

115253

THE TUTOR

by
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FADE IN:

THE SMILING FACE OF A YOUNG MAN

Accepting his college diploma in his rented cap and gown. We PULL OUT and realize it's a framed photo on a TROPHY SHELF.

We PAN across the shelf, finding the same young man in a heated DEBATE at the University of Michigan's Political Union...dressed as AXL ROSE at his fraternity's Halloween party...hunched over a page of his HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER, red pen in hand...

A prelude to a promising future.

Continue panning across the room...a Ferrari Testarossa poster...a "Back to the Future" one-sheet. A teenager's bedroom. So it's a surprise when we arrive on the guy in the photos and...

He's 23.

Both the bed he's lying on and the sports-jacket he's wearing are a size too small. He stares blankly at the ceiling.

MRS. REIGER (O.S.)
David! You're late!

He closes his eyes and exhales. This is DAVID REIGER.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David's parents sit at the kitchen table. They light up as he enters.

MRS. REIGER
Mr. Handsome. He looks eighteen tonight.

MR. REIGER
Good genes from the bull.

MRS. REIGER
Let me see that collar.

As Mrs. Reiger fixes David's collar --

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
Ran into Marsha Messer getting my nails done. Howard is very excited to see you. Second in his class at Fordham Law, and I used to have to drive the little pisher home from sleepovers he got so homesick.

MR. REIGER
To everything, turn turn turn.

MRS. REIGER
Starting his summer internship at some white shoe firm in the city. Making thirty for the summer. Marsha begs him to put it away. Instead the kid buys himself a Saab.

MR. REIGER
Good car.

MRS. REIGER
Turn.

David obeys. Mrs. Reiger goes to work on his tie.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
Remember those two on the debate team?

MR. REIGER
Forget it. My goosebumps had goosebumps.

DAVID
I don't want to be a lawyer.

MRS. REIGER
There are a million exciting things you can do with a law degree.

DAVID
Like be a judge?

MRS. REIGER
The sarcasm, Alan! He used to be such a sweet boy.

MR. REIGER
Your mother's just concerned, David. She --
(off Mrs. Reiger's glare)
--we think it's about time you start acting more like an adult. And being an adult means making choices about what you want.

MRS. REIGER
And moving out of my house!

MR. REIGER
David. Tell us. What do you want?

DAVID
I want to end this conversation.

MRS. REIGER
A nice thing to say to your father.
(motions toward his ear)
You have shmutz.

David wipes his ear, missing a dried dollop of shaving cream.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
No. Over.
(sighs)
Let me.

As Mrs. Reiger removes the shmutz from her son's ear, we hear
PARTY CHATTER and SEE:

EXT. MAMARONECK HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

In front of the regal suburban school is a MARQUEE --

WELCOME BACK CLASS OF '02!

BOARD OF ED. MEET NG 6/12 -- 7:30

Then we SEE:

-- A large poster of the graduating class, ca. 2002
-- A small pyramid of tacky ceramic "Reunion '02" mugs

INT. MAMARONECK HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

David is waiting to order a drink when a hand CLAPS his back.

SCOTT WASSERMAN
Reiger. Gimme the rundown.

DAVID
Same old. You?

SCOTT WASSERMAN
Equity Capital Markets. Goldman Sachs.

DAVID
Money must be good.

SCOTT WASSERMAN
Hear it's great. If I had a free fucking
second to spend it?

David smiles wanly. Already he is beginning to hate himself.
He turns around and sees another classmate. In a series of
quick, grotesque close-ups:

LAUREN BRONSTEIN
Med school.

DUSTIN KUSHNER
Just put a down-payment on a condo in
Tampa. It's where her family lives.

ERIC FELDMAN
Judd Apatow.

AVI KAUFMAN
The Battle for Fallujah.

JOSH SPARBER
Starting this website.

ERIC FELDMAN
The guy who did "Knocked Up?"

DUSTIN KUSHNER
Her Dad owns a furniture store down there.

LAUREN BRONSTEIN
At some point you say "sleep? what's that?"

ERIC FELDMAN
I'm his assistant. There's grunt work but
Judd gives me a lot of creative input.

AVI KAUFMAN
Back to Anbar in September.

JOSH SPARBER
Monster dot com for the Facebook
generation.

SCOTT WASSERMAN
AKA the "Goldman handcuffs."

AVI KAUFMAN
What...

DUSTIN KUSHNER
About...

LAUREN BRONSTEIN
You must be...

JOSH SPARBER
Doing something...

ERIC FELDMAN

Great.

An awkward pause as Feldman awaits David's response.

DAVID

I'm figuring out my options.

Feedback from the small stage as HOWIE MESSER adjusts the microphone.

HOWIE MESSER

Has it been five years already?

Some hoots and groans.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)

I'm Howie Messer, senior class president.

And you must be the 2002 Mamaroneck

Wildcats!

Polite applause. Howie removes index cards from his jacket and begins to read.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)

So many great memories were made in this

gym -- state champion wrestlers, what's up?

But safe to say we've moved onto bigger and better things.

David wishes he were dead.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)

Danny Squadron down in D.C. -- Senator

Schumer can't wipe his ass without him.

Julie Vipler in from from Portland, where

her after-school music program for low-income kids was recently featured on CNN.

From Sydney, Australia to the battlefields of Iraq, from the mid-west to

(he looks at David)

right here in Westchester, we continue to make our mark. So enjoy yourselves tonight.

Re-connect. Talk to that special person you wanted to ask to Prom. Enough from me.

(raises a glass)

To the Wildcats of 2002!

Drinks raised. Applause. Howie remembers something.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)
Don't forget a mug. Made by Heather Wolff
in her Burlington ceramics co-op.

Less applause, scattered and awkward. Howie hops off the stage. Makes a bee-line toward David.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)
Reegs!

David looks for an exit. No luck. They shake hands.

DAVID
Always good with the speeches.

HOWIE MESSER
Just can't get over it. Five years.

DAVID
Time flies.

HOWIE MESSER
Our moms were pow-wowning. Said I saw a guy like you doing alright as a paralegal.

DAVID
Thanks.

HOWIE MESSER
Forty-two five a year. Get the right boss you spend half your day checking e-mail.

DAVID
I'll think about it.

HOWIE MESSER
Then I've done my duty. My new ride's in the parking lot. Come check it...

David eyes a pretty young woman across the gym.

DAVID
'Scuse me. Blast from the past.

He walks up, taps her on the shoulder.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Is that Leah Deblinger?

LEAH
Oh my God! Dave!

She gives him a big hug.

LEAH (CONT'D)
You know I still tell people about our
little high school newspaper adventures?

DAVID
Keep talking. Save me from Howie Messer.

Leah looks over. Howie stares at David. She giggles.

LEAH
So?

DAVID
Law School's good?

LEAH
Managing to keep my head above water. And
you're...?

DAVID
Figuring out my options.

LEAH
I don't worry about you. You see that
article in Newsweek? About how our
generation is taking longer to find itself?
Something about having too many choices.

DAVID
No.

LEAH
You can probably get it online.

Leah looks and sees Howie has left.

LEAH (CONT'D)
He's in retreat. Come see Marissa
Grossbard. She brought her baby!

DAVID
Maybe I'll catch you in there.

He sulks off toward the exit. Hold on Leah, thinking.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Reiger looks over the top of Shantaram as David enters.

MRS. REIGER

Well?

DAVID

I need to go lay down.

MRS. REIGER

Just got off the phone with Robin Deblinger. She said Leah finds you wonderful as ever.

DAVID

(confused)

Hm.

MRS. REIGER

You're to meet Robin at the Starbucks on Franklin Ridge Road at two tomorrow. She has a very intriguing opportunity for you.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

David sits across from ROBIN DEBLINGER.

MRS. DEBLINGER

A small miracle Leah found you when she did. David, we are at something of an impasse with our youngest. Rachel will be a senior in the fall if you can believe it.

DAVID

You're looking at schools?

MRS. DEBLINGER

Fingers crossed she has a shot at a Little Ivy. If she can get that SAT score up.

DAVID

Not the be-all end-all it used to be.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Can we get this one on the Admissions Board at Bowdoin?

She chuckles. David takes a pained sip of coffee.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

Twice she's taken the test. Fine in the Math -- 90th percentile -- but nowhere near what she needs on the Verbal. This despite her affinity for the phone.

DAVID

Heh.

MRS. DEBLINGER

She's got one more shot in September to get that Verbal score up.

DAVID

I did the Princeton Review. It helped.

MRS. DEBLINGER

You think we haven't tried it all?

DAVID

Of course. I didn't mean to...

MRS. DEBLINGER

David, you were one of the brightest lights in Leah's class. You're young, you're someone this kid can relate to. We were hoping you could roll up your sleeves and tutor her this summer.

DAVID

Tutor Rachel? I'm flattered. But...

MRS. DEBLINGER

But what? This kid needs you. And I'm not budging 'til I get a Yes.

Off David, trapped, we

CUT TO:

MRS. REIGER

No? What do you mean you said No?

INT. THE REIGER'S FOYER - DAY

HANDHELD as Mrs. Reiger follows David through the kitchen.

DAVID

What do I know about tutoring?

David flings his jacket on the back of a kitchen chair.

MRS. REIGER

It's so difficult to teach that dummy of theirs a few vocabulary words?

DAVID

For twenty-five dollars an hour? The preparation time alone? It's minimum wage!

MRS. REIGER

Who are you to thumb your nose at money? I should be making you pay rent!

Mrs. Reiger picks up the phone --

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)

Arrogant! Without reason to be!

-- and begins to dial.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)

You get on this phone right now and apologize to Robin about the foolish mistake you made and inform her you will be at her house tomorrow afternoon with bells on! Vacation time is over! It's ringing.

She hands him the phone.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)

And hang up your jacket! I am not your maid!

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE - DAY

A large sign lets us know we're in the

COLLEGE PREPARATION

section. David is surrounded by other TEENAGERS nervously flipping through Test Prep books. David takes one book down:

AWESOME SATs!

Everything YOU Need to Know to ROCK Your SATs

He grimaces. Takes another book.

BARRON'S CRACKING THE SATs

A step-by-step method to success on the NEW SATs

This one looks better.

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE CAFE - DAY

CLOSE ON --

An SAT question:

14. The act of going back to a previous state.

David chews his pen as he thinks.

DAVID'S PEN
Circles

c) regress

David flips to the back of the book. Searches the answer key.

DAVID'S FINGER
Points to "C. Regress." He's right.

DAVID
Still got it.

A woman looks up from her Bon Appetit to shoot David a dirty look. He continues to practice his SATs.

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S DOORSTEP - DAY

A FINGER rings the DOORBELL.

David shifts nervously. Mrs. Deblinger opens the door.

MRS. DEBLINGER
(pleased)
David.

She holds a glossy brochure from BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S FOYER - DAY

As they walk.

MRS. DEBLINGER
(re: the brochure)
She'd thrive in a smaller class situation.
But now she hates the cold. She's on this
UCLA kick from some show she watches.

Mrs. Deblinger puts the brochure on a small table. It's the top of a stack of many. They continue down

THE DEBLINGER'S HALLWAY

MRS. DEBLINGER
Final exams loom. I told her if she's not putting in four hours of study time a day she can forget about her Junior Prom this weekend. Leah was self-motivated. This one I've had to use every trick in the book.

They enter

THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN

MRS. DEBLINGER
And here she is.

Sitting at the ISLAND is

RACHEL DEBLINGER
One of the most desired girls at Mamaroneck High School.

DAVID'S HANG-DOG EXPRESSION
Lets us know that somewhere Nabokov is smiling.

She's surrounded by textbooks, three-ring binders, and her omnipresent T-Mobile Sidekick. At the moment she is intensely reading THE PHONE BOOK.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)
Aren't we supposed to be studying?

RACHEL
I am.

MRS. DEBLINGER
I wasn't aware Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote
the Yellow Pages.

Rachel sighs and slams The Yellow Pages shut.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)
This is David.

RACHEL
(to her mother)
I know.
(to David, a sweet smile)
Hi.

DAVID
Hey.

Rachel's Sidekick dings.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Tell Miss Haley she can lay off the text
messaging while your tutor is here.

RACHEL
(typing)
Ohhkaaay.

MRS. DEBLINGER

God help us when those two separate next
year.

(claps her hands together)

Well. Don't work her too hard.

Mrs. Deblinger moves to kiss Rachel on the head, but Rachel recoils. Mrs. Deblinger makes a "what can you do?" face at David and leaves. David sits down next to Rachel.

DAVID

(surveying the books)

Junior year's the worst. They really pile
it on.

RACHEL

Uch. I'm over it.

DAVID

Your mom said Junior Prom's this weekend.
Studying's easier with something to look
forward to.

RACHEL

Frankly? At the moment Prom is the most
stressful part of my life.

DAVID

But the memories will last you a lifetime.

RACHEL

I'm serious! Corsages. Dresses. Tickets.
Dinner. After prom.

DAVID

Pictures.

RACHEL

Pictures! By the time I got a free second
to call the limo companies today? Booked
solid. A total nightmare.

DAVID

You could drive.

Rachel looks at him -- "are you crazy?"

DAVID (CONT'D)

What was I thinking? Who did we use?

(racking his brain)

White Tie Limo. You try them?

Rachel shakes her head "no."

DAVID (CONT'D)

Small company down in White Plains. No one calls them, they're so off the beaten path. Ask for Mikey. Slip him a twenty, he'll let you drink in the back.

RACHEL

Seriously?

DAVID

(a wink)

I didn't just tell you that.

RACHEL

You are so much cooler than my last tutor.

David blushes -- it's awhile since he's been complimented.

DAVID

No matter how cool I am, we're gonna need to roll up our sleeves here.

RACHEL

Uch.

DAVID

Now the funny thing about the SATs is they don't measure how smart you are. They measure how well you take the test. That's why, drumroll please...

He reaches into his backpack. Takes out Cracking the Test.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We're cracking the test.

RACHEL

(whine)

No-o-o-o.

DAVID

I like your attitude. And away we go...

The pages FLUTTER open as we

DISSOLVE TO:

David and Rachel hunched over the book.

RACHEL

I can't even pronounce it.

DAVID

Con. Flag. Ration. Think about what the word means before you look at the synonyms.

Rachel thinks.

RACHEL

To be angrily like waving um, like a flag?

DAVID

Close. It's a big fire. Now which of these is a synonym for a big fire?

Rachel stares at the page.

RACHEL

It can't be "banner."

DAVID

Good.

RACHEL

And it's not "protagonist" because "pro" is good and fires are bad.

DAVID

Okay...

RACHEL

Cinderblock?

DAVID

Holocaust.

RACHEL

The Nazis?

DAVID

It also means a big fire. That's where the Holocaust got its name from.

Rachel sighs with frustration.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Rome wasn't built in a day.

RACHEL

On her first try my sister got a 760.

DAVID

Because she studied.

(reading)

Effervescent. Good word.

RACHEL

She's a total brain.

DAVID

What set her apart was her work ethic.

RACHEL

I love Leah to death, but sometimes I don't understand how we're related.

DAVID

The mysteries of family. Let's focus.

Effervescent.

RACHEL

(whiny)

I'm tired.

David realizes Rachel's upset.

DAVID

You and Leah are different people. She wishes she had your social life. You know she didn't even go to our prom?

RACHEL

Shut up.

DAVID

Said she had to go interview at Dartmouth but I heard it was 'cause no one asked her.

RACHEL

I went last year with this junior from the baseball team.

DAVID

So you're one of those popular girls.

RACHEL

(smiling: a tacit admission)

Whatever.

DAVID

But I have a feeling you're every bit as smart as Leah when you apply yourself.

Rachel studies him.

RACHEL

I like you.

DAVID

I like you too. With a little elbow grease
I bet you go way over 650. You ready?

Rachel nods.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Effervescent.

RACHEL

Good smelling.

David sighs.

CUT TO:

An SAT question --

4. Mendacity

Rachel studies it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'm hungry.

DAVID

We're almost done.

Rachel thinks.

RACHEL

To fix up a town?

DAVID

A lie. And which of these might mean the
opposite of lying?

Rachel studies her options.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Think about each word.

RACHEL

Captivating?

DAVID

No...

RACHEL
Forthright?

DAVID
Yes!

He holds up a hand for a HIGH FIVE. She slaps it.

RACHEL
(laughing)
You are such a dork! Now can I eat?

DAVID
Pig out.

She opens the fridge. Rummages around.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What's up post-prom? Going down the shore?

RACHEL
My parents are going down to Philly. We're
having the after-party here. Fruit salad?

David shakes his head No. She takes out a big bowl of fruit
salad and starts spooning it into a smaller bowl.

DAVID
Fun.

RACHEL
You around this weekend?

DAVID
The limo was one thing. A beer run, I
dunno.

RACHEL
We're good with drinks.

DAVID
Believe it or not your dorky SAT tutor has
plans on a Friday night.

RACHEL
If you're out, roll by. Look for the girl
passed out in the hot tub.

She shovels a spoonful of fruit into her mouth. David's jaw
hits the ground. Nabokov orgasms.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Knock knock.

She walks into the kitchen.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)
How'd we do?

DAVID
Great.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Rachel?

RACHEL
Fine.

MRS. DEBLINGER
I asked you not to snack.

RACHEL
I had low blood sugar.

MRS. DEBLINGER
(sighs)
Go wash up for dinner. Your father'll be
home any minute.

She picks up her Sidekick, dialing as she walks out.

RACHEL
White Tie Limos? Is Mike there please?

Exeunt Rachel.

MRS. DEBLINGER
She's nuts with this Prom. When I told her
we'd be missing her pictures?

DAVID
World War Three.

MRS. DEBLINGER
(opening her purse)
This all came so easily to Leah. It's such
a struggle for that one.

Rachel bursts in.

RACHEL
Dave. You are awesome.

MRS. DEBLINGER

He is?

RACHEL

Um, yes? He gave me --

DAVID

-- so that website still works? Study guides for novels. Good to review for English finals. More helpful than what's in the phone book.

MRS. DEBLINGER

(smiling)

Go wash up.

Rachel runs out.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

You certainly hit a nerve.

DAVID

She's a good kid. We do have our work cut out for us though.

She places \$50 in David's palm.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Don't have anything smaller. Consider it a little tip for such a good first day.

DAVID

Mrs. Deblinger.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Seems to me this kid's finally found a teacher who can touch her.

An embarrassed David stares down at ULYSSES S. GRANT. The great general does not approve.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dinner.

MRS. REIGER

So Nancy Finkelstein? With the kids off at college she decides to go back to work.

MR. REIGER
Good for her. I am loving this salad.

MRS. REIGER
Fresh arugula. Three dollars a pound at the
new Whole Foods on Franklin Turnpike.

MR. REIGER
Worth it.

MRS. REIGER
She's a career counselor.

MR. REIGER
David, pass the balsamic?

MRS. REIGER
She helps people find suitable careers for
themselves.

DAVID
(a whine)
Mom.

MR. REIGER
Will someone please pass me the balsamic?

MRS. REIGER
Are you going to be forty years old and
still living in this house?

David doesn't respond.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
Answer me.

MR. REIGER
Will someone please pass me the god damned
balsamic?

Mrs. Reiger reaches across the table and SLAMS a bottle of
vinaigrette in front of her husband.

DAVID
No.

MRS. REIGER
Then it's time to get serious about moving
out of here.

DAVID
I'm tutoring.

MRS. REIGER
For pocket money.

MR. REIGER
Can we save this for another time? I don't know about the rest of you, but I for one would like to enjoy my meal in peace.

MRS. REIGER
Save some room. The Finkelsteins are coming over for cake and coffee.

DAVID
Tonight?

MRS. REIGER
You have plans, Mr. Bigshot?

David nods.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

DAVID
Nowhere.

MRS. REIGER
If you think you're too old to tell me where you're going then maybe you're too old to be living in this house.

MR. REIGER
(wearily)
Tell your mother where you're going.

DAVID
A party.

She looks at him very skeptically and we

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - NIGHT

VROOM! David pilots the white beast around a sharp turn.

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jeep Grand Cherokees and beat-up Volvos line the street. LIMOS drop off the prom-goers, some of whom are still wearing their tuxedos and evening gowns. David parks on the street.

IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

David stares at himself -- is he really going to do this? He sighs and fixes his hair.

TRACK WITH DAVID

As he walks to the front door. He nods at a waiting LIMO DRIVER. A few kids, just arriving, give him weird looks.

AT THE DOORSTEP

David pauses once more. He looks back at his minivan. Then he takes a step, crossing the threshold into

THE DEBLINGER'S FOYER

A DRUNK GIRL hazily reads one of the COLLEGE BROCHURES on the table as she pulls from a bottle of Jose Cuervo. She sees David and quickly hides the bottle behind her back.

DAVID
Muhlenberg. Good liberal arts.

GIRL
Are you a cop?

DAVID
No. Rachel around?

GIRL
In the living room.

The drunk girl gives him a dirty look and walks away.

THE LIVING ROOM

David awkwardly leafs through a booklet of CDs next to the stereo. Presses STOP. Puts in a different CD when --

T.J.
What the fuck?

DAVID
Sorry. You seen Rachel?

T.J.
Out back.

T.J. goes back to the conversation -- a bunch of boys all comparing cell phones. He looks at David strangely.

EXT. THE BACKYARD - NIGHT

David stands alone. He walks over to a
KEG OF BEER

A bunch of boys huddle around it, trying to tap it ("Wrong way, asshole"). One of them is DOUG SCHACHTEL, 17.

DAVID
You guys seen Rachel?

DOUG
In the living room.

DAVID
I'm like Indiana Jones searching for the
Holy Grail here.

Doug shoots a "whatever" smirk. David looks over at THE JACUZZI. Empty. He stares sadly at the bubbling cauldron.

EXT. THE FRONT YARD - NIGHT

A defeated David walks toward his minivan when he hears:

RACHEL
Donny Dorko!

He turns around and sees RACHEL and her best friend HALEY WEISS sharing a cigarette on the front lawn. David walks over to them. Rachel moves in to kiss him on the cheek, but he pulls away and hugs her awkwardly.

DAVID
Traffic on the Bridge was a mess. Couldn't
get near the city.

RACHEL
Their loss.

HALEY
Excuuuuuse me?

RACHEL
This is the love of my life. Haley Weiss.

HALEY
(taking a drag)
You saved our ass with that limo.

DAVID
(pointing to the cigarette)
Careful. Don't wanna start a conflagration.

HALEY
A what?

DAVID
A what, Rachel?

RACHEL
A large flag?

DAVID
A big...

RACHEL
A big fire!

DAVID
A+ for you.

They high five. Rachel giggles.

HALEY
Tell me he does college application essays.

Doug runs over.

DOUG
Raych.

RACHEL
Douglas. This is Dave.

DOUG
(dismissively to David)
Hey.
(to the girls)
The keg? It broke or some shit.

DAVID
It broke?

DOUG
People are saying the party's dry! They
want to fuckin' bail!

DAVID
Let me take a look.

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S BACK DECK - NIGHT

CSHHHHHHHH!

Beer ejaculates out of the keg. Widen --

David, on one knee, has just successfully tapped the keg.
SCATTERED APPLAUSE from the gathered crowd. David puts a hand
on Doug's shoulder.

DAVID

Insert it firmly then twist gently. Like
screwing in a light bulb.

DOUG

Usually we just pound cans.

DAVID

You think I knew how to do this in high
school? No one taught me 'til college.

DOUG

Where at?

DAVID

Michigan.

DOUG

Raych didn't say you were a Wolverine. I'm
applying early decision. Try and walk on
the football practice squad. How was it?

On David. He's got some stories to tell.

WIPE TO:

Doug listens avidly.

DAVID

Fall of freshman year, I'm holed up in the
library. Midterm the next day. A buddy
comes up to me. Dave Matthews is playing
Detroit that night...

WIPE TO:

David speaks to some other boys. Doug still listens intently.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(seriously)

Should you rush a frat?

WIPE TO:

A drunker David expounds to more kids.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You have to do Junior Year abroad.
Barcelona? Whoo.

WIPE TO:

David, drunker still, has run out of things to say. The boys wait expectantly.

DOUG
Tell 'em about The Game senior year. Him and his boys totally fucked with some a-holes from Ohio State.

David laughs at the memory.

DAVID
So we buy some red face paint...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE DEBLINGER'S LIVING ROOM

A CD is dropped into the stereo.

DAVID
An oldie but a goody.

Guns 'n' Roses' "SWEET CHILD O' MINE" begins to play. Rachel and the small group of kids cheer.

HALEY
Love love love this song! Who is it?

DAVID
Rachel?

She doesn't know.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Anyone?

Nope.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You guys are making me feel old! Guns 'n' Roses!

David happily swigs his beer as Rachel and some friends dance. She reaches out her hand to David.

RACHEL

Come on!

David shakes his head No.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Come on!

David acquiesces. They dance. Flirty and silly. Air guitar.

DAVID

*She's got a smile that seems to me, reminds
me of childhood memories...*

HALEY

Smile!

Haley snaps a PHOTO of Rachel and David on her Sidekick. The song suddenly STOPS. Standing next to the stereo is --

DOUG

Keg's kicked.

TWENTY PLEADING FACES look toward David. We hear: DING DONG!

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

David opens the door. Standing there is BEER DELIVERY GUY, 21. David is three sheets to the wind.

BEER DELIVERY GUY

Quarter keg Lowenbrau.

DAVID

Yup.

BEER DELIVERY GUY

ID?

David hands it over. As the Beer Delivery Guy examines it:

BEER DELIVERY GUY (CONT'D)

David Reiger?

DAVID

Yeah.

BEER DELIVERY GUY

You went to Mamaroneck?

DAVID

No.

BEER DELIVERY GUY

You and Howie Messer did the debate team
with my older brother. Dan Dubinsky?

DAVID

Sorry.

BEER DELIVERY GUY

You kicked ass at county finals.

DAVID

I did?

BEER DELIVERY GUY

Busted. You're probably like a Congressman
now or something.

DAVID

I'm doin' great.

We hear a scream.

BEER DELIVERY GUY

Everyone in there over 21?

DAVID

(ultra sarcasm)

Just a bunch of high school students.

The Beer Delivery Guy studies David. Then laughs.

BEER DELIVERY GUY

Jerry Friggin' Seinfeld over here. Twenty
bucks, debate discount.

David hands him the money.

DAVID

This is gonna make me Prom King now.

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S BACK DECK - NIGHT

HIGH FIVES as David wheels the keg past Rachel and Haley.

DAVID

Doug, give me a hand with the tap?

Doug happily walk-jogs over. Haley and Rachel watch.

HALEY

He's kinda cute. In like a Harry Potter
sort of way.

Rachel laughs.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Older guy? Bet he can really fuck, too.
(motioning toward T.J.)
Not like the one minute wonder over there.

RACHEL
You are so bad!

HALEY
What? I'm just saying, forget the SATs? He
can really get you ready for college.

Rachel looks at David. Off her contemplative face we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE JACUZZI - NIGHT

STEAM RISES.

We PUSH THROUGH it to REVEAL...

David, Rachel, Doug, T.J. and Haley. Guys in boxers, the
girls in bras and panties, all drinking wine coolers. To the
high school hoi polloi this group's enviously referred to as
THE CREW. David is the only one with chest hair.

T.J.
First day of school, we paint Seniors '08
on the hill behind the football field. Show
everyone we're for real.

DOUG
Genius.

DAVID
(drunk)
You guys are really living your lives.

T.J.
Hell yeah.

DAVID
'Cause once you stop it's not easy to start
again.

DOUG
Sounds like you've seen some dark shit.

DAVID
Every day. Every day.

The crew stare sadly into bottoms of their bottles.

DOUG
I went through some dark shit myself sophomore year with my parent's divorce. Nothing mattered. I wanted to quit football. You know what Coach Simonetti said to me? "If you don't believe in yourself, no one else will."

T.J.
Now that's genius.

DAVID
It's not easy when your mom's making you feel bad about yourself all the time.

DOUG
Fuck what your mother thinks of you. Everyone in this jacuzzi thinks you are one stand-up dude. That's what matters.

Doug raises his wine cooler.

DOUG (CONT'D)
To David. Believe.

DAVID
Been a long time since someone raised a glass to me.

David raises his B&J.

DAVID (CONT'D)
To you guys. Seniors '08.

They clink and drink.

RACHEL
Uch. I'm beginning to boil.

Rachel examines David's WRINKLED FINGERTIPS.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
And you are getting all wrinkled.

DAVID
She likes making me feel old.

RACHEL
Do we need to dry you off?

INT. THE STAIRWAY - NIGHT

David follows Rachel up. She flicks the ass of her bathing suit. It snaps against her soft wet skin. David gulps.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A TEDDY BEAR --
David squeezes him. He squeaks.

RACHEL
That's Mr. Dorchester.

DAVID
Hi Mr. Dorchester.

RACHEL
It's his bedtime.

Rachel takes Mr. Dorchester from David and puts him back on the bed. There's a SMALL MENAGERIE of stuffed animals there.

DAVID
Great group of friends.

RACHEL
Doug wishes he was up here with you.

DAVID
I think I hear them down there...you think they need more beer?

RACHEL
You're not going anywhere.

DAVID
I'm not?

RACHEL
(playing with his chest hair)
Teddy bears belong on the bed.

DAVID
They do?

They kiss. As they fall to the bed, there is a loud SQUEAK from Mr. Dorchester as we

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S FRONT DOOR - DAY

A SHAKING FINGER rings the doorbell.

David takes a deep breath. Mrs. Deblinger opens the door.

MRS. DEBLINGER
(seriously)
David Reiger. What have you done?

DAVID
(his voice cracking)
Nothing.

MRS. DEBLINGER
That can't be true.

David is two seconds from shitting his pants when Mrs. Deblinger breaks into a huge SMILE.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)
Because I have never seen her this excited
to study in my life.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S HALLWAY

As they walk.

MRS. DEBLINGER
All morning raving about you. And David?

They stop at the staircase.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)
(whispers)
I caught her putting on eyeshadow after
school. You can draw your own conclusions.

DAVID
("no way")
Mrs. Deblinger.

MRS. DEBLINGER
I've known you since you were nine years
old. It goes without saying we have
complete trust in you. You just keep doing
whatever it is that's turning that one Miss
Studious.
(yelling)
Miss Rachel! Your tutor awaits!

Rachel runs in, wearing a touch too much make-up.

RACHEL

Hi.

DAVID

Hey.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Don't you look pretty.

RACHEL

Mom!

An awkward beat passes.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Would you two like a fresh fruit salad?

RACHEL

No.

MRS. DEBLINGER

The berries are in season.

DAVID

Sure.

(to Rachel)

Ready for some reading comprehension?

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

They sit at the island. Behind them, Mrs. Deblinger prepares a fruit salad.

DAVID (CONT'D)

So. Reading comprehension.

He takes out Cracking the Test.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You would think the first thing you want to do is read the passage. But actually, you want to read the questions.

RACHEL

You read the questions.

David makes "chill out" eyes at Rachel.

DAVID

Let's start with this one.

(reading)

This passage was written by an expert in dolphin sonar following an expedition to the Pacific in 1981.

She traces his hand with her finger. Again, the "chill out" eyes. Rachel giggles. David glares at her. Rachel sighs.

RACHEL

Mom?

MRS. DEBLINGER

Sweetheart?

RACHEL

Can David and I go study upstairs? I'm insane with all this chopping.

Mrs. Deblinger looks to David -- "okay with you?" David nods.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Vamoose. Go learn.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

They sit on her bed.

DAVID

So. Dolphins.

She traces her fingers over his. David sighs.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We need to talk.

RACHEL

Here he comes with the drama.

DAVID

Saturday night was awesome.

RACHEL

Off-the-hook.

DAVID

You're 17.

RACHEL

Big whoop. My dad's nine years older than my mom.

DAVID
It's a little different.

RACHEL
It's not against the law. I Googled it.

DAVID
Your parents are gonna care about the law
if they find out I'm with their daughter?

RACHEL
Harvey and Robin still think I play with My
Little Ponies.

DAVID
They can't find out. From you, your
friends...

RACHEL
This is how I always imagined it.

Rachel looks for something on her dresser.

DAVID
I'm being serious. This is our secret.

She finds it. Holds up a SEWING NEEDLE.

RACHEL
A blood oath.

David considers this.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Jesus!

DAVID
(smiling)
Sometimes I get a little nervous.

RACHEL
You're worrying over nothing. It's the
summer.

DAVID
We still do work when I'm here. I'm not
getting paid to fool around with you.

RACHEL
Fine. Dolphin whatever.

DAVID

Sonar.

She leans over and kisses his ear. He groans with pleasure.

MRS. DEBLINGER (O.S.)

Rachel? Does David like cherries?

FUN MUSIC kicks off our SUMMER MONTAGE --

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dinner. Mrs. Reiger is yelling at David when he feels his cell phone vibrate. He flips it open under the table. There's the photo of him and Rachel doing "Sweet Child." Then another TEXT -- COME OUT WIT US 2NITE. He smiles. His mother continues yelling.

INT. RAMSEY LIQUORS - DAY

At the Counter, David slams a \$50 down. Quite a bit of alcohol. BEER DELIVERY GUY (he pulled Counter Duty tonight) nods approvingly.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - DAY

Suds spray everywhere as The Crew open their drinks. David smiles at Rachel, who is riding shotgun.

EXT. LIONS PARK- NIGHT

A playground/park -- and a drinking spot for upperclassmen since time immemorial.

David cracks a few of THE BOYS up with a story. He hears someone calling his name. Looks over at

THE PLAYGROUND

Where Rachel stands in a CASTLE atop the jungle-gym structure. Motions for David to come up.

SLOW MOTION --

As David climbs up the slide. He looks up at the glorious FULL MOON and we

DISSOLVE TO:

DAVID'S REFLECTION

In the oven window. We're in --

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

David fixes his hair.

MRS. REIGER

Where are you off to looking so nice?

DAVID

Tutoring.

Mrs. Reiger looks at him skeptically.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Deblinger is cleaning up and talking on the phone.

MRS. DEBLINGER

They're upstairs. You would not believe how hard he works her.

DAVID (O.S.)

Good, Rachel. Very good.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

She is blowing him.

DAVID

(too loudly)

Let's move onto sentence completion!

PAN to Cracking the Test, unopened on the floor.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Reiger pours herself some tea as David passes.

MRS. REIGER

David?

DAVID

What.

MRS. REIGER

I have no idea what is going on in your life but I do not want a call that you are in some sort of trouble.

DAVID

You're talking to David Reiger. What kind of trouble have I ever gotten myself in?

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - NIGHT

The back seats are collapsed. Rachel is snuggled under some covers in the back as David snaps a condom on.

DAVID
You ready?

Rachel nods.

RACHEL
(earnest)
This is so much more romantic than my first time.

Outside --

THE MINIVAN
Begins to rock.

Wider --

THE MINIVAN
Is in the parking lot of LIONS PARK. Rocks faster and faster.

Wider --

T.J. AND DOUG
Watch the van with academic interest.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LION'S PARK - NIGHT

David and Rachel stand in

THE PLAYGROUND CASTLE
Surveying all below them. The King and Queen, post-coital.

From below, Doug raises a drink to them. Off the RAISED BOTTLE OF BEER we

MATCH CUT TO:

A RAISED GLASS OF WINE

We're in --

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

With David and the Deblingers.

MR. DEBLINGER

When Leah first told us about you I was sure you were one of these kids. Grew up being told you could do anything only to discover you were talented at nothing.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Harvey!

MR. DEBLINGER

But that's not him. He has a gift. We're so happy you've opened her up like this.

David smiles uncomfortably.

MR. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

To David.

The glasses all come together.

As the music CLIMAXES...

In QUICK CUTS (or maybe SPLIT SCREENS):

Beers clink. The minivan rocks. Rachel and David kiss in their Castle. Cracking the Test remains closed.

The music ends. In silence:

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As he falls to his bed, a smile as long as the Great Wall of China plastered on his face. Poor guy doesn't realize that it's only going downhill from here.

He leans over and shuts off his light. As he does, we

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

CHOP CHOP CHOP!

Mrs. Reiger massacres carrots.

Pajama-clad David stumbles in, picks up the newspaper off the kitchen table.

MRS. REIGER

Look who's decided to join the living.

David opens the fridge. Takes out some OJ.

DAVID
Any bagels?

MRS. REIGER
Empty the dishwasher.

DAVID
(reading the newspaper)
They opened a tapas restaurant in Glen
Rock. Supposed to be good.

MRS. REIGER
Empty the dishwasher.

DAVID
After breakfast.

MRS. REIGER
If you wish to remain living under this
roof, you are going to start doing a little
more around here than waking up at noon.
Now empty the dishwasher.

David sighs. He tries to open the overloaded dishwasher but
the bottom compartment won't pull out.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
Careful. The bottom tray is feshtunkteh!

David is pulling...pulling...

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
I found a condom wrapper in the minivan.

...the tray comes loose as the dishes RATTLE. David sighs and
begins to unload the cutlery.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
You stumble into this house every night,
two, three in the morning. You're out there
doing God knows what with who the hell
knows in the backseat of your mother's
minivan! Guess what? Vacation time is over!

DAVID
Did you valet park it somewhere?

His mother stares at him incredulously.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'm just thinking out loud here.

MRS. REIGER
Oh, David. You have grown into the crown
prince of dishonesty.

DAVID
Where do these go?

MRS. REIGER
With the pans! I'm making you an
appointment with Nancy Finkelstein.

DAVID
Nancy Finkelstein?

Mrs. Reiger's chopping has assumed a Dahmer-like intensity.

MRS. REIGER
The career counselor? She will walk you
through a battery of questionnaires and
from that will discern the most appropriate
career for you. Then you are going to get
on the Internet and look in the newspaper
and apply for a job. And if you don't want
to do that, you can start applying to law
schools. Because your father and I? We are
fed up with you! Fed up!

DAVID
Your doubles partner is going to make
career decisions for me.

MRS. REIGER
We should trust you? You haven't made one
decision since you left school!

DAVID
I am thinking about switching to a one-
handed backhand.

MRS. REIGER
You've earned the right to be sarcastic?
Look at yourself! Almost twenty-four years
old and standing in your mother's kitchen
in your underwear at noon like some poor un-
educated schaven! You had me convinced --
convinced! -- that you just needed time to
find yourself. But fool me twice? You're
bullshit! You're nothing! Nothing!

DAVID
Unload the dishes your fucking self.

He tries to slam the dishwasher closed but the feshtunkteh lower tray keeps that from happening.

MRS. REIGER
And he has the gall to open up that fresh mouth to his mother!

DAVID
(under his breath)
Fuck you.

MRS. REIGER
You get back here!

He storms out.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - DAY

Rocketing down a suburban street. David on his cell phone:

DAVID
Your parents home?

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM

She's painting her toenails and watching a movie on TBS.

RACHEL
(yelling)
Mom? Mom?

MRS. DEBLINGER (O.S.)
Down here!

RACHEL
(into phone)
She's doing laundry.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN

DAVID
Answer the door.

He flips the phone shut.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM

She looks down at her toenails. They're still wet. She sighs.

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S DOORSTEP

Mrs. Deblinger, holding a hamper of laundry, opens the door.

MRS. DEBLINGER

David? Did you two have an appointment?

DAVID

Rachel can't make heads or tails of some reading comprehension.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Above and beyond.

She notices David's eyes are red.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

Everything alright?

DAVID

Summer allergies.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

RACHEL

No idea it would take so long to dry.

DAVID

I asked you to answer the door.

RACHEL

You know what happened last time I got nail polish on the carpet?

(off David's glare)

Tch, c'mere.

She opens her arms. David's eyes well up with angry tears.

DAVID

My mother. My fucking mother found a condom wrapper in the minivan and said things to me. Things no son should hear.

He cries. Rachel looks at her toes to make sure there is no nail polish touching her duvee.

INT. RACHEL'S BED - DAY

They sit like therapist and patient.

DAVID

She's the most ambitious person I know. But instead of having a career she has me. Know what? It's her I feel sorry for. Because I have my own dreams. I'm not the one who has to spend my life living someone else's.

RACHEL

Totally like Robin.

DAVID

It's like I'm this enormous disappointment. Her favorite thing in the world is bragging about me.

(his voice cracking)

She gave me so much.

(smiling wistfully)

You know I couldn't go anywhere as a kid without holding her thumb?

RACHEL

Aw.

DAVID

She doesn't understand it's not easy to find yourself these days.

RACHEL

No.

David senses Rachel isn't fully invested.

DAVID

There's something great inside of me. I just...don't know what it is yet.

RACHEL

You...are...great...

He leans over. Sees she's sending a text message.

DAVID

What are you doing?

RACHEL

Listening to you.

David stares.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Haley won't leave me alone.

DAVID
Shut that thing off.

RACHEL
I can't listen and type?

David glares. She shuts the Sidekick off.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Okaaaay.

Over the obnoxious power down chime --

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Keep going.

DAVID
Everything always has to be about you.

RACHEL
Don't take it out on me, okay? Let's go to
the park tonight, you'll feel better.

DAVID
I'm in no shape for human consumption.
Let's do something the two of us.

RACHEL
You don't like my friends now.

DAVID
We could go for tapas.

RACHEL
Tapas?

DAVID
Spanish appetizers, ate about a ton of them
junior year abroad. I've told you this.

RACHEL
What is it with all this drama? It's the
summer.

David stares at her. He realizes something.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
What?

DAVID
You're so young.

RACHEL
I'm a senior.

DAVID
All this time I've been acting...trying to
re-capture some old version of myself, of
my life. Uch. I don't belong with you
anymore than I belong at home.

Rachel examines him for a long beat.

RACHEL
(frustrated)
Do you want to come out tonight or not?

David gets up and walks out the door.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

They eat in dead silence. Munch. Munch. Munch.

MR. REIGER
David Brooks in The Times said that for Gen
Y the twenties are now "the wandering
years." David, maybe you can write in a
letter to the editor?

DAVID
Maybe.

Munch. Munch. Munch.

MRS. REIGER
We created too good a home life. We thought
we were providing what our parents
couldn't. Instead we raised adult children,
no more suited to the real world than a
puppy outside his doghouse.

Munch. Munch. Munch. David stands up and walks out the door.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - NIGHT

David drives 65 m.p.h. around a curvy street.

RACHEL
Will you slow down? You're driving like a
freaking maniac!

David's lips make a twisted smile.

A GROUP OF BOYS (O.S.)
Chug, chug, chug!

EXT. LIONS PARK - NIGHT

David polishes off another beer. The boys cheer. David sees a GARBAGE CAN.

DAVID
I am going to destroy that garbage can.

He stumbles over to it, and kicks the shit out of it. Garbage flies everywhere. David holds his arms up victoriously.

Rachel and Haley watch the festivities:

HALEY
Men.

RACHEL
He's having problems at home. His mother.

HALEY
Fucking moms. Mine's making me stay in tomorrow night to work on my college essay.

David stumbles up to them. Puts his arm around Rachel.

DAVID
There's my awesome girlfriend.

RACHEL
You need water.

DAVID
What advice she gives.

David hugs her. Rachel pushes him away.

RACHEL
What is your problem?

DAVID
You care that I have a problem?

HALEY
Whatever.

DAVID
Let's go to our castle. Please my queen?
While we're still young.

Rachel's eyes well up. Haley hugs her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'm going to the playground.

AT THE PLAYGROUND --

David climbs up the slide to the Castle. Then he climbs over the railing and onto the ROOF. Does a lame little dance. Looks down and sees THE BOYS cheering him on.

He dances some more. Suddenly...

...He begins to wobble...

...The Boys GASP...

...David rights himself...

...The relieved boys EXHALE...

...But David's fucked his balance...

...He pitches forward...backward...

...And he tumbles off...

...Landing with a DISGUSTING THUNK!

He gets up slowly. The TEENAGERS stare at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Whaddo I get for the dismount?

Then he looks down at

HIS HAND --
Covered in blood. He touches

HIS CHIN --
It's like drilling an exposed nerve.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Ow! Holy shit! Oh, fuck!

He collapses.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID'S POV --

The Crew sits nervously. A NURSE enters.

NURSE
Eliazar Fernandez?

Haley groans as a fat Mexican dude limps past them. David closes his eyes.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

DAVID'S POV --

T.J. and Doug watch "ER" on the hospital television. David hears a voice, looks over at

THE NURSE'S STATION

Haley and Rachel yell at the nurse. David can only pick up certain words. "Waiting forever"..."unconscious"..."my curfew."

David closes his eyes.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

THE SMILING FACE OF DR. SANJEEV RAMESH
Speaks directly at us --

DR. RAMESH
You're lucky you didn't break your jaw.
Gonna have a humdinger of a black-and blue
mark.

RACHEL
Is he gonna get a scar?

DR. RAMESH
A small one.
(to David)

DR. RAMESH (CONT'D)

You're lucky you have a little sister who
cares so much about you.

EXT. PINE NUT TERRACE - NIGHT

The Minivan screeches to a stop a few feet from the
THE DEBLINGER'S DRIVEWAY

David looks like he just went twelve rounds. Blood seeps
through the bandage on his chin. His jawline is swollen and
black-and-blue.

RACHEL

(re: the bandage)

Change that in the morning.

DAVID

Thanks.

RACHEL

You don't have to be a dick about it.

DAVID

Get out.

Rachel's eyes fill with tears. She hops out and runs toward
the driveway. She looks back to see if David has waited to
see her inside. But the minivan is gone. We hear it turn the
corner with a harsh SCREECH.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He carefully takes his shirt off. The neck-hole scrapes
against his chin.

DAVID

Fuck.

He leaves his shirt on. He stumbles over to his

COLLEGE GRADUATION PHOTO
Stares at it. He hears

SOUNDS FROM THE PAST --
"Pomp-and-Circumstance" plays. APPLAUSE.

Then --

David loses control. One by one, he takes each framed photo
and throws it on the ground. SMASH. SMASH. SMASH.

David, spent, stares at the carnage at his feet. He picks up

his graduation photo. The glass covering it is cracked.

DAVID'S BANDAGED FACE

Is reflected over his younger, happier one. The two images in clear and certain contrast. The applause grows louder.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - DAY

More precisely, the wreckage of David's bedroom. We SEE:

-- A pile of dirty underwear.

-- Half-empty Snapples sprouting colonies of green mold.

-- A cell phone flashing fourteen new messages.

David lays on his bed, staring at the ceiling. He looks dreadful. He hasn't changed his bandage -- it's now yellowed and caked with dried blood. Dark circles under his eyes. Wearing the same shirt as the day he fell. Unshaven.

A knock on the door.

MR. REIGER

Davy? Sweetheart?

Mr. Reiger, carrying a plate of food, wades through the mess.

MR. REIGER (CONT'D)

Some bagel and lox? Fresh from this morning.

DAVID

I'm fine.

MR. REIGER

I'll leave it here in case you're hungry later.

He puts the plate down.

MR. REIGER (CONT'D)

Make some room for your old man.

Mr. Reiger sits awkwardly on the edge of the bed.

MR. REIGER (CONT'D)

How's that chin?

DAVID

Hurts.

MR. REIGER

Bet that's the last time you play touch football.

David looks away.

MR. REIGER (CONT'D)

You've been locked up here for days now. The natives below. They worry.

DAVID

Just thinking.

MR. REIGER

Your old man's been around the block.

His father's well-intentioned stare breaks David's reticence.

DAVID

I feel...

MR. REIGER

You feel what? Tell me.

DAVID

I dunno...Stuck?

MR. REIGER

Stuck.

DAVID

Like I'm in this situation that there's no way out of. The guilt.

MR. REIGER

There is a way out. You might not see it from where you stand, but seems to me you're starting to find out who you really are.

David looks at him with an odd hopefulness.

MR. REIGER (CONT'D)

From what Robin Deblinger's told your mother it appears you have a major talent at connecting with teenagers. You know what a guy like that might enjoy doing for a living?

DAVID

No.

MR. REIGER
Teaching.

David gets off the bed.

DAVID
I have to go tutor.

MR. REIGER
If it were up to me, teachers would be the highest paid people in society, not athletes and movie stars.

DAVID
I know.

MR. REIGER
Not bad advice. C'mere.

Mr. Reiger hugs his son. Then looks into his eyes deeply.

MR. REIGER (CONT'D)
You look better already. What I would've given to have had talks like this with my old man, the old ball-buster.

Off-screen -- a THUNDERBOLT.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - DAY

RAIN.

David drives.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD --
David stares at the bleary brake lights. Lost in thought. He hears the VOICES of his life.

MRS. REIGER (V.O.)
You're nothing! Nothing!

MR. REIGER (V.O.)
What about teaching?

RACHEL (V.O.)
Tapas?

MRS. REIGER (V.O.)
Nothing! Nothing! Nothing!

MR. REIGER (V.O.)
There is a way out.

David decides something. Cackles to himself. A man without hope. Christopher Walken at the end of Deer Hunter.

The traffic has cleared. David's eyes narrow. The gas pedal is slammed. DAVID'S EYES fill the frame. A man on a mission. And that mission is self-destruction.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

RACHEL'S BEDROOM DOOR
Swings open and

RACHEL
Looks up to see

DAVID
Striding toward her. He kisses her.

RACHEL
What was that for?

DAVID
For being an asshole.

He kisses down her neck.

RACHEL
Oh, Dave, mmmmm. I forgive you.

They kiss some more.

DAVID
Where are your parents?

RACHEL
I left you like ten messages and...oh, it's okay, you're here. You're here.

DAVID
Where are your parents?

He starts to take off her shirt.

RACHEL
Dave.

DAVID
Where are your parents?

RACHEL
My parents are out.

DAVID

When are they coming home?

RACHEL

They're picking Leah up. They'll be home in like twenty.

DAVID

Better hurry up then.

RACHEL

You're really sorry aren't you?

He kisses down her stomach.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(giggling)

They could walk in any minute! Do you want us to get caught?

ON DAVID

A nihilistic smile. Exactly what he wants. He kisses her. Hard. They fall to the bed.

INT. DR. DEBLINGER'S CL320 - DAY

Leah is exhausted.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Should we stop for a cup of coffee?

LEAH

Just need a shower. The partners took the summer associates out last night. Dinner, drinks, the works. Three a.m. I got home.

MRS. DEBLINGER

And?

LEAH

(playfully)

And?

MRS. DEBLINGER

Do you want dinner tonight, miss?

LEAH

They offered me a job after graduation. Starts at 70 with a Christmas bonus.

MR. DEBLINGER

Yes! Yes!

Mrs. Deblinger begins to cry.

LEAH

Ma.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Your grandfather an electrician on the Lower East Side and you a lawyer.

MR. DEBLINGER

Robin? We did good by our girls.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rachel blows David.

DAVID

Gently. Take your time.

INT. DR. DEBLINGER'S CAR - DAY

MRS. DEBLINGER

Any nice Jewish men down there?

LEAH

Ma.

MRS. DEBLINGER

I know how hard you work. I worry sometimes about you getting lonely.

DR. DEBLINGER

She'll have plenty of time to play house when school is over. Unbelievable. Five o'clock and it's clear sailing.

EXT. THE GARDEN STATE PARKWAY - DAY

The car turns off onto Exit 162.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

They reach the second act turning point of their fucking.

EXT. PINE NUT TERRACE/INT. DR. DEBLINGER'S CL500 - DAY

Dr. Deblinger turns onto his street.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

CRRRRRRRRRRR --

We hear the Garage Door open.

David keeps pumping.

RACHEL
Dave!

DAVID
(pumping away)
Yeah? Yeah?

RACHEL
Oh my God!

MRS. DEBLINGER (O.S.)
Everything still look the same?

DR. DEBLINGER (O.S.)
Trick question. She re-did the cabinets.

RACHEL
Get off!

DAVID
(a twisted smile)
I'm not finished.

RACHEL
Get off!

He smiles. Continues to pump away. This is it, folks.

MRS. DEBLINGER (O.S.)
Hellooo? Princeton Review?

RACHEL
In my room!
(frantically to David)
Get off of me!

Footsteps.

MRS. DEBLINGER
I brought someone home with me who is very
excited to see the both of you!

RACHEL
What are you doing?

TIME SLOWS DOWN
As David thinks. He HEARS footsteps. He LOOKS at Rachel's
terrified face. He CLOSES his eyes. Has he gone crazy?

—
TIME SPEEDS BACK UP

As he decides:

DAVID
No! Get dressed!

He dismounts. Frantically runs around the room, throwing on his clothes. Rachel paws through the tangled sheets.

RACHEL
Where're my panties?

DAVID
Just put on your jeans!

Rachel throws off the duvet...the panties aren't there...

RACHEL
I told you!

DAVID
Put on your fucking jeans!

RACHEL
Don't yell at me!

The footsteps grow louder. David picks up his shirt. Takes a deep breath. Pulls his shirt on. The neckhole hits his chin.

DAVID
Fuck!

Rachel finds her underwear tangled up in a sheet.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Am I bleeding?

She has one leg in her jeans when:

MRS. DEBLINGER
Knock knock.

David opens the door a crack. Sticks his head out.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)
David!

DAVID
(whisper)
This? I fell.

MRS. DEBLINGER
(whisper)
Stitches?

DAVID
(whisper)

I'll survive. We're just finishing up a
practice test here.

MRS. DEBLINGER

(whisper)

A little peek? I'd like Leah to see this.

DAVID

(whisper)

She's really in the zone right now. I don't
think we should disrupt her.

An agonizing moment as Mrs. Deblinger considers this.

MRS. DEBLINGER

(whisper)

You are one hundred percent right.

DAVID

(looks at his watch)

Ten minutes.

Like the end of Godfather I, David closes the door, leaving
Mrs. Deblinger and Leah standing dumbly in the hallway.

Beat.

DAVID (CONT'D) (O.S.)

(loudly)

Pencils down!

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

David splashes cold water on his face. His disgusted
reflection stares at him. What was he thinking?

DAVID

You just can't do this anymore. You hear
me? You cannot fucking do this anymore.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

David opens the door. Rachel's already yakking on the phone.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

David enters. He sees

LEAH --

Sipping juice and reading a book. Maybe it's just David's

desperation, but she suddenly looks very beautiful. David STARES.

LEAH

Oh my God!

DAVID

Hi?

(realizing)

I fell.

She stands up. Gives him a hug.

LEAH

Hear this is working out well for you.

DAVID

Rachel's on the phone and I'm late for dinner. Tell your mom she can pay me next time.

LEAH

They're bringing my bags in, she'll be right back.

(yelling)

Mom! Dave's done!

MRS. DEBLINGER (O.S.)

David, wait!

David exhales. He sees the book Leah was reading: Jeffrey Toobin's The Nine: Inside the Supreme Court.

DAVID

This for school?

LEAH

For fun. I know.

MRS. DEBLINGER (O.S.)

I hear our study bunnies!

As she walks in --

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

Where is my other daughter?

DAVID

She's on the phone.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Unbelievable.

(screaming)

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

Rachel! Get down here immediately and say
hello to your sister!
(to David and Leah)
So? How is the Class of '02?

Before they can answer --

RACHEL
Lee-lee!

Rachel walks over to her sister. They deeply embrace.

LEAH
Raych! Let me look at you! You're glowing!

David feels a CLAP on his shoulder. Turns around.

DR. DEBLINGER
(to David)
The daughters Deblinger. Not a bad sight.
(sees his chin)
Christ, David!

DAVID
Just a little fall. I should be getting
home for dinner.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Hold your horses. How did we do?

DAVID
How did we do?

MRS. DEBLINGER
On the practice test?

DAVID
We're improving.

MRS. DEBLINGER
The test is two weeks away. Are we closing
in on that 650?

DAVID
With a little more studying and a little
bit of luck.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Maybe she shouldn't hang out with those
beer guzzling friends of hers for the next
two weeks and commit solely to working with
you.

RACHEL
I'm allowed to have a life!

MRS. DEBLINGER
You can have all the life you want at
Bowdoin.

RACHEL
(gritted teeth)
I want to go to UCLA.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Want to know what these two were doing at
your age?

LEAH
(protesting)
Ma.

Mrs. Deblinger takes a PHOTOGRAPH out of a drawer.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Found this the other day when I was
cleaning out your room. You two'll get a
kick out of it.

She hands it to Leah.

THE PHOTO --
Leah and David at 17. His hair is geeky, she wears horrifying
eyeglasses. They're both exhausted, but proudly hold up the
page proofs of their high school newspaper, The Wildcatter.

LEAH
Ma.

RACHEL
What is it?

Mrs. Deblinger takes it from Leah and gives it to David.

MRS. DEBLINGER
David? Do you remember?

DAVID
(wishes he could disappear)
Senior year it looks like.

LEAH
(examining the photo)
The Back to School Issue.

MRS. DEBLINGER
The Woodward and Bernstein of Pascack
Valley High.

DR. DEBLINGER
More like the Bernstein and Bernstein.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Harv.

RACHEL
Who?

DR. DEBLINGER
Famous reporters, sweetheart. "All the
President's Men." Make it a Blockbuster
night.

RACHEL
They're actors?

LEAH
Broke the Watergate story. They made a
movie about it with Robert Redford.

MRS. DEBLINGER
The fights these two would have over who
would get their story on the front page.

RACHEL
Robert Redford?

DR. DEBLINGER
Tell me he tutors history.

LEAH
(to David)
It went to you that issue. Last one before
college applications. I was convinced it
was your fault I wasn't getting into Duke.

DAVID
Smoke is probably coming out of my mom's
ears right now.

MRS. DEBLINGER
("oh please" eyes at David)
Do you remember what your stories were?

LEAH
Mine?
(she thinks)

LEAH (CONT'D)

Mine was the school opening up early to
accommodate a student prayer group.

RACHEL

Like stop the presses.

LEAH

Church versus state?

RACHEL

Blah versus blah?

MRS. DEBLINGER

David? What was yours?

DAVID

Don't remember.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Try.

The whole family looks at him. He breaks.

DAVID

A thing on Prom safety.

Leah laughs. Even David can't help but smile.

LEAH

Dave convinced the staff that more students
cared about the prom.

DAVID

Stupid.

RACHEL

No! You were right!

LEAH

History has judged you well.

The Deblingers laugh. Leah smiles. David watches her, charmed
by this smart, witty woman.

RACHEL

(to Leah)

Prom matters! You'd know if you ever went.

LEAH

It's good to be home.

Off Leah's laughter, we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David searches through his bookshelf. From below:

MRS. REIGER (O.S.)
He thinks he can support a family on a
teacher's salary?

David finds the book he was looking for. Walks to his door.

DAVID
(yelling)
Good night!

David slams the door.

AT HIS BED --

He lies down and opens

FOOTPRINTS
His high school yearbook. Opens to the CLUBS section. Finds
the photo of The Wildcatter staff. Looks at himself and Leah
smiling awkwardly. Chuckles. Flips to the

PHOTO SECTION --

And finds Leah's photograph. The epigram under her name:

Every end is a new beginning.

David smiles and nods in agreement.

17-YEAR OLD LEAH
Looks up at David invitingly.

David shoves his hand down his pants. Begins to jerk off.

As David retches forward in climax:

DAVID (CONT'D)
Oh God. Leah. Uhhhhm. Save me. I love you.

He comes like a horse and collapses onto the bed.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE - NIGHT

COLLEGE PREPARATION

Teenagers look at SAT Prep books.

But David isn't there.

Camera GLIDES through the store to find him in

NON-FICTION

With the other adults. He picks out The Nine from the shelves. Begins to read it as he walks.

INT. THE BARNES AND NOBLE CAFE

David sits at a table, reading and eating a scone, when he looks up and sees Leah strolling past.

David panics. He bolts from the cafe. Hiding behind a bookshelf, he watches as she orders a coffee. When he's certain her back is turned, he runs into

THE BATHROOM

He smells his pits. Wets his hair. Gargles with water from the sink. Satisfied, he walks out and back up to

THE CAFE

Leah is sipping coffee, reading.

DAVID
This seat taken?

LEAH
Wow. Hi there.

DAVID
Barnes and Noble on Thursday night.

David looks at the book in her hand: "First Amendment Law."

DAVID (CONT'D)
Will you quit it with the beach books already?

She sees the book David is holding.

LEAH
You like?

DAVID

Very well-written. Mind if I?

He sits down. She has returned to her hi-liter and her book.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You know what always drove me crazy with hi-liters? Once you hi-lite something you can't un-hi-lite it. If someone could invent a white-out for hi-liters?

Leah smiles indulgently without looking up from her book.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Again Leah smiles without looking up, hoping he will take the hint. He reads for a moment.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Yesterday? What a trip down memory lane.

Leah realizes she's going to have to talk.

LEAH

All for Rachel's benefit.

DAVID

We did have some good times on that newspaper though.

LEAH

We did.

DAVID

Tried to do the paper in college. Wasn't the same. No Mrs. DiCamillo.

LEAH

(smiling, a warning)

Dave.

DAVID

Drinking tanqueray from a Gatorade water bottle in her desk. That old drunk better not still be teaching.

LEAH

She died last year. Liver cancer. My mother plays Mah Jongg with her sister.

That deflates things. A long pause. Leah looks at her book.

LEAH (CONT'D)
I really need to get cracking here.

DAVID
Sure.

They both begin to read. Then David looks up and says --

DAVID (CONT'D)
You remember the headline for that story I
did on the cafeteria workers? "Nacho
Average Lunch Ladies?"

Leah laughs. She realizes it's a lost cause. Closes her book.

Music. They continue to talk and laugh as the other patrons
slowly DISSOLVE out of frame until they're the last two
remaining. David asks Leah something. She agrees. They leave.

INT. MATTHEWS' DINER - NIGHT

Packed with teenagers and college students home on break.
David and Leah sit in a vinyl booth.

LEAH
Remember we'd come here after a late night
working on the newspaper? That was the
table we'd all cram into.

David sees A BUNCH OF HIGH-SCHOOL KIDS horsing around at a
big table.

DAVID (V.O.)
We didn't look that ridiculous.

The kids DISSOLVE out of frame. They are replaced by 17 year-old Leah and David, surrounded by the NEWSPAPER STAFF.

LEAH (V.O.)
More ridiculous.

DAVID (V.O.)
Still going over every word.

A WAITRESS walks over with plates of grilled cheese, pancakes, burgers, and one salad. Everyone starts to eat. Mrs. DiCamillo pours vinegar on her salad.

DAVID (V.O) (CONT'D)
That gross salad Mrs. DiCamillo always
ordered. She was hoping the balsamic
fermented.

LEAH (V.O.)
You'd put on Guns 'n' Roses.

"Sweet Child o' Mine" leaks out of the little juke-box in the booth. The staff groans. PAN over to --

LEAH AND DAVID
In the present. She's still staring at the big table when she hears SWEET CHILD O' MINE begin to play.

David smiles. Leah giggles. They look at each other. All sound fades away except SWEET CHILD O' MINE, which becomes loud on the soundtrack. An unmistakable CONNECTION.

A YOUNG MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Reiger!

A NEEDLE DROP snaps us back to reality. David spins around. Doug and T.J. stand there happily.

T.J.
No love?

David stands up and reluctantly gives them bro-hugs.

T.J. (CONT'D)
My parents are taking off next weekend. You good to take care of the brews?

David shoots a "not now" look at the boys.

DAVID
I forgot to introduce everyone. T.J., this is Leah.

T.J.
What up.

LEAH
Nice to meet you.

DAVID
And Doug. Friends of your sister's.

DOUG
(realizing)
Leah Deblinger?

LEAH
Hi?

DOUG

Leah, it's me. Doug Schachtel.

LEAH

Doug Schachtel! You went through puberty!

She stands up and gives him a big hug.

DAVID

I'll let you guys go get a table.

DOUG

I'm gonna be a senior!

LEAH

You're taller than I am!

DAVID

One just opened up. Better take it. Getting pretty crowded.

LEAH

David's tutoring Rachel. That's how you all know...

T.J.

He's the tutor, yo.

DAVID

Alright. Good seeing you.

(calling to the waitress)

These guys need to be seated.

T.J.

Text me about those brews?

The waitress comes and whisks the boys away.

DAVID

We'll have a check when you get a chance.

(to Leah)

Would you mind if we went somewhere a little more grown up?

INT. THE ALLENDALE BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

A quarter is inserted into the slot of an arcade game. David begins to play Ms. Pacman as Leah looks on.

DAVID

Sounds like law school's been a good thing.

LEAH

First year was an adjustment. Being up to
your eyeballs in that much reading.

DAVID

Can't imagine there's a ton of time for
dating with all that.

Ms. Pacman gets eaten by a Ghost.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Leah's turn.

LEAH

My last relationship was not a success.

DAVID

Lawyers. Lots of arguments.

LEAH

The self-obsession. Career, career, career.
The deepest question he ever asked me was
whether I saw myself in the private sector.

DAVID

You were dating my mother?

Leah giggles as her Ms. Pacman gets eaten.

LEAH

That was your fault!

David takes over.

LEAH (CONT'D)

I keep praying it'll get easier when I get
out of my tiny little incestuous world.

David takes a big gulp of beer. Begins to play.

LEAH (CONT'D)

You?

David pretends he's concentrating.

DAVID

What?

LEAH

Am I on Charlie Rose here? You don't have
to answer your own question?

David takes a long sip of beer: is he going to tell her?

DAVID

The world's not exactly crawling with girls
looking for a guy who still lives at home.

LEAH

With the drama. Move out and you're just
the one millionth sweet Jewish boy with
mommy issues.

David's Ms. Pacman gets eaten.

EXT. THE BACK PORCH OF ALLENDALE BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

Candles flicker. A cover band energetically butchers Tom
Petty's "American Girl." David and Leah are buzzed.

DAVID

They make nights like these down in
Philadelphia?

LEAH

Dave? Why did Doug and his friend think you
would buy alcohol for them?

David takes a long pull of beer.

DAVID

A few weeks back, your sister and her
friends were having a party. They asked me
to buy them beer. I said no. Then they said
they were going to drive into the city and
use someone's fake ID. I wasn't about to
let them do anything that dangerous. So I
bought them a case and they promised not to
drink and drive. They're good kids.

LEAH

(chiding)

Dave.

DAVID

I recall Lauren Bronstein's brother scoring
a keg for us at the shore after prom. We
weren't complaining then.

Leah smiles.

DAVID (CONT'D)
It was a one time thing.

LEAH
Promise me you won't do it again.

DAVID
That's all over with.

From the darkness, a voice:

HOWIE MESSER
Deblinger.

DAVID
I'm like a magnet.

LEAH
Shhh.
(to Howie)
Messer!

They hug.

HOWIE MESSER
(concerned)
Reegs.

DAVID
I fell. Home again?

HOWIE MESSER
Been coming up weekends. Me and my pops are
building a gazebo. But the Thruway is
another perk. The east coast Autobahn.

An awkward beat as Howie sees if they'll take the bait.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)
Wanna see her? She's right outside.
DAVID
We're actually -- LEAH
Sure.

EXT. ALLENDALE BAR AND GRILL - NIGHT

They stand in the parking lot admiring Howie's awesome Saab.

HOWIE MESSER
Six cylinders, GTX engine, eight-speaker
surround with an after-market sub-woofer.
The spoils of being a sell-out.

LEAH

It's very nice, Howie.

HOWIE MESSER

Reegs? Start as a paralegal, hit law school, this could all be yours.

DAVID

My plate's full.

HOWIE MESSER

My mom didn't say you found something.

DAVID

SAT Tutoring.

HOWIE MESSER

Good for you. I should get inside. Reegs, if you ever need a ride. I'm here weekends.

Howie trots off. David collapses on a bench. This run-in has sent him into a tailspin of self-loathing. Leah sits down next to him.

DAVID

Like I would ever get in that asshole's Saab.

LEAH

Never the most sensitive guy.

DAVID

"Good for you." Like being an SAT tutor is the best I can do with my life.

LEAH

He didn't mean it like that.

DAVID

Him. Everyone. The condescension.

LEAH

You're figuring things out.

DAVID

I keep thinking the answer will magically reveal itself. Cut to a year later.

LEAH

You don't see yourself anywhere?

DAVID

The more I think about doing something the less appealing it becomes.

LEAH

There has to be something you can see yourself doing.

DAVID

I've spent so much time crossing things off some imaginary list that now it feels like it's too late. I have career A.D.D.

LEAH

You're still young.

DAVID

This summer, with the reunion and this SAT stuff, it's like everyone's grown up and I'm still stuck in Neverland.

LEAH

Sometimes you need to look back to move forward. We gotta get you on a good path again.

As David's smile fills the screen, we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They amble.

DAVID

You're around for two more weeks?

LEAH

Mhm.

DAVID

Better do something tomorrow night then.

LEAH

I was gonna check out this Women in Law thing over at Purchase.

DAVID

They scalping tickets on Craigslist?

LEAH

Is this you inviting yourself?

DAVID

Yes.

LEAH

Good.

They walk for a moment.

DAVID

I was thinking. Maybe you shouldn't mention we'll be hanging out to your sister. You know Rachel. Your mother has this idea she has a little crush on me. I don't want her to be distracted. These are two very important weeks before the SATs.

LEAH

That's very sensitive of you.

DAVID

No secret she feels inferior. If I hear one more thing from her about your SAT score? We've been working on building her confidence and...you get it.

LEAH

I get it.

They've arrived at Leah's car.

LEAH (CONT'D)

This is me.

They hug. They stand like that for a moment. Leah laughs.

LEAH (CONT'D)

David Reiger. David Reiger.

DAVID

Yup.

He kisses her. They make out under the soft halogen glow of the parking lot lights.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

CRACKING THE TEST

PLOPS down onto Rachel's bed.

501 SAT WORDS

PLOPS down onto Rachel's bed.

501 MORE SAT WORDS

PLOPS down onto Rachel's bed.

DAVID

There's a new sheriff in town.

Rachel stares at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

No more partying. Just studying. 24/7.

RACHEL

Are you still mad at me?

DAVID

You think this is my decision? I'm coming from a long talk with your mother.

(a la Mrs. Deblinger)

"Until this test is done with, she has no social life."

RACHEL

Behind my back. Typical.

DAVID

We're moving back down to the kitchen. Your mom's making pizza bagels for us. Yum.

RACHEL

I'm not hungry.

DAVID

As your tutor, and your...

RACHEL

Boyfriend?

DAVID

(grimaces)

Boyfriend, I'm in your mother's camp. These are two very important weeks coming up. Weeks that will affect your whole life.

RACHEL

Uh huh.

DAVID

When I'm here? You'll be studying. When I'm not here?

DAVID (CONT'D)
(game show "buzzer" sound)
What is you'll be studying.

RACHEL
(getting upset)
Things'll be normal after the SATs?

DAVID
You'll be overloaded with school and
college applications. Probably won't even
have the time for me.

RACHEL
(more upset)
I'll always have time for you!

DAVID
I'm being silly. I guess I was a little
worried you can't keep a secret.

RACHEL
What?

DAVID
Sisters like to talk.

RACHEL
I would never.

DAVID
If Leah found out about us? An inkling?
She'd tell everyone and I don't think I'd
ever be able to talk to you ever again.

RACHEL
I promise!

MRS. REIGER (O.S.)
Your pizza bagels are getting cold!

DAVID
Then we won't break up. We're just getting
to work. But if you want us to be together
when all is said and done?

RACHEL
(satisfied)
Seal it with a kiss.

David quickly kisses her. They walk out. David closes the
door to Rachel's bedroom.

MUSIC BEGINS:

INT. UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A DOOR swings open. Leah and David enter, passing a small sign --

WOMEN AND THE LAW

AT THEIR SEATS --

David and Leah listen to a woman speak. Leah is really into it. David looks at her and smiles.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Rachel takes a practice test as David reads The Nine.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

David eats breakfast and reads The Nine. Mrs. Reiger yells at him but he's too engrossed in his book.

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE - NIGHT

David's in the LEGAL SECTION, looking at books. He finds one that seems interesting: Scott Turow's 1L: A Year in the Life of a Harvard Law Student. Picks it up. Walks back to

THE CAFE

Where Leah is studying. He shows her the book. She looks at him and smiles. He feels his cell phone BUZZ. Looks down. I HATE MY LIFE. David types back: HANG IN THERE. Then he sits down and begins to read.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

David grades a practice test. Shows Rachel her grade: 620. They're both impressed.

INT. BARNES AND NOBLE - NIGHT

Leah studies. David finishes 1L.

DAVID

Stupid question. You think I'd be a good lawyer?

LEAH

You a good liar?

David shifts uncomfortably.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Joking.

DAVID

Hearing you talk about it, reading these books. I dunno. It sounds sort of really interesting to me.

LEAH

I think it's right up your alley.

DAVID

Can you believe this? Somewhere a Jewish mother just got her wings.

Leah laughs. David's cell phone buzzes. Looks down: **MISERABLE**. David types back: **1 MORE WEEK**.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

David walks in. Leah and Rachel are on the couch watching TV.

DAVID

The Deblinger girls. Rachel? Ready?

Rachel groans. She walks out the door. David pauses a moment and **WINKS** at Leah. Leah giggles. Rachel doesn't notice.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN

David grades a practice test. 630.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

David and Leah watch a movie with subtitles.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David finishes cleaning his room. Spotless.

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN

David grades a practice test. 650. They high five.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He prepares for a date. When he's done, he gently removes his **BANDAGE**. All that remains is a small scar. **MUSIC ENDS**.

EXT. APAMATE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A framed restaurant review hangs in the window: "Tapas Come to Westchester."

INT. APAMATE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

David and Leah chow down.

DAVID

These *mariscos* take me right back to Barcelona.

LEAH

Try the artichoke tapenade.

A dish is placed in front of them.

BENEVOLENT WAITER

Compliments of the chef.

They both smile.

DAVID

Gracias, mesero.

The waiter smiles, turns his back, and rolls his eyes.

David tries the artichoke. His cell phone rings. Ignores it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(munching)

Holy shit.

His cell phone rings again. Looks at the number.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I should get this. Hello?

INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Rachel has the SAT books in front of her.

RACHEL

I just did a reading comprehension about whales. Made me think of you.

INT. APAMATE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

DAVID

(covering the phone; to Leah)

Two minutes.

EXT. APAMATE RESTAURANT/INT. THE DEBLINGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

RACHEL

My parents are out. Leah's studying at Barnes and Noble's. Keep me company? We'll just do synonyms and antonyms.

DAVID

I'm at dinner with my parents.

RACHEL

Wah.

David looks inside. Leah waves at him, points at the table -- dessert has arrived.

DAVID

Three tomorrow. Make sure you have those "r" words memorized.

RACHEL

Two more days 'til the SATs. Then things will be normal.

DAVID

Two more days.

INT. APAMATE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

David sits back down.

DAVID

Mrs. Reiger says shalom.

LEAH

Tres leches.

She holds out a spoonful of cake for him. He eats it happily.

DAVID

Mmmmm.

LEAH

So I bought you a present.

She takes a book out of her bag. Gives it to him:

Barron's Guide to Cracking the LSATs

DAVID

These test prep people have some racket.

LEAH
Read the inscription.

DAVID
(laughing)
You inscribed...?
(reading)
I.O.U. LSAT tutoring sessions. These last
two weeks you've made me understand that
you really can go home again.

David puts a hand over his heart and smiles.

EXT./INT. THE REIGER'S GARAGE - NIGHT

CRRRRR!
The Garage Door opens.

DAVID
(Elmer Fudd)
Be vewy vewy qwiet. My pawents are
sweeping.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David opens the door and hears:

MRS. REIGER (O.S.)
Normal people call if they're out late.

David and Leah walk in. Mrs. Reiger sits at the table.

DAVID
Still up.

MRS. REIGER
I can't sleep until he gets home.

DAVID
You remember Leah Deblinger.

MRS. REIGER
Lovely Leah. Let me look at you.

LEAH
Hi Mrs. Reiger.

MRS. REIGER
For you I just might start liking lawyers.
Sit, sit. I'm having deja vu of you two on
that high school paper.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)

We had high hopes this one was going to be
the next Bob Woodward.

David smiles.

DAVID

Maybe I'll be Bob Woodward's lawyer.

Mrs. Reiger nearly spit-takes.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We're going upstairs.

Before Mrs. Reiger can inquire, David whisks his girl away.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leah admires the photos on the shelf.

DAVID

No one ever lives up to their baby
pictures.

LEAH

Tch, Dave. Look how cute you were.

He walks up behind her, putting his arms around her. She
shows him the graduation photo -- cracked glass and all.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Just needs a new frame.

David takes the photograph from her. Turns her around in his
arms and KISSES her.

DISSOLVE TO:

DAVID

Staring glumly at the ceiling -- the same shot from the start
of the movie. Widen and see Leah sadly lying on his shoulder.

DAVID

Tell me you're not really leaving in two
days.

LEAH

Don't remind me.

DAVID

I could come down some weekends.

LEAH

When I'm not in the library, I guess...

DAVID

Yeah...

LEAH

Dave? Why don't you come back to Philly with me?

DAVID

Come back to Philly with you?

LEAH

I can probably talk one of my professors into hiring you as a research assistant. Perfect for a law school recommendation.

David stands up.

DAVID

Philadelphia?

LEAH

Philadelphia.

DAVID

Philadelphia. Wow. I don't know.

LEAH

You can stay with me 'til you find your own place.

DAVID

We've known each other two weeks.

LEAH

Since fourth grade.

David thinks.

LEAH (CONT'D)

I know it's scary for you.

DAVID

It's not scary.

LEAH

Leaving home is a big change. But you'll have me with you.

David isn't convinced.

LEAH (CONT'D)

You're on a good path now. Don't you think it's about time to take the next step?

CUT TO:

MRS. REIGER'S OVERJOYED FACE

MRS. REIGER

Yes!

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

DAVID

Leah's going to get me a job working as a professor's research assistant. I'll take my LSATs in September and apply for next year with a strong recommendation.

MR. REIGER

You're going to law school?

MRS. REIGER

At Penn. Leah's okay with this?

MR. REIGER

Who's Leah?

DAVID

I'll stay with her for a few days until I find my own place. I've saved up almost \$2000 this summer.

MR. REIGER

And she thinks there's no money in teaching.

She picks up the phone.

MRS. REIGER

Nancy Finkelstein please.

MR. REIGER

The one whose sister you're tutoring?

DAVID

Yup.

MRS. REIGER

Nancy. Susie Reiger. David needs to cancel his appointment for tomorrow. Uh huh.

MR. REIGER
(cracking up)
"Leah and her Sisters." Get Woody Allen on
line one.

MRS. REIGER
A lawyer! I know! I'm flying!

She hangs up.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
That Leah Deblinger! That tutoring job was
the best decision I made for you in your
life!

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

David stares at the answer sheet incredulously.

DAVID
690.

Rachel screams with delight. Mrs. Deblinger runs in.

MRS. DEBLINGER
What?

DAVID
Your daughter just scored a 690.

MRS. DEBLINGER
Say that again.

DAVID
690.

MRS. DEBLINGER
690! Can you do that tomorrow?

RACHEL
I think?

MRS. DEBLINGER
You can! 690! We knew you just weren't
living up to your potential! Lee!

RACHEL
What if I forget?

DAVID
You'll have Cracking the Test with you. You
can review during breaks in the test.

MRS. DEBLINGER
What a guy.

Leah runs in.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)
Your sister just scored a 690.

LEAH
She must have a very good tutor.

RACHEL
The best.

DAVID
Credit goes to Rachel. It's a testament to
how hard she's worked these past two weeks.

RACHEL
Can Dave take me to the SATs tomorrow? For
good luck?

MRS. DEBLINGER
It's very early.

DAVID
No problem.

MRS. DEBLINGER
I'll pick you up after.

RACHEL
Haley is. She's taking me out to lunch.

MRS. DEBLINGER
(knocking on the counter)
Let's not give a conahura here, but
tomorrow is going to be a great day for
Rachel Deblinger.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

PLINK! PLINK!
Diet Pepsi cans smack against each other.

MRS. REIGER
(laughing)
David, we knew you would find yourself.
Maybe not that it would take this long...

The family has a laugh. She raises her Diet Pepsi again.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)

It's been too long since I toasted my only child. Good mazel for your future. It begins tomorrow.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David's on the phone with Leah.

DAVID

My last night in this bed.

LEAH

I told my mother about us. She's concerned how Rachel will take the news. My sister thinks the world of you.

DAVID

She's a great kid.

LEAH

I regret we've spent the last two weeks like this. The thought she'll think I lied to her.

DAVID

I'm telling her after the test. No biggie.

LEAH

You're her tutor. I'm acting like I stole her boyfriend.

DAVID

Right.

(exhales)

Tomorrow is gonna be one hell of a day.

And off David's worried face, we

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

AT HIS DESK --

The first rays of sunshine fall on David's scrunched face. He reads over a piece of paper.

DAVID (V.O.)

Dear Rachel. What a crazy summer. Tutoring you and getting to know you has been an experience I will never forget.

He opens his cell phone. Find the photo of him and Rachel doing "Sweet Child." Looks at it fondly. Deletes it.

AT HIS BOOKSHELF --

David removes books and places them into his backpack.

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

But we both know it hasn't been good between us for some time. And now I've developed feelings for someone else.

He comes to Footprints, his Yearbook. Opens to Leah's photo.

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

That someone else is your sister Leah.

A slight RRRRIP as the pages comes unstuck. David looks at Leah's picture and then puts the yearbook in his backpack.

AT HIS CLOSET --

David takes out clothes.

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

I know this hurts. But you have the best four years of your life ahead of you. I have my life ahead of me.

AT HIS BED --

David struggles to fold a shirt.

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

Guess what? I'm finally ready to grow up.

He gives up. He rolls up the shirt into a ball and smushes it into his suitcase.

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

You might wonder why I didn't tell you all this in person. It might seem like I'm running away from my problems. That is not the case at all.

AT HIS COMPUTER --

David brings up a web page: "GET AWAY on AMTRAK!"

DAVID (V.O.)

It's just that it would be too hard for me
to say all this to you in person. I'm that
upset.

IN THE SHOWER --

David cleans himself.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(singing)

I'm leaving on a big train...

AT THE SINK --

David brushes his teeth.

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

I know this will be hard for you. That is
why I have made sure that you are reading
this with your wonderful friend Haley next
to you.

He spits.

IN THE BATHROOM MIRROR --

David fixes his hair.

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

And tonight you will go to the park with
your friends, and have one last party
before senior year begins.

DAVID'S BEDROOM --

As he dresses.

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

Though you will be hurt, you promised me
that you would keep our relationship a
secret and I am hoping you stick to that
promise. For both of us.

AT HIS TROPHY SHELF --

David takes down a few photos and puts them in his backpack.

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

Hopefully in a few months when I am back to
visit I can buy you a beer -- ha ha -- and
we can have a laugh about all this drama.

ON HIS BED --

ZIP! ZIP! The suitcase is ready.

DAVID (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Until then I wish you the best of luck in
whatever new tests may come your way.
Sincerely, your tutor and friend, David
Reiger.

AT HIS DESK --
LICK LICK! David seals the ENVELOPE and puts it in his
backpack.

Now he just needs to make his plan work.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Reiger sips coffee.

MRS. REIGER
Where are you running off to?

DAVID
Told Rachel I'd take her to the SATs.

MRS. REIGER
She doesn't have parents?

DAVID
No.

MRS. REIGER
You need to clean out my car. Your LSAT
book, your CDs. They're growing mold.

DAVID
Be back in twenty.

MRS. REIGER
Now.

David sighs.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - DAY

Still full of David's shit. Rachel sits shotgun, clutching
Mr. Dorchester.

DAVID
Last minute quiz?

RACHEL
Just let me chill.

David pulls into

EXT. MAMARONECK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Kids in pajama bottoms and other "comfortable" test attire mill about, nervously clutching calculators and coffees.

RACHEL
(swallowing hard)
I'm gonna puke.

DAVID
Deep breaths. By noon this'll all be over.

They hug. Rachel steps out of the car.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Make me proud.

Rachel slowly walks toward her destiny. David sees Cracking the Test on the floor, hands it to her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Your book.

She looks at him -- "why?"

DAVID (CONT'D)
Remember? If you need to look something up?

She leans back in, grabs the book, and heads toward school.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - DAY

David drives, talking into the cell phone.

DAVID
A four o'clock train? You said noon.

LEAH
I said four.

DAVID
Just bought my ticket online. It's non-refundable.

LEAH
When are you going to tell her?

DAVID
Taken care of. She totally understood.

LEAH
I won't have a chance to say goodbye.

DAVID

Leah? What do you want me to do? I have to run a million errands in the next three hours so if you can't go on this train with me I'll just meet you in Philly or something.

Leah sighs. David waits nervously for an answer.

LEAH

Jesus. See you at quarter to twelve.

David sighs. Speeds off.

INT. MAMARONECK HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

A PROCTOR stands at the front of the room.

PROCTOR

You have thirty minutes to complete section one. You...may...

The classroom of students nervously watch the clock.

PROCTOR (CONT'D)

...begin.

WHOOSH! 25 test books open simultaneously. It's on.

EXT. HALEY WEISS'S HOUSE - DAY

Haley is holding the ENVELOPE.

DAVID

After lunch, take her back to your house. She'll be upset when she reads it. Make sure she doesn't do anything stupid.

HALEY

Why don't you give it to her yourself?

DAVID

I'm going away for awhile.

Haley looks at him skeptically.

HALEY

I'm her best friend.

DAVID

I'll write your application essay for you.

HALEY
(perking up)

I have all these stories about my trip to Antigua to build huts for two weeks, I just don't know how to focus them.

DAVID
We'll talk over e-mail.

INT. MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN - DAY

David pushes the pedal to the metal.

EXT. DOUG'S HOUSE - DAY

Doug's mother opens the door.

DAVID
Hi. Is Doug home?

DOUG'S MOM
He's at football practice. Are you his...?

David's already running back to the car.

EXT. THE FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

David's talking to T.J. and Doug through a fence. The team runs wind sprints behind them.

DAVID
Tonight I want you all to go to the park and get your drink on. In honor of Rachel.

T.J.
Coach is making us do a double today.
Miracle if I'm up past "Family Guy."

DAVID
Dougster. I need you on this.

DOUG
Alright.

DAVID
I'll leave it in a bag under the bleachers.

EXT. MAMARONECK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The Minivan zooms past us. We HOLD on a

CLASSROOM WINDOW

And see Rachel chewing on her pencil, thinking hard about what a word means. She looks up at the clock: 10:30.

She sighs. A kid turns around, gives her the hairy eyeball.

INT. RAMSEY LIQUOR STORE - DAY

At the counter, the Beer Delivery Guy bags the booze. Gives David a thumbs up.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET/INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Mrs. Reiger's Minivan flies past us. David's cell phone rings.

MRS. REIGER

The lightbulb in the hallway just blew out.

DAVID

So?

MRS. REIGER

I need you to go buy a new one and come home and put it in.

DAVID

What about Dad?

MRS. REIGER

Your father is too old to be up on a ladder.

He flips the phone shut.

DAVID

FUCK!!!

He makes an ILLEGAL U-TURN. We hear angry HONKS.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

David agitatedly waits in a long line. Holds a single bulb. The CLOCK on the wall -- 11:05. Tick. Tick. Tick.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Rachel is stuck on a word. She looks down at Cracking the Test. She knows the definition is in there.

INT. THE REIGER'S HALLWAY - DAY

David is screwing in a lightbulb. His mother watches.

MRS. REIGER

Gently.

The bulb alights.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)

You sure that's in?

DAVID

Be right back.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The Minivan flies past us.

EXT. THE FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

David deposits the bag behind the bleachers.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The Minivan flies past us in the opposite direction.

INT. THE REIGER'S KITCHEN - DAY

David bursts in. His mother is doing the dishes.

DAVID

Let's go! Let's go!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The WALL CLOCK ticks to 11:15.

PROCTOR

Pencils down. You now have a ten minute break. You may have a drink of water, a snack, or use the restroom. No cell phones. Young man? I said pencils down.

Rachel reaches into her bag, surreptitiously grabs her prep book and walks out.

EXT. THE TRAIN STATION PARKING LOT - DAY

College students and parents drag back-to-school stuff to the train platform. We find --

MRS. REIGER'S MINIVAN

David and his mother are both overwhelmed by the special brand of sentimentality partial to Jews and Hollywood movies.

DAVID

I know we've had our ups and downs these past couple years.

MRS. REIGER

Your lousy luck you were blessed with a crazy Jewish mother.

DAVID

These past two years? I wanted you to be proud of me like you used to.

MRS. REIGER

David. You are a loving, honest, sensitive boy. The pride I feel about you has nothing to do with your career. It has to do with the man you are inside.

They hug, both overwhelmed by the bullshit.

EXT. WOODCLIFF LAKE TRAIN STATION - DAY

David sits on his bench, his suitcase next to him. Watches as PARENTS and their COLLEGE-BOUND KIDS exchange teary goodbyes. David smiles wistfully. He looks up at

THE TRAIN STATION CLOCK -- 11:35.

He picks up his cell phone, dials. Straight to voice mail.

DAVID

Leah, I'm running early. I'm under the clock. Look for the guy doing LSAT prep.

He sits back, reaches into his backpack, and pulls out his test prep book. Takes a deep breath and SMILES. He's earned it. He opens his book. Begins to read.

ON THE TEXT --

...not about how smart you are...

David BLINKS.

ON THE TEXT --

...but how well you take the test.

He flips the book over. Looks at the cover.

It's Rachel's SAT book.

Which can only mean one thing. David closes his eyes.

FLASH CUT to --

MRS. REIGER
Clean out the car. Your LSAT book...

FLASH CUT to --

David handing a book to Rachel:

DAVID
Take it.

Rachel gives him that weird look, which suddenly makes a lot more sense when we ZOOM IN on what Rachel is holding:

BARRON'S CRACKING THE LSATs.

Back to --

THE TRAIN STATION

DAVID (CONT'D)
Oh fuck. Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck.

He picks up his cell phone.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Rachel? Dave. I know you're probably still taking your test but um, I gave you the wrong book. Don't open it. Bye.

He quickly dials another number.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Leah? It's Dave. Uh...Bye.

He quickly dials another number.

MRS. DEBLINGER'S VOICE
You have reached the Deblinger residence.
No one is available to come to the...

He flips his phone shut. Brings his hand to his mouth. What the fuck can he do? Then he remembers something.

INT. HOWIE MESSER'S SAAB - DAY

Flying down the street.

HOWIE MESSER
Tune-age?

DAVID
Just drive.

HOWIE MESSER
You gotta get a load of this subwoofer.

He cranks the radio.

ON THE RADIO
...Q 104.3, home of Classic Rock's Labor
Day 500 Greatest Rock Songs of All Time.
Here at number fourteen is...

HOWIE MESSER
Pearl Jam.

ON THE RADIO
Journey's...

David slams his head back against the headrest.

EXT. THE DEBLINGER'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

The Saab SCREECHES to a stop.

HOWIE MESSER
I'll wait.

David doesn't respond. Hops out. Runs up to

THE DEBLINGER'S DOORSTEP

David rings the doorbell. Nothing. He tries the doorknob.
It's open. He runs into

THE KITCHEN

DAVID
Hello? Hello? It's Dave Reiger.

He walks into

THE LIVING ROOM

There on the COUCH is the whole family. Plus Haley. And T.J. And Doug, holding the alcohol. David swallows. Everyone waits for him to speak.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I guess I need everyone to know that the age of consent in New Jersey is sixteen.

Mr. Deblinger charges.

MRS. DEBLINGER

Harvey!

He tackles David.

RACHEL

Daddy!

MR. DEBLINGER

Age of consent! Age of consent!

Mr. Deblinger slams David's head into the floor.

RACHEL

Don't kill him!

LEAH

Dad!

MRS. DEBLINGER

Boys!

Doug and T.J. pull him off.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

Haley? Take your friends and Mr. Deblinger into the kitchen for a glass of water.

They walk out. David and his women remain.

MRS. DEBLINGER (CONT'D)

She found it before the test ended. She wanted to look up a word at break.

DAVID

What word?

RACHEL

Conflagration.

David closes his eyes.

MRS. DEBLINGER

She couldn't finish. They don't give the test again before early decision applications are due. She can forget Bowdoin.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

MRS. DEBLINGER

You know what she wanted to know? Why does everyone love Leah more than me?

David looks at Rachel. She won't make eye contact.

DAVID

I was lost. And now, I --

LEAH

David.

DAVID

Yes?

LEAH

Go home.

DAVID

I love you.

LEAH

Go home.

INT. HOWIE MESSER'S SAAB - DAY

Driving down the street. David is pole-axed.

HOWIE MESSER

Good thing I waited.

David can't speak.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)

Wanna talk about it?

David doesn't move. Howie shrugs, turns up the radio.

ON THE RADIO

And at number seven.

The riff of Sweet Child O' Mine begins to play.

HOWIE MESSER

Awesome.

As Axl sings, David closes his eyes, reliving the past summer. The song suddenly stops.

HOWIE MESSER (CONT'D)

My grandparents are coming for brunch.

But David's decided.

DAVID

Drop me at the train station.

EXT. WOODCLIFF LAKE TRAIN STATION - DAY

FROM BEHIND A GARBAGE CAN
David watches as

THE DEBLINGERS

Hug Leah goodbye and walk to their car. The coast is clear.

DAVID

Runs over to his girl.

DAVID

Leah.

LEAH

Oh God.

DAVID

I'm coming with you.

LEAH

Go home.

DAVID

You said yourself. Sometimes you have to
look back to move forward.

LEAH

Never in my wildest dreams did I think you
were so pathetic you needed a bunch of
teenagers to validate you.

DAVID

Stupid.

LEAH

Sick is what is. Stupid is thinking that by writing Rachel a letter and running away everything would magically work itself out.

DAVID

I love you.

LEAH

You're pathological.

DAVID

You inspired me. To find myself.

LEAH

Find yourself? I was a way out for you. A way out of Neverland for the lost little boy with no idea what he wants!

The train enters the station.

DAVID

(brokenly)

I want you.

LEAH

David, David, David.

CONDUCTOR

All aboard. All aboard.

Leah looks at him sadly. Then she boards the train.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)

What's happening here?

David considers.

DAVID

Just saying goodbye.

CONDUCTOR

Next stop Philadelphia 30th Street Station.

The train coughs and rumbles out of the station. All that remains are the fluttering pages of yesterday's newspapers, a few bereft parents, and David, clutching Cracking the Test to his broken heart.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

THE SMILING FACE OF A YOUNG MAN

Accepting his COLLEGE DIPLOMA in his rented cap and gown. We PULL OUT and realize it's a framed photo on a TROPHY SHELF.

PAN across the shelf...to find the rest of the photos are missing. As we continue to make our way around the room, we see that the posters are gone too. The walls are empty.

David is lying in bed, staring at the ceiling. His cell phone buzzes. He answers.

MRS. REIGER
You're going to be late.

DAVID
I'm up, I'm up.

David walks out.

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

INT. DORMITORY/EXT. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN QUAD - DAY

David is still on the phone as he walks out of his dorm and onto the Quad. Could be the front cover of the brochure -- a late September day in full bloom, kids of various ethnicities playing frisbee, smoking cloves, jamming on acoustic guitars.

MRS. REIGER
Nancy Finkelstein's husband's high on the totem pole at Skadden Arps and Flom. They gobble up smart boys like you for their summer internships.

DAVID
I don't want to be a corporate lawyer.

MRS. REIGER
You think you can keep up your lifestyle on a prosecutor's salary?

David sighs.

MRS. REIGER (CONT'D)
So you'll never guess who I ran into at the gym. Your once future mother-in-law.

BOOM! David collides with a FRESHMAN GIRL. The books she was holding crash to the ground. David helps her pick them up.

FRESHMAN GIRL

Sorry. I'm still learning my way around.

DAVID

I was a freshman here many moons ago. Takes a few weeks to figure things out.

From the cell phone, a tinny "David? David?" David brings the phone back to his ear.

The FRESHMAN GIRL mouths "thank you." David smiles and watches her go.

MRS. REIGER

So Robin was telling the entire Zumba class how much Rachel is loving UCLA. I walk up to congratulate the woman? Walks the other way! L'Effaire Deblinger. A mess.

DAVID

I'm walking into class.

MRS. REIGER

I'll never forgive that Leah. A snake. With a boyfriend back in Philadelphia yet. You're the only lawyer I'll ever trust.

DAVID

Bye.

MRS. REIGER

I'm worried you're not eating well.

David flips the phone shut. Looks up at the sign -- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL -- and enters.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

IN THE LAW STUDENT CAFE --

JACLYN, 24, sits reading a casebook and sipping tea. David sneaks up behind her.

DAVID

Boo.

Jaclyn yelps. David giggles.

JACLYN

Three hours on this case, I'm not even halfway through.

DAVID

Think you'll be done by dinner?

JACLYN

(flirty)

If someone would leave me alone.

DAVID

Thai? I'm in the mood for something light.

JACLYN

There's that new tapas place on sixth.

David smiles, kisses her, and walks toward a classroom.

INT. LAW SCHOOL AMPITHEATER - DAY

An ampitheater packed with fiscal conservatives in their mid-20s. An aggressive PROFESSOR holds court. David sits in a seat next to the WINDOW. He is crushingly bored.

PROFESSOR

...We put ourselves in the mindset of the state when we look at these in testate claims. What does the state want? Prakesh Sitel?

PRAKESH SITEL

I want at least a minimum...

David looks out the window at

THE QUAD --

Kids frolic and sunbathe. Eden. Then he sees her.

THE FRESHMAN GIRL --

She's talking to a group of nubile young things a few feet from the window. A friend nudges her -- there's someone looking at you. She turns to see David.

She smiles and waves at him. Motions "come outside." David shrugs and rolls his eyes -- he's stuck here.

PROFESSOR

David Reiger?

David jolts to attention.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

You are the state. What do you want the court to award you?

The entire class stares at him. Like antsy third-graders they make a small show of fighting down their spring-loaded hands.

David looks back out the window. THE GIRL is walking away with her friends -- a sad little image of youth receding.

A poignant chill washes over David. He can feel his adult life unfolding before his eyes. Making Law Review, making partner, 2.3 children, college fund, beach house, synagogue, Maalox, children's marriage, Florida, chemo, death. It all seems so much less enticing than the perfectly formed 18-year disappearing in the distance.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
Mr. Reiger. What do you want?

David blinks twice. He doesn't know.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END