

8-BIT CHRISTMAS

Written by
Kevin Jakubowski

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Based on the novel "8-Bit Christmas" by Kevin Jakubowski

EXT. CHICAGO - ESTABLISHING - MORNING - DAY

A cold but sunny morning in Chicago. Snow glistens on trees. A jingle bell rings in the distance. Christmas is in the air.

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE - MORNING - DAY

COMMUTERS file down sidewalks and bridges. A sea of boots and coats. One man stands out. He is JAKE DOYLE (40, stressed, but can laugh about it). He talks on his iPhone as he walks.

ADULT JAKE

...What do you mean you didn't send it yet? We need the shipment, Ed. We needed it yesterday.

ANNIE

Dad look! That's the tablet I want!

Jake's daughter ANNIE DOYLE (8, inquisitive) points to a storefront DISPLAY of the latest TABLET. Annie sniffs with a cold but her eyes are curious, alert.

ANNIE

Can we go inside? Can we go look?

Jake holds up a finger, "just a second", stays on the phone.

ADULT JAKE

I don't care if it's almost Christmas. Get us the-- whoa!

Jake steps on a patch of ice and almost loses his balance. He shoots a look at a nearby SALVATION ARMY SANTA CLAUS (60s).

ADULT JAKE

Still?! The ice?!

SALVATION ARMY SANTA

I told 'em to salt it.

ADULT JAKE

Get us the shipment Ed. Because I just yelled at Santa. Yeah. You're making me the guy who yells at Santa. My daughter is very upset.

Jake holds the phone down to Annie, she's all smiles.

ANNIE

I'm very upset!

Jake chuckles, takes the phone back.

ADULT JAKE
See? Get us the shipment!

Jake takes Annie's hand as they hustle across the street.

INT. ELEVATOR - SKYSCRAPER - A LITTLE LATER - MORNING - DAY

Jake and Annie ride an elevator up to Jake's office. Annie blows her nose as she watches Jake scroll through emails.

ANNIE
Are you stressed Dad? Are you
tired? Is this elevator safe?

Jake's phone buzzes. It's his WIFE calling.

ADULT JAKE
Hold on, it's Mom.
(on phone)
Hey. Yeah, it's strep. We got the
antibiotic. When can you come get
her? Me? Honey, I can't watch her
all day. Because I just can't.

Annie sighs, she's used to this. Jake doesn't notice her reaction. He just listens to his wife, softening a little.

ADULT JAKE
Okay. No, you're right. I can watch
her. I'm not too busy.

The doors open. Jake exits.

ADULT JAKE
I got this.

A beat. Annie is still in the elevator. The doors start to close. Jake runs back and pulls her out.

ADULT JAKE
Totally got it.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Jake leads Annie through his office. Employees bustle about.

ANNIE
Do all these people work here? What
time does work start? Are you late?

A coworker, BETH (30s) passes by.

BETH
Pendrock keeps calling from New
York, Jake.

ADULT JAKE
I know, I know.

INT. JAKE'S CORNER OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Jake walks Annie into his spacious corner office. BLUEPRINTS
and PICTURES adorn the walls. Annie looks out the window.

ANNIE
Is that a park down there? Is that
a jungle gym? Is this office eco-
friendly?

ADULT JAKE
Okay, no more questions. You're
sick. You need to take a nap.

ANNIE
That's boring.

Jake gently leads Annie to a couch, takes off her coat.

ANNIE
If I had my own tablet I wouldn't
be bored.

ADULT JAKE
Enough about the tablet, sweetie,
okay? C'mere.

Jake sets a pillow down and Annie reluctantly lies down.

ADULT JAKE
There we go. Now, I'm gonna go over
there and send about three hundred
emails and you're gonna lie here
and get some rest. Cool? Cool.

Jake heads to his desk, gets right back to work.

ANNIE
Are you gonna work over Christmas
again too?

ADULT JAKE
(not paying attention)
Uh-huh, sounds good.

Annie sighs, disappointed. Bored, she starts to look around the room. Something in the corner sparks her interest.

Jake looks up to see Annie now standing before his OLD TV.

ADULT JAKE
Hey, you're supposed to be resting.

ANNIE
What's that?

Annie points to an OLD NINTENDO under the TV.

ADULT JAKE
A Nintendo.

ANNIE
A what?

ADULT JAKE
A video game from when I was little.

ANNIE
Cool. Can we play?

ADULT JAKE
Annie, I have work to do--

ANNIE
Please? Pleeese?

Jake sighs. He needs a play here. Beth walks by his door.

ADULT JAKE
Beth?

BETH
What's up?

Jake heads to the door, out of ear shot from Annie.

ADULT JAKE
Can you push the Pendrock call for a bit. I gotta get her down for a nap somehow.

BETH
No problem.

Jake heads back to Annie who is now feebly trying to get the Nintendo to work, pressing buttons, etc. Jake picks up a GAME from a KANGAROOS SHOE BOX full of games on the coffee table.

ADULT JAKE
Here. First you have to do this.

Jake blows on the game as is customary.

ANNIE
Why?

ADULT JAKE
I don't know, you just do.

Jake hands the game to Annie, she blows on it happily.

ANNIE
I thought you said Grandma and
Grandpa didn't let you have video
games when you were little.

ADULT JAKE
They didn't.

ANNIE
Then how did you get it?

ADULT JAKE
Tell you what? If I tell you the
story of how I got my Nintendo will
you take a nap? A long one?

ANNIE
Uh-huh.

ADULT JAKE
You have to promise though. Because
this is probably the most amazing,
dangerous, awesome story of all
time and you'll probably get so
excited you'll never want to sleep
ever again so you have to promise.

ANNIE
Promise.

Jake puts the game in the console, has a seat next to Annie.

ADULT JAKE
Okay. The year was 1987. Or was it
'88?
(thinking to himself)
'85 Bears. Super Bowl in '86...

ANNIE
Does it really matter Dad?

ADULT JAKE
You wanna hear this or not?

Annie does. Jake hands her a controller, she smiles. EXCITE BIKE starts to play on TV. Jake softens a little, settles in.

ADULT JAKE
The year was 1988. Let's call it
December. I was ten years old...

The sounds of an 8-Bit motor-cross bike rev as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN CHICAGO STREET - 1988 - MORNING - DAY

The Excite Bike sound effects now match a BOY on his bike.

This is YOUNG JAKE DOYLE (10). He pedals down the middle of the street as fast as his legs can carry him. He wears a ski jacket, Walter Payton Kangaroo shoes and a Bears knit cap.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
In the winter, if the streets were
plowed, I could make it to Timmy
Kleen's house in just under eight
minutes.

ANNIE (V.O.)
On a bike? How fast were you going?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Super fast.

ANNIE (V.O.)
Did you wear a helmet?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Uh, yeah. We always wore helmets in
the 80s. We were super safe.

A HELMET suddenly appears on Jake's head.

ANNIE (V.O.)
What color was it?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Just let me tell the story, Annie.

WHOOSH! Jake rounds a corner and flies down another street. The Excite Bike sound effects match his increase in speed. Suburban middle class houses pass him by.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MIKEY TROTTER (10) watches INSPECTOR GADGET, eating cereal.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

I had recently come to the profound conclusion that Inspector Gadget would never catch Dr. Claw on any Saturday morning, so that gave me a five minute head start.

On TV DR. CLAW yells his famous line as he makes his escape.

DR. CLAW

I'll get you next time Gadget!

MIKEY TROTTER

(to TV, disappointed)

You kiddin' me?

Trotter looks up through the window and notices Jake whizzing by. He quickly drops his cereal and rushes out of the room.

EXT. STREET - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Jake pedals on, determined. He approaches a snowblower and rides through its snow shower. Nothing will get in his way.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

The rule at Kleen's was simple. The first ten kids to get through his door got to play. And the first one on his couch got first game, after Kleen of course, but if you got that pole position, you were sitting pretty all weekend.

Jake pulls even with a PAPER BOY (10) on his bike delivering papers. The two lock eyes. Jake accelerates past him. The Paper Boy reluctantly picks up his pace.

EXT. TIMMY KLEEN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Jake pedals up to TIMMY KLEEN'S HOUSE. It's by far the biggest and nicest one on the block. In one continuous motion Jake hops off his bike and ditches it in the yard.

Momentum carrying him, Jake runs up the front steps and rings the bell repeatedly. He takes his helmet off, noticing it for the first time and chucks it over his shoulder.

A sleepy TIFFANY KLEEN (16) answers the door. She struggles to hold a yipping little dog LACY DOG from getting out.

TIFFANY KLEEN
Lacy Dog! NO! You're too early, I
don't even think he's up--

Jake runs past her right into the house.

TIFFANY KLEEN
--yet. Hey!

INT. TIMMY KLEEN'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jake comes running down the basement steps into a nice rec room. He flicks on a light, heroically illuminating a NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM sitting under a HUGE TV on the far side of the room. Jake stands awestruck.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And there she was, glistening in
all her gray plastic glory. A maze
of rubber wiring and electronic
intelligence so advanced it was
deemed not a video game but an 8-
bit Entertainment System.

JAKE
Wow...

As Jake smiles we see a RETAINER in his mouth.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
There wasn't a pair of blistered
kid thumbs in suburbia that didn't
feel an instinctive tingle when the
word Nintendo was mentioned.

TIMMY KLEEN (O.S.)
Forget something?

Jake turns around to see TIMMY KLEEN (10) at the bottom of the stairs. He wears a KARATE ROBE over silk PJ's and stirs chocolate milk in a coffee cup. Remember the rich kid in the neighborhood with all the cool stuff? This is him.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It was an early lesson in God's
cruelty giving the only Nintendo in
town to rich kid Timmy Kleen.

TIMMY KLEEN
Your shoes, butthead.

JAKE
Oh, sorry, sorry about that.

Kleen heads upstairs. Jake follows, tiptoeing in his shoes.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
I'd prayed several times to be made
part of his family.

INT/EXT. TIMMY KLEEN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - FOYER

Jake sets his shoes by the door. Timmy stirs his chocolate milk and gazes out the window. TWO DOZEN KIDS are now jostling for position outside in the snow, hoping to get in.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Outside, half of H.C Storm
Elementary wrestled in the snow.
Including my four best friends.

Jake looks at a particular group of KIDS, his friends.

FREEZE ON: MIKEY TROTTER. On screen, a wood border frames him up like an '87 TOPPS BASEBALL CARD, name and logo included.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Mikey Trotter. All time
quarterback. Great at drawing army
guys and lighting things on fire.

UN FREEZE.

MIKEY TROTTER
How much you guys think a flame
thrower costs?

EVAN OLSEN
Flame throwers are dangerous.

BASEBALL CARD FREEZE ON: EVAN OLSEN (10) looking nervous.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Evan Olsen. Nervous. Allergic to
bees. Probably has to go home in
ten minutes.

UN FREEZE.

EVAN OLSEN
I prolly gotta go home soon.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
More Nintendo for us.

BASEBALL CARD FREEZE ON: TOMMY GRUSECKI (10, smart) as he studies a BECKETT BASEBALL CARD MAGAZINE.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Tommy Grusecki. Baseball card
genius. Future multi-millionaire.

UN FREEZE.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Hey look at that. My Canseco
rookie's up two bucks.

RYAN GRUSECKI
The Canseco's mine.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Is not.

RYAN GRUSECKI
Is too! It was in my pack!

BASEBALL CARD FREEZE ON: RYAN GRUSECKI pushing his brother.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Ryan Grusecki. Tommy's twin
brother. At least I think that's
Ryan. It was always hard to tell
them apart.

UN FREEZE: Ryan and Tommy go at it.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Yep. That was my crew. These were
the guys who'd make it all happen.

JOSH FARMER (O.S.)
(with a lisp)
Hey guys! What's up?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oh yeah, and this kid.

JOSH FARMER (10, serious lisp) runs into frame.

JOSH FARMER
Just got off the phone with Whitney
Houston, she says hi.

BASEBALL CARD FREEZE ON: Josh's smiling face.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 Josh Farmer. Pathological liar. Not
 really our friend, but always
 around.

UN FREEZE.

JOSH FARMER
 I tell you I saw Bigfoot in the
 bushes outside my Dad's apartment
 last night. Intense.

MIKEY TROTTER
 The same apartment you saw Randy
 the Macho Man Savage at?

JOSH FARMER
 That's the one.

EVAN OLSEN
 And he told you wrestling was real?

JOSH FARMER
 You guys have good memories.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
 You never saw Macho Man, Farmer.

JOSH FARMER
 Did too. He was eating a hot dog.

RYAN GRUSECKI
 Macho Man eats Slim Jims.

JOSH FARMER
 I know, I thought it was weird too.

BOY (O.S.)
 Hey! He's coming out!

A hush falls over the crowd. Everyone turns to the porch. The
 door slowly opens and out steps Timmy. He stands high above
 the crowd on the top step. Lacey Dog nips at his heels.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 Kleen surveyed the crowd like an
 annoyed Roman emperor. He checked
 his Swatch watch. Both of them.

Kleen checks his wrist, revealing two Swatch watches.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 Eight AM. Game time.

TIMMY KLEEN
Anyone for a little Nintendo?

The crowd ROARS! Everyone rushes toward the door. Fresh to the scene, the Paper Boy from earlier pedals through the crowd chucking papers indiscriminately. It's pandemonium.

INT. KLEEN'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Today's TEN LUCKY KIDS file downstairs, out of breath.

TIMMY KLEEN
Boots off, boots off. Don't touch
the wall it's French.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Wait, my brother's still outside.

TIMMY KLEEN
You know the rules. First ten,
that's it.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
But it's Ryan.

TIMMY KLEEN
(mimicking)
"But it's Ryan".

Ryan Grusecki bangs on the adjacent basement well window.

RYAN GRUSECKI
Lemme in!

Kleen just closes the curtain shut.

RYAN GRUSECKI (O.S.)
Jerk!

TIMMY KLEEN
You guys want some Pop Tarts or
something?

MIKEY TROTTER
Yeah that'd be great.

TIMMY KLEEN
Too bad.

Kleen chuckles to himself as the boys seat themselves numerically on the couch. Kleen turns on DUCK HUNT, grabs the GUN and holds it directly on the TV. He smiles devilishly.

TIMMY KLEEN
Winner stays.

Kleen blasts away, he'll be playing forever. Jake scowls.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
As I sat there and watched Timmy
Kleen blast away to his evil
heart's content...

TIMMY KLEEN
Die duck! Die! Ha ha ha!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
One thing became clear: I needed to
get my own Nintendo. Fast.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

An old, two story, Victorian style farm house. Jake sits at the kitchen table lost in thought, spinning his retainer.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
For two months I'd been secretly
laying the ground work for my
Nintendo Christmas sales pitch.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - QUICK POP - FLASHBACK

Jake proudly hangs a crude DRAWING on the refrigerator of a family playing Nintendo together.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Carefully crafting pictures...

INT. DOYLE MINI VAN - DAY - QUICK POP - FLASHBACK

Jake sits in the back seat, singing the theme to Super Mario Brothers, loudly. "Do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do..."

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Quietly singing theme songs.

FRONT SEAT VOICE (O.S.)
Shut up already!

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - QUICK POP - FLASHBACK

Jake sits at the kitchen table eating NINTENDO CEREAL.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And making ever so subtle
suggestions.

JAKE
Oh my God! This is the best cereal
I've ever had in my life!

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Jake sits up in his chair, centers himself.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
But tonight was the night I'd
finally put it all into action.

Jake's mom PATTY DOYLE (40, even keeled) cooks chili on the
stove. She wears a leotard and leg warmers.

JAKE
You know what's really important
mom? Hand-eye coordination.

PATTY DOYLE
(didn't hear him)
What's that dear?

JAKE
Hand-eye coordination. Totally. You
need it to get into college.

PATTY DOYLE
Is that right.

CRASH! Something falls in the other room.

JOHN DOYLE (O.S.)
God bless it!

PATTY DOYLE
Well I'm sure your dad will want to
teach it to you then.

JOHN DOYLE (40s, gruff) storms into the kitchen through a
plastic sheet hanging over the door to the dining room. He
wears a tool belt and is slightly dusted in plaster dust.

JOHN DOYLE
Has anyone seen my bandsaw?

PATTY DOYLE
I think it's in the shower.

JOHN DOYLE
That's the table saw. I need the
bandsaw. Jake get in here.

John grabs a package of nails off the counter and goes back
through the sheet. Jake reluctantly follows.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jake awkwardly holds a board as John hammers nails into it.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It was a well known up and down
Linwood Avenue that in 1978 my
father went to install a kitchen
cabinet and had not stopped since.

PATTY DOYLE (O.S.)
Dinner's ready! You almost finished
out there?

John gives a quick glance around. The room, like much of the
house, is totally gutted.

JOHN DOYLE
No.

PATTY DOYLE (O.S.)
You know what I mean.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
He was warmly referred to in our
house as the dyslexic Bob Vila.

John examines his work. Not satisfied.

JOHN DOYLE
God bless it.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And no matter what, if I was ever
going to get a Nintendo, I'd have
to go through him.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Jake sits at the table eating dinner with his parents and his
little sister LIZZY DOYLE (6, super smart, cute, conniving).

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
This was going to take some serious
buttering up.

JAKE

Drywall looks really good in there Dad. Totally.

JOHN DOYLE

Stop saying totally. It makes you sound like a moron. And why's your retainer out of your mouth?

JAKE

We're eating.

JOHN DOYLE

Do you know how expensive that thing is? Put it back in.

Jake looks at his mom for some help.

PATTY DOYLE

John you really can't eat with it in. It doesn't work that way.

JOHN DOYLE

Well it's terribly designed then.

LIZZY DOYLE

If I had a retainer I'd wear it all the time. No matter what.

JOHN DOYLE

I know you would Lizzy. Good girl.

Lizzy smiles devilishly at Jake. Jake scowls.

JOHN DOYLE

You haven't seen my bandsaw have you?

LIZZY DOYLE

It's in the backyard. Right next to all the dog poop that Jake didn't pick up.

JOHN DOYLE

You didn't pick that up?! Cry in a bucket, Jake. What have you been doing all day?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Well Dad, I've been playing an amazing new system called Nintendo! You seem ready to hear about it, let me regale you with its wonders!

JAKE
Uh, I was in Timmy Kleen's
basement.

JOHN DOYLE
You can't play outside?

JAKE
It's cold.

JOHN DOYLE
It's not even below zero out. What
the heck were you doing inside all
day?

PATTY DOYLE
Probably playing the Nintendo.

JOHN DOYLE
Nintendo?

LIZZY DOYLE
Nintendo.

PATTY DOYLE
Tenda?

JAKE
Tendo. The Nintendo Entertainment
System. It's this totally-- really
educational piece of technology,
Dad. I think you'd like it.

PATTY DOYLE
Well I ran into Mrs. Trotter at the
Jewel today. Apparently Nintendo's
been doing all kinds of strange
things to children in Japan.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Like making them smarter? Faster?
Better at sports and Karate?

PATTY DOYLE
They get so involved that they
forget about everything else.
School, friends. One little boy
supposedly had a seizure.

JAKE
A seizure?

PATTY DOYLE
Plus they're very expensive.

JOHN DOYLE

Video games make you fat Jake. That is a fact.

LIZZY DOYLE

Cabbage Patch Kids don't make you fat. And you can take them outside. They're a great Christmas present.

Lizzy smiles at Jake. She's good and she knows it.

JOHN DOYLE

No Nintendo in this house. I'll tell you that right now.

PATTY DOYLE

I second that.

LIZZY DOYLE

Nintendo no-friendo.

PATTY DOYLE

Now what did you want to talk to us about honey? Something important you said?

Jake just sighs and stares at his plate, crushed.

JAKE

Never mind.

MIKEY TROTTER (PRE-LAP)

Jake. Jake...

EXT. HC STORM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - DAY

Jake sits in a daze slumped against the bottom of a MASSIVE SNOW MOUND on the playground. Trotter and Olsen crouch on either side of him like a couple of scared infantry men. In the distance, we hear the sounds of screaming.

Welcome to fifth grade.

MIKEY TROTTER

Jake!

Jake snaps out of it and looks up.

MIKEY TROTTER

You gotta focus man.

EVAN OLSEN

His parents told him he couldn't
get a Nintendo last night, go easy.

MIKEY TROTTER

Jeez. You sure you're up for this?

JAKE

Yeah...

The guys peer up toward the top of the mound. Standing there, dominating the game "King of the Mountain" is DAN DELUND (age unknown). He wears steel toed work boots and a Mötley Crüe t-shirt under his ratty bomber jacket. His rat tail is amazing.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It was never quite certain what
grade Dan "King of the Mountain"
Delund was actually enrolled in, as
the vast majority of his time was
spent in such foreign districts as
the principal's office and the Ben
Franklin cigarette counter.

Delund is easily twice the size of his opponents. As kids
rush up to him he just tosses them off like rag dolls.

DAN DELUND

Woooo! You like that?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And every day before school we
would gather, for reasons unknown,
to get pummeled by him in the game
"King of the Mountain."

Tommy Grusecki and Ryan Grusecki come tumbling down the mound
face first and land on either side of the group.

RYAN GRUSECKI

I think I saw hair under his pits.

Trotter keeps his eyes on Delund, focused.

MIKEY TROTTER

Okay, his back is turned. This is
it. You ready Jake?

JAKE

Right now?

MIKEY TROTTER

Olsen? Goonies never say die, man.

EVAN OLSEN
Goonies never met Dan Delund.

MIKEY TROTTER
Let's DO IIIIIIIIT!

Trotter charges up the hill, yelling. Jake sighs, then reluctantly follows after him. Olsen sits there for a beat, then nervously charges up the hill too.

Athletic and confident, Trotter sprints toward Delund.

MIKEY TROTTER
Ahhhhh!

Delund spins around, his eyes widening. In one powerful motion he just grabs Trotter and tosses him over the side.

MIKEY TROTTER
Nooooo!

Jake and Olsen see this happening but it's too late to retreat. Delund clothes-lines both of them at the same time with two outstretched arms. They hit the ground with a THUD.

DAN DELUND
My mountain! Mine!

Olsen somehow rolls himself off the hill. Jake tries to crawl away but Delund grabs him and starts white washing his face.

DAN DELUND JAKE

Ha! Ha! Ha! Quit it! Quit it! Quit it!

Delund tosses Jake over the side, raises his arms in victory.

DAN DELUND
Mine!

Jake comes tumbling down and lands next to Olsen, Trotter and the Gruseckis who all lie flat on their backs, dazed.

JAKE
I hate that guy.

MIKEY TROTTER
Just think about the Power Glove,
man.

JAKE
What Power Glove?

MIKEY TROTTER
You didn't tell him?

EVAN OLSEN
I thought you told him. The Power
Glove! Kleen got one last night!

Evan pulls out a NINTENDO POWER MAGAZINE from his back pocket, points to a POWER GLOVE ad. Jake's in awe.

JAKE
No way...

MIKEY TROTTER
Yes way.

EVAN OLSEN
He's already practicing, look.

Jake and Olsen look to the other side of the playground where Kleen practices martial arts "Power Glove" moves with his naked right hand, chopping and punching at imaginary enemies.

EVAN OLSEN
We're all going over to his house
after school to play it.

JAKE
He's gonna let us in?

EVAN OLSEN
We gotta bring him gifts, but yeah.

JAKE
Who else knows about it?

EVAN OLSEN
Just us. Well, and Farmer.

JAKE
Farmer knows? Great.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. TIMMY KLEEN'S HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY - DAY

Timmy Kleen's front lawn is SWARMING with KIDS, at least twice as many as Saturday. The atmosphere is like a rock concert. The crowd chants in unison.

CROWD
POW-ER GLOVE! POW-ER GLOVE! POW-ER
GLOVE!

JOSH FARMER
I didn't say anything to anybody.
Swear to God.

The Gruseckis, Jake, Trotter and Olsen just stare at Farmer.

JOSH FARMER
Okay, maybe Meg Platt. And Steve
Dybsky. And my second period gym
class and some lunch ladies but
that's it.

MIKEY TROTTER
Come on Farmer! We're never gonna
get in now.

JOSH FARMER
Don't worry, I got a Power Glove
too, you guys can play it whenever.

MIKEY TROTTER
No you don't Farmer.

JOSH FARMER
No I do not.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
I don't think anybody in Chicago
has one yet. I don't even know how
the thing works.

MIKEY TROTTER
Nobody knows how it works, man.

JOSH FARMER
Oh, it has a suction cup that
connects directly to your brain.
Yeah. My uncle was on the design
team.
(then)
At NASA.
(then, off their looks)
I hate you guys.

Suddenly the front door starts to unlock. Everybody turns.

PAPER BOY
He's coming out!

Tiffany Kleen walks out with a BOOMBOX, rolling her eyes.

TIFFANY KLEEN
This is so dumb.

A voice yell-whispers behind her through the mail slot.

TIMMY KLEEN (O.S.)
Just do it.

Tiffany reluctantly presses play. The 80s anthem "HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO" by Bonnie Tyler plays. Tiffany opens the door and Timmy struts out onto the porch. He wears sunglasses and his Karate robe. His right hand is stuffed into his robe pocket.

The crowd is silent. Not sure what to make of this. But then, Kleen shoots his right hand up in the air to the beat. Sure enough he's wearing the POWER GLOVE. The crowd goes bananas!

HYSTERICAL KID
Yeah Kleen! YEEEEEEAAAAAH!

Jake just stares at the glove in awe.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It was the most beautiful piece of machinery I'd ever laid eyes on.
The thing made Luke Skywalker's robot hand look like a Tinker Toy.

Kleen silences the crowd with one swipe of his hand.

TIMMY KLEEN
Silence children of Batavia!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
I'm not kidding, that's seriously how this kid talked.

TIMMY KLEEN
What have you brought me?!

Everyone holds up toys and money. Jake holds up a SAUSAGE.

JAKE
It was the best I could find.

MIKEY TROTTER
You're not getting in dude.

The crowd surges. Kleen starts pointing to individual kids, who hold up and shout out their offerings.

KID
Five bucks from my first communion!

TIMMY KLEEN
One.

KID
A bunch a Micro Machines!

TIMMY KLEEN
Two.

JOSH FARMER
I can get you a Ryne Sandberg
rookie card by tomorrow--!

TIMMY KLEEN
No.

JAKE
Over here! Timmy! It's gourmet!
It's a gourmet sausage!

Kleen's not interested. Jake's not going to make the cut.
Lacy dog barks like a maniac. Jake watches her run to the
back of the house. Suddenly he gets an idea.

EXT. KLEEN'S HOUSE - BACK OF THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake runs to the back of the house to see Lacy Dog run
through a TINY DOG DOOR.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Desperate times called for
desperate measures. There was no
way I was missing out on that Power
Glove.

Jake runs to the doggie door. As he pokes his head in Lacy
Dog starts barking and nipping at his face.

JAKE
Ah! Shh! Lacy Dog, no!

Lacy Dog won't shut up. Jake suddenly remembers the sausage.
He tosses it inside. The barking stops. Jake dives through.

INT. TIMMY KLEEN'S HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Jake runs through the house and casually files in with the
group now walking down into the basement.

MIKEY TROTTER
How did you--?

Jake just smiles as he removes his shoes.

INT. TIMMY KLEEN'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Ten lucky kids and Jake sit facing Kleen who stands dramatically before them. He raises his gloved fist.

TIMMY KLEEN
Gentlemen. Behold! The power of the
Power Glove!

Kleen presses play on the dual deck boom box.

TIMMY KLEEN (V.O.)
Timmy's audio journal. Well, I peed
on myself a little bit today--

Kleen shuts off the tape. He pressed the wrong tape deck.

TIMMY KLEEN
No one heard that!

Everyone stifles their laughter.

TIMMY KLEEN
Behold! The power of the Power
Glove!

Kleen presses play on the other tape deck and "DANGER ZONE"
by Kenny Loggins plays.

Way too into it, Kleen starts playing DOUBLE DRAGON, a
violent fighting game. Everyone watches, excited.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oh man this was it! The Power Glove
at last! Each one of us in that
basement knew we were about to
witness history.

Kleen starts throwing punches.

TIMMY KLEEN
Hi-ya!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
We just didn't know what kind yet.

TIMMY KLEEN
I said hi-ya!

Kleen has trouble controlling his character on screen.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
You gotta kick him Kleen.

TIMMY KLEEN
I'm trying! Hi-ya! Hi-ya!

Kleen's character just stands there, getting pummeled.

MIKEY TROTTER
You're getting killed man.

TIMMY KLEEN
Do what I say! Do what I say!

Kleen jiggles the cord connected to the glove. He tries a few different buttons, nothing works.

TIMMY KLEEN
What's wrong with this thing?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And that's when we realized. In the span of about fifteen seconds. A horror that has haunted our generation ever since.

MIKEY TROTTER
This thing sucks.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
The Power Glove sucked.

JAKE
It doesn't work at all!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It didn't work at all.

TIMMY KLEEN
NOOOOOOOO!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Maybe it was the glove. Maybe it was the song. Maybe it was because he was just such a magnificent spaz. But Timmy Kleen lost his dang mind that day.

Kleen loses it. He starts flailing about. Pounding the carpet. Kicking and screaming. Lacy Dog barks like a maniac.

TIMMY KLEEN
Stupid glove! Stupid game! Why are you so stupid?!

The boys watch in amusement as Kleen starts to karate chop and kick anything he can find.

MIKEY TROTTER
You tell 'em Kleen!

RYAN GRUSECKI
Yeah, show us your moves Kleen!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
The taunting probably didn't help
either.

JAKE
Go Kleen go! Tae Kwan Do!

EVERYONE
Go Kleen go! Tae Kwon Do! Go Kleen
go! Tae Kwon Do!

The couch is in hysterics, chanting. Kleen starts doing
Karate moves in a blind rage. Lacy Dog barks like crazy.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And then. It happened.

Kleen suddenly locks his eyes on a target across the room and
we go into SLOW MOTION...

TIMMY KLEEN
RRRRRAAAHHHHHH!

Kleen charges the TV. He takes flight and jump kicks the
screen. It rocks back and forth on impact.

EVERYONE
NOOOOO!

We now notice Lacy Dog sitting directly under it, still
barking. The TV lurches forward. The kids all watch it fall
to the ground. The barking stops.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Broken stained glass window.
Swallowed marble. Show Biz Pizza
party compared to this. For there,
lying under the weight a smashed
forty two inch television set was a
dead dog.

ANNIE (V.O.)
What?!

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - LATER - PRESENT DAY - DAY

Back to present day. Annie's face fills the frame, upset.

ANNIE

The dog dies?! There's a dead dog
in this story?!

ADULT JAKE

It was the eighties, what can I
tell you. Stuff got real.

We notice that Annie and Jake have been playing Super Mario
Brothers. The game has been paused on the TV.

ANNIE

Are you making all of this up?

ADULT JAKE

No way.

ANNIE

I don't believe you. I'm Googling
Nintendo.

ADULT JAKE

Be my guest.

BETH (O.S.)

Jake?

Beth knocks on Jake's door. Jake gets up to answer it. Annie
nibbles on a cookie as she heads toward Jake's computer.

ADULT JAKE

And no more cookies. This story's
backfiring on me here, you're
supposed to be asleep by now.

Jake approaches Beth at the door.

ADULT JAKE

What's up?

BETH

I pushed it an hour, but they want
an answer.

Beth hands Jake a large file, gives him a hopeful look.

BETH

It's a big contract, Jake.

JAKE

I know, I know.

BETH
You want another Christmas cookie
Annie?

ANNIE
Yes please!

JAKE
She does not. Thank you Beth.

Jake turns to Annie who is now on his computer.

ANNIE
So Power Glove didn't come out til
1989. And Nintendo came out in 1985
not 1988. Your dates are all wrong.

ADULT JAKE
Well I guess I should stop telling
the story then.

ANNIE
No! I mean, you can still tell it
if you want.

ADULT JAKE
And then you'll take a nap?

ANNIE
Uh-huh. What happened next? In the
basement? What did you do?

Jake looks at his file for a second. Then at Annie.

ADULT JAKE
Well, we did what every other
rational, thoughtful, intelligent
kid would've done in our position.

ANNIE
You ran away?

ADULT JAKE
So fast.

EXT. TIMMY KLEEN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

WHOOSH! Kleen's front door flies open and eleven screaming
kids come pouring out. Some try to put their boots on as they
run, others just sprint away in their stocking feet.

Evan Olsen and a few other stragglers sit outside.

EVAN OLSEN
What happened?! What happened?!

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Get outta here!

Jake holds his shoes in his hands and hops on the back of Trotter's bike as Trotter pedals away.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It was the end of Nintendo as we knew it. So many thoughts raced through my head. Would I be arrested? Would I go to jail? Or worse, would my parents find out?

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jake sits at the table, nervously picking at his dinner.

PATTY DOYLE
So. What happened today? What did you do after school, Jake?

JOHN DOYLE
Nothing to do with a certain dog I bet.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oh god. This was it. This was the end.

JOHN DOYLE
You see my boots over there? You see what's all over them?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Saw dust? Rage?

JOHN DOYLE
Poop. You never picked up Elwood's dog poop in the back yard did you?

Jake exhales, relieved. The Doyle's golden lab ELWOOD looks up from the floor sadly.

JOHN DOYLE
Look at him. Poor guy can barely walk around back there.

JAKE
Sorry Dad, I forgot.

JOHN DOYLE

This weekend. Before it snows again
and we can't get to it til April.

PATTY DOYLE

It's supposed to snow tonight,
dear.

JOHN DOYLE

Says who? Skilling? Guy doesn't
know what he's talking about.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Chicago weatherman TOM SKILLING does his cheery morning
forecast on WGN TV.

TOM SKILLING

Just like I said. Snow! Snow! Snow!

Jake and John look out the window. It's definitely snowing.

JAKE

Yes!

JOHN DOYLE

God bless it.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Patty, still in that leotard, cooks eggs on the stove. Lizzy
stares out the kitchen window.

LIZZY DOYLE

Are we gonna have a snow day today
Mommy?

PATTY DOYLE

I wouldn't count on it dear.

Patty adjusts the knob to a RADIO above the stove.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Of course not. In the history of
Batavia, Illinois there had never
been a snow day. Not a single one.
It could be twenty below with a
Soviet attack on the way and we'd
still have school.

Jake enters the kitchen and stands next to Lizzy. The two
stare up at the radio, hopeful.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
 ...and St. Charles in Dupage
 County. In Kane County, school
 closings are as follows: Geneva,
 Oswego, Elburn, South Elgin, North
 Aurora...

JAKE
 Come on...

RADIO ANNOUNCER
 And that's it.

JAKE
 No!

LIZZY DOYLE
 Stupid.

PATTY DOYLE
 That's enough you two. Coats and
 gloves on the double. And Jake.
 Don't forget your boots this time.

Lizzy smiles slyly.

LIZZY DOYLE
 Yeah, don't forget your boots Jake.

Jake just closes his eyes in pain.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 There was a slight problem with
 that.

EXT. DOYLE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Jake steps out onto the porch, looking sick to his stomach.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 My mother, in a Kohl's coupon
 induced bout of madness, had
 accidentally bought me girls boots.

Tilt down to reveal PURPLE ESPRIT BOOTS on Jake's feet. Boy
 George's "DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HURT ME" plays-- and will
 play every time we see the boots.

Lizzy, now dressed in a one piece snowsuit smiles, mockingly.

LIZZY DOYLE
 Pretty.

Jake scowls and walks down the steps.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

The boots were purple, with pretty white trim and pretty white letters that said ESPRIT, a word that I'd later learn was not only synonymous with female fashion but also *French!*

Jake ducks behind a tree and takes a knee in the snow.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And they were a death sentence if anyone ever saw me in them.

JAKE

Just go ahead, I'll catch up.

Jake pulls shoes out of his bag, starts to remove his boots.

LIZZY DOYLE

You shouldn't be doing that.

JAKE

I'll catch up.

LIZZY DOYLE

You're not supposed to let me walk by myself.

JAKE

Then wait a second and shut up.

LIZZY DOYLE

Oooh. You said a swear.

JAKE

Shut up's not a swear.

LIZZY DOYLE

You said it again.

JAKE

I got a lot on my mind Lizzy!

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - LATER THAT MORNING - DAY

Jake, now in his shoes, Trotter and Olsen sit at the base of the snow mound, thinking. Up above them we hear the constant sounds of Delund's taunts and kids' screams.

DAN DELUND (O.S.)
You like that?!

KID (O.S.)
Noooooooo!

EVAN OLSEN
Are we even sure the dog's dead?

MIKEY TROTTER
You ever see the end of Raiders of
the Lost Arc?

EVAN OLSEN
Yeah?

MIKEY TROTTER
It looked like that.

EVAN OLSEN
Jesus.

JAKE
The dog's dead, Olsen.

DAN DELUND (O.S.)
I am literally going to murder you!

KID (O.S.)
Noooooooo!

EVAN OLSEN
Are we gonna get in trouble?

JAKE
I dunno. All I know is we gotta
find another Nintendo now.

Tommy comes tumbling down the hill, lands there in a heap.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Hey, we talked to Kleen.

Ryan comes tumbling down right after him.

RYAN GRUSECKI
Hey, we talked to Kleen.

JAKE
What'd he say?

TOMMY GRUSECKI

Nothing. He says he doesn't want to talk about it. It was weird, but I don't think we're in trouble.

EVAN OLSEN

Thank God.

DAN DELUND (O.S.)

Is that all you babies got?!

Josh Farmer comes running up, out of breath.

JOSH FARMER

Hey! Did you guys hear?!

MIKEY TROTTER

Yes, we heard about the dog Farmer, we were there, remember?

JOSH FARMER

No, the Cub Scouts! They're giving away a Nintendo this year! Whoever sells the most wreathes in the wreath selling contest gets one!

JAKE

No way.

JOSH FARMER

Yes way! A sixth grader just told me!

MIKEY TROTTER

The same sixth grader who told you there were tryouts for the A-Team?

JOSH FARMER

That wasn't-- that was a different-- Murdoch's gotta go guys.

DAN DELUND (O.S.)

Alright then! I guess I gotta come down there and start pounding people!

The boys all groan, scramble for their bags and run off toward the school as the bell rings. Farmer yells after them.

JOSH FARMER

Fine. You don't have to believe me! I'm gonna win the Nintendo anyway! I already sold sixty seven wreathes already!

(MORE)

JOSH FARMER (CONT'D)
(then, to himself)
Tell me what to do. I do what I
want.

DAN DELUND (O.S.)
I see you Farmer!

JOSH FARMER
Dang it.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER - DAY

Jake sits in his desk. MRS. HUGO (30's, perpetual head cold)
teaches at the front of the class.

MRS. HUGO
It's called... The Dewey Decimal
system. That's right.

Mrs. Hugo underlines "Dewey Decimal System" on the board.

MRS. HUGO
This is a skill you will definitely
need to know as adults. Just like
cursive.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
By mid morning Nintendo prize
rumors were circulating like Mario
Brother fireballs.

Trotter leans back in his seat and whispers to Olsen.

MIKEY TROTTER
Farmer says first prize comes with
a Power Pad too, pass it on.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
However ridiculous Farmer's Cub
Scout story was, we were all
starting to believe it.

Olsen leans back to Jake.

EVAN OLSEN
First prize comes with a Power Pad,
pass it on.

Jake leans back to Tommy Grusecki.

JAKE
First prize comes with--

MRS. HUGO
Jake Doyle!

Jake just sits there, caught.

MRS. HUGO
Is there something you'd like to
share with the class?

JAKE
No.

MRS. HUGO
Don't think I haven't been watching
you. You're the only one in here
with wet shoes. You know the rules.
No boots. No recess.

JAKE
But--

MRS. HUGO
No buts. Now I expect to see you in
boots at recess, or your name goes
on the board. With a check.

The class turns to face Jake, concerned.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oh God, not a check. No one even
knew what that meant. The only kid
who ever got one was Dan Delund and
he lived in the principal's office.
I did not want to end up there.

Jake looks at the board to see Dan Delund's name up there
with a series of checks. Jake looks to see Delund's empty
seat in the class-- a sign of his absence.

MRS. HUGO
So what's it gonna be Mr. Doyle?
Boots? Or a check?

Jake closes his eyes again.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - LATER - DAY

"DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HURT ME" plays. Jake's girls boots tap
nervously in the snow. He hides awkwardly behind a garbage
can on the perimeter of the playground. All around him,
recess is in full swing.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Over the years I'd come to find
that garbage cans were great hiding
places. They were solid, abundant,
and they smelled really bad, so
people tended to stay away from
them.

Jake catches a whiff, scowls.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Unless of course they needed you on
their football team.

Twenty yards away, two teams are about to square off for a
game of snow football on the blacktop. Delund and his team on
one side, Trotter's team on the side closest to Jake.

MIKEY TROTTER
Jake, come on! You're on our team!

JAKE
Just play without me!

MIKEY TROTTER
What are you doing back there? Is
there a dead squirrel again?

Trotter trots over with the ball.

MIKEY TROTTER
Is it all furry and frozen-- Dude!
You're wearing Katie Sorrentino's
boots.

JAKE
They're mine.

MIKEY TROTTER
Oh man.

Delund calls from the other end of the blacktop.

DAN DELUND
Let's go Trotter! You baby!

MIKEY TROTTER
We gotta get you outta here. If
Delund sees you he'll kill you.

Olsen runs over.

EVAN OLSEN

Hey, what are-- Oh my GOD! You're wearing Katie Sorrentino's boots!

JAKE

They're mine.

Out on the blacktop Delund's had enough.

DAN DELUND

That's it! I'm coming over there!

JAKE

What do I do?

The guys panic. Delund jogs toward the group.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Answering too many math questions, having insufficient fruit roll ups for the taking, these were grounds for physical retaliation. But girls' boots? There was no telling what Delund would do.

DAN DELUND

I call dibs if there's a dead squirrel back there again--

Delund notices the boots and stops short. Bewildered. Angry.

DAN DELUND

What the--?! Are those..?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Painfully, my mind flipped through the Rolodex of punishment I was about to endure.

Jake takes his retainer out, preparing for the beating.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Weeks of wedgies, swirlies, dead legs, dead arms, dead torsos--

DAN DELUND

I think we got ourselves a pair of girls' boots here.

Delund grabs Jake by the coat, holds him up.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

But then, I heard the voice of an angel.

JOSH FARMER (O.S.)
HEY! HEY YOU GUYS! YOU GUYS!

Farmer runs across the playground waving a green flyer.

JOSH FARMER
I got proof! The Cub Scout "take
home note"! It says it right here!
Proof it's a Nintendo! It really is
a Nintendo!

Delund drops Jake and grabs Farmer's flyer. This is bigger
news than girls' boots any day. A crowd starts to gather.

DAN DELUND
Just a picture of a dumb wreath. So
what?

JOSH FARMER
You gotta read it.
(reading)
"This year's first prize is a the
perfect addition to any Cub Scout
living room. The new Nintendo
Entertainment System!"

The boys' eyes widen. Maybe it is true. Delund grabs the
flyer back, his disbelief vanishing. We see it in print.

DAN DELUND
"Nintendo Entertainment System."

A beat. Delayed shock.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
By God, little Farmer had struck
gold!

The boys all cheer and jump around. Delund puts Farmer in a
headlock and happily/violently nuggies his head.

JOSH FARMER
Ow. Ow. Okay, ow.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
A cheer went up among us. And for a
brief moment, my girls' boots
became a neglected side show. It
was all I needed.

Jake casually runs away toward the side of the school. Only
Trotter, Olsen and Delund have seen the boots.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Ecstatic on several levels, I took
off to hide behind the dumpster and
contemplate the biggest wreath
selling campaign to ever hit
Batavia. That Nintendo was mine.

Jake crouches behind a dumpster, giddy with excitement.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - JAKE'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - DAY

Jake rushes into his room, tearing off his jacket. He's
wearing his shoes now. Patty calls out from downstairs.

PATTY DOYLE (O.S.)
How was school honey?! What did you
learn today?!

Jake takes his boots out of his backpack, stuffs them under
his bed. He grabs his Cub Scout uniform from his closet.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Patty sits at the table with Lizzy. Patty drinks coffee,
Lizzy drinks milk. They both flip through magazines.

LIZZY DOYLE
I learned about Brazil today.

PATTY DOYLE
Really?

LIZZY DOYLE
Yes, it's in South America. They
speak Portuguese there. Most people
don't know that, but I do.

Lizzy helps herself to a cookie, nibbling it thoughtfully.

LIZZY DOYLE
Portuguese comes from Portugal. Do
you think they have Cabbage Patch
dolls in Portugal?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Ah yes. There were other Christmas
plans hatching in the Doyle house.

PATTY DOYLE
Well Lizzy, I don't really--

Jake comes flying through the kitchen. His Cub Scout uniform is half on half off. He slides across the floor.

PATTY DOYLE
Jake. Where are you--?

No response, Jake is out the door.

LIZZY
They probably don't have Cabbage
Patch dolls in Portugal. Those
poor, poor children of Portugal...

EXT. STREET - OUTSIDE THE DOYLE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake comes flying out of the house buttoning up his blue Cub Scout shirt under his jacket. He wears a blue and gold Cub Scout ski cap and holds a clipboard and a pen.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Less than twenty minutes after the
final school bell, I was fitted in
my dress blues and on my way,
secretly envisioning the acres of
Alaskan pine forest needed to cover
the amount of wreathes I was about
to sell.

EXT. HOUSE ON JAKE'S STREET - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake rushes up the steps of a neighboring house to make his first sale. He knocks confidently on the door.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oh I had it all planned out.
(sales voice)
"Yes, I'm with the Cub Scouts
ma'am. And without your help,
thousands of boys may become drug
addicts and communists before the
year 1997. All we need from you is
a bit of generosity in the form of
a marvelous Merry Christmas
wreath!"

The door opens. An imposing FAT MAN stands there.

FAT MAN
WHAT?!

Jake freezes, scared.

JAKE
Uh. Communists.

FAT MAN
What? What is it?

Jake just stands there, stammering.

FAT MAN
Look kid they got Ditka on WGN
tellin' ethnic jokes, whaddya want?

JAKE
Uh, hello, my name is--

FAT MAN
Wait, are you trying to *sell* me
something?

The Fat Man points to a small white sign next to the door
that reads "No Solicitors".

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Solicitors? Oh no, I'm with the Cub
Scouts sir.

JAKE
Wanna buy a wreath?

The Fat Man looks at his door. It already has a wreath on it.

FAT MAN
You got a learning disability?!

Jake just stares at him blankly.

FAT MAN
(concerned)
Wait, you don't really got a
learning disability do you?

Jake shakes his head "no".

FAT MAN
Good.

The Fat Man slams the door shut in Jake's face.

JOSH FARMER (O.S.)
Gotta look out for those "No
Solicitors" signs.

Jake turns to see Josh Farmer walking up the steps of the house next door. Like Jake, he wears a Cub Scout hat and holds a clipboard.

JAKE
What are you doing here Farmer?

JOSH FARMER
Just out for a stroll.

Farmer smiles, rings the bell.

JAKE
You can't sell wreathes here.

JOSH FARMER
Why's that?

JAKE
Because this is my block, that's the rule.

JOSH FARMER
You think there are rules here, Doyle? There are no rules.

JAKE
That Nintendo's mine!

JOSH FARMER
I already sold sixty seven wreathes already.

JAKE
To who?

JOSH FARMER
People. Your mom.

JAKE
You're full of it Farmer.

JOSH FARMER
We'll see about that.

A HOUSE WIFE opens the door in front of Josh. Josh smiles.

JOSH FARMER
Hello ma'am. That's a lovely blouse you're wearing. Let me ask you a question. Do you love your country?

Farmer's good. Jake scowls, rolls up his sleeves. This isn't gonna be easy. The Jam's "TOWN CALLED MALICE" kicks in and we begin our wreath selling montage!

EXT/INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE - DAY

Cub Scouts hustle up and down sidewalks and staircases all over town. The boys in blue are out in force.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
All over town Cub Scouts pounded
the pavement in record numbers.

Various Cub Scouts stand on different door steps and porches.

MIKEY TROTTER
Merry Christmas sir.

EVAN OLSEN
It's that time of year again.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
You're in luck.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
A swarm of snot nosed Gordon Gekkos
had been born.

RYAN GRUSECKI
I'm talking top of the line.

EVAN OLSEN
Totally tax deductible.

JOSH FARMER
A hundred percent recyclable.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Flame resistant.

RYAN GRUSECKI
Non toxic.

EVAN OLSEN
Christmas wreathes!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
All in the name of Nintendo. And it
was every man for himself.

- Two CUB SCOUTS argue outside a JEWEL GROCERY STORE.

CUB SCOUT 1
I was here first!

CUB SCOUT 2
Were not!

CUB SCOUT 1
Was too! I got Jewel! You take the
White Hens!

CUB SCOUT 1
No one goes to White Hens!

- Two CUB SCOUTS race toward the same door, then wrestle on the front porch trying to be the first one to ring the bell.

- The PAPER BOY rides down the street, chucking papers with a bright red WREATH ORDER FORM wrapped onto every one.

- The Cub Scouts at the Jewel now have each other in head locks. A SALVATION ARMY SANTA CLAUS tries to break them up.

SALVATION ARMY SANTA
Guys, guys!

- A bare fingered glove bangs on a door.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Kids who weren't even in Cub Scouts
were getting in on the action.

Pull back to reveal Dan Delund. He's written CUB SCOUT on a piece of masking tape and taped it to his White Snake hat.

DAN DELUND
Your mom home? No? Okay you just
bought three wreathes.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Even I was getting the hang of it.

- Jake stands on a few porches, more confident.

JAKE
Hello sir.

JAKE
Hello ma'am.

- Jake stands before his ancient neighbor MISS SHERMAN (90s, bathrobe and slippers). She can barely hear or see.

JAKE
Hello Miss Sherman. It's Jake Doyle
from down the street.

MISS SHERMAN
Who?

JAKE
JAKE DOYLE FROM DOWN THE STREET!

- Jake stands on another doorstep.

JAKE
Wanna buy a wreath?

- Jake stands in the Christmas decorations aisle of a
hardware store next to a MAN HOLDING CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.

JAKE
Wanna buy a wreath?

- Jake stands on a doorstep next to a PIZZA DELIVERY GUY
waiting for the door to open. Jake turns to the pizza guy.

JAKE
Wanna buy a wreath?

- Back to old Miss Sherman.

JAKE
Would you like to buy a wreath?

MISS SHERMAN
Teeth? I don't have any teeth.

JAKE
A WREATH! WOULD YOU LIKE TO BUY A
WREATH MISS SHERMAN?!

MISS SHERMAN
Oh, yes indeedy. Come on in. I'll
make ya some sandwiches.

Miss Sherman pulls him inside. Jake groans.

- Farmer steps out of a house smiling. It's DUSK out now.

JOSH FARMER
And God bless the United States of
America! You have yourself a merry
Christmas Mrs. Doyle.

Farmer's just sold a wreath to Jake's mom. He skips down the
steps and pats a stunned Jake on the shoulder.

JOSH FARMER

Told ya.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

Jake sits at the dinner table, fuming. At the counter, Patty cuts up vegetables for some large dinner salads.

JAKE

Did it have to be Farmer?

John enters through the backdoor, carrying a bucket of tools. He's clearly been working outside on the house.

PATTY DOYLE

I'm sorry. You hate selling wreathes. How was I supposed to know you were going to do it this year.

LIZZY DOYLE

He only cares about it now because they're giving away a Ninten--

Jake kicks the table, coughs.

JAKE

A night in Chicago. Yeah, it's a new prize. At a hotel I think.

PATTY DOYLE

That's a weird prize.

Lizzy smiles, delighted.

LIZZY DOYLE

That is a weird prize. Don't you think that's a weird prize Dad?

John rummages through the refrigerator, not listening.

JOHN DOYLE

God bless it. Where the hell is it?

PATTY DOYLE

Screwdriver's in the butter dish.

John pulls a screwdriver out of the butter dish.

JOHN DOYLE

No that's not it.

John puts it back. He rummages more.

PATTY DOYLE
What are you looking for?

JOHN DOYLE
My gourmet sausage.

Jake looks around nervously.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Whoopsie...

JOHN DOYLE
How the hell do you lose a sausage?

PATTY DOYLE
I'm sure it will turn up honey.
Have a seat, dinner's ready.

JOHN DOYLE
I wanna eat it with dinner.

PATTY DOYLE
We're having salads.

JOHN DOYLE
That's why I wanna eat the sausage!

Patty sits. John sits down in a huff.

JAKE
Maybe Elwood ate it, Dad. He's been
pooping so much lately.

JOHN DOYLE
He has, hasn't he. You know how I
know that? Because it's still not
picked up.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Whoopsie again.

JAKE
It snowed.

JOHN DOYLE
That's no excuse. Tomorrow morning.
You and that shovel. Back yard.

JAKE
But I'm totally supposed to sell
wreathes all day.

JOHN DOYLE
Too bad. And stop saying totally.

JAKE
That's not fair.

JOHN DOYLE
You want fair? I'll give you fair!
Every day I go to work and bust my--

PATTY DOYLE
--Innn the name of the father...

Patty starts to make the sign of the cross, the signal that it's time to pray and eat. And that she's had enough.

PATTY DOYLE
And of the Son and of the Holy
Spirit amen.

JOHN DOYLE
Gourmet sausage!

ALL THE DOYLES
Bless us, oh Lord, for these thy
gifts...

The Doyles all mumble their way through the Catholic dinner prayer. John sputters. Jake cringes. Lizzy smiles.

EXT. DOYLE HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING - DAY

Jake stands in the backyard, a small shovel over his shoulder and a garbage bag in his hand. Elwood pops a squat in the snow nearby, panting almost mockingly at Jake.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Elwood was one year older than
myself and in that eleven year span
I was convinced he had pooped more
times than any other dog, in the
history of the world.

Jake scans the yard. Despite the recent snow fall, little black poo specs still dot the lawn.

John heads toward the shed carrying half a hardware store. The shed sits in a tucked away corner of the yard next to a cluster of large trees.

JAKE
What's Lizzy doing? She can't help?

JOHN DOYLE
Lizzy's being six years old right
now Jake. Just pick it up.

Jake scowls. John sighs.

JOHN DOYLE
C'mere. Take a deep breath.

John takes a deep breath, soaking in the winter air.

JOHN DOYLE
Smell that?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Poo?

JOHN DOYLE
Fresh air. That's all we had and we loved it. You know, when I was your age we didn't have Nintendos. We used to build forts in the woods all day. Can you believe that? We'd gather up old lumber, siding, whatever we could find. We made look out towers, rope ladders...

JAKE
Trap doors?

JOHN DOYLE
Yeah, trap doors too.

JAKE
Cool.

JOHN DOYLE
It was cool. We'd work on 'em all year round.

JAKE
Kinda like the house?

JOHN DOYLE
(chuckles)
Yeah. Kinda like the house.

John and Jake trade a smile. A nice moment between the two for a change. They watch as Elwood finishes up his business.

JOHN DOYLE
Cry in a bucket that dog poops a lot.

JAKE
Yeah.

JOHN DOYLE
Do that one last. Let it freeze.

John heads to the shed. Jake grabs his shovel, gets to work.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - JAKE'S ROOM - LATER - DAY

Jake trudges into his room, tired from a morning of picking up poop. He opens his closet to grab his Cub Scout uniform.

LIZZY DOYLE (O.S.)
We need to talk.

Startled, Jake turns to see Lizzy coloring at his desk.

JAKE
What are you doing in my room?

LIZZY DOYLE
I need your help.

JAKE
With what?

LIZZY DOYLE
Getting a Cabbage Patch. Santa didn't get me a She-Ra last year so I can't trust him. I gotta go through Mom and Dad.

JAKE
So what do you need me for?

LIZZY DOYLE
I need you to tell them to get me one. A red head named Dawn, with freckles. It looks bad if I say it all the time. And we gotta act fast.

Lizzy points to a TIME MAGAZINE article next to her coloring book. A headline reads "CABBAGE PATCH KIDS IN RECORD DEMAND." A picture shows two MOMS fighting over a doll.

JAKE
What are you gonna do for me?

LIZZY DOYLE
Tell you how to win the Nintendo.

JAKE
You don't know how to win a Nintendo.

LIZZY DOYLE
Okay never mind.

Lizzy starts to pack up her stuff.

JAKE
Wait. Okay. How can I win it?

LIZZY DOYLE
You promise to help me get a
Cabbage Patch?

JAKE
Sure.

LIZZY DOYLE
Promise?

JAKE
Yes, I promise already. What is it?

LIZZY DOYLE
Okay. You sold two wreathes to Miss
Sherman yesterday right?

JAKE
How do you know that?

LIZZY DOYLE
Don't worry about it. She bought a
lot because she's old, right?

JAKE
Not necessarily.

LIZZY DOYLE
Yes necessarily. When you're old,
you buy stuff from kids. That's
what you do. So what you need are a
bunch of old people all in one
place so you don't have to track
them all down.

JAKE
What's your point?

Lizzy sets her crayon down and looks at Jake.

LIZZY DOYLE
Prairie Pines. The nursing home.
Two hundred old people with no
where to go and nothing to do
except buy wreathes from you.

Jake almost has to sit down that's such a good idea.

JAKE

Wow. That's a really good idea.

LIZZY DOYLE

I know. So we got a deal or what?

Jake does sit down, reeling from the brilliance of this.

JAKE

Yeah...

Lizzy stands and hands Jake a drawing from her Cabbage Patch Coloring book-- a picture of the exact doll she wants.

LIZZY DOYLE

A redhead. With freckles. Don't mess it up.

Lizzy exits the room.

EXT. PRAIRIE PINES NURSING HOME - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Jake rides his bike up to PRARIE PINES NURSING HOME. He wears his Cub Scout shirt and his nicest dress pants and dress shoes. His hair is combed and parted.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen of Prairie Pines nursing home!

INT. PRAIRIE PINES NURSING HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Jake strides down the hall.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Allow me to introduce myself.

Jake puts on a SANTA HAT as he rounds a corner and enters a large DINING HALL. Dozens of OLD FOLKS enjoy lunch together.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

I am Jake Doyle. Cutest Cub Scout alive!

Jake stops in the doorway and waves adorably.

JAKE

Hello everybody.

The entire dining hall looks up, delighted to have a little kid here visiting.

OLD FOLKS

Oh hello! / Merry Christmas! / What
a cute Cub Scout! / It's Santa's
little helper!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

That's me.

OLD MAN

Well don't just stand there sonny,
come on over.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Don't mind if I do.

Jake clicks his pen, smiling. This is going to work.

INT. DOYLE MINIVAN - THE NEXT DAY - DAY

The Doyles' '86 Chrysler Minivan heads east down I-290 toward Chicago. STEELY DAN'S "DO IT AGAIN" plays on the tape deck.

Jake sits in the way back seat, happily studying his sales sheets. They are heavily filled in with new sales.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It took five hours and eleven cups
of rice pudding, but I managed to
sell a whopping eighty two wreathes
to the nursing home. All thanks to
Lizzy.

Jake shuffles to Lizzy's Cabbage Patch Kid drawing. He gives Lizzy a nod. Lizzy nods back in solidarity.

JAKE

Hey mom. Did you know that Water
Tower Place has the best selection
of Cabbage Patch kids in Chicago?

PATTY DOYLE

I didn't know that, no.

JAKE

They do, which is good 'cause
they're really flying off the
shelves.

John leans over to Patty as he drives, concerned.

JOHN DOYLE
He doesn't want a Cabbage Patch kid
now does he?

PATTY DOYLE
Who knows with this one.

A car suddenly cuts John off. He lays on the horn.

JOHN DOYLE
Oh! Just put it anywhere pal! Yeah!

John scans the heavy traffic, shaking his head, muttering.

JOHN DOYLE
Everybody come on down to the city.
All at once. All at the same time.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Ah yes, the annual Doyle Chicago
Shopping Trip. Also known as my
dad's least favorite day of the
year.

PATTY DOYLE
You know, you could really use some
new turtle necks John. Let's try
some on today.

JOHN DOYLE
Sounds great.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
The shopping. The stress. The
traffic. The tourists.

John stews. Another car cuts him off. He lays on the horn.

JOHN DOYLE
Wisconsin plates! Shocker!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
The man held it together with
nothing more than sheer will and a
Steely Dan Mix tape.

LIZZY DOYLE
Can we turn on Christmas carols?

JOHN DOYLE
No Christmas carols!

HARD CUT TO:

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE SHOPPING MALL - LATER - DAY

A group of elf costumed CHRISTMAS CAROLERS sing SLEIGH RIDE as they ride up a crowded escalator with the Doyles. The mall is PACKED. One ANNOYING CAROLER is inches from John's face.

PATTY DOYLE
Just breathe honey. Just breathe.

This is John's hell.

JOHN DOYLE
They gotta put a bar in here.

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - MARSHALL FIELDS - LATER - DAY

Lizzy scurries ahead through the department store MARSHALL FIELDS. Jake walks with Patty. John lags behind carrying the day's shopping bags like a pack mule.

LIZZY DOYLE
There's the Cabbage Patch section!

PATTY DOYLE
Lead the way Lizzy.

Lizzy charges ahead toward a big Cabbage Patch Kid sign.

JAKE
Hey Mom, did you know Cabbage Patch kids come with their own birth certificates?

PATTY DOYLE
I didn't know that, no.

JAKE
(whispering)
Lizzy really wants one.

PATTY DOYLE
They're very expensive Jake. And very hard to find.

Lizzy rounds the corner and stops short. The Cabbage Patch aisle is almost completely BARE. Only a few bald headed boys and an armless girl remain.

An OLD JANITOR sadly sweeps up the remains.

OLD JANITOR
Sold out in twenty minutes. Last patch in all of Chicago.

Lizzy holds it together for a second, then buries her head in her hands, crying. Patty picks her up, consoling her.

PATTY DOYLE

It's okay Lizzy. I saw some really nice Care Bears on the way in.

LIZZY DOYLE

Yippie.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Poor little Lizzy. It kinda made you want to go over there and wipe her tears and give her a big hhhh--

Jake notices a BEAUTIFUL NINTENDO DISPLAY in the distance.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

--hhhhhhold on a second.

Jake just stands there staring at it. The display is twenty feet tall, featuring large cut-outs of NES characters: Zelda, Mario, etc. A huge TV rests in the center of it, surrounded by blinking lights and other high tech flourishes.

NINTENDO (V.O.)

Hello Jake.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Who said that?

NINTENDO (V.O.)

You know who.

Jake focuses on the GIANT REPLICA of the NES console at the base of the display. In Jake's mind, it's talking to him. It's slightly robotic and creepy. Think the voice of KEVIN SPACEY (but, you know, not him).

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Nintendo?

NINTENDO (V.O.)

That's right. Come over here. I've missed you.

Patty taps Jake on the shoulder, not noticing the display.

PATTY DOYLE

Jake, Dad and I are going upstairs to get the Fenelons a gift.

JOHN DOYLE

They never get us anything.

Patty sets Lizzy down.

PATTY DOYLE
You can stay down here with the
toys, just watch your sister. Okay?

Jake hasn't heard a word she just said.

JOHN DOYLE
Jake.

JAKE
What?

JOHN DOYLE
Watch your sister.

PATTY DOYLE
We'll be right back. Okay?

JAKE
Yeah.

Patty heads up the escalator with John. Jake just stares at the Nintendo, completely under its spell.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
That's it. Come on over Jake.

LIZZY DOYLE
What am I gonna do about my Cabbage
Patch now, Jake?

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Forget your sister Jake, she's
useless.

JAKE
Yeah, useless...

LIZZY DOYLE
Who are you talking to?

Jake starts walking toward the display. Lizzy follows.

LIZZY DOYLE
We need a new plan. Jake? Jake.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Do you know how many games I have
here Jake? I have all of the games.

Jake gets closer, now standing eye level with the NES.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
What game would you like to play?

JAKE
Top Gun.

Beat.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Pick another one. I don't have that one.

JAKE
Mega Man.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Mmm, how 'bout Double Dragon? It's loaded up right now. You have to get an employee to change it otherwise. It's a whole thing.

JAKE
Cool.

Jake grabs a controller and starts playing DOUBLE DRAGON. His character punches and kicks opponents at will.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Oh very good. Yes. I can tell you've got what it takes.

JAKE
Yes I do.

Jake exhales, focused-- a kid about to get in the zone.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Maybe it was the excitement of the display, or just the thrill of playing in public. But for some reason I started playing the game of my life.

As Jake punches and kicks, TIME STARTS PASSING.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Never before had my thumbs maneuvered with such efficiency. My response time was clicking at an all star rate.

Jake's eyes widen. His face contorts with his character's motions on screen. KIDS start to gather around to watch.

BOY ONE
Dude you're on fire.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
All other distractions became
irrelevant. My senses had reached a
higher state. I'd become one with
Nintendo.

Jake's beats a level, pulls out his retainer and in SLOW
MOTION yells a primal roar.

JAKE
YEAAAAAH!

The crowd, even bigger now, cheers! Jake bounces in place
like a boxer. People pat him on the shoulders.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Yes! Yes! You were born for this
moment!

BOY ONE
What'd you say your name was again?

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Go ahead. Tell them your name Jake.
Say it!

JAKE
Jake Doyle!

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Jake Doyle! Nintendo master!

BOY TWO
My man Jake.

BOY ONE
Jake! Jake! Jake!

The crowd starts chanting. "Jake! Jake! Jake!"

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
This was why I wanted a Nintendo.
This right here. This was my
destiny. Nothing could stop me now!

CROWD
Jake! Jake! Jake!

Jake keeps playing, a manic look in his eyes. Through the
chanting, two muffled voices start to come into focus.

PATTY DOYLE (O.S.)
Jake! Jake! Jake!

JOHN DOYLE (O.S.)
JAKE STEPHAN DOYLE!

Jake freezes and looks up to see his parents standing above him. John grabs him by the jacket, lifts him up.

JOHN DOYLE
Where. Is. Your. Sister?!

The chanting stops. The music stops. Everything stops.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oh dear God in heaven.

JOHN DOYLE
Where is she?!

Jake can't get out an answer. John drops him like a sack of potatoes. He and Patty start looking around frantically.

PATTY DOYLE
Lizzy! Lizzy honey?

JOHN DOYLE
Elizabeth!

BOY ONE
You're a dead man bro.

Jake drops the controller and starts running around looking for Lizzy too. Panic has set in.

JAKE
Lizzy?! Lizzy?!

Jake runs down toy aisle after toy aisle.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
In the realm of punishable kid
offenses losing your sister ranked
somewhere just above grand theft
auto and just below lighting your
grandma on fire. I had to find her.

EXT. WATER TOWER PLACE - MICHIGAN AVE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Lizzy stands before a SALVATION ARMY SANTA CLAUS (30s),
grilling him with questions. She's been at it for awhile.

LIZZY DOYLE
Do they speak English at the North Pole?

SALVATION ARMY SANTA
Yes.

LIZZY DOYLE
Even the elves?

SALVATION ARMY SANTA
Yes.

LIZZY DOYLE
Even the elves that make the Cabbage Patch dolls?

SALVATION ARMY SANTA
Yes.

Jake comes rushing outside and sees Lizzy.

JAKE
She's out here mom! I found her!

Patty comes running out and scoops up Lizzy. Hugging her.

PATTY DOYLE
Oh Lizzy!

LIZZY DOYLE
Mom, they might still have Cabbage Patch dolls at the North Pole! Even ones with red hair!

PATTY DOYLE
Lizzy, we told you to stay with Jake.

LIZZY DOYLE
He was playing Nintendo.

John comes barreling out of the store, out of breath, irate.

JOHN DOYLE
God bless America Jake! You play that stuff and your head goes to mush in three minutes!

JAKE
Sorry Dad.

JOHN DOYLE
She's your sister! It's not like
losing your retainer for cripes
sake!

Jake freezes. He cautiously runs his tongue over his teeth.
No retainer. He subtly checks his pockets. No retainer.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oh for two.

John notices Jake's reaction.

JOHN DOYLE
Open your mouth.

Jake slowly opens his mouth just enough so that you can't see
anything on his teeth or the roof of his mouth.

JOHN DOYLE
Open it Jake.

Jake stands motionless, weighing his options.

PATTY DOYLE
Do you have the Marshall Field bag
John?

John looks down at the bags for a brief second. Jake makes a
break for it and runs back inside. John chases after him.

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake rushes through the crowded store, frantically trying to
get back to the Nintendo display.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
The actual cost of my retainer had
been explained to me in the simple
terms of "if you lose it, don't
bother coming home."

John runs after Jake, now hell bent on catching him.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
I figured it cost roughly as much
as a new car.

Jake sprints around sales displays, weaves and bobs, takes
short cuts, dodges old ladies, runs past stores.

John barrels through fake snow, knocks over animatronic snow men, side steps small children. He curses and sputters, takes off his coat mid-stride and chucks it.

Jake and John end up on matching escalators on either side of the second story foyer. They lock eyes from a distance. A father son standoff.

Jake darts through shoppers on his escalator. John gets stuck behind those damn ELF CAROLERS again. The same annoying one is right in his face.

ANNOYING ELF CAROLER
Fiiiiive golden rinnnnnngs!

JOHN DOYLE
AHHHHH!

Jake nears the top of his escalator. Then he sees it. His retainer! It's lying across the hall on the floor in the slush, getting kicked around, in danger of being crushed. It sits equidistant from Jake's escalator and John's.

SLOW MOTION: Jake takes off like a shot and runs towards it. He slides feet first, baseball style toward the retainer. In one athletic swoop he scoops it up, wipes it on his coat, pops it in his mouth and stops at his dad's approaching feet.

John stands above Jake like an umpire. He didn't see the slide. He points to Jake's mouth. Jake opens it, smiling.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Safe.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - BEHIND THE DUMPSTER - DAY

Jake's slight smile matches the one from the previous scene. He sits in the snow behind the dumpster, hiding his girls' boots from view, watching recess from a distance.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Despite nearly losing my sister and
my retainer at the hands of
Nintendo, I had managed to survive.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Jake comes bounding down the steps, fresh from another sale.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And by the final day of wreath
selling I'd sold an astounding
ninety six wreathes.

INT. DOYLE MINI VAN - NIGHT

John drives, intently listening to the CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS game on the radio. Jake sits shotgun, staring out the window.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Before I knew it, I'd have a
Nintendo. And then everything would
change. *Everything...*

Jake smiles to himself.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - NIGHT - FANTASY SEQUENCE

Peter Gabriel's "BIG TIME" plays. There's a party going on in the Doyle house. A Nintendo party! Pretty much everyone we've seen in the movie so far is here, decked out in hip 80s fashion. Lizzy walks around with a tray of ECTO COOLER JUICE BOXES passing them out to guests.

A NINTENDO rests on a marble pedestal, hooked up to a BIG SCREEN TV in a maze of blinking lights and high tech wiring. A crowd of kids huddle around it, playing ICE HOCKEY.

Arm in arm, John and Patty happily survey the party.

JOHN DOYLE
Jake's test scores are up again.

PATTY DOYLE
That Nintendo Entertainment System
is the best thing that ever
happened to this family.

JOHN DOYLE
Totally.

A pair of COMBAT BOOTS descend the stairs. Tilt up to reveal Jake. He wears sunglasses, a Miami Vice sport coat and a Rad Racer T-Shirt. The NES gun is holstered on his belt. GIRLS wave hello, including KATIE SORRENTINO who wears her boots.

JAKE
Like those boots Katie Sorrentino.
If you've noticed, mine are
completely different from yours.

KATIE SORRENTINO
I did.

Katie smiles, a little flirtatiously. Jake nods back coolly.

Jake walks through the party, trading hellos with various 80'S ICONS including MARC SUMMERS and SPUDS MCKENZIE.

JAKE

Marc Summers, my man. Spuds McKenzie, 'sup dog? Glad you could make it. Mega Man and the California Raisins! That's what I'm talking about!

Jake exchanges high fives with a life size MEGA MAN and life size CALIFORNIA RAISINS.

Jake leans over to Dan Delund, who wears a suit and sunglasses and works the door, clearly the party's bouncer.

JAKE

We gotta get Ronald McDonald out of here. He's freaking people out.

DAN DELUND

No problem boss.
(points off camera)
You. Clown.

Delund goes to take care of it. Jake walks up to the Nintendo where the Gruseckis play Ice Hockey.

JAKE

Gentlemen. Next game of Ice Hockey, mix it up a bit. Go all fat guys versus all skinnies. It's a party.

Jake pulls out a candy cigarette, takes a bite.

JAKE

(to the crowd)
A Nintendo party!

The partygoers all cheer "woooo!".

BACK TO:

INT. DOYLE MINIVAN - NIGHT

Jake cheers quietly to himself, in a daze.

JAKE

Wooo... Wooo...

JOHN DOYLE

Will you quit "wooing" for crying out loud?!

Jake snaps out of it.

JAKE

Huh?

JOHN DOYLE

We're on a power play here, I'm trying to listen to this.

JAKE

Sorry Dad.

JOHN DOYLE

(muttering to himself)

Hawks can't score, kid's makin' weird noises...

The crowd noise intensifies. John turns it up.

PAT FOLEY (V.O.)

Larmer high slot... Savard with it now. Down the near side-- past Claude Lemuix-- Oh! He shoots he scores! DENNY SAVARD! Hawks take the lead!

The Stadium horn blares. The crowd erupts. John cheers.

JOHN DOYLE

Ha ha! Dipsey-doo to you Lemuix!

PAT FOLEY (V.O.)

And Claude Lemuix is still jawing away. He did not like that move Savard put on him.

JOHN DOYLE

Oh, quit your whining Claude. You're all talk no walk. Jake?

Jake looks over. John looks him in the eyes.

JOHN DOYLE

Always remember, a bully like Claude Lemuix isn't worth a hill of beans. All talk, no walk. Worst combo a man can have. Now what do you know about Cabbage Patch Dolls?

JAKE

Huh?

JOHN DOYLE

You seem to know a lot about them.

JAKE

I don't want a Cabbage Patch Doll.

JOHN DOYLE

I know, but you know what they look like, right?

JAKE

I guess.

JOHN DOYLE

Good.

Jake looks out the window, suddenly concerned.

JAKE

Where are we going?

JOHN DOYLE

To see a guy.

JAKE

About Cabbage Patch Dolls?

JOHN DOYLE

Do you wanna deal with your sister if she doesn't get one?

JAKE

No.

JOHN DOYLE

Then there ya go.

EXT. SHADY STREET - AURORA - NIGHT

A deserted street in the much more urban city of Aurora. John and Jake exit the van. Jake looks a little nervous. John is focused, he splits a stick of gum for the two of them.

JOHN DOYLE

Stay close. Let me do the talking.

A DEALER stands against an abandoned building across the street. He wears a Members Only jacket, smokes a cigarette. Jake and John approach him.

DEALER

Help you boys?

JOHN DOYLE

Word is you've come into a little cabbage.

DEALER
Step into my office gentlemen.

The dealer leads John and Jake down the adjacent alleyway toward his car, a '79 CUTLASS.

JOHN DOYLE
I'm gonna need a girl with
freckles.

DEALER
Not a problem.

The dealer opens his trunk to reveal a dozen CABBAGE PATCH KIDS all covered in a blanket with just their heads sticking out. It's a little unsettling.

DEALER
Best patch in the Tri Cities.

John looks them over, then gives Jake a look for confirmation. Jake leans over, studying them.

JAKE
Yeah, they're legit.

DEALER
'Course they're legit.

JOHN DOYLE
There aren't any freckles on the
redhead.

DEALER
The freckles are on the blond here.

JOHN DOYLE
Listen Mac, I need a redhead with
freckles or we don't have a deal.

DEALER
This ain't a make your own pizza
pie here pal. Look, I had this lady
lookin' for a green eyed black
haired kid a few weeks ago. I says
all I got is a green eyed blond
haired one. Lady says she'll just
dye the doll's hair. Badda-bip-
boop, she's got herself a black
haired green eyed Cabbage Patch
doll.

JOHN DOYLE
That worked?

DEALER
Like a charm.

JOHN DOYLE
How much?

DEALER
Hundred.

JOHN DOYLE
A hundred?!

DEALER
Where else you gonna find one man?
Every store from Wheaton to
Winnetka's out.

JOHN DOYLE
Sixty bucks. I got the name of two
brothers in Villa Park selling for
fifty, I'll go there right now if I
have to.

DEALER
Diaz brothers. You don't want their
bald headed junk. Eighty.

JOHN DOYLE
Seventy. Last offer.

DEALER
Fine. Deal.

John pulls out his wallet, nods for Jake to grab the doll.
Jake pulls the doll out to find it's COMPLETELY NAKED.

JOHN DOYLE
Oh! Hey!

John covers Jake's eyes, grabs the doll.

JOHN DOYLE
What the hell is this?!

DEALER
What?

JOHN DOYLE
Where's her clothes?

DEALER
You didn't say nothin' about no
clothes.

JOHN DOYLE

Jiminy Cricket. I can't give my daughter a naked doll for crying out loud. My wife will kill me!

DEALER

I don't do clothes man, it just complicates things. I want this dress, I want that dress, I want a stinkin' space suit, no, you want the doll, you get the doll, that's it.

John sputters. He puts a five back in his wallet.

JOHN DOYLE

Sixty five. I thought there were clothes.

DEALER

Seventy.

JOHN DOYLE

Sixty five, that's all you're gonna get. Yes or no?

The dealer relents and holds his hand out for the cash. John slaps it in. John leads Jake out of the alley, proudly.

JOHN DOYLE

Down from a hundred. You see that Jake? Lizzy's gonna love it.

Jake forces a smile.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Of course she would. Like always, my parents were getting Lizzy exactly what she wanted for Christmas. Me? I had to do it all on my own...

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

The cafeteria is eerily dark. Rows and rows of Cub Scouts stand in front of metal folding chairs, all dressed in uniform, their faces illuminated by candles in their hands.

Jake stands next to Olsen and Trotter. Anticipation is in the air. MR. HALBERG (40s, Pack Leader, 'Nam Vet) stands before the group. He wears a Cub Scout shirt and holds a candle.

MR. HALBERG

Gentlemen, look deeply into the candle's flame. Stare into its dancing light. Now... close your eyes. What do you see?

All the scouts close their eyes.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Fifty seven glorious visions of Nintendo blazed before us. For tonight was the night one of us was going home with an NES.

MR. HALBERG

You see the flame gentlemen. It burns even when your eyes are closed. Because when we blow these candles out, we know the Cub Scout flame will never fade.

Halberg blows out his candle, the Cub Scouts follow suit.

MR. HALBERG

It will remain with us forever.

The lights come back on, everyone sits. Halberg is a little choked up with his speech. He checks his list.

MR. HALBERG

Ahem. A lot to go over tonight gents. Pine Wood Derby, Loyalty Day parade, I got another 'Nam poem for you entitled "A Tie is Not a Loss--"

DAN DELUND

Get to the wreathes, Halberg!

MR. HALBERG

I'm sorry?

DAN DELUND

The wreathes.

Halberg notices Dan Delund leaning against the back wall in his bomber jacket-- the only kid here not in uniform.

MR. HALBERG

Are you in this troop?

DAN DELUND

I'm here ain't I?

Halberg stares, about to say something.

CUB SCOUT ONE (O.S.)
Do the wreathes!

CUB SCOUT TWO (O.S.)
Yeah! Wreathes!

The crowd starts chanting "Wreathes-wreathes-wreathes!".

MR. HALBERG
Okay, okay. We'll do the wreathes.

The boys cheer and stomp their feet!

MR. HALBERG
Calm down, calm down. Now I know
you've all been selling very hard
this year, so we've really done our
best to make these prizes special.
Mr. Delacruz, if you will?

Another Scout Leader, MR. DELACRUZ rolls three carts out onto
the stage marked THIRD PRIZE, SECOND PRIZE and FIRST PRIZE.
Each prize is mysteriously covered with a SHEET.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Ho-ho! Look at that! First prize
looked even bigger than a normal
NES system. Who knew what other
Nintendo treasures were under
there.

Farmer leans over to the Gruseckis.

JOSH FARMER
Told ya it came with the Power Pad.

Mr. Halberg steps on stage, clears his throat.

MR. HALBERG
Ahem. Alright. In third place this
year... Joshua Farmer!

Applause and laughter. Josh reluctantly goes up on stage.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Considering Farmer's constant
claims to victory, this was a
delight to us all. Anybody had a
chance now.

Mr. Halberg lifts the sheet revealing a small box. Farmer
opens it and pulls out a small card and reads from it.

JOSH FARMER
A subscription to "Boys' Life".

More mocking laughter. Josh trudges back to his seat.

MR. HALBERG
In second place, selling even more
than last year, Jeff Bristow!

Polite applause. JEFF BRISTOW, the Cub Scout who was fighting
outside the Jewel earlier, sulks his way up onto the stage.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Bristow walked up onto stage like
he'd just been shot. There was no
second place when it came to
Nintendo.

Halberg pulls back the sheet revealing a nice GLOBE.

MR. HALBERG
Look at that! A globe that lights
up!

Bristow picks up the globe and immediately dumps it in the
trash as he walks off stage.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
You had to feel for the guy.

MR. HALBERG
And now, the first prize winner of
this year's wreath selling contest.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
This was it. This was it...

MR. HALBERG
The highest sales total in troop
history... Jake Doyle!

Jake cheers! His friends all maul him like he just hit a walk
off homer. Jake gallops up on stage, beaming.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
You can put it on the boaaaaard,
YES! Oh, so many people to thank.
My friends, my family, the Nintendo
corporation.

MR. HALBERG
This year's first prize, the best
we've had in years...

SLOW MOTION: Halberg pulls back the sheet.

MR. HALBERG
A brand new set of World Book
Encyclopedias!

SHOCK hits the crowd. Horrible, terrible, dog-just-got-run over-by-an-ice-cream-truck, shock. A few kids fall to their knees. A set of ENCYCLOPEDIAS glisten under the lights.

JAKE
What?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It was like winning more school.

Delund picks up a chair, hurls it across the room.

DAN DELUND
Where's the Nintendo? Where is it?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It didn't make any sense! Why? Why
had the Cub Scouts promised us toys
and then given us books!? Who could
possibly be behind something so
terrible, so awful, so villainous?!

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Timmy's Dad, DR. TIMOTHY KLEEN SR (50s, glasses) stands behind a podium. A button with Lacey Dog's face on it is pinned to his tweed jacket. This is a serious man.

DR. KLEEN
Parents of Batavia. Good evening.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Doctor Timothy Kleen Senior, that's
who.

A hundred concerned parents sit on folding chairs in the gym, including JOHN & PATTY DOYLE and a row of CUB SCOUT LEADERS.

EXT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Jake, Trotter and Olsen straddle their bikes and peer through a small window at the back of the gym. A sign on the door reads: EMERGENCY PTA MEETING TONIGHT ON VIDEO GAME VIOLENCE.

MIKEY TROTTER

The dog...

JAKE

This is bad.

EVAN OLSEN

This is really bad...

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Dr. Kleen continues.

DR. KLEEN

As some of you may know, there was an incident at my home last week. A member of the Kleen family, Lacy Dog Kleen...

We notice MRS. KLEEN (30s, trophy wife) sitting in the audience, wearing all black, crying into a Kleenex.

DR. KLEEN

...was crushed to death by our forty two inch television set.

JOHN DOYLE

Forty two inches. That's a nice TV.

DR. KLEEN

This dog killing crime has a culprit ladies and gentlemen. And it goes by the name Nintendo!

Kleen clicks on a slide projector and an image of Nintendo covered in blood fills the screen. The audience gasps.

DR. KLEEN

Nintendo is the reason for this!

Kleen clicks to a photo of the smashed TV.

DR. KLEEN

And this!

A photo of a Timmy Kleen wailing hysterically.

DR. KLEEN

And this!

A photo of Lacy Dog's paw sticking out from underneath the TV like the Wicked Witch of the East. The crowd gasps.

DR. KLEEN

The question is, are we prepared to
do something about it?!

Mikey's mom, MRS. TROTTER (40s) stands up, fired up.

MRS. TROTTER

We should ban it!

DAD ONE

Yeah! Ban it!

OFFICER MASEJEWSKI

No more dogs are dying in my town!

DR. KLEEN

We must protect our dogs! We must
protect our children!

The crowd cheers. Jake, Trotter & Olsen look on, distraught.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Kleen's panicked propaganda
continued on well into the night,
leaving even the most skeptical
parents petrified that their own
television sets might suddenly be
jump kicked onto little sisters,
immobile grandparents, Neil Diamond
record collections. Poor Frankie
Wattendorf who'd been unfortunately
dragged to the event sat amid the
hysteria and wept, openly.

FRANKIE WATTENDORF (8) sits between his parents, sobbing.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It was virtual Nintendo Armageddon.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - MORNING - DAY

Saturday morning cartoons. Jake and Lizzy sit on the couch
watching MUPPET BABIES in their pajamas.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And there was nothing we could do
about it.

The cartoon is suddenly interrupted by a NEWS ANCHOR.

NEWS ANCHOR

We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin from Kane County.

Lizzy and Jake exchange a worried look. The TV cuts to the GENEVA COURTHOUSE in Kane County. A group of concerned parents picket in the background with "NINTENDO-NO!" signs. A REPORTER interviews Dr. Kleen.

REPORTER

Thank you Walter. We're here live in Geneva with video game violence activist, Dr. Timothy Kleen. Dr. Kleen, it's only eight shopping days now until Christmas and you've managed to pass a county wide ban on selling Nintendos?

DR. KLEEN

That's correct. Every store in Kane county has agreed to it.

REPORTER

You really feel that Nintendo promotes violence enough to make it *illegal*?

DR. KLEEN

Has your dog ever been crushed to death by your TV?

REPORTER

No it has not.

DR. KLEEN

Okay then. Parents need to know the truth. Nintendo is pure evil and it has to be stopped. Nintendo-NO! Nintendo-NO! Nintendo-NO!

Jake looks like he's about to cry. Concerned, Lizzy hands him the remote. Jake starts changing channels, his nerves shot.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Suddenly it was as if the entire world was against me. Was there no end to this anti-Nintendo madness?

Jake begins to hallucinate, his imagination running wild. He clicks to MAX HEADROOM, the computer talking head.

MAX HEADROOM

Ni, Ni, Ni, Nintendo No-friend-o.

He clicks to McGRUFF the crime fighting cartoon dog.

MCGRUFF
Say no to Nintendo and take a bite
out of crime.

He clicks to A CARTOON MR. T.

CARTOON MR. T
I pity the fool who plays Nintendo!

He clicks to A GI-JOE CARTOON. SHIPWRECK and FLINT talk to
two kids. One is fat: ERIC, one is skinny: MICHAEL.

FLINT
And that's why Eric over there is
such a big fatso.

Eric turns from his game of Nintendo, waves in agreement.

MICHAEL
Because Nintendo makes him fat?

SHIPWRECK'S PARROT
"Nintendo makes him fat. Nintendo
makes him fat."

They all laugh heartily.

MICHAEL
Well now I know.

FLINT
And knowing is half the battle.

ALL
"GI JOE! A REAL AMERICAN--"

Jake clicks to that iconic "JUST SAY NO" COMMERCIAL.

GUY
This is your brain.

JAKE
No way.

The guy cracks an egg and drops it into a sizzling pan.

GUY
This is your brain on Nintendo.
Any questions?

ANNIE (V.O.)
Yes! What is happening?!

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - PRESENT DAY - LATER

Back to Jake's present day office. Annie is beside herself.

ANNIE

Cartoons are talking to you?! They
banned Nintendo? What is going on?!

Annie and Jake sit on the floor in front of the TV. Couch
pillows and blankets have been fashioned into a small fort.
Take out lunch rests between them. Nintendo is paused on TV.

ADULT JAKE

Sometimes grownups just get really
upset, Annie.

ANNIE

So what did you do? If the town
banned it and Grandma and Grandpa
won't get you one and you're acting
like such a bad kid all the time--

ADULT JAKE

--Not all the time.

ANNIE

Yes all the time. If I was doing
that stuff you'd never get me a
tablet. If you're doing all this
and everything is going wrong, then
how did you get it?! How did you
get the Nintendo?!

ADULT JAKE

Okay, calm down, calm down. Have
some orange juice.

Annie takes a gulp of juice, calms down a little.

ANNIE

It just doesn't seem like you're
ever gonna get one, Dad.

ADULT JAKE

That's what makes it such a great
story Annie. Now you want to hear
the rest or not?

ANNIE

Yes.

ADULT JAKE

Okay...

Jake leans in. He's starting to enjoy telling this thing.

ADULT JAKE

You see sometimes, at Christmas,
just when you think all hope is
lost, something magical happens.
Some people call it a Christmas--

Jake's intercom buzzes.

BETH (O.S.)

Jake, I got Pendrock on line one.

ANNIE

He'll call 'em back!

Jake smiles, a little proud of Annie.

ADULT JAKE

--A Christmas miracle. It all
happened at the baseball card
store...

EXT. THE DUGOUT BASEBALL CARD STORE - 1988 - DAY

"I'M WALKING ON SUNSHINE" by Katrina and The Waves plays, the
happiest, peppiest song of all time.

Jake, Trotter, Olsen and the Gruseckis sit slumped against a
bike rack outside THE DUGOUT baseball card shop. They are
seriously, hopelessly depressed.

Farmer dances to the music coming from a small boom box by
his bike, trying to cheer them up.

JOSH FARMER

Come on guys! It's not that bad. We
still got each other. Walk on some
sunshine! Yeah!

Tommy scowls.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

Who needs one?

All the guys raise their hands. Tommy goes back inside to buy
more baseball card packs. Farmer keeps dancing.

MIKEY TROTTER

Turn that terrible song off Farmer!

JOSH FARMER
 Can't. The play button's frozen.
 Wooo! Sunshine baby!

Ryan grabs the boom box and bangs on it until it turns off.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 Six days until Christmas and it was
 officially official. None of us
 were getting a Nintendo.

EVAN OLSEN
 My cousin in Elmhurst might get one
 still. That's in Cook County.

JAKE
 Dupage County.

EVAN OLSEN
 How do you know?

JAKE
 I got encyclopedias.

Trotter shuffles through his pack of Topps.

MIKEY TROTTER
 Need it, got it, need it...

JOSH FARMER
 You gonna eat your gum?

Trotter tosses the gum from his pack at Farmer. Farmer drops
 it on the ground, picks it up and crunches away on it, happy.

MIKEY TROTTER
 Need it, got it, got it...

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 The only thing that could ease our
 pain now was cracking open a few
 tasty packs of baseball cards.

Tommy comes back out of the store with fresh packs of FLEER
 '89 (new this week) for everyone. He dishes them out.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 There wasn't a boy among us who
 wasn't thoroughly convinced they'd
 make us millionaires one day.

The guys all shuffle through their packs, calling out the
 good cards they got.

JAKE
I got a Clemens.

MIKEY TROTTER
Mattingly.

EVAN OLSEN
Chris Sabo.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Oh, that's a good card.

RYAN GRUSECKI
I got a Ripken. Billy Ripken.

Ryan just stares at his card, gobsmacked.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Who cares about Billy Ripken?

Ryan looks like he's just seen a ghost.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
What? What is it?

RYAN GRUSECKI
You guys aren't gonna believe this.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
What?

RYAN GRUSECKI
Look! Right there! On his bat!

The guys all gather round and peer over his shoulder.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And there it was. Written on the
bottom of Billy Ripken's baseball
bat, staring up at us like some
kind of private joke from God. A
swear word.

JOSH FARMER
Oh, that's a bad one.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And not just any swear word. The
worst swear word. "Swear word dash
face." On a baseball card!

MIKEY TROTTER
It's an error card.

RYAN GRUSECKI
No. It's the greatest error card of
all time.

Tommy quickly fumbles through his Beckett Magazine, searching
for the price. The guys wait with baited breath.

TOMMY GRUSECKI
Billy Ripken... Ninety five bucks.

The guys go crazy! Jumping up and down, hugging Ryan.

RYAN GRUSECKI
Careful! Don't tweak it! Careful!

JOSH FARMER
You're rich Grusecki!

EVAN OLSEN
Yeah, a couple more of those and
you can buy your own Nintendo.

Jake suddenly stops jumping around.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And that's when it hit me like an
'85 Bears blitz. We didn't need Cub
Scouts or our parents or anyone. We
were going to buy our own Nintendo
for Christmas. I had a plan.

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The guys sit on Jake's bedroom floor. Jake stands above them.
He's just told them his incredible plan, which has been
written out in extreme detail on an easel, entitled "FIFTEEN
STEP PLAN FOR NINTENDO!".

JOSH FARMER
I don't get it.

JAKE
What do you mean you don't get it?
It's a very clear fifteen point
plan.

Olsen points to the easel.

EVAN OLSEN
I think you spelled "covert" wrong.

MIKEY TROTTER

The field trip is Monday Farmer. To Chicago.

JOSH FARMER

So?

MIKEY TROTTER

So, they still sell Nintendo's there.

JOSH FARMER

So?

TOMMY GRUSECKI

So we sell some baseball cards, get some money, sneak out of the field trip and buy our own Nintendo.

JOSH FARMER

Oh, okay, I get it. Why didn't you just say that in the first place?

JAKE

This can work guys.

EVAN OLSEN

I don't know, sounds dangerous.

JAKE

We don't have to do the flame thrower thing, I just tossed that in there for Mikey.

MIKEY TROTTER

Flame thrower thing would be pretty cool though.

EVAN OLSEN

I dunno, we could get in trouble. I can't get in trouble now Jake, it's almost Christmas.

JAKE

Forget Christmas! This is serious!
(beat, digs deep)

This is our one and only chance to get a Nintendo. One that we can play on our own and we don't have to worry about taking our boots off or getting in line or any of that stuff. We can *totally* do this. This is our Goonie adventure. Who's with me?

MIKEY TROTTER

I'm in.

The Gruseckis look at each other, then.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

We're in.

RYAN GRUSECKI

We're in.

JOSH FARMER

You know, this reminds me of the
time me and Face from the A-Team--

JAKE

Yes or no Farmer.

JOSH FARMER

I'm in.

JAKE

Olsen?

Olsen still isn't sure. He looks around, sighs, then smiles.

EVAN OLSEN

We're gonna get in so much trouble.

JAKE

That's what I'm talkin' about!

The guys all cheer! Olsen is in.

JOSH FARMER

Yeah! Woo!

Farmer presses play on his little boom box. "WALKING ON
SUNSHINE" plays again. Everyone tries to turn it off.

MIKEY TROTTER

No!

JAKE

Turn it off!

RYAN GRUSECKI

I hate this song!

JOSH FARMER

You love it! You know you love it!

INT/EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

The boys get to work on their plan. "WALKING ON SUNSHINE"
continues through the whole montage.

- Olsen puts fresh batteries in some WALKIE TALKIES.
- Tommy and Ryan select a few cards, including Billy Ripken, and put them in a small plastic case.
- Trotter squeezes a little cup of MOTTS APPLESAUCE onto the counter, experimenting.
- Farmer leads the guys in some aerobic dancing exercises.
- Olsen reluctantly hands over a few of his best cards to Tommy. Tommy puts them in the case.
- Jake studies a city map of Chicago in his encyclopedia.
- Trotter hands over a few of his best cards to Tommy.
- Jake goes over a crude overhead drawing of a city block with the guys. We see words like BACK SEAT OF BUS, ESCAPE ROUTE, TICKING CLOCK, WATER TOWER PLACE, "KOVERT".
- Jake hands Tommy a few of his best cards.
- Farmer hands Tommy a few GARBAGE PAIL KID CARDS. Tommy just shakes his head.
- Tommy's plastic case is now full of cards. The guys all follow him into The Dugout.
- Moments later the guys exit the store, excited. Tommy fans through a bunch of ten dollar bills. He hands the stack to Ryan, Ryan hands it to Trotter, Trotter hands it to Olsen who puts the money in a TRAPPER KEEPER and hands it to Jake.
- The guys walk off down the street like Reservoir Dogs. But as they do we see a FIGURE watching them. It's Dan Delund.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Oh no! Not Delund! What's he gonna do?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Just hang on Annie, I'm getting there.

EXT. FRONT OF SCHOOL - MORNING - DAY

All the fifth grade classes board a school bus to Chicago. Jake stands off to the side, holding the Trapper Keeper, inspecting his crew as they pass by to get on the bus.

JAKE

Walkie talkies?

EVAN OLSEN

Check.

JAKE

Blanket?

TOMMY GRUSECKI

Check.

JAKE

Duffle bag?

RYAN GRUSECKI

Check.

Farmer steps forward wearing head to toe CAMOUFLAGE clothing.

JOSH FARMER

Camouflage! Check.

JAKE

Not really necessary, Farmer, but I like the spirit.

Trotter steps up, he and Jake exchange a little handshake.

MIKEY TROTTER

You got the money. I got the Motts.

JAKE

Let's do it.

Jake and Trotter turn to walk toward the bus but run right into Dan Delund who stands over them, menacingly.

DAN DELUND

Nice Trapper Keeper, Boyle. I hear it's good for organizing money.

Delund snatches the Trapper Keeper out of Jake's hands.

JAKE

Hey! That's ours!

DAN DELUND

Not anymore.

MIKEY TROTTER

You can't do that!

DAN DELUND

Oh yeah? What are you gonna do about it?

Dan looms, threateningly. Trotter and Jake stammer.

DAN DELUND
That's what I thought. The
Nintendo's mine.

Delund chuckles to himself and walks onto the bus with the Trapper Keeper. Trotter and Jake just watch helplessly.

MIKEY TROTTER
Oh man. This is bad.

JAKE
I don't think it could get any
worse.

MRS. HUGO (O.S.)
Jake Doyle!

Jake looks up to see Mrs. Hugo now standing above him.

MRS. HUGO
Where do you think you're going?

JAKE
On the bus. To the Art Institute.

MRS. HUGO
Not like that you're not. No boots.
No field trip.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Son of a--

INT. SCHOOL BUS - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

"DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HURT ME" plays. A nervous Jake slowly steps onto the now completely full bus in his girls' boots.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
At first I thought, maybe no one
will notice.

A KID in the second row immediately stands and points.

KID
Hey everybody! Jake Doyle's wearing
girls' boots!

The entire bus starts laughing and pointing. Humiliated, Jake trudges toward the back where his friends are sitting.

KID TWO
Look at those!

KID THREE
They're so pretty!

KATIE SORRENTINO
I have the same kind.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Reoccurring nightmares of Freddy
Kruger and the '84 Cubs quickly
fell to the wayside. It was a bad
dream come to life.

Delund stands up, pounding his fist in his hand, smiling.

DAN DELUND
Forgot about those. Nice boots
Boyle! Come on back and have a
seat!

There are two seats left on the bus. One right next to Delund
in the very back. And one right next to CONOR STUMP (10, the
weirdest kid in school) toward the front. Jake gulps.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
And suddenly our whole plan was in
jeopardy.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - LATER - DAY

The bus makes its way through downtown Chicago. It's bumper
to bumper traffic. Jake sits next Connor Stump who sings to
himself. He's probably been doing so the entire trip.

CONNOR STUMP
*When you're running into first and
you feel a juicy burst. Diarrhea.
Diarrhea.*

Jake puts his head in his hands. Stump keeps singing.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
The entire plan hung in the
balance, and I was stuck
sitting in the reject seat
with Connor Stump.

CONNOR STUMP
*When you're sliding into
third and you feel a juicy
turd. Diarrhea. Diarrhea...*

Jake looks back at Trotter who shrugs "What do we do?!" Jake
looks over at Delund who is counting the money in his seat.
Connor takes note.

CONNOR STUMP

Are you scared of Dan? I am. That's why I sing the poo songs. To calm me down. Do you know any poo songs?

JAKE

No.

CONNOR STUMP

You should learn some.

Trotter comes running up, crouched down to avoid detection.

MIKEY TROTTER

We're almost to the spot Jake, what do we do?

JAKE

I don't know. Just, just go ahead, I'll think of something.

Trotter nods, walks up to the front of the bus, moaning.

MIKEY TROTTER

Mrs. Hugo...

MRS. HUGO

Michael, what are you doing out of your seat?

MIKEY TROTTER

I don't feel good...

With Mrs. Hugo distracted, Jake scurries to the back of the bus. Delund watches him approach.

DAN DELUND

Well looky what we got here. A girl in girls' boots.

JAKE

Dan, we gotta go get the Nintendo now. I can show you how to--

DAN DELUND

I'm not listening to you Boyle. The money's mine. I'll get my Nintendo when I get it.

JAKE

We gotta go now or else--

DAN DELUND

Or else what? You're gonna make me?

Delund stands, he grabs Jake by the jacket.

DAN DELUND
Go back and sit with your
girlfriend in your girls' boots.

Dan pushes Jake hard. He stumbles backwards and falls onto the floor. Delund laughs hysterically as Jake lays there.

DAN DELUND
Ha ha! Look at the little girl! Are
you gonna cry now little girl? Wha
wha wha! Wha wha wha!

Jake looks like he might actually cry. He looks around, all eyes are on him. Connor Stump looks up at him with innocent kid eyes. Something inside of Jake snaps.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Oddly enough, it was something in
Connor Stump's runny nose that made
me get up. Nintendo or not, Delund
had been king of the mountain for
too long.

Jake suddenly pops up off the floor and charges back toward Delund. Delund looks up from his seat, surprised.

JAKE
You're all talk, no walk Delund.

DAN DELUND
What's that supposed to mean?

WHAM! Jake slams his ESPRIT BOOT into Delund's chest. Pinning him up against the seat. He leans toward him, growls.

JAKE
It means gimme the Trapper Keeper
you heavy metal hair on an
elephant's butt.

The bus is in complete shock. Delund is in complete shock.

JAKE
Now.

Delund swallows hard. Then, without a word he hands the Trapper Keeper over.

JOSH FARMER
Holy smokes...

Kid's jaws are hitting the floor. Jake nods to the Gruseckis. They start waving hand signals toward Trotter. Trotter, who's still distracting Hugo, gives a subtle nod.

MRS. HUGO

Just tell me what it is. Is it your stomach? Do you think you might--

MIKEY TROTTER

Bluuuuuuuughh!

Trotter suddenly PUKES all over Mrs. Hugo.

MRS. HUGO

Ugh! Stop the bus! Carl! Stop the bus! Pull over!

Kids start screaming, Hugo keeps yelling, it's chaos. The bus pulls over. Trotter runs out puking into his hands-- we now notice that he has cups of MOTTS APPLESAUCE in his sleeves.

In the back, The Gruseckis mash a BLANKET over the emergency exit alarm. Farmer pulls the handle and thrusts the door open. Olsen tosses Jake a walkie talkie and a duffle bag. Jake jumps out onto the street and takes off. He's doing it! Olsen scrambles to the window and calls out after him.

EVAN OLSEN

Goonies never say die Doyle!

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Jake runs down the sidewalk. He checks his map and crosses the street toward WATER TOWER PLACE. He pulls out his walkie.

JAKE

Red Dog this is Blue Bird I'm approaching Water Tower Place. Over.

EVAN OLSEN (O.S.)

Blue Bird, this is Ewok One.

JAKE

What happened to Red Dog?

EVAN OLSEN (O.S.)

I changed it.

JAKE

We get to change names now? Start over.

(then)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)
Ewok One this is Millennium Falcon
Super Cool.

EVAN OLSEN (O.S.)
Love it.

JAKE
I am crossing the street. Over.

Jake runs toward WATER TOWER PLACE shopping center. The very same place he went shopping with his family last week. The same SALVATION ARMY SANTA CLAUS is there too.

SALVATION ARMY SANTA
Careful there kid. It's slippery.

Jake gives Santa a wave and side steps a small patch of ice near the entrance. He runs through the doors.

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS

Jake runs through the store foyer. He clicks his digital Casio calculator watch to countdown NINE MINUTES.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
The plan was simple. I had exactly nine minutes to buy a Nintendo and three games and make it back to the bus before Trotter's applesauce ran out. As long as I didn't run into any major obstacles I figured I'd be good to goo-- Oh God.

Jake runs up to Marshall Fields to find MRS. TROTTER and MRS. KLEEN picketing with NINTENDO-NO signs in front of the store. There's no way he can get past them without being seen.

JAKE
Are you kidding me?!

Jake ducks behind a MALL MAP KIOSK. Pulls out his walkie.

JAKE
Ewok One. We have a problem.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - CONTINUOUS

Olsen holds his walkie talkie. The Gruseckis and Farmer huddle up with him in the back two seats.

EVAN OLSEN
What's the problem Millennium...
Super whatever?

We cut back and forth between the store and the bus.

JAKE
Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Kleen are
standing outside the store! Repeat
Trotter and Kleen are here! I can't
get in without them seeing me!

EVAN OLSEN
Oh no! What are we gonna do?!

JAKE
I don't know that's why I'm calling
you!

EVAN OLSEN
Abort! Abort!

JAKE
No! No abort. We just need to get
them out of the way.

Jake notices the PHONE NUMBER for the building on the kiosk.

JAKE
Maybe we can page them. Over the
intercom or something. Tell them
they have a call.

Tommy taps Olsen, points to a PAY PHONE across the street.

EVAN OLSEN
There's a pay phone across the
street!

JAKE
Yes! Okay. How's Trotter? Gimme a
sauce check.

Olsen peers out the window to see Mrs. Hugo tending to
Trotter who is now standing up, breathing slowly.

MRS. HUGO
(to Trotter)
Is that it? Is that everything?

Trotter doubles over and "pukes" again. Mrs. Hugo sighs.

MRS. HUGO
I should've gone to law school.

EVAN OLSEN
Sauce is still flying. We can make
it to the pay phone. But what do we
say?

JAKE
I don't know, something good.

EVAN OLSEN
Like what?!

JAKE
I don't know, make something up!

Farmer rises from his seat. Smiles.

JOSH FARMER
Did someone say, "make something
up"?

EXT. STREET - PAYPHONE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Farmer's on the payphone across the street, in his element.

JOSH FARMER
Yes, I need you to page a Mrs.
Trotter and a Mrs. Kleen please.
Yes, it's an emergency, this is
their nephew. Well, I've just found
a needle in my halloween candy and
I'm trying to decide if I should
eat it or not. Yes, I think you
should get them.

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS

Jake nervously looks at his watch. It's down to SIX MINUTES.

JAKE
Come on... Come on...

The PA crackles on.

PA VOICE (O.S.)
Paging Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Kleen.
Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Kleen. Please
come to the customer service desk.
You have an emergency phone call.

Surprised and concerned, Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Kleen walk off
toward the front lobby. Jake grabs his walkie talkie.

JAKE

It worked. I'm going in. Keep 'em
on the phone.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Olsen looks out the window at Farmer across the street.

EVAN OLSEN

Copy that.

Olsen gives Farmer a thumbs up and a signal to keep the call
going. Farmer gives him a thumbs up back. He's got this.

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - MOMENTS LATER

Jake runs through the store. Focused, determined.

NINTENDO (V.O.)

Hello Jake. How 'bout a quick--

JAKE

Not today!

Jake blows by the Nintendo display.

EXT. STREET - PAYPHONE - CONTINUOUS

Farmer does his best to keep Kleen and Trotter on the line.

JOSH FARMER

Hello Mrs. Trotter. I mean Mrs.
Kleen, right. It's your nephew!

(then)

Yes I know you don't have a nephew.
That's exactly why I'm calling. I'm
with the International Nieces and
Nephews Collective. That's right.

(then)

Well, we're based in Europe.

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

Jake runs up to the aisle where Nintendos and games are sold.
He grabs a Nintendo, pausing for a second to soak in the
moment. He hoists it on his shoulder, starts grabbing games.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Okay, games, games, games, let's
see... RBI Baseball.

(MORE)

ADULT JAKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Double Dragon, obviously. Top Gun
or 1943? Top-Gun or-1943? Top-Gun-
or-1943?

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)
Four minutes Super Falcon!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Dah!

Jake grabs Top Gun and runs off.

EXT. STREET - PAYPHONE - MOMENTS LATER

Farmer keeps the conversation going somehow.

JOSH FARMER
Well it makes perfect sense if you
think about it. You don't have a
nephew, you would like a nephew,
the Collective is here to help.
(then)
Hello?

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Jake runs up to the checkout counter to find five SHOPPERS in
front of him, all with loaded up arms of merchandise.

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)
Super Cool, come in. Farmer's
losing them, you gotta hurry!

Jake scrambles and heads toward the other end of the store.

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake runs past the Nintendo display again.

NINTENDO (V.O.)
Tick tock, Jake. Tick tock.

JAKE
Shut up!

EXT. STREET - PAY PHONE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Farmer does his best to keep the ladies on the line.

JOSH FARMER

Oh, I have Mrs. Trotter now, yes, thank you. No I was unaware prank phone calls were a criminal offense. Well I'll get down to brass tacks then. I'm with the Book-It program. Your son's won a personal pan pizza.

INT. COSMETICS SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake reaches a checkout counter in cosmetics, out of breath.

JAKE

One Nintendo please.

The COSMETICS CLERK (50s, female) looks him over, suspicious.

CLERK

How old are you?

JAKE

Lady, I got two hundred bucks and no time for questions, ring it up.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Trotter teeters back and forth on the sidewalk, moaning. The BUS DRIVER has joined Mrs. Hugo on the sidewalk now. The two watch Trotter in amazement. This kid has been puking forever.

MRS. HUGO

Feeling better now? Think we can get on the bus?

Trotter doubles over again, "pukes", but no applesauce comes out. He's out of Motts cups.

BUS DRIVER

Yeah he's dry heavin', you're good.

The Bus driver heads back to the bus. Trotter sneaks a panicked look up at Olsen. "I'm out." Olsen grabs his walkie.

EVAN OLSEN

The sauce is gone. Repeat. We are out of sauce.

Olsen turns to see the Gruseckis pulling Farmer on the bus.

JOSH FARMER

I lost em.

EVAN OLSEN
And Farmer's off the phone!

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - MARSHALL FIELDS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake sprints toward the Marshall Fields exit as he stuffs the NINTENDO and GAMES in his duffle bag.

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)
Repeat. Farmer's off the phone!
Look out for Kleen and Trotter!

Jake looks up to see Kleen and Trotter approaching. He has no where to hide. He dives along side A GROUP OF SHOPPERS heading toward the escalator. He army crawls along with them, using them as a screen from Kleen and Trotter.

A TODDLER in the arms of one of the shoppers notices Jake and smiles. Jake give the kid a little wink, he's in the zone.

INT/EXT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake runs down the escalator stairs, yells into his walkie.

JAKE
I got past 'em! I'm in the clear!

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)
The bus is moving Jake. The
stoplight is still the rendezvous!
You're gonna make it!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
This was it. This was it. Victory
was mine. I could taste it...

Jake barrels through the front doors, his eyes wide as saucers as he runs onto the sidewalk. Sunlight hits his face, he's free, he's made it! We go into SLOW MOTION.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Yes! Yes!

Suddenly Jake's feet slide out from under him.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Nooooooooo!

Jake slips backward on a patch of ice-- the same spot that Adult Jake almost slipped at the beginning of the movie.

The momentum thrusts Jake's hands upward and the duffle bag goes flying. It glistens in the sun as it flutters down, down, down onto the street.

Jake scrambles up on his side just in time to see THE BUS come flying by and RUN OVER THE NINTENDO.

JAKE

Nooooooooo!

Front tire, then back tire. On the bus Olsen, Farmer, Trotter and the Gruseckis all peer out the back window, their faces pressed against the glass in horror, witnessing the damage.

THE GUYS

Nooooooooo!

The bus stops at the stoplight at the end of the block. Jake just stands in the street, devastated. The Nintendo lays SMASHED TO BITS at his feet. The bus drives off.

INT. TAXI CAB - A LITTLE BIT LATER - DAY

Jake sits in the back of a CAB, totally dejected holding a broken piece of Double Dragon. A CABBIE (60's, South Side, gruff) looks Jake over in the mirror, a little concerned.

CABBIE

Where to chief?

JAKE

Art Institute.

A beat. The Cabbie looks Jake over again.

CABBIE

So what gives?

JAKE

I got money, don't worry.

CABBIE

No, what gives? Why the long face?

JAKE

I don't want to talk about it.

CABBIE

You on Christmas vacation?

JAKE

Yeah, almost.

CABBIE

So, you should be happy. Go on tell me what the problem is.

A beat. Jake sighs. Okay.

JAKE

I'm not gonna get what I want for Christmas. Nobody is.

CABBIE

Yeah, that's a tough one.

The Cabbie sighs, then gets reflective.

CABBIE

One year when I was a kid I wanted a horse. Can you believe that? We live eight blocks from Comiskey and I want a horse. All November, all December that's all I talk about. My grandparents, my parents, they all ask "Chester what do you want for Christmas?". "A horse" I says, over and over "a horse". That's it, nothing else. Everybody tells me "Chester we can't get a horse and that's final." I don't listen, I spend all Christmas waiting for the horse, figuring out how to get the horse. And then you know what happened Christmas morning?

JAKE

You got the horse?

CABBIE

No, I don't even know what I got that year. But no horse. I realized later, I wasted a whole Christmas worrying about something that didn't really matter anyway.

A car cuts the Cabbie off.

CABBIE

You see that? Come January I'll call that yuppie every name in the book. But now, well, it's Christmas. You only get so many of 'em and you gotta make 'em count. Like with you. Betch-ya you haven't even told somebody Merry Christmas this year have you.

A beat. Jake thinks about that. The cab pulls into the back driveway of THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

CABBIE

Who you meeting here?

JAKE

My class. We're on a field trip. I kinda left. I'll probably get held back now. How much do I owe you?

CABBIE

Hold on. You cut out on a field trip?

JAKE

Yeah.

The cabbie chuckles a bit, impressed.

CABBIE

Is it a big class?

JAKE

Pretty big.

CABBIE

This is the back entrance to the place. Tell the guard at the door there you got lost, the place is huge. He'll let you in, just hop right back in with your class, you'll be fine.

JAKE

Thanks. How much is it?

CABBIE

Ah don't worry about it. You gotta do me a favor though chief.

JAKE

What's that?

CABBIE

Have a merry Christmas.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAWN

"HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS" plays. It's Christmas morning at the Doyle house. Stockings hang from exposed wall studs. Presents rest under the tree. Cookies left for Santa have been nibbled on. All is calm and bright.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - JAKE'S ROOM - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

Jake sleeps soundly. A hand rustles his shoulder. He opens his eyes to see Lizzy standing there in her PJ's, BEAMING.

LIZZY DOYLE
Is it time yet?

Jake manages a small smile.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - PATTY AND JOHN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lizzy bursts into the room yelling and jumping on the bed.

LIZZY DOYLE
It's Christmas! It's Christmas!
Wake up! Wake up!

PATTY DOYLE
Merry Christmas Lizzy, dear.

LIZZY DOYLE
Dad, wake up it's Christmas!

John groans, puts a pillow over his head.

JOHN DOYLE
Christmas is canceled.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER - DAY

A giddy Lizzy crawls around the tree inspecting packages. Jake stands a few feet away, pessimistically looking it over.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Nine years of visual unwrapping
experience, I could tell right away
that there was no Nintendo under
the tree. Fat ladies standing by
quietly warmed their vocal chords.

John and Patty descend the stairs, still half asleep.

PATTY DOYLE
No touching packages till we pass
them out Lizzy. You know the rules.

Lizzy doesn't listen, she shakes a package. It rattles.

LIZZY DOYLE
Legos?

JAKE

Legos.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

All I wanted at this point was to
get the whole thing over with.

John plops on the couch.

JOHN DOYLE

Alright, lets have some Christmas.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - MONTAGE - TIME PASSING - DAY

The 8-BIT TETRIS THEME SONG plays as Patty hands out presents. The Doyles happily tear into packages. Jake just mopes his way through it.

- Lizzy opens up a My Little Pony.
- Patty opens a pair of leg warmers.
- Jake opens some Legos. He nods, knowingly.
- John opens an electric sander. He's impressed.
- Patty opens up another pair of leg warmers.
- John starts sanding a nearby wall. It's very loud.
- Jake opens some ear muffs. He puts them on.
- Lizzy opens her Cabbage Patch doll. She's ecstatic!

LIZZY

A CABBAGE PATCH!

The doll wears nothing but a child sized Chicago Bears T-shirt. It also has PURPLE HAIR. Jake gives his dad a look. John shakes it off.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Post presents bliss. The floor is a mess with wrapping paper. Jake and Lizzy sit on the couch on either side of Patty.

PATTY DOYLE

Well that was another great
Christmas, wasn't it?

John sands the wall behind the tree.

LIZZY DOYLE

What?!

PATTY DOYLE

I said that was another-- John! Do you have to do that right now?!

John shuts the electric sander off.

JOHN DOYLE

You bought it for me.

John pulls the cord taught, inadvertently knocking over an unseen PACKAGE wrapped in brown mailing paper by the door.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And that's when I saw it.

The sun suddenly illuminates the package. A choir of ANGELS SING. Jake's eyes widen. Lizzy's eyes widen. Elwood's friggin' eyes widen. Could it be?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It was the exact size and shape of the box I'd held in my hands not three days before. I knew that box. I'd felt that box in my sleep. *That* was a Nintendo box.

Lizzy runs over and sneaks a look at the shipping label.

LIZZY DOYLE

To Jake. From Uncle Dan.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Uncle Dan! Of course! Unreliable, stinking rich, crazy Uncle Dan! Uncle Dan who hadn't so much as sent me a postcard in three years.

JOHN DOYLE

Dan sent a gift? Great.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Clearly he was making up for it. With a Nintendo!

JOHN DOYLE

Where's he living again now?

PATTY DOYLE

Japan.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 Japan! Japan! The home of Nintendo!
 The land where dreams came true! Oh
 God don't mess with me now...

JOHN DOYLE
 Well, it's got your name on it
 Jake.

Jake slowly walks toward the package. John sits on the couch.

JOHN DOYLE
 (aside to Patty)
 What'd he say he was sending?

PATTY DOYLE
 I have no idea.

Jake cautiously brings the package to the middle of the room.
 He kneels before it. Everyone waits with baited breath.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 I'd later read of Olympic athletes
 training their entire lives for one
 five second moment. This was it.

Jake tears open the package, his eyes widening.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 It had to be. It had to be...

Jake gasps.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 Lite Brite!

JAKE
 Lite Brite?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
 Lite Brite. Japanese Lite Brite.

We now see the box. It's dotted with Japanese lettering and
 strange English phrases. TWO PREPPY JAPANESE CHILDREN smile
 as they make an ornate picture of a CLOWN on a LITE BRITE.

PATTY DOYLE
 Oh look Jake, it's the "super happy
 yum" version. That's great.

JOHN DOYLE
 Jeez, for a second there I thought
 it might be a Nintendo.

Patty and John both start laughing.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
As I slowly tried to grasp the
situation I began to fear that I
might never recover from this. That
this was a tragedy so great I'd
never go to prom, never go to
college, never leave the house. I'd
become a thirty year old balding
man in his parents' basement making
elaborate pictures of Zelda on his
Lite Brite.

Jake just sits there in pain.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Christmas was dead to me now.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

Jake looks out his kitchen window, still in a daze.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
By nightfall I got word that
despite the panic, level headed
grandmas had come through. And half
my friends went to bed with
blistered thumbs from ten hours on
their new Nintendos.

Jake sighs and sits on the floor.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
It was a tough pill to swallow.

Lizzy and Patty sit next to a HUGE PILE OF LUGGAGE. Lizzy
holds her doll. John storms in and out, picking up bags.

JOHN DOYLE
We're going to Minnesota for three
days Patty. You've been in our car
before, I've seen you in it. You
know how big it is.

PATTY DOYLE
Let's just go in the morning John.

JOHN DOYLE (O.S.)
I'm not hitting traffic!

LIZZY DOYLE
Can I bring Dawn outside at
Grandma's, Mom?

PATTY DOYLE
Sure you can honey.

LIZZY DOYLE
We need to get her a hat though.
(whispering)
Her hair. It's an embarrassment.

John walks back inside. He exchanges a glance with Patty.

JOHN DOYLE
Jake.

JAKE
Yeah?

JOHN DOYLE
There's still a ton of poop out
there. Go grab the shovel and pick
it up.

JAKE
Right now?

JOHN DOYLE
Yes right now. You've had all day
to do it. And start by the shed.
You haven't been back there in
months.

Jake sighs, grabs his coat and exits.

EXT. DOYLE HOUSE - BACKYARD - A LITTLE BIT LATER - NIGHT

We have not seen this part of the yard yet. It's tucked away
behind the shed next to a small wooded area. Jake mopes
through the snow and sits down on an overturned bucket. He
watches his breath in the darkness. A sad beat.

JAKE
You forgot to turn on the lights
Dad. Dad! The flood lights!

The flood lights suddenly flick on. Jake slowly gets up. He
looks toward the heavens and stops short.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And there, high above the frozen
dog poo that had become the bane of
my existence was the most beautiful
structure I had ever laid eyes on.

JAKE

Whoa...

We see what Jake sees. A picture perfect TREE FORT, freshly
painted and slightly hidden by the snowy branches.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

A tree fort. A spectacular, two
level, solid wood, tree fort.

Jake stands awestruck. He drops his shovel and walks towards
it. He climbs the ladder and slowly looks around.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Oh it was breath taking.

John, Patty and Lizzy walk outside to have a look.

LIZZY DOYLE

Wow-ee.

PATTY DOYLE

Maybe I should ask Santa to finish
the kitchen next year Lizzy, what
do you think?

JAKE

It's got a trap door!

JOHN DOYLE

Careful by that paint. It still
looks wet.

PATTY DOYLE

Why don't I go get the video
camera, John?

JOHN DOYLE

Nah. Let him be.

John looks on, happy, proud.

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - LATER - PRESENT DAY - DUSK

It's almost dusk now. A Christmas tree twinkles in the park
below. Headlights flicker on the street. Jake and Annie sit
on the floor of his office, holding controllers.

ANNIE

But the Nintendo was hidden in the fort wasn't it?

JAKE

Nope.

ANNIE

Then how did you get it?

JAKE

I didn't get one until I worked a whole summer outside as a caddy. Grandpa said I could buy my own then.

ANNIE

I would've got you a Nintendo, Dad.

JAKE

Thank you Annie.

Jake puts his arm around her. The two sit there together.

JAKE

But I think the tree fort ended up being a pretty good present.

ANNIE

Yeah.

Annie and Jake look to the wall in front of them. Only now do we see that it is filled with BLUEPRINTS and PICTURES of TREE FORTS-- ornate and elaborate structures built for hospitals, yards and schools. Smiling kids are in each and every one.

A prominent plaque reads 2018 CHICAGO BUSINESS of the YEAR: ALL SEASONS PLAYGROUNDS, FOUNDER & CEO JAKE DOYLE. Jake builds tree forts for a living now. This is his business.

BETH

(knocking)

Sorry to interrupt. Jake, I told Pendrock we'd just get back to them tomorrow.

ADULT JAKE

That's okay. We can get back to them today. The answer's no.

BETH

You sure?

ADULT JAKE

If we took that job we'd end up
working straight through New
Year's. The whole office.

BETH

Central Park, it's a huge contract.

ADULT JAKE

It's a restaurant deck. We build
forts for kids. Do me a favor Beth,
send everybody home. It's
Christmas.

BETH

You got it boss.

Beth smiles, exits. Jake looks back to see Annie now standing
at his window, staring at the hustle and bustle below.

ADULT JAKE

You feeling any better?

ANNIE

Yeah.

ADULT JAKE

You wanna go check out that tablet
on our way home?

ANNIE

You think we could go to the park
instead?

Jake smiles, proud.

ADULT JAKE

Totally.

Annie runs over to grab her coat. Jake goes to turn off the
light. As he does we notice a SMALL FRAMED PICTURE on the
wall. It's of JAKE, TROTTER, OLSEN, THE GRUSECKIS and FARMER
playing in Jake's fort circa summer '89. We see JOHN near the
back, about to hammer a nail. He's smiling.

EXT. BACKYARD/TREE FORT - A LITTLE BIT LATER - 1988 - NIGHT

John pops his head through the open trap door of the fort. He
looks around and takes a deep breath.

JOHN DOYLE

Smell that?

JAKE
Fresh air?

JOHN DOYLE
Fresh air.

A nice father-son beat. Jake watches his dad soak it in.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
From that moment on I saw John
Doyle a little differently. He was
more than just a guy who hated
traffic and could never quite
finish the kitchen. He was a
magician. He was a hero. He was my
dad.

JOHN DOYLE
Come on. It's getting late. We
don't want to hit the traffic.

Jake climbs down the rope ladder after John. At the bottom of
the ladder, John grabs Jake and slings him over his shoulder.
He carries him through the snow toward the house.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)
Peacefully, my mind unfolded all
the tree fort adventures that
undoubtedly lay ahead. Ghost story
campouts by flashlight. Week long
snow ball battles. And round the
clock sky gazing for Soviet spy
planes.

JAKE
Hey dad.

JOHN DOYLE
Yeah?

JAKE
Merry Christmas.

JOHN DOYLE
Merry Christmas, Jake.

FADE OUT.