonofa --

Miles breaks free. Gary finds his footing, but gets pummeled by a golf ball to the forehead and hits the grass hard.

GARY (CONT'D)  
 I'm having you put to sleep! Just  
 like Arnold! Our first dog!

Miles stops running and turns around, horrified.

MI LES  
 What a cruel thing to say. That dog  
 was my whole life! Why would you  
 take it there?

Miles, about to cry, beams a golf ball at Gary's head, and escapes into the dense trees lining the golf course.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
Please tell me you got all of that.

Elliot, his trusted cameraman, gives a smiling thumbs-up.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Miles and Elliot stand a few feet apart.

MI LES  
Okay, punch me in the face.

WHACK! Elliot slugs him hard, close-fisted, square in the face. Miles goes flailing backwards and lands on the tile floor. Blood gushes from his fractured septum.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
(in agony)  
Christ, man! Mother of GAWD! You're supposed to hesitate. Say, 'no' Miles, I can't do it. I don't want to do it because you're my closest friend'.  
(explanation of pain)  
FUCK!

ELLIOT  
I feel terrible.

MI LES  
Just take the picture.

Elliot kneels down, points the camera at Miles' disjoined nose, and -- FLASH!

INT. DEN - DAY

Meredith is at the family computer, typing. She appears frustrated. CLOSE ON an Excel sheet listing their family income. In the column marked Meredith, several numbers are listed. In the column marked Gary, nothing but zeros. She shakes her head, disappointed.

Miles, his nose taped up and stuffed with gauze, stands over her shoulder.

MI LES  
Hey there, Ma.

MEREDI TH  
(wi thout turning around)  
What now? Off selling secrets to Al -  
Qaeda?

MI LES  
This is serious. Can you check the  
internet real quick? I heard there  
was another terrorist attack.

MEREDI TH  
What is the world coming to?

Meredith clicks on the internet logo and a vile, pornographic montage begins. Raw, pasty flesh contorted in awkward, animalistic positions.

MI LES  
C'mon, mom... voyeur?

Meredith turns to grab him and -- FLASH! Miles lowers the camera and walks down the...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

... where Gary had been watching from around the corner. He's laughing hard into his palms.

GARY  
That was good. I'll give you that.

MI LES  
(smiles)  
Thanks.

Gary just keeps on chuckling until Meredith appears, out in the hallway. Then, Gary stops.

INT. MI LES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miles downloads the photo of Meredith, her angry hands extended, onto his laptop. He catches a glimpse of his bandaged nose in the reflection in the mirror. He walks over to his dry-erase board and under **Abuse: Mental. Physical.**  
**Very Physical.**

GARY (O.S.)  
Straight A's all your life. Over-  
achieved in every subject. When it  
comes to art and music, you're a  
goddamn renaissance man.

## INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The unhappy family is gathered around the kitchen table. Meredithe stands over the stove, stirring Spaghetti sauce.

GARY  
I have to believe you're not a bad kid. Just maybe a little misguided. Actually, no... the more I think about it, yeah, you're a bad kid.

MEREDITHE  
(with disdain)  
That's helpful.

GARY  
Yeah? Well you patting him on the back every time he launches a Katusha rocket isn't helping either.

MILES  
(quietly)  
Um... I never actually went through...

They glare at each other and I look away, not wanting to fight in front of Miles.

MILES (CONT'D)  
...with the launch.

GARY  
Miles, let's pray it's just a phase.

MEREDITHE  
We can't pray, remember? We got thrown out of temple.

GARY  
I'm trying to talk to my goddamn son and you can't stop yourself from interrupting! Could you just please, please... go!

She drops the wooden spoon and storms out. Gary looks at Miles, but Miles looks down at the floor, uncomfortable.

GARY (CONT'D)  
It's just... well, it's a tough time, you know, for everyone.

MILES

Yeah.

They sip their drinks.

MILES (CONT'D)

Dad?

GARY

What?

MILES

She understands.

Gary nods, appreciating the support. Gary goes to throw out the trash, and when he does -- Miles quickly sprinkles some sort of powder into the Spaghetti sauce.

Meredith returns, and angrily plops Spaghetti down onto everyone's plate. Gary takes his seat and they eat. Miles makes a big display of how tasty it is.

MILES (CONT'D)

(to Meredith)

Did I ever tell you how much I love your cooking?

MEREDITH

No, but, well . . . thanks, Miles.

Meredith smiles, touched by his unexpected kindness.

MILES

Hey, it's a pleasure.

CUT TO:

MILES

As he violently throws up into the toilet.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

He takes a short break from heaving to literally hug the porcelain.

GARY (O.S.)

For the love of -- !

Gary barrels in, knocks Miles out of the way, and vomits violently. They gather air, both nearly passed out on the floor.

MI LES  
Food poisoning. Like the summer of '98.

GARY  
'98 pales in comparison. Don't tell Mom. She'll feel terrible.

Meredith bursts through the door, shoves both of them out of the way, and howls.

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Miles lays out his suit, shirt, clip-on tie, and freshly buffed dress shoes.

He pulls his laptop from under his bed, and he begins the arduous process of transcribing the thousands of words he has written in his two-foot tall stack of composition books.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - HOURS LATER

ON LAPTOP SCREEN, he types the words THE END. Satisfied, he presses print, climbs into bed, and turns off the lights. He goes to sleep to the sweet sound of pages printing.

FADE OUT.

SUPER:

**Fool** (fool) *n.*

3. One who has been tricked or made to appear ridiculous; a dupe.

FADE IN:

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Miles brushes his teeth in perfect little circles, his execution flawless.

He swishes the water around in his mouth, stares at himself in the mirror, and spits like a boxer ready to climb into the ring.

He slips on his trousers, buttons up his freshly-ironed suit, the iron still steaming in the background, and clips on his tie.

He gels his hair into a perfect crest in the mirror, and considers winking. Instead, he throws a fist.

EXT. CALABASAS STREETS - MORNING

It's daybreak. The sun shines down on freshly cut lawns. Sprinklers turn on in unison. Garage doors open and close as NEIGHBORS hustle off to work.

The awakening calm is broken by a three-car caravan of different model SUVs as they roar down the street like an angry elephant herd.

INT. LAND ROVER - MORNING

The lead SUV of the pack. ELLIOT sits in the passenger seat. His mother, DORA, an equally large individual, sips an extra-large strawberry-banana smoothie while she drives.

DORA  
Did you forget the extra fiber boost?

ELLIOT  
No.

DORA  
Then why don't I feel it yet?

In the backseat are three other KIDS. One's asleep. One's listening to an i-pod. Another drools as he stares out the window.

DORA (CONT'D)  
Oh, there... now I feel it.

ELLIOT  
(disgusted)  
Mom.

DORA  
So, everybody excited for the first day of school?

ELLIOT  
C'mon. You know the answer to that question. School blows.

Dora slaps him hard across his face, completely unexpected.

DORA  
Consider yourself lucky to be getting an education. It's a privilege.

ELLIOT  
No, actually... I'm pretty sure it's a right.

She grips his arm hard, like an angry cop.

DORA  
Smart guy, huh?

ELLIOT  
(nods)  
I go to school.  
(points left)  
Turn here. Keyshon has to run something up to his father.

DORA  
Ah, Christ. Why didn't you tell me earlier?

Elliot flinches, expecting another blow.

DORA  
Oh, grow a pair, would ya?

Dora turns the wheel. She looks in her rear-view and signals to the MOMS behind her. These women could be piloting fighter jets.

EXT. CALABASAS STREETS - MORNING

WE DRIFT quickly past the second SUV in line, a Lexus, and we get a brief view through the passenger windows of bored KIDS being hauled off to school like mental patients in transit.

CUT TO:

FIVE OVERLY-MANI CURED TOES

As they slam hard on a brake pedal.

## INT. ESCALADE - MORNING

The toes belong to Keyshon's mother CLAIRE, the driver of a gleaming white, chromed-out Escalade.

Behind her, Miles sits between Keyshon and Nate, as though they were his bodyguards.

This is a motorcade. A motorcade for Miles J. Calhoun. And the moms don't even know it.

## EXT. CALABASAS STREET - DAY

The SUV's brake in unison and come to a stop on the side of a busy street.

## INT. ESCALADE - DAY

Claire looks at Keyshon, Nate, and Miles in the rear-view.

CLAI RE  
Why we stoppi ng?

They all shrug. She fidgets with the radio, leaving it on gangster rap. She taps her extra-long fingernails against the steering wheel.

## EXT. VENTURA BOULEVARD - MORNING

The motorcade pulls away. Nobody even noticed Miles disembark, two heavy briefcases swinging at his sides.

He climbs the steps and enters the tall, glass office building.

## INT. ELEVATOR - MORNING

He glances at his reflection in the mirrored-doors. As usual, he's incredibly pleased at what glances back.

The doors open and Miles steps out, briskly.

## INT. RECEPTION AREA - ARCHIBALD, SCHAFER AND FOX - DAY

Doesn't break pace. A RECEPTIONIST shoots up from behind her desk.

RECEPTIONIST  
 Mr. Calhoun, we were expecting you.  
 How about a glass of orange juice  
 and a granola bar?

MI LES  
 Coffee. Black.

He walks right into Archibald's office.

INT. ARCHIBALD'S OFFICE - DAY

Archibald paces back and forth, enjoying a sprawling view of the Encino Hills.

He looks up as Miles enters and slides the briefcases on the beautiful oak desk.

ARCHIBALD  
 (into phone)  
 Governor, calling you back now, ya  
 hear?

He hangs up, and shakes Miles' hand.

ARCHIBALD (CONT'D)  
 Have a seat, son.

Miles sinks into an expensive, brown leather chair. From behind, A HAND passes him a steaming cup of black coffee.

ARCHIBALD (CONT'D)  
 I just want to make sure that we're  
 real clear with each other here,  
 alright?

MI LES  
 Of course, sir.

ARCHIBALD  
Emancipation. You understand what  
 this word means, don't you?

MI LES  
 Let's not waste anybody's time  
 here, okay?

ARCHIBALD  
 Freedom. It means freedom. In this  
 case, freedom from your mother and  
 father. Freedom from their  
 constant, unconditional love.

MI LES  
With all due respect, sir --

ARCHI BALD  
Understand, you do this and you can't go back. The law is permanent. A decision is made and lives are altered. You're risking a whole lot here, a whole heck of a lot that may never be recovered, win or lose.

Archibald paces in front of his windows, commanding.

ARCHI BALD (CONT'D)  
Once you walk out of here my paralegal picks up the phone and files a motion and this goes public and a monster is unleashed that neither you nor I can control. Son, these people, they're your --

MI LES  
Defendants, sir.

Archibald sits on the edge of his desk, leveling with Miles.

ARCHI BALD  
This will hurt them in a way you won't understand until you have a child of your own. This really what you want to do?

MI LES  
I'll be co-counsel if allowed.

Archibald sighs, then he chuckles to himself, amused by the kid's determination.

He sits down behind his desk and opens the first briefcase. He rifles through audio tapes, a petri dish of camp food, still photos of his parents surfing porn, medical documents with the words FOOD POISONING underlined.

He opens the second briefcase, and comes across 700 or so typed pages.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
My memoirs. I've been writing it since I was six. Non-fiction, feel free to fact-check. Filled with every sordid detail about my mother and fathers' lives.

Archibald closes the briefcase, impressed.

ARCHIBALD  
Mr. Calhoun, I have some good news.  
(leans in)  
We're going to win.

MILES  
Because it's right?

ARCHIBALD  
Because I can.

Miles nods, admiring the logic.

ARCHIBALD (CONT'D)  
I'll have one of my interns assist  
you in prepping your testimony.

MILES  
I don't think that will be  
necessary, sir. I'm perfectly  
capable of --

The door opens and in walks Layla Gardner, gorgeous in a  
young, professional kind-of-way.

LAYLA  
Miles Calhoun. Well, I'd have never  
guessed.

Layla extends her hand. Miles stands in disbelief.

ARCHIBALD  
This is Ms. Gardner. My new intern.

LAYLA  
(to Miles, winks)  
School credit. But I don't do it  
for that.

He hands her the two briefcases. Her shoulders sag from the  
weight. Her smile disappears.

ARCHIBALD  
Layla, give Mr. Calhoun a lift to  
school, would ya sweetheart? Oh,  
and make a copy of, uh, his  
memoirs, read the thing and give me  
a full report on it by the morning.  
(to Miles)  
Court starts on Monday, son. Be  
ready.

MI LES  
Al ways.

Mi les nods proudly, and walks out. Layla follows, lugging the heavy briefcases behind her.

ARCHI BALD  
(yelling O. S.)  
Phyllis darling, hold my calls.

Archi bald sits in his chair, reclining back on the fine Italian leather. He pulls a file out of the briefcase and glances at it. The photograph of Miles and his parents vacationing in Jamaica slips out.

He studies it, intrigued by a once happy family soon to be torn asunder. He shakes his head.

INT. VOLKSWAGON JETTA - DAY

Layla drives. Miles sits shotgun, reading the Wall Street Journal.

MI LES  
What are you doing?

LAYLA  
I thought you could use my help. I didn't believe you when you told me you were suing your parents, but then I talked to your friend Elliot who told me that you went and hired a lawyer. I found out who and applied for an internship.

MI LES  
I don't need your help.

LAYLA  
I think you do. You got kicked out of summer camp based on a flawed argument.

MI LES  
Apparently Camp Okeebogee doesn't believe in the basic tenants of democracy and has no regard for individual rights. I don't know, I'm building a case.

LAYLA

See, I believe you can win this one. With some help, of course.

MILES

Shouldn't you be off bring and purging, or whatever 16 year-old girls do?

LAYLA

You're smart, but you don't know how to read people. It's okay, you're young. Eventually, you will learn that everything important exists between the lines. That's where you look, and that's where you make your moves.

MILES

Tell me more, oh wise one.

LAYLA

You can stay at my house once the subpoena is delivered. Archibald doesn't want you staying at home.

Layla turns up the radio. A terrible GWEN STEFANI pop song is heard.

LAYLA (CONT'D)

Don't worry, it'll be fun!

She turns the music up a few more decibels and sings along loudly with Gwen.

MILES

Dear diary. Today I contemplated suicide.

Miles gazes out the window.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CALHOUN HOUSE - DAY

Meredith watches some chirpy morning talk show. The doorbell rings. She opens the door, revealing a MAN IN A SUIT.

MEREDITH

Can I help you?

He hands her an official looking document, turns on his heels and leaves. Meredith opens the envelope, stunned at its' contents.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

She kicks the door shut, and leans against it in pure disbelief.

MEREDITH  
Gary!

Gary saunters into the living room, having just awoken.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)  
We've been subpoenaed.

GARY  
Subpoenaed? C'mon, by who?

He snatches the document from her hand and reads the name  
**MILES J. CALHOUN.**

MEREDITH  
Our son.

GARY  
What for?

MEREDITH  
Emancipation.

GARY  
He wants freedom?

MEREDITH  
I guess so.

GARY  
Why didn't I think of that?

Meredith glares, hurt.

GARY (CONT'D)  
I didn't mean that. Honey, I  
didn't.

MEREDITH  
He's my son. And he wants nothing  
to do with me. He hates me and  
wants me out of his life.

GARY  
I'm an equal part of the equation  
here.

MEREDITH  
 Remember when he used to crawl into bed with us at night, when he was scared.

GARY  
 Yeah.

They enjoy the memory.

GARY (CONT'D)  
 Impeccable timing, that kid. It was always when I was erect.

MEREDITH  
 Gary!

GARY  
 Hey, I cherish those.

MEREDITH  
 Those memories?

GARY  
 Those erecti ons.

They share an amus ing moment. Then, sadness returns.

MEREDITH  
 You think we may lose him, Gar?

GARY  
 I think we already have.

INT. LAYLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's the pastel -colored bedroom that belongs to every teenage girl since the beginning of time. The walls are plastered with posters and press clippings of TV stars and pop icons.

Layla lies on her bed, top-loaded with pillows, and reads the very last page of Miles' unbound novel. She looks off in thought, digesting the narrati ve, deepl y moved by the prose.

INT. TOOL SHED - NIGHT

Miles is stashed away in a tiny little shed along with a bicycle, a tire pump, and beat-up old sports equipment. He's wrapped in a sleeping bag set on top of a weight bench, his head resting on the bench-press. A lantern bathes the room in green-tinted light.

The door cracks open, and Layla appears in the shadows.

LAYLA  
I read your memoirs.

MI LES  
Here we go. Everybody's a critic.

LAYLA  
No, no. I thought it was...  
inspired.

She sits down next to him on the weight bench.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
It's brave, you know. What you're  
doing. You have... passion.

MI LES  
That's what I've been trying to  
tell you.

TIGHT ON her dainty hand as she lays it on his leg and just leaves it there, without thought. The touch of her flesh separated only by a thin layer of denim. To a thirteen and a half year-old boy, this is sex, pure and simple.

LAYLA  
You're very talented.

MI LES  
The sky is blue.

She laughs. Miles struggles not to stare down at her hand. A charged moment passes, then --

LAYLA  
(fake yawns)  
Okay. I'm going to bed.

MI LES  
(fake yawns)  
Yeah, me too. Boy, am I beat.

They sit there for another equally charged moment, nobody doing anything.

LAYLA  
Well, good night then.

MI LES  
Yeah. Uh-huh. Good night.

She takes her hand off his knee and leaves.

Stunned, Miles rolls off the bench, still in the sleeping bag, and hits the ground with a THUMP. He stares up at the roof of the shed, his body still tingling from her touch.

INT. KITCHEN - GARDNER HOUSE - MORNING

Miles stands over the stove, frying eggs. Layla, sleepy-eyed and barefoot in a pair of oversized boxer shorts and tank top, walks into the kitchen.

LAYLA

What are you doing in the house? My mom will kill me if she finds you here!

MILES

Relax. Suzanne left early for work. Seems like a lovely woman, by the way.

LAYLA

You were spying?

MILES

Observing. Also, you should use less conditioner.

She throws a fork at him, knowing he's kidding.

Miles slides two plates of picture-perfect eggs and hash-browns on the table. They sit and eat together.

CUT TO:

QUICK CUTS:

- Miles sits on Layla's bed, practicing his answers as Layla cross-examines.
- Miles holds up the petri-dish of food from camp. He tries to shove it in Layla's face. She avoids him and laughs.
- ON LAYLA'S TV, they watch the video footage of Miles being attacked by his father on the driving range.
- They watch the footage of Gary looking at the cop, who holds a bag of grass in his hand.

- Layla flips through still photos of Gary and Meredithe lunging for Miles in the den, with flashes of explicit pornography on the computer screen behind them.
- She looks at the photo of Miles' broken nose taken from five different angles. Looks like a mug shot.
- They tack the letter that Miles wrote in the opening to a cork-board.
- They listen to the grainy audio of Miles being berated by his father. It plays like the Watergate tapes.
- Using colored markers, Layla has concocted the entire case on the large dry-erase board. **Imprisonment**, **Abandonment**, **Abuse** -- little pink arrows connect the words.

END MONTAGE.

INT. LAYLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

They sit there on the bed, exhausted from prepping the case. Layla rests her hand on Miles' leg, again. He doesn't know what to do, but he knows he has to do something.

So he leans in fast and furious, and his forehead smacks into her upper lip.

LAYLA  
What... in the hell!

Blood trickles from her upper lip.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
Are you fucking sick? I'm bleeding  
here!

MI LES  
Yeah, ooh... apply pressure. That's  
gonna scar.

She holds a piece of cotton against the wound.

LAYLA  
This can't happen. You're just a  
little boy.

He doesn't respond, hating that theory. He walks out of her room, holding his head low for the first time probably ever.

IN THE MIRROR, Layla stares at her wound, and watches Miles as he exits.

INT. TOPANGA MALL - DAY

Layla leads a protesting Miles through the mall.

MI LES  
I don't understand, what's wrong  
with this suit?

LAYLA  
Nothing, if you're in a casket.

MI LES  
Please. I debuted this at my Bar  
Mitzvah to rave reviews.

INT. BANANA REPUBLIC - DAY

Layla grabs a pin-striped, seersucker suit off a nearby rack, pairs it with a tie, suspenders, and shiny shoes. She hands it all to Miles, and shoves him into a fitting room.

INT. FITTING ROOM - DAY

Miles opens the door. He fits perfectly into the stylish suit. Layla is enamored.

LAYLA  
Well, well, well... would you have  
a look at this.

She circles around him as though she were appraising a piece of fine art.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
It's perfect. You look --

MI LES  
Handsome. That's assumed. But there  
are other adjectives. Start with  
dapper, divine... work from there.

Miles walks back into the fitting room, and shuts the door.

He unbuttons the suit and pulls it off, when -- the door swings open and Layla appears. Miles flinches and drops down into the fetal position, in nothing but his jockeys and knee-high, striped socks.

She shuts the fitting room door, and locks it.

LAYLA  
Just get up.

MILES  
Don't tell me what to do.

Miles does as he's told. Gets up.

LAYLA  
Okay. Alright. So you wanna try  
something?

Miles shrugs, unknowingly. Layla plants her lips on his with unbribled passion. They begin to kiss, gently.

INT. ANOTHER FITTING ROOM - DAY

A PIG-TAILED GIRL is trying on a summer dress. From the other room, sloppy LIP-SMACKING can be heard. Her MOM throws her hands over her ears.

MOTHER  
Get a room, you animals!

MILES (O.S.)  
Say that again and I'll...  
(lip-smack)  
... sue you for libel.

The mom grabs her very confused little daughter and walks out of the fitting room.

INT. FITTING ROOM - DAY

Miles slides his hand behind her pony-tail. The room spins and spins. And then it stops. The short, though powerfully charged kiss comes to an end, as they pull apart.

Miles is bright red, beside himself, having entered an entirely new universe. A pretty damn good one.

MILES  
Your tongue, it was in my...

LAYLA  
... mouth. Yeah. Cool, right?

MILES  
It was... moving around. And stuff.  
I mean, I felt it. And it felt...  
real good.

LAYLA

I know how it feels. And now you do too. So, how about we cut the crap and get you emancipated?

Miles stands up, and pulls on his suit. He looks at himself in the mirror, Layla reflected behind him. Pure confidence looks back.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER MIRROR REFLECTION

Of Miles, who stands a tall four-foot something in his new Seersucker suit. He cracks his neck from side to side. Fixes the collar.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

IN THE BATHROOM MIRROR, he gels his hair into a perfect crest and, as is tradition, almost winks -- but this time TWO HANDS appear from behind. The hands mess up his perfectly sculpted crest.

LAYLA (O. S.)  
The trick is to look natural.

Layla appears, REFLECTED IN THE MIRROR.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
Not like you tried.

She walks out, leaving Miles flushed.

INT. COURTHOUSE ANTEROOM - DAY

A small CROWD has gathered. Archibald and Layla hold the courtroom doors open for Miles, who pauses a moment to gaze across the hall, where his parents prepare enter.

Despite pleas from Gary and their ATTORNEY, Meredith darts over to Miles, beyond hurt. She's infuriated.

MEREDITH  
Miles, you're really going through  
with this?

MILES  
It's nothing personal.

MEREDI TH  
Nothing personal? I'm your mother!

MI LES  
Temporarily.

MEREDI TH  
I gave birth to you!

MI LES  
And my neck still aches from the  
delivery. What do you think,  
Archibald, we got a case?

Archibald walks away, not wanting any part of this.

MEREDI TH  
Don't you remember when you were a  
little boy and we'd play all day  
together, you and me? We'd make up  
imaginary games and play pretend  
and...

Archibald steps in.

ARCHI BALD  
Pardon me, Ma'am. Court's about to  
begin.

Meredith and Miles part -- walking in opposite directions.

MEREDI TH  
I carried you inside of me for nine  
months.

MI LES  
One more and I'd have tunnelled  
out.

MEREDI TH  
Miles... I love you.

Miles watches his mom walk away, sad. And it hits him. He  
loves her too. And can't help it.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

DRI FT OVER a table of labeled evidence: audio tapes, food  
samples, doctor's reports, photos of camp, etc...

We are days into the trial and Miles is on the stand, playing the part of a scared child to perfection. Archibald questions his star witness.

ARCHI BALD

And right there, in the middle of the house, on the family computer no-less, this is what your mother and father were doing?

MI LES

That's right, sir.

ARCHI BALD

Must have been shocking to a young boy.

MI LES

Sir, it was terrifying.

ARCHI BALD

How so, son?

MI LES

Just seeing these people, these real people, doing these scary things that I don't quite understand. It looks like it must hurt so much. And seeing my own mom and dad taking such pleasure in these images...

ARCHI BALD

... made you feel?

MI LES

Sad.

ARCHI BALD

Sad?

Miles swallows dramatically.

MI LES

Sad.

Archibald gives the jury a moment to digest.

INT. COURTROOM - ANOTHER DAY

TV monitors play the footage of Gary being arrested by the cop, and Gary attacking Miles at the driving range. The images freeze.

ARCHI BALD

Ladies and gentleman of the jury, I want to thank you for your time, and most importantly, for your understanding. As you know, my client is an above average, highly achieving young honors student. You've seen his report cards, and therefore have seen his inspiring marks. But folks, ever since Miles learned his ABCs, he has been writing, in vivid and may I say incredibly moving prose, a detailed account of his life with his parents, and the journey they have taken in raising him.

Layla walks over to the jury, and passes out manuscripts.

ARCHI BALD (CONT'D)

I ask of each and every one of you, read this tell-all for yourself before you decide whether this young man shall be set free. As you deliberate, I ask each and every one of you to read A HISTORY OF FOOLS, by my client, Miles J. Calhoun.

Archi bald holds up the book as though lightning will shoot out of it.

TI GHT ON the cover of the novel -- a water-colored image of a boy wearing fleece, footed-pajamas, trapped behind prison bars.

The title page reads: **A HISTORY OF FOOLS: *The Story Of My Mom And Dad*, by Miles J. Calhoun.**

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

- The Judge reads intensely in his bedroom at home. His WIFE reads next to him, equally enthralled.

- JURORS read on park benches and cafeteria tables around the courthouse atrium, entirely immersed in the page turner.

JURY #1  
Says here she can't have any more kids.

JURY #2  
Yeah, and Gary took up drinking because of it.

They shake their heads in shame.

CUT TO:

- Two court-house JANITORS lean against their brooms, reading the novel .

JANITOR #1  
The kid is prolific, let's be honest. He's captured that suburban, middle-class angst that has the potential to tear apart the very fabric of the family structure.

JANITOR #2  
What I found most shocking was that he didn't shy away from a problem that has infected our society for years.  
(deadpan)  
Meredith Calhoun has a prescription drug problem.

The janitors shake their heads shamefully.

JANITOR #2 (CONT'D)  
You got any weed, by the way?

JANITOR #1  
(shakes his head)  
Fresh out.

CUT TO:

GARY

As he reads a passage directly to camera.

GARY  
Toni ght, dad came home i n a solemn mood. He says he was laid off.

INT. CALHOUN BEDROOM - NI GHT

Gary and Meredi th read i n bed.

GARY  
(readi ng al oud)  
But Mom and I know i t was because he was fi red.

Gary gl ares at Meredi th.

MEREDI TH  
I never said that. I swear.

Gary shuts off hi s night-stand lamp, rolls over, and goes to sleep with hi s back faci ng hi s wi fe. After a moment, Meredi th does the same.

INT. COURTRoom - NEXT DAY

The mood i s solemn, pi ns and needl es. Everybody takes thei r seats. The j udge begi ns.

JUDGE  
In the case of Mi les J. Cal houn versus Gary and Meredi th Cal houn, the jury has deci ded to grant Mi les J. Cal houn full emancipati on under the ti tle of the law.

Meredi th cri es, softl y and pai nful ly. Gary consol es her.

MEREDI TH  
We' ve lost our son.

GARY  
I know, honey. I know.

Miles watches them, then quickly looks away, fearing the slightest tinge of emoti on.

JUDGE  
This entai ls the abi lity to offi ci ally obtain legal adul thood before reachi ng the age at whi ch you woul d normally be consi dered an adul t.

(MORE)

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
 You now also have the right to sign  
 legally binding contracts, own  
 property, and keep one's own  
 earnings.

(to Miles)

Son, welcome to the real world.

MI LES  
 A pleasure to be here, sir.

Miles smiles brightly, until he sees his mother and father, visibly hurt. Then, his smile slowly fades.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CALABASAS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Expensive, up-scale track homes as far as the eye can see. DRI FT PAST ten-or-so of them until we land on a single one, where Keyshon, wearing a cheap, black suit, yanks a FOR SALE sign out of the freshly cut lawn, and breaks it over his knee victoriously.

INT. MILES' HOUSE - DAY

The home is pristine. Mediterranean style, with high ceilings, marble floors, skylights, the whole deal. However, it's sparsely furnished, a couch here, a chair there, not a painting on the wall.

ELLIOT (O.S.)  
 Mr. Calhoun's office, how may I  
 help you?

INT. OFFICE - MILES' HOUSE - DAY

Elliot, also in a ragged Bar Mitzvah suit, sits at a desk, answering phones -- multiple phones that ring and ring. Faxes continuously spit out of the fax machine. A copy machine runs loudly, spewing documents.

ELLIOT  
 (into phone)  
 I'm sorry, he is unavailable for  
 interviews at this time. Call back  
 in a month.

He grabs another ringing phone. Holds it to his other ear.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Mr. Calhoun's office. That's correct ma'am, he is currently working on his next book for Random House. An advanced copy? Nice try, sweet cheeks. Gonna have to settle for his blog.

Another phone rings. Holds it to his other ear.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Mr. Calhoun's -- I thought I made it quite clear the last time you called, lady... he is not doing any interviews at this time. What? Well you can tell Larry King to shove it up his --

Miles walks in, a pencil behind his ear, a steaming cup of coffee in his hand. Elliot changes his tone.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Look, Mr. Calhoun is a serious novelist, and as soon as he has the time, he'd love to join Mr. King for an in-depth conversation. Good day, ma'am.

Elliot hangs up. Miles pulls a fax from the fax machine. TIGHT ON the document -- an exposé on Miles J. Calhoun in *The New Yorker*.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)  
I hate this job. I hate it, I hate it, I hate it!

MI LES  
That's because you have no work ethic.

ELLIOT  
How much are you paying me again?

MI LES  
Let's see, when you add it all up and round it off to the nearest tenth? Yeah... nothing.

ELLIOT  
I still don't understand why I'm  
doing this.

MI LES  
Life lessons, Elliot. Life lessons.  
An honest day's work is my gift to  
you.

Miles walks out, sipping his coffee, reading *The New Yorker*  
expose with his eyebrows arched upward.

MI LES (CONT'D)  
You'll thank me some day.

The phone rings again. And again. And again and again and  
again.

ELLIOT  
(into phone)  
Mr. Calhoun's office. Mr. Calhoun's  
office. Mr. Calhoun's...

Follow Miles into...

INT. KITCHEN - MILES' HOUSE - DAY

A sparkling kitchen, complete with a sub-zero fridge, and  
marble counter-tops. Nate, in a white chef's uniform, stirs  
spaghetti sauce on the stove.

MI LES  
Christ, pasta again?

NATE  
Dawg, I told you fifty times, I  
don't even know how to cook.

MI LES  
True, but you know how to eat.

NATE  
Is that necessary? Look, I need  
some more food.

MI LES  
For what?

NATE  
Shopping. We're out of ice-cream,  
Snickers bars, Doritos, Oreo  
cookies, cupcakes, and Twinkies.

Miles peels him off a few bills.

MI LES

Let me ask you something, you ever worry about your, you know, how shall I phrase this... weight?

NATE

Please. I'm big-boned.

MI LES

Right. Big-boned.

A DOORBELL is heard.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MILES' HOUSE - DAY

Keyshon opens the door. Layla is standing there, beautiful as always.

KEYSHON

Afternoon, Ms. Gardner.

LAYLA

Uh... afternoon, Keyshon?

KEYSHON

Is there something I can help you with, young lady?

LAYLA

I need to speak with Miles, young man.

KEYSHON

Is he expecting you?

LAYLA

Well, no.

KEYSHON

Huh.

Keyshon stands there, enjoying his authority.

KEYSHON (CONT'D)

Just a moment, if you would be so kind.

He shuts the door on her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MILES' HOUSE - DAY

Keyshon presses an intercom button.

KEYSHON  
(into intercom)  
Miles, a Layla Gardner is here to  
see you.

MILES (O. S.)  
(over intercom)  
Send her in.

Keyshon opens the door. Layla stands there, now annoyed.

KEYSHON  
After you.

She walks in, followed by Keyshon, who directs her to a couch sitting in the middle of a completely empty living room.

KEYSHON (CONT'D)  
Mr. Calhoun will be right with you.

LAYLA  
Mr. Calhoun? His father is here?

KEYSHON  
Well, no. We just call him... oh,  
here he is.

Miles enters, coffee mug still in hand, pencil still behind his ear.

MILES  
What a lovely, lovely surprise.

LAYLA  
Is there somewhere we can talk?

EXT. POOL - MILES' HOUSE - DAY

Miles and Layla sit with their feet submerged in a beautiful, black-bottom pool.

MILES  
Something to drink?

LAYLA  
I don't know. An iced-tea, I guess.

MI LES  
(screams)  
Two iced-teas, A-SAP!

Nate instantly appears with the drinks.

LAYLA  
Thanks, Nate.

NATE  
A pleasure, ma'am.

Nate walks as far as another lounge chair, and collapses, exhausted, though out of view of Miles and Layla.

LAYLA  
Wow, you have a full staff, huh?

MI LES  
When I'm writing, I can't be  
burdened by the minutiae of daily  
life.

LAYLA  
(re: house)  
So, all this, it's all from the  
advance from Random House?

MI LES  
*A History of Fools* was a best  
seller. They are eager for the  
sequel, the Untitled Teenage Years  
of, you know, me.

LAYLA  
Congratulations, Miles. You deserve  
it.

A moment passes. The sun reflects peacefully off the pool.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
Listen, I have to talk to you about  
something. Something difficult.

MI LES  
Talk away.

LAYLA  
Okay, well, look, I like you a lot.  
I mean, I really do. And I've had  
such a great time with you these  
last few days.

Despite his lack of experience, Miles knows what's coming.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
 But I want to get something straight. The other day in the fitting room, I just wanted to try it, you know, and it really didn't mean any --

MI LES  
 Good, because I've been meaning to talk to you too.

LAYLA  
 Just a minute, Miles. I'm right in the middle of --

MI LES  
 I don't want you to get the wrong idea here. I mean, I'm young and I'm free and everything is just so new right now! I don't think it's smart for me to tie myself down, do you?

LAYLA  
 (shocked)  
 No. No, I guess not.

Miles lays his hand on top of hers. She's thrown off, feeling rejected.

MI LES  
 I'm so sorry if I hurt you. It's the last thing I ever wanted to do.

Layla studies Miles, more fascinated by him now than ever. She stands, and she leaves.

And then he cries. Not just a normal cry either, but a primal, desperate plea for mommy.

Unbeknownst to Miles, Nate is watching the entire time, holding back a laugh.

Unexpectedly, Layla appears once again.

LAYLA  
 Forgot my sweater.

She grabs her sweater off the back of the lounge chair, and walks away. She stops, and turns back around.

LAYLA (CONT'D)  
Hey, were you crying?

MILES  
What? Crying? Me? C'mon, please.

LAYLA  
Oh, because you're eyes are kind of  
red and glossy and it sort of looks  
like you've been --

NATE  
Crying. He was. I saw.

Layla rubs Miles' hair like he were her little brother.

LAYLA  
You're so adorable, Miles J.  
Calhoun.

She gets in her car, and drives away.

MILES  
(to Nate)  
Appreciate that. End it with  
dignity, you know?

NATE  
Right. Dignity.

Nate walks inside. Miles drops himself into the pool like  
dead weight. WE DROP UNDER WITH HIM, until he becomes hidden  
by bubbles.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT DOOR - MILES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Miles stands at the door as his exhausted friends leave.

MILES  
Thanks for coming, guys. See you  
tomorrow?

ELLIOT  
Uh, Miles?  
(to Keyshon, nudging him)  
You want to tell him? You said you  
would.

KEYSHON  
Miles, cool house and all, but...

NATE/KEYSHON/ELLIOT  
We quiet.

MILES  
What? You can't just...

NATE  
Yes, we can. And just did.

Nate and Keyshon walk away. Elliot slaps Miles on the shoulder, lovingly.

ELLIOT  
Good luck, pal.

He shuts the door. Then, he looks around and realizes he's all alone in a big, empty house -- in a big, empty world.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MILES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Miles lays in his massive bed, scribbling notes on a yellow pad of paper. Suddenly, he stops. And he just lays there, unable to write, unable to sleep.

He gets up, paces. Back and forth. Back and forth. Collapses back onto his mattress, the painful feeling of loneliness finally settling in.

He fishes the photo of the Calhoun's Jamaican vacation from his night stand, and studies it.

INT. CALHOUN HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Miles walks the streets of his old neighborhood, cautious not to be seen. He approaches his family home, hops over a fence, and walks around to the back of the house.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Gary and Meredith are lying in lounge chairs, each holding drinks with umbrellas in them. The pool is sparkling clean.

Miles' little head peeks over the wooden fence, just as Gary and Meredith clink their drinks together, in some kind of celebration.

GARY  
This is the life.

MEREDI TH  
It sure is, baby. It sure is.

Miles' drops his head OUT OF FRAME. He leans against the fence, dismayed.

EXT. CALABASAS COUNTRY CLUB - DRI VING RANGE - DAY

Gary and Meredi th both tee off, wide smiles covering their faces. Meredi th slices the ball wide right, and she and Gary giggle at her lack of skill.

Now it's Gary's turn. Ducking behind a parked golf cart, Miles watches, his parents oblivious to his spying presence.

Gary smacks a perfect 300-yarder. Meredi th is impressed.

MEREDI TH  
Gary, my gawd! Where on earth did you learn to drive like that?

GARY  
I got a tip awhile back. Not too shabby, eh?

MEREDI TH  
Not too shabby at all.

They kiss and laugh, happy as ever. Miles sighs, hops in the cart, and speeds away.

Gary and Meredi th immediately release each other.

GARY  
He was in the golf cart, wasn't he?

Meredi th nods. They smile, up to something.

EXT. ZUMA BEACH - MALIBU - DAY

The sun is shining, the Pacific sparkles, and the seagulls sing from high above. Gary and Meredi th lie on beach towels, enjoying the day.

Suddenly, Meredi th tosses sand at Gary and races towards the ocean. Gary rushes after her, picks her up, and dunks her in the ocean. They laugh hysterically, and kiss lovingly.

Miles, hiding behind an ice-box, watches the entire event -- confused, shocked, and somewhat infuriated.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE - MILES' HOUSE - DAY

Miles, unable to work on his novel, dials a number on speaker phone.

MEREDITH (O. S.)  
(through telephone, sounding  
cheery)  
Hi, you've reached Meredith...

GARY  
(through telephone, equally cheery)  
... and Gary!

MEREDITH (O. S.)  
(through telephone)  
And we're not home right now, so  
please leave a message after the --

Miles presses END.

MILES  
Where are you, mom and dad? Where  
the hell are you?

He walks out of the room, head hung low.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MILES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Miles brushes his teeth, preparing for bed, when the DOORBELL RINGS. He presses the intercom.

MILES  
(into intercom, unhappy)  
Who is it?

MEREDITH (O. S.)  
(through intercom)  
Miles, honey... it's Mom and Dad.

MILES  
(into intercom)  
Hey, great! How you doing.  
(MORE)

MI LES (CONT' D)  
(screaming)  
Go away!

GARY (O. S.)  
(through intercom)  
C'mon, son. Open up. Just for a  
mi nute?

Mi les races down the stairwell. Now, he talks to his parents through the door.

MI LES  
I can have you arrested. I have a  
restraining order and...

Mi les stands on his toes, and looks at his tanned, healthy-looking parents THROUGH THE PEEP HOLE.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
... all I have to do is --

He opens the door, staring at his parents, who hold hands across the threshold.

MI LES (CONT' D)  
Jesus, you look great. Did you go  
on vacation?

GARY  
Maui.

Meredith bows Gary in the ribs.

GARY (CONT' D)  
No. We didn't. Go anywhere. I mean.

Meredith leans in and gives Miles a big hug. He stands there, his body limp.

MEREDITH  
C'mon, honey, let us in.

He surrenders, and Gary and Meredith enter. They sit on the couch in the large, empty living room.

GARY  
Your own regular bachelor pad, eh?

Miles glares. Meredith prods Gary to start the conversation.

GARY (CONT' D)  
Listen, Miles, your mother and I,  
well we've missed you. It goes  
without saying.

MI LES  
How's the weather in Maui this time  
of year?

GARY  
Fabulous. From the day we got  
there, blue skies, sunshine, white  
sands beaches like you've never  
seen before, and...

Meredith elbows Gary again.

GARY (CONT'D)  
...we've been doing a lot of  
thinking, son.

MEREDITH  
And it hasn't been easy. We asked  
ourselves all the hard questions.

GARY  
And we've decided that yes, we  
probably have been holding you  
back. I mean, it goes without  
saying that you are not a normal  
child.

MI LES  
That supposed to be a joke?

MEREDITH  
What he's trying to say is that  
we've tried to nurture you and give  
you whatever you needed to discover  
and develop your talents...

GARY  
But now you feel that we're  
stifling your growth, that you  
don't need us...

MEREDITH  
And that we're in your way.

He listens attentively.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)  
And... we agree.

MI LES  
(stunned)  
You what?

GARY

We don't want to stifle your growth. As parents, that's the last thing we'd ever want to do. So if living away from us, from our love and guidance, helps you become the man you want to be, then we wish you the best.

MI LES

You do?

Gary and Meredithe nod, and walk towards the door.

MEREDITHE

Good-bye, Miles.

He shuts the door and leans against it, feeling separated from his parents in a way no child ever should.

MI LES

Good-bye, Mom and Dad.

DISOLVE TO:

INT. MILES' HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

We hear the haunting song "Let Me Fly", by DMX.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- Miles Callahan, a once promising intellectual with the world in his hands, has become a 13 year-old Charles Bukowski. He is slumped over his laptop in his office, eyelids growing heavy.

He sits up, inspired by an idea. He types the words:

***Freedom, a blessing or a curse?***

Then, he passes out, hopeless.

- Four in the morning. Pages and pages have been crumpled up and thrown into the trash can. Miles types and types, prints the pages, walks into the kitchen, and sets the pages aflame on the oven range, finding pleasure in the blaze.

- He eats beans. He eats Cup-O-Noodles. He stares off longingly, wishing he had his mom to stir up a hot meal.

- Again, he tries to sleep. Struck by a perpetual loneliness, he unfolds the photo of the Calhoun family in Jamaica, and props it up next to his bed.

- Now he just sits there in his sprawling master bedroom, knees clenched to his chest. He can't write. He can't think. He's miserably alone.

END MONTAGE.

INT. OFFICE - MILES' HOUSE - NIGHT

His laptop screen glows. A blank page. He stares at it for a moment, thinking. Finally he types:

***Freedom is a right extended to us all. However, with freedom comes loneliness, reminding us that nothing is ever free.***

He stops typing.

MILES  
I can't live like this.

EXT. CALABASAS STREET - NIGHT

A cab pulls to a stop in front of Miles' house. He hands the driver some cash and gets out. The cab pulls away.

Miles stands on the lawn and inhales its scent, a child standing at the foot of his childhood home.

He thinks about knocking, and then remembers something. He walks around to his bedroom window, jostles his Speech-And-Debate trophy from the window sill, slides it open, and drops in.

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

He falls down onto his warm bed, and stares up at his ceiling.

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Meredith and Gary lie in bed in the darkness of night. Meredith sits up, and her attention turns to the glow of light coming from the hallway -- a light that peeks through the bottom of Miles' bedroom door.

She lies back on her pillow with her hands behind her head.  
She smiles, proudly.

MEREDITH  
I told you that would work.

GARY  
Hey, I came up with Maui.

They share a warm smile. Then, in unison, they both roll over, this time facing one another. This time, happy.

DISOLVE TO:

INT. MILES' BEDROOM - HOURS LATER

Miles Calloun, a scrawny thirteen year-old boy with shaggy, cowlicked hair and pre-braces teeth, sits at his desk with his back turned to us. His laptop sits open, glowing blank.

He wears his trademark ill-fitting suit with a striped red, clip-on tie. We hear the sounds of his fingers typing rhythmically.

MILES (V.O.)  
I want to thank you, Mom and Dad.  
Without you I would not be here and  
none of this would be possible.

He thinks, sips from a bottle of juice, then continues typing.

MILES (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
And for that, we all would have  
suffered.

He turns up his laptop speakers and enjoys the sounds of "Blue Monk", the original Thelonious Monk version. WE DRI FT UP, above the boy with his hands behind his head, now laying comfortably on his bed.

He reaches over to a nearby dresser drawer and fishes out a torn baby blanket. He rests it under the covers next to him, closes his eyes, and falls peacefully asleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.