

IDOL

Based on a True Story

written by

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MOTOR / Happy Canvas
V. 7.1

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

CHYRON: 1993 HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA

WILLIAM (10), Asian, buck teeth. He is simple, but high functioning, and a look in his eye reveals, he may not be like others. Large headphones cover his ears as an UPBEAT, CATCHY dance tune plays.

MUSIC CUE: "WO AI ICHI BAN" by LEON LAI.

Through his headphones, the remix starts with fans cheering and a guitar solo. William sways his head to the tune. Then the song breaks and William pauses with his arms ready.

LEON LAI (THROUGH HEADPHONES)
STANDBY FOR ACTION

The beat starts and William breaks into a step-dance with the intense rhythm.

For a taste of the beat break, listen to the song here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbjy0CwkF00&list=RDxbjy0CwkF00&start_radio=1

LEON LAI (THROUGH HEADPHONES) (CONT'D)
想不到看着你 我像有个梦
一切停止在考慮
不管天已黑 不管心已累
或是有罪

William does a sort of lizard-walk with his arms and legs. We see William's lips moving to the song, but only hear Leon Lai's voice.

LEON LAI (THROUGH HEADPHONES) (CONT'D)
估不到 远地里
告别了以后
竟再度跟你相聚
忐忑的我心 丝丝的畏惧

He shakes his herky-jerky hips and points expressively. William leaps onto the jungle gym and holds on with one hand while singing. (Think Gene Kelly, singing in the rain, but to dance music.)

LEON LAI (THROUGH HEADPHONES) (CONT'D)
默默爱谁
不知不觉中 又再想
你是动人的伴侣
若这刻匆匆告吹
谁愿意一生都空虚

He twirls around the pole and jumps off. William sings, looking up into the heavens, with such joy on his face.

WILLIAM
OH MY LOVE YOU'RE ICHI BAN
 无论你跟我离开远近
 其实我全部爱已经奔向你

STUDENTS look at one another in the judgy way kids do. William doesn't notice and continues his part-kung-fu fighting, part-sexy-boyband gyrate. Some snicker quietly at him, others point and laugh out loud.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE
OH MY LOVE YOU'RE ICHI BAN
 如令我一再狂想放任
 彷似重温梦的世界
GOODBYE LONELINESS

Suddenly, a FIST comes rushing toward William's FACE and makes HARD CONTACT with his right eye. The fist belongs to ANGRY WHITE KID (10). William dizzily tips over, onto the gravel.

ANGRY WHITE KID
 Are you retarded? No one wants to
 hear you sing.

**NOTE TO READER: All *italics* will be spoken in Cantonese.

WILLIAM
Help! I think I've gone blind.

ANGRY WHITE KID
 You're in America. Speak English.

WILLIAM
Why me? I didn't do anything wrong to you.

ANGRY WHITE KID
 There's something wrong with you.

William rolls on the floor, cradles his puffy eye, LOOKING UP at the bully and his friends laughing, LOOKING DOWN ON HIM.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - LATER

William, innocent and expressionless, sits in between his MOM (30's) short Asian perm, fully made up face, wearing a dim sum restaurant uniform, and DAD (30's) button down under a conservative vest. Mom yells in Cantonese at the stoic PRINCIPAL (50's) while Dad translates in broken English.

MOM

What?! How can you only give that boy a three-day suspension?! That is woefully inadequate. What if my son had hit him back? Would you only give him a three-day suspension?! You're an idiot!

DAD

We do not think three-day suspension is enough punish.

PRINCIPAL

Tell your wife, if she doesn't like it, she can call the police.

Mom's jaw drops, fury in her eyes.

DAD

She understood.

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT - DAY

CHYRON: 2003 LOS ANGELES

William (now 21), thick accent, unlocks the door and carries his travel bag into a cramped, never-renovated Van Nuys apartment.

WILLIAM

Hello?

A DING from the small galley kitchen.

MOM (O.S.)

William! There's leftovers from work in the oven, can you take it out?

WILLIAM

Oh, what did you bring home today?

MOM

The boss gave us duck and char siu.

William walks through the modest living room with worn furniture and a boxy TV that hasn't moved since the early 90's. A wooden partition makes the room half it's original size. Through the make-shift door, a single bed and dresser comprises William's bedroom.

Dad faces one way scrolling through pictures of pretty Asian girls on a dating site called 2 Red Beans on a PC computer. Mom sits facing a mirror, putting rollers into her hair. Fox News blares on the TV.

MOM'S SISTER (THROUGH SPEAKER PHONE)
*You move all the way to the USA and
 you still have to perm your own
 hair? What kind of American Dream
 is that?*

MOM
*Oh! Well... I don't have to, I
 choose to.*

MOM'S SISTER (THROUGH SPEAKER PHONE)
*Well sister, someday your son will
 be as successful as mine and you'll
 be able to get a professional to do
 your hair.*

MOM
*Ah, the oven just went off, I have
 to get the duck out before it
 burns.*

Mom hangs up, affected by the judgment.

DAD
*Your sister is just jealous because
 she's never been to America.*

Mom stares into the mirror and continues to roll her hair. William walks through.

MOM
*I wish we lived in a Chinese
 community. No one here knows how to
 do Asian hair.*

DAD
*One day, darling, I'll be able to
 afford to move us out to San
 Gabriel Valley.*

MOM
*Ha, I'm relying on William for that
 now.*

Dad has no answer and turns back to his computer. Through the opening, William uses two dish cloths to take the hot pan out. He almost drops the food.

DAD'S COMPUTER-- He types: I'm 21. I am on my way to becoming a successful civil engineer at the #1 program in the USA. How about you?

The girl answers: I just graduated from UC Santa Cruz in marine biology.

DAD

Hey William, come over and talk to this girl I find for you.

William walks into the living room. Dad minimizes the picture of the girl to reveal William's profile.

WILLIAM

Dad, you shouldn't pretend to be me.

DAD

Nothing I write about you is not true.

WILLIAM

But there's this girl at school...

William pulls out an envelope from his bag. It has already been opened.

NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)

Michael Chang, the youngest male tennis player in history to win the Grand Slam at age 17, has retired from professional touring. He won a total of 34 top-level professional singles titles.

MOM

Wahh, his parents must be so proud of him. He became a big somebody when he was still a teenager!

WILLIAM

Mom...

MOM

William, when is it going to be your turn?

INT. PARENTS' HOUSE | WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - LATER

There's only enough room between his bed and the partition to walk, and one dresser with just enough room to pull the drawers out. William sits on his bed, staring at a piece of paper with the Berkeley letterhead. It states William Hung. Civil Engineering. Academic Probation.

Through the thin plywood wall, he listens to Mom and Dad yelling.

MOM (O.S.)

A "D"! A "D"! I think I am the first Asian parent to ever see a failing grade on a piece of paper!

DAD (O.S.)

Come on now, don't be dramatic.

William face shows his guilt. He pulls his Pokemon comforter over his knees as he watches his parents fight.

MOM (O.S.)

Don't accuse me of being dramatic. Getting into a good College was the reason we even came to America and now our son is failing out of school!

DAD (O.S.)

Probation means that he still can raise his grades up and continue studying. It's not so big a deal.

William sighs and puts the letter back in it's envelope.

MOM (O.S.)

Probation means he could lose his chance to keep studying! If he doesn't graduate, he will be a nobody. I don't want my son to be a nobody.

William blinks as he registers this comment.

He puts on headphones, which are connected to a Discman, over his ears. The voices are muffled under the music.

MUSIC CUE: "RIGHT HERE WAITING" BY RICHARD MARX

INSTRUMENTALS PLAY...

MOM (CONT'D)

This is your fault, you know?

THE CAMERA explores William's room. A lunchbox with Ricky Martin's face, certificates state he has placed fourth in the Sun Valley Math Competition,

DAD (O.S.)
How is this my fault?

Tenth in a Science Bowl LADWP Trivia Contest.

MOM (O.S.)
You encourage him to play video games and now look at where he is.

Sixth in the Blockbuster Donkey Kong Country Competition.

RICHARD MARX (V.O.)
OCEANS APART DAY AFTER DAY
AND I SLOWLY GO INSANE
I HEAR YOUR VOICE ON THE LINE
BUT IT DOESN'T STOP THE PAIN

INT. BUS - DAY

Rain hits the window that William leans his head against. He has headphones on. Through the window, we see William's lips moving to the words, but only hear Richard Marx's voice.

RICHARD MARX
IF I SEE YOU NEXT TO NEVER
HOW CAN WE SAY FOREVER

Inside the bus, William doesn't realize he's singing out loud. He's off key, but expressive.

WILLIAM
WHEREVER YOU GO
WHATEVER YOU DO
I WILL BE RIGHT HERE WAITING FOR
YOU

People look at him weird, but he's in his own world.

EXT. CAMPUS FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The rain continues to pelt as William exits the bus and pulls the drawstrings of his blue rain jacket tight around his face. He walks by the football stadium where the cheerleaders are practicing. Through the fence, he watches one girl in particular-- STEPHANIE (21), a Caucasian brunette, fit and pretty, in a cheerleader uniform. He sees her movements in SLOW-MO, as her hair whips around, the rain droplets create a circle around her like an angelic halo.

RICHARD MARX (V.O.)
WHATEVER IT TAKES
OR HOW MY HEART BREAKS
I WILL BE RIGHT HERE WAITING FOR
YOU

EXT. CAMPUS FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

It has stopped raining. Stephanie exits the field and looks in William's direction. She smiles and waves. William's face lights up. He shakes his hand to wave back.

Stephanie walks toward him. William sucks in a breath.

And then she walks past him. William turns to see her greet her PRETTY GIRL FRIENDS. William watches them walk away.

END MUSIC CUE

INT. CIVIL ENGINEERING CLASS - DAY

William blends into a sea of students in a sloped lecture hall. KEVIN (21), Asian-American, no accent, skinny and naturally nerdy-looking sits beside him. PROFESSOR LIU (50s) Asian, bounces with a lively pep. William's hand is up high, eager, along with quite a few other students.

PROFESSOR LIU
...Jason. Yes. I definitely want
you on my team. Karen, you too.
Emily. Where are my A- to A+
students from last year?

Kevin pulls out a box of Reese's Pieces and offers some to William.

WILLIAM
Not now, Kevin.

Professor Liu squints into the crowd and lasers onto one student.

PROFESSOR LIU
Carmella?

STUDENT #1
Sir, I can't commit to any more
extra curriculars right now. Sorry.

KEVIN
Why do you even bother?

PROFESSOR LIU

Leon. And... I need one more person. To round out our winning Concrete Canoe team and take back the cup.

William perks up with his hand reaching to the sky. Professor Liu scans the lecture hall. William tries to make eye contact with him: I'm right here! Professor Liu raises his arm to point. It aims toward William, but then veers off to the left.

PROFESSOR LIU (CONT'D)

Emily. Perfect. We have our team.

William drops his hand and sighs. Invisible. He takes the box from Kevin and eats the candy.

INT. CAMPUS CLUB - NIGHT

William and Kevin stand by the bar. Students dance on the dark dance floor.

MUSIC CUE: "HEY YA!" BY OUTKAST

WILLIAM

Oh my god! I love this song. Kevin, dance with me.

KEVIN

Oh no no no.

William gets up and pulls Kevin.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Not me, not me, I don't dance. No.

WILLIAM

Come on, come on.

William puts his arms up and dances.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

HEEEEEEY YA, HEY YA.

William tries to wave Kevin over to dance with him.

Kevin's attention gets pulled away by an ASIAN GIRL, curled tinted brown hair, couldn't gain weight even if she ate a dozen donuts. Kevin gathers his guts and walks over to talk to her. Kevin looks over her shoulder at William, who encourages him with a smile. William keeps dancing oblivious to how people are avoiding him.

INT. STUDENT UNION - DAY

Filled with students milling about and eating lunch, William orders at a fast food staple in the food court.

WILLIAM
One Coke please.

The bartender fills a cup as William pays in cash.

William sits at a table by himself. He looks at his drink. STUDENT approaches.

MALE STUDENT
Excuse me.

William's head pops up.

WILLIAM
Yes?

MALE STUDENT
Can I take this chair?

WILLIAM
Oh, ah, no one is using it.

The student moves the chair to join another table and William sits at his table with no other chairs.

Stephanie walks by. William's head turns and slight smile forms as he watches her pass. He waves slightly.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Hiiiii.

Stephanie makes eye contact and stutters between pausing and continuing.

STEPHANIE
(being polite)
Hey.

She continues to the closest wall and tapes up a piece of paper. William stands up, holding his coke.

WILLIAM
How are you?

STEPHANIE
Fine.

Her body language shows she wants to leave, but is struggling to put up the poster.

William looks at it and it has a picture of a microphone and states SIGN UP FOR CLARK KERR TALENT SHOW.

WILLIAM

Are you going to be in the talent show?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, that's why I'm organizing it.

WILLIAM

My mom got me into singing. We did Karaoke together. In Hong Kong. She would take me at lunchtime. On weekends. But we haven't done that in a long time.

STEPHANIE

Mm-hmm.

She only needs to tape one more corner.

WILLIAM

I loved The Four Heavenly Kings: Leon Lai, Jacky Cheung, Aaron Kwok, and Andy Lau. They were the most popular singers in Hong Kong at the time. But I was only comfortable singing Leon Lai, so I spent a lot of time learning his lyrics.

STEPHANIE

I gotta go.

She scurries away. William stares at the poster. An idea forms in his head.

He walks back to his seat to find...

MEI LING (21) Asian, awkward, sitting in his seat. Mei Ling naturally looks nerdy with her striped shirt and glasses that she actually needs, and even the rebellious dyed red stripe in her hair can't save her from her geekdom. Beside her open laptop, is a mini robotic machine on wheels.

WILLIAM

Oh, ah-- excuse me. You took my seat.

MEI LING

No, this table was empty.

Mei Ling goes back to typing a command, pressing enter and watching the robot move.

WILLIAM

But ah, I was sitting there just
thirty-seven seconds ago.

MEI LING

I guess I could find another table.

WILLIAM

No no no no no, I will find another
seat.

Mei Ling nods and William walks away. Mei Ling types another command and the robot performs the two moves in sequence.

Moments later, William reappears, carrying a chair. He plops it down at the table and sits across from Mei Ling.

MEI LING

Ahhhh....

WILLIAM

I'm William.

William puts out his hand, but Mei Ling does not shake it.

MEI LING

I didn't invite you to join me.

WILLIAM

Well, technically, you are the one
who was not invited to join.

Mei Ling stands her ground. She types, presses enter and the robot makes three moves. William watches her.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I like Ricky Martin too.

MEI LING

Huh?

William points to a sticker of Ricky Martin on her laptop.

WILLIAM

His tunes are catchy. They don't
sound like the other music that's
out there right now.

MEI LING

(trying to get rid of him)
Were you waiting for someone?

WILLIAM

Oh, no, not really.

William points to the robot.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Can I play?

MEI LING
It's not a toy.

WILLIAM
It looks fun.

MEI LING
You don't really seem to be worried
about being liked, do you?

William shrugs.

WILLIAM
I got bullied by kids when I was
younger. It made it hard for me to
trust any of my classmates. If I
learned anything from that time, it
was that not everyone you meet is
going to like you, and sometimes
for no good reason. But you can't
let it stop you. So I made friends
with my teachers and adults
instead.

MEI LING
That's kinda profound. And baffling
at the same time.

WILLIAM
(shrugs)
Just being honest.

Mei Ling warms.

MEI LING
I'm Mei Ling.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER

Bunk bed, two desks, mini fridge. William's side is neatly organized with one Ricky Martin poster on his wall. Kevin's side is littered with protein powder and posters of pretty Asian girls, but also action figures and Pokemon cards.

William enters to find Kevin reading a workout magazine on the top bunk.

WILLIAM

Kevin, oh my goodness. I talked to someone today.

KEVIN

Who?

William places his yellow backpack on the floor.

WILLIAM

Stephanie, the cheerleader!

KEVIN

Dude, girls like that don't like guys like us.

WILLIAM

What? Nerds?

KEVIN

No. Listen, Asian girls don't even choose Asian guys, she's never going to go for you.

WILLIAM

Oh, she's not like that. I think we connected over our shared love for music.

KEVIN

Just face it William, we're going to be celibate until we're either rich or famous. At least, in a few years, we will be making six figures as engineers.

INT. CLARK KERR STAGE - NIGHT

A large room, filled with folding chairs that face a slightly raised platform. William sits in the front row of a crowd of over one hundred people. He watches the stage intently. Stephanie sings AVRIL LAVIGNE. She is decently good, but the audience is still.

STEPHANIE

ALL THIS TIME YOU WERE PRETENDING
SO MUCH FOR MY HAPPY ENDING
OH, OH, OH, OH, OH
SO MUCH FOR MY HAPPY ENDING

She finishes and the audience claps.

The HOST, who has no inhibitions, tries to rile up the crowd.

HOST

Alright y'all! This has been a riveting night. You all look like wet toilet paper, though. Come on!

The crowd gives a few obligatory woots. She looks at William, a little concerned.

HOST (CONT'D)

And our last contestant, but let's hope not least, please welcome William to the stage!

The audience claps. William quickly walks up the stairs and motions to someone offstage to hit it. The Host watches, unsure.

MUSIC CUE: "SHAKE YOUR BON BON" BY RICKY MARTIN

A karaoke instrumental version plays. William bops his head to the music, readying himself.

BACKGROUND SINGERS (THROUGH SPEAKERS)

SHAKE YOUR BON-BON
SHAKE YOUR BON-BON
SHAKE YOUR BON-BON

William raises his hand and sweeps it across his body as he sings. He looks directly at Stephanie and acts as confident as a suave Asian Elvis.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'M A DESPERADO
UNDERNEATH YOUR WINDOW

The audience starts to sit up in their chairs.

WILLIAM (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I SEE YOUR SILHOUETTE
ARE YOU MY JULIET?
I FEEL A MAD CONNECTION WITH YOUR
BODY

We stay with their reactions. The audience is grooving with William. Smiles emerge on their faces. Some are laughing. Kevin sees the laughing and winces.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

SHAKE YOUR BON-BON
SHAKE YOUR BON-BON
SHAKE YOUR BON-BON

We don't see William's dance, but the crowd goes crazy, clapping, cheering, waving their arms imitating him. Stephanie watches the reaction, shocked and insulted.

The audience is whipped up, enjoying themselves.

William finishes the song and everyone jumps to their feet for a STANDING OVATION! A big smile plasters itself on his face as he bows again and again.

The audience is STILL CHEERING! Kevin looks around, a concerned look on his face. William returns to his seat beside Kevin, who shrinks.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
That was pretty cool huh?

Kevin flips his hood up and tries not to be identified talking to him.

KEVIN
Oh man.

The volume dies down. William watches the Host consult with the judges. She then runs onto the stage.

HOST
Alright, I think we have it folks.
It's unanimous, the winner of this
year's Clark Kerr Talent
Competition is ...

The anticipation is palpable. William looks hopeful.

HOST (CONT'D)
William Hung y'all!

William jumps with his arms in the air! Kevin's head whips around: Really? Stephanie's jaw drops: WTF?!

William high fives people as he runs up to the stage.

The Host presents him with a DVD Player and he holds it over his head like a champion. He looks into the audience and sees Mei Ling cheering for him.

INT. AUDITORIUM HALLWAY - LATER

William walks through the crowd and everyone gives him high fives and pats him on the back.

STUDENT #1
That was awesome!

WILLIAM

Thank you.

Kevin stands back and watches William. He turns and sees people snickering.

STUDENT #2

Can you perform that every night
please?

WILLIAM

Yeah sure!

Student #3 walks up to Kevin.

STUDENT #3

Kev, you gonna shake your bon bon
next?

KEVIN

I'm not - no man-

STUDENT #3

You guys could shake your little
dong dongs together.

Student #3 laughs and walks away, but Kevin is frozen by this comment.

CUTE ASIAN GIRL (21), with big Anime eyes, steps up to Kevin.

CUTE ASIAN GIRL

I didn't know your roommate was
such a joker.

KEVIN

Uh, oh yeah, he's always just
trying to make people laugh.

PRETTY ASIAN GIRL

We're going to the Bear's
Lair. You should ask him to come.

KEVIN

Ah, um, he's got something to do
after this, so he has to leave
soon.

PRETTY ASIAN GIRL

Okay, well are you coming?

Kevin looks at the girl in front of him and William in the background, who is just beaming. Kevin smiles at the girl and nods his head.

KEVIN
Yeah, let's go.

Kevin follows her out the door.

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

William walks alone, holding his DVD Player. He opens it and pulls it out to check it. Mei Ling approaches him.

MEI LING
William?

He looks up and sees a familiar red-striped ponytail.

WILLIAM
Mei Ling?

MEI LING
I saw you perform tonight.

WILLIAM
Oh thank you.

MEI LING
It wasn't a compliment.

William giggles. Mei Ling studies him: Was that performance in earnest?

WILLIAM
Okay.

MEI LING
So... what're you gonna watch?

WILLIAM
Oh, I'm going to give it to my mom.
She likes to keep these stickers on
to make things look new for longer.
She says it's free dust protection.

William shows her the blue film on the player.

MEI LING
My mom does that too! Even though
it's peeling off the microwave, she
still keeps it on!

William's attention is caught by some pretty girls and he doesn't hide his head turning.

MEI LING (CONT'D)

I could never dance like that in front of people. I would die of embarrassment.

WILLIAM

You can die of many things, but it is not possible to die of embarrassment.

MEI LING

Well I could.

WILLIAM

Maybe if you fall while dancing you could.

MEI LING

I'm so terrible that I would fall. And that would be so embarrassing that I would double die.

WILLIAM

But do you like dancing?

MEI LING

Of course I do.

WILLIAM

Well, maybe if you danced more, you wouldn't be so terrible at it.

Mei Ling laughs.

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT | KITCHEN - DAY

Mom, wearing her restaurant uniform, carefully peels the scotch tape off Christmas wrapping paper on a gift, trying not to tear it. William watches expectantly.

MOM

It's not even that close to Christmas.

WILLIAM

It was the only wrapping paper I could find in your closet.

MOM

You know, it's a waste to use wrapping paper unless you are giving a gift to someone outside of the family.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

*Then you want to make it look good.
Otherwise, you wrap something that
I just tear off and throw away.
Waste of money.*

WILLIAM

(proud)

*I won it at a talent contest! I
studied Ricky Martin's dance moves
and the audience loved my singing.*

MOM

*You won because all the good
singers are studying for their
exams. And they are going to get
their degrees and good jobs and get
married and buy their parents nice
house in San Gabriel Valley.*

Her comments just roll off William's back. She finally succeeds in preserving the wrapping paper and removing the gift. Mom pulls out the DVD Player.

MOM (CONT'D)

What is this?

WILLIAM

*It's to play your Chinese movies
on.*

MOM

*But they are all on video cassette,
why didn't you get me a VHS?*

WILLIAM

*DVD is better quality. It's the
popular thing now.*

MOM

*Can I record my Chinese soap operas
on it?*

WILLIAM

No.

MOM

*Then better quality doesn't matter
if I can't watch what I like.*

WILLIAM

*Let me plug it into the TV and show
you.*

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT | LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

William heads towards the TV, which is on. Dad sits on the couch, working on a jewelry mold. Mom carefully rolls up the wrapping paper for reuse.

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS HOST (ON TV)

Paris Hilton, the 22-year-old socialite has sued a Panama-based internet company for \$30 million, claiming that it illegally Distributed a now-infamous tape of her having sex with an ex-boyfriend. Hilton, whose grandfather founded the Hilton Hotel chain, asserts...

MOM

These Americans don't know how save face. They don't care if they do something that makes them look bad.

DAD

That is how you get famous in the US, you don't need to be talented to be a celebrity, just outrageous.

MOM

Hey family must be so ashamed. I can't think of that hotel now without thinking of her naked.

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS HOST (ON TV)

Are you the next American Idol? Do you want to sing in front of Simon Cowell and hear what he thinks?

William pops out and moves in front of the TV, mesmerized.

ENTERTAINMENT NEWS HOST (ON TV) (CONT'D)

If you think you have a chance to be season three's winner, the next audition is in San Francisco at Pac Bell Park. Gates open at 7am on Tuesday Come early and we might see you in Hollywood!

William looks at his mom, who rubs tiger balm on her sore feet. He gets that look in his eyes.

SHOT OF Pac Bell Park gates On TV.

TRANSITION TO:

EXT. PAC BELL PARK - MORNING

Pac Bell Park Gates in real life. Tilt down to reveal William, both thumbs under his yellow backpack straps, looking up at the gates. A BUS with an American Idol side panel swipes by revealing a THOUSAND PEOPLE in a huge line organized by SECURITY GUARDS.

William puts his head down and walks and walks to find the end of the line. He spots Stephanie and her TWO CHEERLEADER FRIENDS in line and approaches.

WILLIAM

Hi Stephanie-- good morning. You must be nervous since I beat you at the talent show. Don't be, there's room for both of us to make it to Hollywood.

Stephanie recoils.

STEPHANIE

Um, yeah, I have to practice my song.

WILLIAM

Okay, good luck.

STEPHANIE

Luck has nothing to do with it.

WILLIAM

Well, I think you're really talented.

Stephanie scoffs: What do you know about talent?

EXT. PAC BELL PARK - MOMENTS LATER

William gets into line and looks around. A line continues to form behind him. People sit. William stands. Many practice their tunes in a cacophony of sounds. William stays silent.

EXT. FIELD - HOURS LATER

William is almost at the front of the line. He watches Stephanie audition from afar.

THREE JUDGES sitting behind a fold-out table.

STEPHANIE
 ALL BY MYSELF
 DON'T WANNA BE
 ALL BY MY--

JUDGE #1 puts up a hand and stops her.

JUDGE #1
 We've heard enough thank you.

STEPHANIE
 But I can do it! There are stars
 out there that you put synthesizers
 on them and get them a
 choreographer! I can do that! Just
 give me a chance!

Judge #2 looks at the producers who are shaking their heads
 and giving the "Let's move on" signal.

JUDGE #2
 Thank you for coming out.

STEPHANIE
 Please, I have another song, I
 should have done that one. Please
 just a few notes.

JUDGE #3
 Thank you. Who's next?

EXT. FIELD - EVEN LATER

Finally William is on deck. A BURLY MUSCULAR MAN steps up.

BURLY MUSCULAR MAN
 ...SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW
 WAY UP HIGH
 THERE'S A LAND THAT I HEARD OF
 ONCE IN A LULLABY

JUDGE #1
 Thank you. Next.

BURLY MUSCULAR MAN
 But, let me continue. It gets
 better.

JUDGE #2
 No thank you. Next please.

William watches him start to sing again.

BURLY MUSCULAR MAN
SOMEWHERE OVER THE--

JUDGE #3
Sir, we've already told you to
stop.

BURLY MUSCULAR MAN
--RAINBOW
BLUEBIRDS FLY

JUDGE #1
Security.

BURLY MUSCULAR MAN
AND THE DREAMS THAT YOU DREAM OF
DREAMS REALLY DO COME TRUE

The judge motions and a just-as-burly muscular security guard drags him off. The man keeps singing.

BURLY MUSCULAR MAN (CONT'D)
SOMEDAY, I WISH UPON A STAR
AND WAKE UP WHERE THE CLOUDS ARE...

JUDGE #1
Next!

Burly Muscular Man throws his water bottle at them.

BURLY MUSCULAR MAN
Fuck you guys. Who the hell are
you? You don't put yourself out
there and sing!

William steps up to the plate. He looks fearful, but hopeful.

JUDGE #1
Hi, what's your name?

WILLIAM
I'm William-- William Hung.

JUDGE #3
William, why did you come here
today?

WILLIAM
I want to make an impact on the
world.

The judges react, they haven't heard that answer before.

JUDGE #1

And what song are you going to sing
for us?

WILLIAM

Two Worlds by Phil Collins.

JUDGE #1

Why did you choose this song?

WILLIAM

Because I thought it could show off
my vocal range better. There are a
lot of ups and downs.

He uses his hand to emphasize the point. A judge smirks.

JUDGE #2

Alright then, off you go.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

--and I really like the
jungle theme.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Okay, um, okay.

PUT YOUR FAITH IN WHAT YOU MOST

BELIEVE IN

TWO WORLDS, ONE FAMILY

TRUST YOUR HEART

He sings with gusto and arm movements. He moves in a clearly rehearsed and remembered series of movements that is something meant to resemble dance, but widely misses the mark. The judges look at each other: is this guy for real?

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

LET FATE DECIDE

TO GUIDE THESE LIES WE SEE

A PARADISE UNTOUCHED BY MAN

WITHIN THIS WORLDS BLESSED WITH

LOVE

A SIMPLE LIFE, THEY LIVE IN PEACE

SOFTLY TREAD THE SAND BELOW YOUR

FEET NOW

TWO WORLDS, ONE FAMILY

TRUST YOUR HEART

LET FATE DECIDE...

William gets through a whole minute of his song. Judge #1 and #2 wipe the amusement off their faces and start to shake their heads, when Judge #3 (who turns out to be MEGAN WOLFLICK, producer on American Idol) stands up and smiles.

MEGAN

WOW, thank you so much. William,
come step aside with me.

WILLIAM

Uh okay.

Megan leads William to a corner while the NEXT PERSON starts singing.

MEGAN

Hi William, I'm Megan.

WILLIAM

Hi Megan.

MEGAN

So William, what did you think of your performance?

WILLIAM

I thought it went pretty well.

MEGAN

How do you feel right now?

WILLIAM

Pretty-- pretty good, I guess.

MEGAN

Do you have any other songs in your repertoire?

WILLIAM

I recently won a talent competition at my school singing Ricky Martin. People really loved it. I got a standing ovation!

MEGAN

What's your favorite Ricky Martin song?

WILLIAM

Oh... I think it has to be... She Bangs.

A Grinch smile slowly grows on Megan's lips. William doesn't read this.

MEGAN

William, I'm going to let you through. Here's your orange ticket.

WILLIAM

What?

Meagan nods. William's body shakes. The hugest smile swipes across his face.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
REALLY?! You think I'm worthy of
moving forward?!

William bounces with excitement. His breath shortens and he shakes his hands.

MEGAN
I want you to dress a lot better
for tomorrow and really take this
seriously. And I want you to sing
She Bangs. Come to the Radisson
hotel at 9am.

William shakes her hand vigorously.

WILLIAM
Megan, I am so grateful. Thank you-
- for believing in me. I'll
definitely do what you said--
Tomorrow-- This is incredible!

MEGAN
Great job William.

William punches his fist in the air.

WILLIAM
YES!

Meagan snickers to herself as William walks away, oblivious.

EXT. STADIUM GROUNDS - LATER

William sees people, nervously waiting for their turn. Stephanie cries and is being consoled by her cheerleader girlfriends. He humbly hides the orange ticket in his backpack and wipes the smile off his face. He walks with his head down.

INT. DORM - NIGHT

William digs through his closet pulling out several colorful shirts and considering them seriously. Finally he settles on a blue Hawaiian shirt and holds it up to his body, checking himself out in the mirror. He nods and smiles at the choice.

FOX NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
American Idol hopefuls today were
whittled down from 3000 people.
Only 180 people received the
coveted orange ticket to make to
the next round.

A proud smile.

William presses a button on his computer and a video of Ricky Martin in concert plays. He studies the moves. He mimics the arm movements, and mutters the lyrics.

Kevin enters, wearing a basketball jersey. He grabs his knapsack and slings it over his shoulder.

KEVIN
Are you coming to Pokemon tonight?

WILLIAM
I can't, I have to practice. I made
it to the next round of American
Idol.

KEVIN
Oh right. And I just made starting
point guard for the Golden State
Warriors.

Kevin walks back out.

WILLIAM
Kevin, that is excellent! Your hard
work and basketball practice is
paying off.

INT. RADISSION HALLWAY - DAY

William sits in a chair amongst other anxious AMERICAN IDOL HOPEFULS. Tension and nerves float in the air. William longingly watches the camera crew and RYAN SEACREST interviewing other contestants.

They turn and start heading toward William. William becomes excited as they approach.

RYAN SEACREST
Hi, nice to see you.

William shakes his hand but no signs of recognition.

WILLIAM
What's your name?

RYAN SEACREST
(trying to keep a straight
face)
My name is Ryan. Seacrest?

WILLIAM
Oh, nice to meet you.

William immediately bends down and picks something off the floor. Ryan looks bewildered.

RYAN SEACREST
Nice to meet you buddy. Can you
tell us a little about yourself?

WILLIAM
I grew up in Los Angeles,
California--ah, originally born
from Hong Kong, so I've been in
United States for ten years. It's
kind of odd, like why I chose to
even audition in the first place
because um-- my major is civil
engineering, which is not totally
not related to music. But um-- I
really like music. I want to make
music my living.

RYAN SEACREST
And what are you going to sing
today?

WILLIAM
I'm singing Ricky Martin's She
Bangs.

RYAN SEACREST
She Bangs.

WILLIAM
Yes, it's a good song, so but um--
so it's either I really do well by
lighting up the stage. Or I don't.

Ryan Seacrest looks at the camera and is amused by William.
William continues to smile into the camera.

INT. RADISSON SMALL HALLWAY - LATER

William stares at closed double doors. He closes his eyes and calms himself.

WILLIAM

Okay William. You can do this.

The door opens and ASSISTANT with a headset, ushers him in.

ASSISTANT

You ready?

William takes a deep breath.

WILLIAM

Yes, I'm ready.

INT. RADISSON BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

William walks around a curtain and sees a table lined with coca-cola branded cups in front of an American Idol backdrop. Here he faces SIMON COWELL, PAULA ABDUL and RANDY JACKSON.

PAULA ABDUL

Hello.

WILLIAM

Hi.

PAULA ABDUL

How are you?

William marches onto a portable dance floor and makes a ninety degree turn as if he's doing a marching band routine.

WILLIAM

Oh great! Thank you. It's great to see you guys.

His stance is wide, like a gladiator.

PAULA ABDUL

It's great for us to be seen by you.

RANDY JACKSON

I like that Paula.

SIMON COWELL

William, why are you here?

WILLIAM

Um, I'm here to um, to sing to America. To sing for America.

PAULA ABDUL

What?

WILLIAM

Okay, alright, let's try again. I'm here for opportunity to sing to America.

PAULA ABDUL

Do you think you can be the next-

WILLIAM

American Idol.

PAULA ABDUL

(coddling him)

Absolutely.

SIMON COWELL

Why?

WILLIAM

Because I'm singing from my heart. I may not be the best singer ah, um-- around the world but I ah-- sing from my heart and I put every bit of energy into it.

RANDY JACKSON

William, what's your last name?

WILLIAM

Hung. H-U-N-G.

RANDY JACKSON

Hung.

Randy giggles at the name.

PAULA ABDUL

Do you have brothers and sisters?

WILLIAM

No I don't, I'm the only child.

PAULA ABDUL

Do your parents tell you you have a great voice?

WILLIAM

Um um no-- they don't realize that actually.

PAULA ABDUL

They don't realize-

WILLIAM

No because um-- when I was young my parents ahh-- like to sing karaoke. I was there with them and sang with them as a hobby.

PAULA ABDUL

And what did they do when you sang with them?

WILLIAM

What did they do when I sing with them? Um they thought I'm okay. They thought-- they thought I have I have a chance of you know, making it to the next level.

PAULA ABDUL

Great, are they excited for you that you're here?

WILLIAM

Actually, they would they would not like it if they hear that um you know I'm missing school two days in a row.

SIMON COWELL

They wouldn't be happy if you got through.

WILLIAM

No, they would be happy if I go through. They wouldn't be happy if I don't go through.

Everyone laughs heartily.

PAULA ABDUL

If you miss two days of school.

WILLIAM

Yes, that's a lot, that's a big sacrifice. But hey I love singing. I love singing, I prefer singing a lot, over a lot of all activities.

SIMON COWELL

Alright William, what are you going to sing?

WILLIAM

I would like to sing Ricky Martin's She Bangs. I hope you all enjoy it.

RANDY JACKSON

Okay. Let's go.

Simon already has his head in his hands.

WILLIAM

Alright.

TALK TO ME

TELL ME YOUR NAME

YOU BLOW ME OFF LIKE IT'S ALL THE
SAME...

William shakes his hips in his now-iconic choreographed dance. Randy chortles, hiding his face behind a piece of paper. Paula grooves encouragingly and Simon's forehead has not been removed from his hand.

YOU CAN WATCH THE SHORTENED AUDITION HERE:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0d5eP0wWLQY>

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

...SHE WALKS LIKE SHE TALKS
 AND SHE TALKS LIKE SHE WALKS
 AND SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS
 OH BABY
 WHEN SHE MOVES, SHE MOVES
 I GO CRAZY
 'CAUSE SHE LOOKS LIKE A FLOWER BUT
 SHE STINGS LIKE A BEE
 LIKE EVERY GIRL IN HISTORY
 SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS

SIMON COWELL

Thank you.

(More forceful)

Thank you.

William stops singing and freezes, bracing himself for commentary. His expectant face stares at the judges.

PAULA ABDUL

William, you did put everything you had into that. You did and I love that.

William doesn't move, but you can feel the disappointment radiating from his body. Randy finally lets out an audible laugh.

SIMON COWELL

Well I didn't. William it's one of actually the worst auditions we've had this year, if I'm being honest.

Paula whines like a sad puppy dog. William nods in understanding.

SIMON COWELL (CONT'D)
Seriously, I mean, everything about
it was grotesque.

PAULA ABDUL RANDY JACKSON
Oh stop. Oh, not grotesque.

SIMON COWELL
It was!

PAULA ABDUL
Stop it!

SIMON COWELL
You can't sing, you can't dance. So
what do you want me to say?

WILLIAM
Um, I already gave my best and
there's-- I have no regrets at all.

RANDY JACKSON
That's good. Now that's good.

PAULA ABDUL
Good for you. That's excellent
William. That's the best attitude
yet. Alright so Randy yes or no?

RANDY JACKSON
No William, you're not, you're not
good enough for this dude. But at
least you came here, you had a good
time, you had fun right?

WILLIAM
(dejected)
Yes.

RANDY JACKSON
You did your thing baby.

PAULA ABDUL
And we had so much fun watching
you. Thank you so much for coming
down.

WILLIAM
(quietly)
Thank you. Thank you.

SIMON COWELL

Go and do some - William, go and do some homework.

WILLIAM

Okay. I'll continue working on it.

PAULA ABDUL

We won't tell your parents that you missed two days of school.

WILLIAM

Yeah, no, you know I have no professional training of singing.

SIMON COWELL

No... well there's the surprise of the century.

PAULA ABDUL

William, you're the best, you're the best.

WILLIAM

Alright, thank you.

SIMON COWELL

But on a more serious note, you're not serious about this are you?

PAULA ABDUL

Yes he is, now Simon, stop it stop it-

WILLIAM

Wait a minute, I missed two days of school for this, it's a big sacrifice.

PAULA ABDUL

That's right!

Paula gives Simon the eye to stop talking and has her fists up to fight him if he doesn't.

WILLIAM

And I already work a lot, and I work very hard for this so, I already gave my best, I believe, at this point. I can do better. I know that.

Simon backs down.

SIMON COWELL

That's - that's for sure. Okay
William.

PAULA ABDUL

Thank you so much. Have a good one.

WILLIAM

Alright.

William turns and leaves. Paula threatens to hit Simon. Randy shakes his head and is still laughing.

INT. RADISSON LOBBY - DAY

A CONTESTANT hugs her family, cries and bounces around.

CONTESTANT

I'm going to Hollywood!!!!!!

William, dispirited, shoulders droopy, wearing his yellow backpack, walks out the door, back into his regular life.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

William, looking depressed, walks up a steep set of stairs that doesn't seem to end, in the opposite direction of the crowd. Like a fish swimming upstream, he zig-zags moving out of the way of everyone who doesn't change course for him.

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

CHYRON: January 2004

The famously familiar American Idol jingle plays on his TV. William opens the mini-microwave that sits on top of his mini-fridge and pulls out a bag of popcorn. He opens it and smells the steaming butter.

On the TV, he hears his own voice. He whips around and sees himself on screen! His audition plays.

WILLIAM

Whoa.

His eyes widen as he slowly loses grip of his popcorn bag.

WILLIAM (ON TV) (CONT'D)

SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS

William stares at the TV, face frozen in an expressionless shock.

The singing ends.

SIMON COWELL (ON TV)
You can't sing, you can't dance, so
what'd'ya want me to say?

Suddenly the door unlocks and Kevin rushes in, knocking William out of his trance.

KEVIN
Dude! You didn't tell me you were
going to be on American Idol!

WILLIAM
I did, you saw me practicing.

KEVIN
I thought you were kidding!
EVERYONE was watching it in the
common room.

Kevin winces in embarrassment for William.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry dude.

Kevin goes over to his friend and pats him on the back.

WILLIAM
Sorry for what? I did my best.
That's why they put me on TV.

Kevin gives him a funny look.

KEVIN
Don't worry, I'm sure it'll all
blow over soon.

WILLIAM
This is crazy! I can't believe I
was on TV!

INT. DORM ROOM - NEXT MORNING

William wakes up and gathers his toothbrush and toothpaste.

INT. DORM WASHROOM - LATER

William brushes his teeth, looking at himself in the mirror. DORMMATES walk in, wearing pajamas. William's eyes shift to see if they will say anything. They don't notice him. William then flosses.

INT. CAMPUS GROCERY STORE - DAY

William sees Mei Ling, on her cellphone, while placing cans into her shopping basket.

MEI LING

It's not good enough to qualify for Robotics North this year and I'd rather not show people at all than get--

William approaches.

WILLIAM

Mei Ling?

Mei Ling turns around.

MEI LING

William! I uh... saw you on TV last night. It was um...
(to person on phone)
I'll call you back.
(then to William)
I was very shocked.

She hangs up.

WILLIAM

You were shocked? I was the one who was shocked!

A SHOPPER beside him speaks softly.

SHOPPER

Excuse me.

WILLIAM

Oh, I'm sorry.

William moves to the side and continues talking to Mei Ling.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Of all the thousands and thousands of auditions, why did they choose to air me?

MEI LING
Well... they were... it was
because...

How can Mei Ling tell him?

SHOPPER
Excuse me.

William moves to the side again.

SHOPPER (CONT'D)
Are you William Hung?

William turns his head around.

WILLIAM
Yeeessss...?

SHOPPER
I loved your performance last
night! You're so awesome!

WILLIAM
Oh. Really?

Shopper nods.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Shopper smiles and turns and leaves. Mei Ling can't say
anything now.

INT. CIVIL ENGINEERING CLASS - DAY

William and Kevin sit together in the middle of the lecture
hall. Professor Liu enters, turns off the lights and turns on
the projector.

Suddenly, William's face with a photoshopped rose border
splashes onto the screen.

PROFESSOR LIU
Class, we have a celebrity amongst
us!

STUDENT #1
Oh my god, I saw his audition last
night!

STUDENT #2
He's in this class?

People start to notice him.

PROFESSOR LIU
William, why don't you stand up?

WILLIAM
(uncomfortable)
Oh, no, no.

PROFESSOR LIU
Come on, you're a big deal now.

Someone in the class starts clapping, others join in. Soon, the class is erupting with applause and William has no choice. He stands up and bows his head in each direction. Kevin doesn't look pleased.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

William sits at a table eating lunch with Mei Ling who in her excited and hopelessly nerdy way, describes the blueprints of a battle robot as she draws lines to illustrate her point.

MEI LING
...you can wire two servos to the same port and they'll both move identical to each other. Also you'll want to make sure you have servos that have metal gears, not plastic and that they have enough torque because if your opponent knocks you over, you want to make sure the lifting arm can lift you back up!

WILLIAM
So your robots battle. To the death?

MEI LING
Robots aren't alive, so they can't technically die.

WILLIAM
Neither are Pokemon, but you play until one is knocked out.

MEI LING
Yeah, it's not the same.

WILLIAM
You should apply to be on Battlebots.

MEI LING
The TV show?

WILLIAM
Yeah! It's the American Idol for robotics!

MEI LING
No way, I would ever show anyone my own designs. I just help the team with math calculations.

WILLIAM
I think you should build your own battlebot.

Mei Ling considers it for a split second and then shakes her head. STUDENT #3 interrupts.

STUDENT #3
Oh my god, you really do go to Berkeley!

William's laugh makes him sound uncomfortable.

CROSS FADE TO:

Another day in the cafeteria. A couple of students are around him. Mostly girls.

STUDENT #4
How did you get the idea to be so positive?

WILLIAM
What do you mean?

STUDENT #4
Usually people swear and throw water bottles at Simon.

WILLIAM
It wasn't an idea, I just spoke from my heart.

CROSSFADE TO:

STUDENT #5
I wish I had your courage and good outlook on life. If more people were like you, our world would be a better place.

WILLIAM

Oh thank you. Thank you.

STUDENT #5

Can I get your autograph?

Several students sit at his table. William signs the notebook thrust at him. When he's done, the girl gives him a hug. Kevin is off to the side, watching all this fanfare. Student #6 holds up her Moto Razr V3 phone with 1.3 megapixel camera.

STUDENT #6

Can I take a picture with you?

CROSSFADE TO:

William's table is full of people.

STUDENT #7

Dude, William, can you talk to my girlfriend?

Student #7 hands William his cell phone.

WILLIAM

Hi. Yes I am. I'm from American Idol. She bangs!

Student #7 stands awkwardly by as William makes his girlfriend laugh. William hands the phone back.

Stephanie approaches.

STEPHANIE

Hey William.

WILLIAM

You know my name.

STEPHANIE

Of course I do! We were in the American Idol line together. In the trenches.

William's uncomfortable laugh takes over.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

If you ever need to practice your singing, I'm your gal.

WILLIAM

Ohhhhh. Okayyyy.

William nods like a puppy dog.

INT. SAN GABRIEL VALLEY HAIR SALON - DAY

Mom sits in a long line of ASIAN LADIES, who are also getting their hair done. Fox News is on in the background.

ASIAN LADY #1

... a child's heart is tiny, the size of a strawberry, the vessels are the size of ramen. No. Smaller! Vermicelli! My son put the two sides back together so the blood can now run through and saved the little boy's life.

All the ladies ohh and wahh.

The HAIRSTYLIST fluffs Mom's hair and shakes her head.

HAIRSTYLIST

Whoever did your hair last time, did a very bad job.

Mom hides her shame.

HAIRSTYLIST (CONT'D)

What salon did you go to?

Asian Lady #1 turns to the one next to her.

ASIAN LADY #1

Oh, but you must be so proud Larissa is marrying a lawyer.

ASIAN LADY #2

A partner at his firm.

MOM

(muttering quietly)

Oh, some stylist in the Panama City, where I live. There are no Asian salons there that know how to handle my hair.

HAIRSTYLIST

Well, don't go back to that person or your hair might fall out.

Mom nods vigorously.

HAIRSTYLIST (CONT'D)

You need to move to San Gabriel Valley. We know how to take care of you here.

MOM

*My son is finishing up at UC
Berkeley.*

(saying the last part a
little louder)

*We are going to buy a big house in
San Gabriel Valley soon.*

ASIAN LADY #3 beside Mom perks up.

ASIAN LADY #3

*Oh! My son goes to Berkeley too!
First year Bioscience.*

MOM

Oh, my son is in civil engineering.

The ladies pay attention to Mom now.

ASIAN LADY #2

*Wow. Berkeley is supposed to be the
best school for Engineering.*

Mom smiles.

INT. HAIR SALON - LATER

The row of ASIAN LADIES all sit under the perm hair dryers. Mom is one of the club now.

ASIAN LADY #1

*How about you Stella? Do you still
cook Chinese food or hamburgers for
dinner?*

MOM

*Oh I never cook American food. It's
so bland, just tastes like salt.*

Suddenly, the news report starts to play clips from William's audition. The ladies' attention is drawn to the "She Bang"-ing. Mom looks to see what they are looking at.

The ladies start to giggle at the dance. At first, Mom is confused.

ASIAN LADY #3

*Oh, my daughter told me about this
guy. How embarrassing.*

ASIAN LADY #1

He looks so funny.

Mom doesn't move her eyes from the TV.

ASIAN LADY #2
*Didn't his parents ever teach him
 to save some face?*

JOHN BEARD (ON TV)
 All of America was watching his
 ridiculous audition.

ASIAN LADY #2
*He must be bringing so much shame
 to his family.*

JOHN BEARD (ON TV)
 William Hung is the worst singer in
 the world!

Mom looks mortified, but she's stuck under the dryer.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

The phone is ringing, ringing, ringing. William enters, takes his backpack off and picks it up.

WILLIAM
 Hello?

MOM (V.O.)
 William! What have you done?!

WILLIAM
 Uh-oh.

William's phone wavers between his ear and hanging up.

INT. PARENT'S HOUSE - INTERCUT

Mom and Dad are on speaker phone.

MOM
 You are all over TV!

DAD
 And all over the internet! I just
 read an article that a website
 about you crashed the server
 because there were 8 million hits!

MOM

William, you're not so good a singer, why you go and do something like this?

WILLIAM

I don't know, Mom. I wanted to-- I thought, maybe-- I could be a champion like Michael Chang.

Dad reads off the computer. The search bar states williamhung.net and the webpage is "Marry Me, William!"

DAD

Hey! Listen to this: William Hung, what I have to offer is my full heart. If you pick me, you will truly have your life fulfilled with love and happiness, and a lot of singing and dancing. Smiley face. Pick me William. Smiley fa--

MOM

Raymond, don't encourage him!

DAD

But--

MOM

William, if you are fail, you should fail in private. You tell all of America you lie to your parents! That make our family look so bad!

WILLIAM

I didn't think they would air my stuff on TV!

MOM

If you tell me you want to audition, I never would approved.

WILLIAM

That's why I didn't tell you.

MOM

William, I'm very disappointed. You are on the verge of being kicked out of school and you are running around making a fool out of yourself.

Mom walks out of the room.

WILLIAM

But, you always tell me nothing
else matters if I try my best!

DAD

She's left the room William.

William frowns.

WILLIAM

I've been invited to perform at the
school volleyball game. Will you
get her to come?

DAD

William, maybe your mom is right.

MOM (O.S.)

(yelling from the other
room)

Of course I'm right!

DAD

They already criticized you once,
it's best to stop now.

WILLIAM

But mom, it's an official Berkeley
school function.

Mom walks back into the room.

MOM

Berkeley want you to perform?

WILLIAM

Yes.

MOM

If the Dean is there, we can ask
him to change your probation
status.

WILLIAM

Yeah!

MOM

But this is last performance.

WILLIAM

Yes. Last one.

INT. CAMPUS GRASSY AREA - DAY

William shows Mei Ling a Ricky Martin music video on his laptop. Ricky flings his hips left and right with some complicated dance moves.

WILLIAM

I need your help to learn the choreography of this dance.

MEI LING

Oh no, I don't dance, remember?

WILLIAM

But you know how to break things down into steps and tell your robots what to do.

MEI LING

You want me to program you like a robot?

A pause. William looks at her with all seriousness.

WILLIAM

Yes.

MEI LING

That's ridiculous.

WILLIAM

I want to look good. My mom is going to be there.

Mei Ling sees his earnestness and then looks at the laptop. She sighs.

MEI LING

Can you play the video for me at half speed?

STEPHANIE (O.C.)

William!

William turns and sees Stephanie and her girl friends in their cheerleading getup.

WILLIAM

Hello.

He waves.

STEPHANIE

We heard you are singing at the game on Sunday. We're going to be cheering and I thought, maybe we could be your dancers for your performance.

William stares at the girls in short skirts all staring at him.

WILLIAM

Oh, that's an even better idea!

Mei Ling reacts.

STEPHANIE

We're going to practice now, wanna come?

WILLIAM

Okay.

William is already walking and turns back to Mei Ling.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

See ya Mei Ling.

William jogs off.

MEI LING

Okay then.

INT. BERKELEY GYM - NIGHT

William is center court, waving his arms while Stephanie and her cheerleaders twirl a choreographed dance around him. Fans in the stadium dance with signs that say "We Love You William!", "William Hung Fan Club" and shirts with William's face on it. In the bleachers, Dad smiles in awe. Mom sees this, scowls and elbows him in the ribs.

WILLIAM

SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS
SHE MOVES, SHE MOVES

William strikes a final pose with one arm up in the air. Stephanie drapes herself sexily all over him and the other girls pose around him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

(speaking)

She bangs!

The bleachers erupt. William waves to his stadium of fans and really takes this in. He humbly bows in many directions. He sees Mei Ling clap, not looking particularly impressed.

Mom looks to her left and to her right and all these people are cheering for her son. Dad focuses on William.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a little surprise for our hometown hero. Please welcome Mark Juris president of Fuse Music Television and Koch Records.

MARK JURIS (40s) tall, lanky business shark, takes the mic.

MARK JURIS

We saw William's performance on American Idol and we fell in love with him. And we're here tonight to offer William a real life, no-kidding around record contract!

The crowd goes wild! A WOMAN in high heels and tight shirt, parades out an oversized \$25,000 check.

WILLIAM

Wahhhh!

MARK JURIS

You know, you might not be an American Idol, but to Fuse and Koch and everybody here, you are a star.

William takes the microphone and looks out into the crowd, all standing up.

WILLIAM

Thank you. I can't believe that Fuse TV and Koch Records um-- likes me. For who I am. I can't believe it. I thought I just gave this ninety second audition, just like everyone else. I didn't think it would turn into this you know-- gigantic media fanfare and colossal fame-- I guess.

Dozens of media outlets snap pictures from courtside. William shakes hands with Mark Juris and poses with the check. William looks into the crowd.

Mom makes eye contact with her son and shakes her head showing her disapproval.

EXT. BERKELEY GYM - DAY

The crowds are exiting the gym. William, carrying the oversized check, walks up to his Mom and Dad, who are waiting for him on a bench.

WILLIAM

Mom?

MOM

No. You say this was last time.

WILLIAM

But what if--

Mom gets up and walks off.

Mei Ling approaches.

MEI LING

Nice moves. Much more foxy than I would have come up with. Did your mom like it?

He watches Mom's back get further and further.

WILLIAM

I don't think so. She doesn't want me to sign the record deal because it will affect my schooling.

MEI LING

Are you going to do it?

WILLIAM

I don't want to disappoint her. What do you think I should do?

MEI LING

I don't know, why does it matter what I think?

WILLIAM

You are like-- one of my best friends.

Mei Ling doesn't hide her surprise.

MEI LING

Ahhh... We've hung out like three times.

William nods: Yeah, exactly.

WILLIAM
What would you do?

MEI LING
(snorts)
If I were you, I would just shut down and cut off any opportunity for people to criticize me.

WILLIAM
Oh. Okay.

MEI LING
But you're not me, William. That's what I like about you. You have courage and you don't apologize for who you are.

William considers this.

WILLIAM
Mei Ling?

MEI LING
Hmm?

WILLIAM
People wouldn't have come out to see me if I didn't have value, right?

MEI LING
I think you bring something valuable to the world.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

William is on the phone. Kevin enters wearing a sweatband and drops his gym bag on the floor.

WILLIAM
Okay, I look forward to it!

William hangs up.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Rolling Stone is coming to campus to interview me!

KEVIN
(coldly)
Whatever. Cool.

WILLIAM
(not reading sarcasm)
I know, isn't it?!

Kevin grabs his towel and shower bucket. He puts his hand on the doorknob and opens the door a crack, then PAUSES.

KEVIN
They are just using you bro.

WILLIAM
Oh that's just how it works.
Magazines use famous people to sell
copies and famous people use
magazines to promote themselves.

Kevin shuts the door.

KEVIN
No dude, I mean, they're laughing
at you, not with you. You're a joke
to them.

WILLIAM
Kevin, they are paying me real
money to record a real album.

KEVIN
Look, I get it, what happened, none
of it was in your control. But now,
you have a choice. William, you had
fun. Just let the notoriety die
down, finish school and get a job
like the rest of us.

WILLIAM
But, what if I want to be more than
that?

A KNOCK on the door. Kevin just stares at William. Dad pops his head in.

DAD
Hey guys. Can I steal William away
for a little bit?

Kevin huffs and walks out. William looks at Dad.

INT. CAR - DAY

William sits in the passenger seat beside his Dad who stares ahead. SILENCE.

DAD
William, Mom--

Dad takes a breath.

DAD (CONT'D)
I don't think that signing this
record contract is the right
choice.

WILLIAM
They are offering me a five album
deal! This isn't just a one time
thing.

DAD
Son, you are half way to your
engineering degree.

WILLIAM
More than half way, actually.

DAD
Yes, two and half years. Plus all
your hard work in high school.

WILLIAM
But twenty-five thousand dollars--

DAD
That's not even enough to pay off
our student loan.

WILLIAM
-- is only like a minimum
guarantee. When the CDs make more
than that, they will give me more
money. Plus, they will help me get
live performance jobs too.

DAD
Being a civil engineer is very
prestigious, William. Especially
graduating from UC Berkeley. Why
would you want to give something
like that up?

WILLIAM
Dad, didn't you ever have a dream?

DAD
Yeah. It came true.

William blinks, surprised.

DAD (CONT'D)
I brought you to America.

WILLIAM
And you gave up everything to come here. You job, your apartment, your family and friends, your language, stinky tofu.

Dad shrugs, acknowledging the point.

DAD
Okay William, listen. Here it is okay?

Dad takes a deep breath.

DAD (CONT'D)
When you were young, your mom wanted to sing a duet for her parents' fortieth anniversary dinner. Don't Go Breaking My Heart by Elton John. Your mother loved singing.

WILLIAM
I remember singing with her.

DAD
We practiced everyday on Karaoke. Singing an English song was very important to her because she wanted to show people she was ready to move to America. And you know, her and her sister are so competitive.

William nods, he's familiar.

DAD (CONT'D)
So, we stood in the middle of the banquet hall. Everyone's eyes were on us. And we sang. Your mom sang her heart out. But in the middle, she started to see the look on people's faces...

Dad's face is pained by pity.

DAD (CONT'D)
Chinese people don't hide how they feel. They were shaking their heads and plugging their ears. I felt so horrible for her.

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)
Her sister made a comment
afterwards: "I hope your vocal
coach gave you your money back".

Dad looks away.

DAD (CONT'D)
She never sang again since that
day.

WILLIAM
Never ever?

Dad shakes his head.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I miss singing Karaoke with her.

DAD
William, our family is just
genetically not cut out for
singing. We don't want you to fail.

William looks solemn. Dad thinks he's got William.

WILLIAM
I might fail.

Dad softens to comfort him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
But there's no dishonor in that.
There's only dishonor in not trying
because you're afraid to fail.

This hits Dad.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You taught me that.

He stares at William for a long time.

The light changes to green. Dad studies William's face.

HONK!!!

Dad shakes out of his moment and steps on the gas. William
brightens.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Thanks Dad.

DAD
For what?

WILLIAM

Before this car ride, I was thinking of continuing my studies, but mom's story reminded me that I shouldn't give up on my dreams.

Dad face just says: Oh Shit.

CUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

Mom and Dad stand in the cramped space.

MOM

You had one job! I sent you to do one thing!

DAD

But you should listen to what he has to say.

MOM

You are like Danny Lee in that John Woo movie!

DAD

What?!

MOM

The cop that was supposed to arrest Chow Yun Fat, but they become friends.

WILLIAM

The Killer.

Reveal William is sitting on the bed between them, listening to them fight. He is holding a twenty-one page contract with the Koch Records logo on the top and twenty-five thousand dollars in bold and underlined.

MOM

It's not your job to become his friend!

DAD (O.C.)

But we are his parents...

MOM

Exactly, and we have to protect him from making mistakes.

DAD

I tried.

MOM

You have no backbone!

(addressing William)

William! You are not quitting
school to go and sing some Ricky
guy's song.

WILLIAM

But--

MOM

Ah-ah, no buts. You listen to me, I
am your mother and I know what is
best for you. The whole reason we
came to USA was to get you into a
school like Berkeley, *you are not*
throwing this all away now for some
silly fantasy.

William's face distorts at implication.

INT. TOYOTA COROLLA - DAY

Dad drives and William flips through the contract.

DAD

(whispers as if Mom's in
the car)Are you sure you don't want to hire
a lawyer to look this over.

WILLIAM

The last one I talked to wanted
forty percent of my lifetime
earnings. It's not the record
company taking advantage of us that
I need to worry about. It's the
lawyers.

DAD

William, I am very serious about
this okay? You cannot tell your mom
I drove you there. She will kill
the both of us.

WILLIAM

I promise.

EXT. KOCH RECORDS BUILDING - DAY

A tall glass building with the Koch Records sign. William and Dad walk up, trying to un-wrinkle their suits. William looks up at his future, takes a deep breath and then opens the glass door.

INT. KOCH RECORDS ELEVATOR - LATER

William and Dad stand against the back. William, nervous, looks at Dad. Dad gives him a reassuring smile.

INT. KOCH RECORDS OFFICE - LATER

William and Dad walk into the lobby. William makes eye contact with the receptionist whose eyes shift past him.

WILLIAM

Hi. My name is--

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

William!

William and Dad turn around. It is Mom!

WILLIAM

Mom? How did you--

MOM

You think I don't know what the two of you are up to?

DAD

Stella, I was just--

MOM

You think you can sneak behind my back?

WILLIAM

Mom, I made Dad come with me. It's not his fau--

MOM

William, you are getting out of control. You are making bad decisions without thinking and you don't know how to take care of yourself. But I can see you are going to do this with or without me, so I am going to protect you from being screwed.

DEE (early 30's), Black, stylish and laid back, enters.

DEE
Hi, William?

Everyone turns.

WILLIAM
Yes?

Dee moves to shake William's hand.

DEE
I'm Dee.

He gestures towards his corner office.

DEE (CONT'D)
Welcome to Koch Records. Are you
ready to make some beautiful music?

Mom stands up.

INT. KOCH RECORDS OFFICE | DEE'S OFFICE - LATER

William sits in between his parents. Mom is all worked up,
flipping through her marker-red-lined contract.

MOM
*You must be an insane lunatic if
you think we will accept only 15%
of the profits. You are messing
with the wrong woman! You stupid
clowns wouldn't have a record if it
weren't for my son. You can't do
business without him, so you better
raise it to something reasonable or
we are walking out of this office
right now and going to the next
highest bidder.*

Dad smiles calmly.

DAD
She, um, just had some questions
about the percentage of money and
thinks it could be a little higher.

Dee makes a note.

DEE
Okay, I will ask my boss. Is there
anything else?

MOM

And just to be clear, we are not your servants, you serve us. We are not at your beck and call anytime you bloody well want. What are we, your pet dog? William will show up to the events that we choose and none of this get on a plane within twenty-four hours business. I need at least three days notice to give my boss so I can take time off work to accompany my client. He's not going anywhere without me.

DAD

Well, she says that we would like to um, consult with you about which performances William will be doing. And would love to have three days notice, if possible.

Mom eyes Dee as he writes down the request.

MOM

You no deal with William no more. You deal with me. I am manager now.

William makes eye contact with his Dad out of the corner of his eye. Dad gives William a shrug with a look that says: Well, I guess mom's on board now. William chuckles.

DEE

Yes ma'am.

WILLIAM

Thank you mom. I am going to make a great album and sell enough records to get you your dream house in San Gabriel Valley.

MOM

Hmmm.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

William packs stuff into a box. His side of the room is stripped empty. Kevin enters holding a pile of school newspapers. William hands Kevin headphones.

WILLIAM

I found this in my drawer.

KEVIN

Oh! I was about to buy new ones.

WILLIAM

Kevin, I want to give you my
holographic Mewtwo card.

William presents a Pokemon trading card. Kevin puts a hand up to refuse it.

KEVIN

Aw, thanks man. I know this is one
of your expensive cards, but I
think I'm going to retire from
Pokemon anyways. I appreciate the
thought.

WILLIAM

But you love Pokemon.

KEVIN

Yeah, I just, I'm going to find a--
it's not-- people don't really
think it's cool.

William puts it in Kevin's hand.

WILLIAM

Kevin, you're going to let that
stop you from doing an activity you
find to be challenging and fun?
As long as the people you care
about like you, who cares what
others think?

William picks up the full box and heads toward the door.
Kevin sighs. Then, he offers his hand.

KEVIN

Good luck man.

William shakes it.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO LOBBY - DAY

William looks around at all the platinum records plastered on the wall.

WILLIAM

Whoa...

An ASSISTANT walks up to him holding a tray of drinks.

ASSISTANT

Hi Mr. Hung, would you like
something to drink?

William contemplates all the choices.

WILLIAM

Ahhh... no, I like...

He reaches for one can, but then changes his mind and picks
another, then changes his mind again.

ASSISTANT

You can have all three if you want.

WILLIAM

Really?

Assistant nods. He takes all three.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

William is on the recording side of the glass.

William holds his headphones and sings into a mic with his
eyes closed, like you see in those music videos of R&B
artists in the recording studio. A MIDI accompaniment track
plays.

WILLIAM

BAILAMOS, LET THE RHYTHM TAKE YOU

OVER

BAILAMOS

TE QUIERO AMOR MÍO, BAILAMOS

GONNA LIVE THIS NIGHT FOREVER

BAILAMOS

TE QUIERO AMOR MÍO, TE QUIERO

On the other side of the glass in the mixing booth, DEE,
GIUSEPPE (40's), a hip record producer, and SOUND TECHNICIAN
sit behind the sound board and speak into the mic.

DEE

Great job, Will, great job.

GIUSEPPE

That was incredible.

William pumps his fist.

WILLIAM
Yes! Nailed it!

CUT TO:

William has his arm out expressively.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
AND CAN YOU FEEL THE LOVE TONIGHT?
IT IS WHERE WE ARE

William makes a gulping noise in between lines.

William doesn't hear them in the mixing booth:

SOUND TECHNICIAN
We can cut that out later.

DEE
No, leave it in, it's priceless.

Sound Technician nods his head.

WILLIAM
IT'S ENOUGH FOR THIS WIDE-EYED
WANDERER
THAT WE'VE GOT THIS FAR

William stops.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Dee, can I sing a different song?
This one's out of my vocal range.

DEE
No, man, it sounds great.

WILLIAM
I want something that people can
enjoy listening to and not cringe.
I don't want to sound bad.

DEE
We gotta keep movin'.

WILLIAM
If my mom were here, she wouldn't
let you move on.

DEE

We only have this studio for one day, friend. It's a good thing she had to work today.

CUT TO:

William sings with Giuseppe and Dee. All of them are having fun in the booth.

ALL

IT'S FUN TO STAY AT THE YMCA
IT'S FUN TO STAY AT THE YMCA
THEY HAVE EVERYTHING FOR YOU MEN TO
ENJOY
YOU CAN HANG OUT WITH ALL THE BOYS

Mei Ling shows up in the mixing booth and William sees her through the window. He waves and signals for her to sit, with a huge smile on his face. She waves back, shyly.

Mei Ling sits and takes in the scene. The Sound Technician offers her headphones, which she accepts.

CUT TO:

In the mixing booth, Giuseppe, William and Mei Ling all gather around Dee's laptop, where a mock up of the CD cover image is displayed. The background is a shot of a crowd of college-aged students looking up and fawning over a blank space. The title states: TRUE IDOL.

Dee drags a picture of William cheering with his arm in the air, into the blank space. His eyes look a little slit-like.

DEE

And this... is what the CD cover will look like.

Giuseppe loves it. Mei Ling looks at William.

WILLIAM

Uh, Dee, my eyes look kind of closed in this one.

DEE

Oh, but it's the best one, you look like "yeah"

Dee mimics the arm in the air.

DEE (CONT'D)

And happy and it's great.

Mei Ling wills William to object further.

WILLIAM
Okay, yeah, that's true.

Mei Ling looks conflicted. Dee pats William on the back.

DEE
(to Sound Technician)
Do we still have time to record the
spoken parts?

Sound Technician looks at the clock.

SOUND TECHNICIAN
Your booking finishes in 4 minutes.

WILLIAM
These inspirational messages are
the most important part. These are
the words that will have an impact
on the world. Sir, please, I will
do it very fast.

The Sound Technician sighs.

CUT TO:

William back in the recording booth, reading from a piece of paper.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Hello, I'm William Hung, you
probably have seen me somewhere,
either from American Idol, news,
media, whatever source you may know
me from.

Dee looks at the CD cover on his laptop and changes the title from TRUE IDOL to INSPIRATION.

EXT. MAYAN THEATRE - DAY

A car pulls up and A HAND opens the door. SLOW-MO: William steps out, his mother behind him.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
I just want to say thank you for
buying my album, and I wish all of
you the best of luck in whatever
you choose to do with your life.

INT. MAYAN THEATRE - NIGHT

SLOW-MO: William walks in with an entourage, including Dee and his Mom. The whole theatre is being art-decorated for the set of his music video.

WILLIAM
Whoa....

William walks past dancers practicing choreography, crew working everywhere; putting up a black and white checker backdrop, polishing a huge disco ball.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
Even with a lot of talent in singing, even with a lot of talent in whatever you choose to do, you still have to put in this hard work and you need that determination and perseverance not to give up.

William takes it all in.

WILLIAM
Ricky Martin shot his music video in this theatre. I'll get to hold the real mic that Ricky Martin sang on!

He turns to face Mom with an enormous smile on his face. Mom is happy to see her son so happy.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
This is like living La Vida Loca!
Dee?

DEE
What's up Will, what can I do for you?

WILLIAM
Can you get me and my best friend a meeting with Ricky Martin?

DEE
Ahh, ah, I'll see what I can do.
But I don't think... yeah, sure,
I'll do my best.

Stephanie, dressed in a flashy costume, walks up to William.

STEPHANIE

Hey Will. Thanks again for getting
me this job. I'm so excited to be
in your music video.

William pats her on the back.

WILLIAM

Yes, of course I am happy to help.

STEPHANIE

I'm so proud of you William.

WILLIAM

Thank you. Thank you.

STEPHANIE

So, you know, I'm trying to record
my first album, and I was
wondering... if you might be able
to introduce me to the record
producer.

WILLIAM

Uh, yeah, okay, I'll ask.

Mom interrupts.

MOM

William. They need you in makeup.

William gets pulled off. Mom leads him across the stage.

MOM (CONT'D)

William, you should be careful with
these women, now that you are
famous, they will start to pay
attention to you...

Mom softens.

MOM (CONT'D)

... and not for the right reasons.

WILLIAM

Do you not like her because
she's... not Asian?

A gentle smile we don't often see, appears on Mom's face.

MOM

No son. I don't care what race they
are, as long as they love you for
who you are.

WILLIAM

Oh, you don't have to worry about
Stephanie, she is a good friend,
from school. She knew me before I
became successful.

INT. MAYAN THEATRE - LATER

Wearing a white shirt and jeans, very suave-looking, William sits on a black leather couch. The MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR, 30's, Caucasian man, watches the monitor, William's version of She Bangs plays over the speakers.

A sexily-clad BEAUTIFUL WOMAN starts writhing-dancing beside him, running a finger down his chest. She moves her face very close to his. William keeps his lips a distance from hers, it's tense and awkward, until he can't hold it anymore and swipes her away, giggling nervously.

Music Video Director takes the woman's place on the couch and encourages William.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR

Hey William, you're doing a great job. We just need to you get a little closer to her.

WILLIAM

I don't like this image. I don't want to flirt-- I don't want to give a false image of falling in love with these ladies.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR

We just need you to lean in and put your hand right--

Music Video Director touches William accidentally on the thigh and William jumps as if a snake bit him!

WILLIAM

Whoa whoa whoa!

Mom jumps up from her seat.

MOM

Hey! He's not going to do anything he's not comfortable with.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR

Sorry Mrs. Hung. Sorry Mrs. Hung!

Music Video Director sighs and shakes his head.

Mom brings William some hot tea. William sips it.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Rain towers are pouring rain, a water truck is wetting down the street, which is blocked off from the public.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR

Okay, this is the last scene, our grand finale William. I need you to be big, over the top, go crazy! Crazier than you've ever been! You ready?

Mom yells from her director's chair behind the monitor.

MOM

He's not going to get soaked is he?

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR

Well, it's going to be just like the Ricky Martin video, it'll look fantastic. You've got the girls dancing in their little costumes.

Mom walks to the middle of set and holds out William's blue raincoat ready for him to stick his arms in.

MOM

Here, put on your raincoat.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR

Uhhhh, Mrs. Hung? That's not part of the costume change.

MOM

He going to get sick.

(to William)

What kind of idiot runs around in the rain without a raincoat?

Music Video Director looks at William: Are you serious?!

WILLIAM

I mean, the last thing I need is to catch a cold, because if I get soaked, ah-- my pants will get wet, other things will get wet, and that's probably not a good idea. These clothes aren't mine exactly, they're borrowed and everything and they were expensive.

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
 I don't know, it's for the best
 interest of everybody if I wear a
 raincoat.

Mom, satisfied, returns to her perch.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR
 (softly to William)
 Do you always do what your mom
 says?

WILLIAM
 No, because she doesn't have final
 say, because I make my own
 decisions. I believe my mom helps
 me and guides me.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR
 Then please William, don't listen
 this time.

WILLIAM
 Music videos is about having fun
 and when I feel cold or
 uncomfortable, that's not fun.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR
 Ricky Martin never wore a raincoat!
 Please don't choose the raincoat.

CUT TO:

CLIP FROM MUSIC VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/bwei5P8bXgs?t=251>

SEXY MODELS, soaked by the rain, wearing short skirts and bras, shake and dance around William, in the blue raincoat with this hood up.

WILLIAM
 SHE BANGS SHE BANGS
 OH BABY SHE MOVE SHE MOVES

TRANSITION TO VIDEO PLAYING ON A TV SCREEN:

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL STUDIO - NIGHT

William is being interviewed by Jimmy Kimmel on his couch.

JIMMY KIMMEL
 That's just a little clip from
 William Hung's music video!

The audience cheers.

JIMMY KIMMEL (CONT'D)
So William, your album Inspiration
debuted at number thirty four on
Billboard's Top 200 and you've sold
two-hundred thousand copies!

The audience reacts to the number.

WILLIAM
Yes, thank you.

JIMMY KIMMEL
And I see your mother's here in the
audience with us tonight.

Mom is in the audience wearing sunglasses.

JIMMY KIMMEL (CONT'D)
Mom, what do you think about this,
are you happy about this?

She just tries to hide her face from the cameras.

JIMMY KIMMEL (CONT'D)
So William, I have to ask you, are
you serious about your singing?

WILLIAM
I want people to take my singing
seriously. Because, I thought-- I
was-- from American Idol audition,
it's entertaining and people really
laughed at it. I don't know if
that's a good or bad thing. I mean,
in long run, I don't want to be
funny cause I'm not funny. I'm
serious.

JIMMY KIMMEL
Okay. Well. So, why do you like
that song, She Bangs? Do you know
what it's about?

WILLIAM
It's kind of a you know, a romantic
song, in a way, like a love song
for a lady, you know? Like for
girls, she bangs, she bangs, she
moves, she moves.

Jimmy snickers.

JIMMY KIMMEL

William, so do you have a
girlfriend?

WILLIAM

Not yet.

JIMMY KIMMEL

Are you saving yourself for
marriage?

WILLIAM

Ah, no, because I'm getting
attacked from groupies left and
right.

The audience cheers and yelps. Jimmy laughs.

JIMMY KIMMEL

Please be honest with me, are you a
virgin?

WILLIAM

Yes I am.

The audience cheers again. William nods and smiles at them.

INT. HOWARD STERN STUDIO - DAY

William sits in a rolly chair with headphones on, across from Howard Stern.

HOWARD STERN

But I have to ask you, everyone
thinks you were either like
retarded or stupid or some- you
know what I mean? Do you get that a
lot?

William pauses and Howard nudges him to answer.

WILLIAM

Ah, some people do. Hmm.

HOWARD STERN

Do you wear pajamas when you sleep?

WILLIAM

That's too personal.

HOWARD STERN

I picture you in pajamas.

WILLIAM
I wear whatever is comfortable.

William sounds uncomfortable. They all are laughing at him.

HOWARD STERN
But you don't get crazy and be
naked in your bed would you?

WILLIAM
I'm not crazy.

HOWARD STERN
Are you allowed to touch yourself?

WILLIAM
What do you mean?

HOWARD STERN
You know what I mean.

WILLIAM
I don't understand the questions.

HOWARD STERN
Every man touches himself. I do it
two three times a week.

WILLIAM
Ohh my god!

HOWARD STERN
That's right, I'm being honest with
you.

WILLIAM
Okay okay that's too far.

HOWARD STERN
You never think of girls and touch
yourself?

WILLIAM
I, I, well thinking is different. I
think a lot of, everybody in my
mind. It's imagination. It's normal
for a guy.

Mom stands up and starts to fume.

HOWARD STERN
Do you watch porno William?

The look on William's face is even more painful.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

In Economy, Mom sits by the window and William has an aisle seat. No one is between them. Mom has her eyes closed.

William scrolls through his 4 megapixel digital camera. He has many pictures with fans whom he doesn't know. He lands on a picture of Stephanie and him.

MOM (O.S.)
We have to be more careful now.

William looks over and Mom opens her eyes and turns to him.

MOM (CONT'D)
If we knew who Howard Stern was
before, I wouldn't have allowed
them to send you to that interview.

WILLIAM
But a lot of people listen to
Howard Stern.

MOM
Save a little face William. Our
family do not talk about that taboo
sex stuff. You are celebrity now.
You must be careful every word you
talk, what you wearing, how you
walking.

WILLIAM
Okay mom.

MOM
I read US Weekly in check out line.
*If you show them vulnerabilities,
the media will attack you.*

FAN #1 (50s), female, shyly approaches.

FAN #1
Excuse me William, I just want to
say that you really inspire me and
you're really great.

MOM
(taking credit)
Oh, thank you, thank you very much.

FAN #1
Can I get a picture with you?

The fan hands Mom the camera and she snaps a photo of William and the fan. The fan leaves.

WILLIAM

Mom?

MOM

Hmm?

WILLIAM

Why do people keep asking me "Do you believe you are a good singer?"

Mom breathes out.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Do you think I'm a good singer?

Mom pauses before she answers.

MOM

William. Being good is all relative. If you sing and it makes you happy and you sing and it makes other people happy, what's the problem?

WILLIAM

Right? That's how I feel.

Mom smiles.

MOM

William. I'm...

William expects her to say "proud of you".

MOM (CONT'D)

I need to get past you to get to the toilet.

MUSIC CUE: ACHY BREAKY HEART BY BILLY RAY CYRUS, WILLIAM SINGS LYRICS

MUSIC PLAYS UNDER MONTAGE:

A) Mom and William scroll through the williamhung.net website. He clicks on "merchandise" and sees his face on

- T-Shirts that say "Don't Be A Playa Hata"
- Buttons that say "Team Hung - Join Today - No Professional Training Needed"

- "No Regrets" Package
- "Ultimate Inspiration" Package
- .gifs of William dancing
- William's face on a mouse cursor

MOM (CONT'D)

We need to send this guy a cease
and desist. He's making money off
of your face. We need to control
your image.

HEADLINES and QUOTES FLOAT ACROSS THE SCREEN:

"herky-jerky, supremely weird and oddly alluring" - ROLLING STONE

B) William on Entertainment Tonight.

WILLIAM

I want to take this opportunity to
continue doing what I love: singing
and performing. People have seen,
you know, generic singers all the
time, but they don't see me. I want
to give something that's special,
that's different from what other
people may be giving to the
audience.

QUOTE FLOAT: "Hatchet job on Ricky Martin's "She Bangs"" - TODAY.COM

B) William on stage at TIMES SQUARE interviewed by Katie Couric.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I seriously don't expect this
experience, there's a lot of people
going crazy after me right now.

QUOTE FLOAT: "enough talent to fill the knapsack of a gnat" -

C) William on the Ellen DeGeneres Show.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I just want to be myself, and not
change too much. I want people to
love me for who I am.

QUOTE FLOAT: "Performer or a clown?" - San Francisco Gate

D) William on Jay Leno.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I believe that in life, and perhaps my success today, isn't the work of one person, it's the work of many people, my parents, my teachers, my friends... all these people out there.

QUOTE FLOAT: "like an earthquake, or a urinary infection" -- DEADSPIN.COM

E) William being interviewed by Ryan Seacrest on American Idol: Uncut, Uncensored, Untalented.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'm interested in civil engineering and if singing doesn't work out for me um, and turns into only a hobby, them um, I really look forward to research on the L.A. air pollution right now.

QUOTE FLOAT: "bungled but earnest audition" -- STAR ONLINE

E) William in front of a step-and-repeat with the Golden Warriors logo.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I don't wanna give myself a score because it's not about necessarily being the most talented, it's about bringing joy to people, bringing happiness through entertainment. It doesn't matter what the score - why is it important for you to know how I rate myself, it's a unique value.

William's eyes dart to Mom, who nods in approval.

QUOTE FLOAT: "WILLIAM HUNG'S SALES FIGURES ARE NOTHING TO LAUGH AT" -MTV

F) William in front of a baseball field with the Toronto Blue Jays logo.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

The rumor that I overdosed on heroin is obviously not true. As you can see, I'm as healthy and energized as ever!

QUOTE FLOAT: "bona fide dweeb" -- ROLLING STONE

G) William at a press conference with mostly Asian reporters.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Yes, I believe I am keeping a healthy image of Asian people. I don't do things that are negative or do bad things to people.

END MUSIC CUE

H) Kevin watches this on TV in the common room: JIMMY FALLON imitates William's audition on Saturday Night Live.

Kevin shakes his head.

I) Mei Ling screws metal plates, part of a robot together, in her dorm room, watches a TV COMMERCIAL: Jack-In-The-Box sits at a poker table.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Jack's got nothing.

Jack pushes all his chips in.

JACK

I'm all in.

William throws his cards away.

WILLIAM

Yikes.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Hung folds.

GARY COLEMAN lifts his cards.

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

Gary Coleman's got pocket tens.

GARY COLEMAN

Are you bluffin'?

Jack takes off his sunglasses.

JACK

Does it look like I'm bluffin'?

J) In a real estate development office, a SALES AGENT shows William, Mom and Dad mock ups for a house that's being built.

SALES AGENT

And right at the end of the street
is a Chinese supermarket and
Chinese salon.

Mom's eyes light up. Mom grabs the sheet and studies it.

K) At home, Dad watches a TV SHOW: Judge Reinhold on Arrested Development, looks into the camera.

JUDGE REINHOLD

Well, it looks like we've got a
mistrial. But on the plus side,
we've also got a hung jury.

He swings his finger over to the jury box and the camera whip pans to reveal a name plate stating "William Hung and his Hung Jury". William sings in the jury box into a microphone with a band behind him.

WILLIAM

MOCK TRIAL WITH J. REINHOLD
MOCK TRIAL WITH J. REINHOLD

Shots of the Bluth family reacting.

DAD

I don't understand this show.

EXT. ROSE BOWL - NIGHT

A huge billboard announces WangoTango.

A hand opens the car door to a black vehicle. William gets out of the backseat and a CROWD of screaming fans greet him. Mom gets out of the other door. People hold signs with his face and the eyes cut out so they can see through it. Other home-made posters state "It's better to be Hung" and "The Phillipines Loves William Hung".

William works his way through the crowd, stopping to take pictures and sign autographs. You'd think he was Paul, John, George or Ringo! Mom gets William's attention.

MOM

We have to get you in for your call
time.

She gets the SECURITY GUARD's attention and snaps them to work. The security guards hold people back and get William inside.

EXT. ROSE BOWL | BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

William waits backstage and stares into the sixty-thousand person audience cheering.

William watches his mom, tired, walking in shoes that are more worn on the inside, giving her a slight limp.

William peeks out at the huge crowd cheering for LENNY KRAVITZ, currently singing on the stage.

LENNY KRAVITZ
 I WANT TO GET AWAY
 I WANT TO FLY AWAY
 YEAH WITH YOU YEAH YEAH
 I GOT TO GET AWAY

Stephanie runs up waving her backstage pass.

STEPHANIE
 Oh my God William, this backstage pass is amazing, I just saw the Backstreet Boys!

WILLIAM
 You're welcome Stephanie. It means a lot to me for you to be here.

STEPHANIE
 Oh William, you are so sweet.
 You're like my angel.

She hugs him. William smiles.

The HOST, on stage, whips up the crowd into a frenzy.

HOST
 You've seen Janet Jackson, the Black Eyed Peas, Lenny Kravitz, Outkast, Backstreet Boys, Jessica Simpson, Maroon 5. And now... to close out your Wango Tango night here at the Rose Bowl is... WILLIAM HUNG!

Stephanie gives him a hug.

WILLIAM
 You better go find your seat!

STEPHANIE
 Oh, it's cool. I'm going to watch from here.

William walks onto the stage waving. An enormous crowd CHEERS!

From William's POV, his heart is pounding, but he sings and grooves.

WILLIAM
 TALK TO ME
 TELL ME YOUR NAME
 YOU BLOW ME OFF LIKE IT'S ALL THE
 SAME
 YOU LIT A FUSE AND NOW I'M TICKING
 AWAY
 LIKE A BOMB
 YEAH, BABY

His energy INFECTS the whole Rose Bowl audience. Fireworks EXPLODE! Lights SHINE! Backup singers DANCE!

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
 TALK TO ME
 TELL ME YOUR SIGN
 YOU'RE SWITCHING SIDES LIKE A
 GEMINI
 YOU'RE PLAYING GAMES AND NOW YOU'RE
 HITTIN' MY HEART
 LIKE A DRUM
 YEAH, BABY
 WELL IF LADY LUCK GETS ON MY SIDE
 WE'RE GONNA ROCK THIS TOWN ALIVE
 I'LL LET HER ROUGH ME UP
 'TILL SHE KNOCKS ME OUT
 SHE WALKS LIKE SHE TALKS
 AND SHE TALKS LIKE SHE WALKS

The teeny boppers who came to see the Backstreet Boys sing along!

TEENY BOPPERS
 AND SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS

Middle-aged Janet Jackson fans sing along!

MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN
 OH BABY
 WHEN SHE MOVES, SHE MOVES

Rocker Black-Eyed Peas fans sing along!

ROCKERS
 I GO CRAZY
 'CAUSE SHE LOOKS LIKE A FLOWER BUT
 SHE STINGS LIKE A BEE
 (MORE)

ROCKERS (CONT'D)
LIKE EVERY GIRL IN HISTORY

From the wings, EVEN MOM AND DAD shake a tail feather.

WILLIAM
SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS

SHOTS OF the varied crowd, singing, dancing, laughing, smiling, cheering. Think concert scene in Ferris Bueller's Day Off.

William STRIKES A POSE at the end of the song and the LIGHTS BLACK OUT TO HUGE CHEERS!

EXT. ROSEBOWL | BACKSTAGE - LATER

Everyone around William is packing up and breaking down equipment. Mom picks up his bag.

MOM
Come on, Dad is going to drive us back to the hotel.

WILLIAM
Oh, you go on without me. I'm waiting for Stephanie.

MOM
Okay, don't stay out too late. And don't drink too much beer.

WILLIAM
Okay mom.

Mom leaves and William looks around. He doesn't see Stephanie anywhere. He wanders around, past CELEBRITIES, their AGENTS on the phone, TECH CREW, SECURITY GUARDS. William approaches a ROADIE putting a guitar away.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Excuse me, have you seen a girl with dark brown hair and really pretty eyes?

ROADIE
You just described every single girl who makes it backstage, man.

Then he sees Stephanie talking with a MAN who has his back to William.

WILLIAM
Stephanie!

She doesn't hear him. Stephanie smiles at the man and the man walks away.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Hey Stephanie. Are you ready to go for a drink?

Stephanie looks over.

STEPHANIE

Oh! Um, actually, I've been invited to go to an after party with Howie.

WILLIAM

Howie?

STEPHANIE

Yeah. From the Backstreet Boys.

HOWIE DOROUGH from the BACKSTREET BOYS turns around.

HOWIE

Hey Steph, you comin'?

STEPHANIE

Yeah!

Howie sees William.

HOWIE

Hey Will Hung! You need a ride somewhere?

STEPHANIE

Oh no, he's fine.

She turns his back on William.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I'll call you later.

And with that, she runs off and Howie puts an arm around her. They walk into a limo.

William stares with his mouth agape.

EXT. CAMPUS | GRADUATION LAWN - DAY

GRADUATES step one by one on stage and take their diplomas from their professor. William sits in the audience.

GRADUATION HOST (O.S)
 Mei Ling Li, bachelor of
 mathematics.

Mei Ling walks onto stage and shakes hands with her professor. The audience claps. She poses with the diploma and MEI LING'S PARENTS take pictures of her. William catches her eye and he claps even harder.

CROSSFADE TO:

GRADUATION HOST (O.S) (CONT'D)
 Kevin Jung, bachelor's in civil
 engineering.

Kevin strides up the stairs, carrying himself a little different than when we last saw him. A little more prideful. He takes his diploma and gives a peace sign when he poses for his picture. William watches.

EXT. CAMPUS PARKING LOT - DAY

Mei Ling and Kevin walk William to his car.

WILLIAM
 Wow, you both have your degrees
 now.

KEVIN
 Mei Ling has a job offer as an
 actuary.

WILLIAM
 Oh! Will you be building robots for
 them?

MEI LING
 No, we measure risk and uncertainty
 in the future.

WILLIAM
 Oh, so no fighting robots?

MEI LING
 That was just an extra curricular
 in College. I don't have time for
 that anymore.

WILLIAM
 Oh, I thought you were going to
 make your own robot one day.

Mei Ling sighs: Not in the cards now.

KEVIN

Dude, I can't believe what you've been up to these past couple of years.

MEI LING

So, now that you're William Hung, when are you going to introduce me to Ricky Martin?

WILLIAM

I still don't know him.

KEVIN

What?! You became infamous because of his song, you mean he hasn't thanked you for keeping that song alive?

WILLIAM

I don't like that word.

KEVIN

Alive?

WILLIAM

Infamous. When people introduce me, they like to say my infamous audition from American Idol and that kind of bothers me a little bit. Not because I could change it. It was what it was. I want people to somehow respect it for what it is. Not for my singing talent, but because everybody has the right to go after their dreams. It's okay to fail. It's okay not to make it, why should I be infamous for that?

They arrive at his Toyota Corolla.

MEI LING

That's fair.

KEVIN

Dude, if I were you, I'd be driving a Porsche by now with all the dough you're making. How much have you made?

WILLIAM

Let's just say that Uncle Sam is taking six-figures in taxes. I've made a lot of bananas.

KEVIN

Well what are you waiting for?

WILLIAM

I'm saving up to buy my mom a nice house in San Gabriel Valley. But I still need a few more gigs to afford it.

EXT. MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

CHYRON: 2007

In the middle of the diamond, William sings into a mic.

WILLIAM

TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME
TAKE ME OUT WITH THE CROWD
BUY ME SOME PEANUTS AND
CRACKERJACKS

The stadium is much smaller than we've seen before. There are more people in line ordering hot dogs and going to the restroom than in their seats.

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT - DAY

The place is now filled with William Hung bobble heads, mugs and paraphernalia with William's face on it. His three albums are framed including the Christmas CD, with his cut-out head pasted on an animated body (think South Park characters).

William picks up the phone and dials.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - SAME

Megan stands in front of a line of auditioners on her cell.

MEGAN

Sorry William, we're onto another season now and looking for someone... another... you know.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

A small tent is set up near the food court. A small banner announces 104.5 KISS FM RADIO. The DJ puts his arm around William, who shifts uncomfortably.

DJ

Hey y'all. Guess who my weekend guest is today? You all must remember William Hung!

There's a small crowd who claps. A few passersby stop and look, then keep walking.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

William grabs a couple of cans from the shelf. SHOPPER #2 approaches him.

SHOPPER #2

Excuse me?

WILLIAM

Yes, hi!

William smiles and put his hand out to shake hands with his fan. But--

SHOPPER #2

Could you please move out of the way?

William steps aside. The shopper doesn't look at him and reaches past for a can.

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT - DAY

William picks up his phone and dials.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Dee sits in a sound booth on his cell.

DEE

Sorry brother, no one's calling to book you anymore.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Big Moe's on the phone for you.

DEE

I gotta go Will-- wait, you know, there was this movie that called. They're shooting in China...

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT | LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WILLIAM
China? I'll do a movie in China.
Okay. Okay.

William hangs up. Dad is on his computer, on the 2 Red Beans dating site.

DAD
That's perfect! You can go and meet Lifen in China!

WILLIAM
Who's Lifen?

DAD
Your online girlfriend! I've been talking to her for three months already. She's been wanting to meet you in person.

Dad shows William a picture of her.

WILLIAM
She looks pretty in her pictures.

DAD
William, I think she's the one. I really like this girl for you. She's from a small town. She's much more pure than American girls, less likely to divorce and... and she doesn't know that much about the world.

WILLIAM
They never look like their pictures online.

DAD
Invite her to your movie set, she'll be very impressed.

EXT. CHINESE VILLAGE MOVIE SET | CHINA - DAY

William, dressed as a Chinese peasant, talks to a HORSE who is chewing with it's mouth open.

WILLIAM

Brother Fai, please come over to me quickly and do not pay all your attention to eating the vegetables and please come over to me and help me to sing a song together.

Someone yells out the lines the horse is supposed to be speaking.

HORSE

I am not in good mood. I have been here for so many days, I am getting tired. Do you have any new entertainment to make me happy?

WILLIAM

Okay, if you co-operate with me to sing a song, after the performance, I will take you for a bath and do a good massage for you.

HORSE

Also do a repair on my shoes!

WILLIAM

I will do all that for you.

HORSE

Don't you dare to lie to me!

WILLIAM

My mother taught me not to lie and I am telling the truth.

HORSE

Hurry up then, go and gather your onlookers to do the performance together with me.

MOVIE DIRECTOR (50s) Asian male, yells.

MOVIE DIRECTOR

Cut!

William pets the horse before leaving set. Mom, behind the video monitors coaches William's acting, showing him the moves, bouncing back and forth like a boxer. William watches and nods.

MOM

Don't be so stiff, you gotta move your arms and your legs together!

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)
Keep your body in sync. You're a dancer.

William nods.

INT. CHINESE PALACE MOVIE SET | CHINA - DAY

In the huge middle hall surrounded by grand staircases, draped in red curtains, William sings and prances around, serving plates to dinner guests.

WILLIAM
SIU BANG, SIU BANG

(In case you didn't get it, siu bang sounds like "she bangs", which means cake buns in Cantonese)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
*WITH PLENTIFUL NUTRIENTS
 EAT THEM ANY TIME
 NICE AND LOW-COST
 CAKE BUNS, CAKE BUNS
 MY CHUM
 EVERLASTING FRIENDSHIP FROM
 HOMELAND*

INT. CHINESE PALACE - LATER

William walks away from the set and takes off his hat. He uses a straw to sip from a drink that Mom holds for him.

Dad approaches excitedly.

DAD
 William... someone is here to meet you!

WILLIAM
 Can you tell the fans I will sign autographs after my scenes are done? I have to concentrate.

A demure, sweet-looking woman steps out from behind Dad. LIFEN (24) looks just like she does in her pictures.

DAD
 This is Lifen.

William straightens up.

**NOTE TO READER: William speaks Cantonese and Lifen speaks Mandarin, so William speaks in a broken combination of both.

WILLIAM

Oh! Lifen. Nice to meet you.

Lifen bows slightly.

LIFEN

Hello. William.

She attempts English, but her Mandarin accent is very thick.

WILLIAM

Come, have a seat.

He offers his director's chair. She sits and he stands in front of her. His parents move away to give him some privacy, but of course, are just close enough to listen in a little.

LIFEN

It's very nice to meet you in person after typing for so long.

WILLIAM

What? Oh typing, yes typing on the computer.

LIFEN

I brought you something small. It's your favorite snack.

Lifen digs in her purse.

WILLIAM

You brought me pocky sticks?

Lifen reacts and pulls out a small wrapped dessert.

LIFEN

Oh! I thought you said you cannot find good mooncakes in America, so I brought you one.

William's eyes flicker to his dad who gestures to just go with it.

WILLIAM

Oh yes, I must have said that, I love mooncakes. Especially the ones with the double yolks. Thank you for such a sweet thought.

Lifen smiles shyly.

LIFEN

This movie set is so glamorous. But I bet you must be used to this kind of thing.

WILLIAM

Lifen...

William steps closer.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'm... I'm not so famous anymore. But I have saved all the money I made. I am going to buy a nice house and can provide a good life.

LIFEN

I don't love you for your fame, I love you for who you are.

William blushes. Lifen steps down from the chair and takes William's hand.

LIFEN (CONT'D)

Will you take me for a tour of the set?

WILLIAM

Sure.

William walks past his parents, who have been hanging on to every word. William hands off the mooncake to his dad, who is very excited for the treat.

INT. COURTHOUSE | CHINA - DAY

CHYRON: 1 WEEK LATER

The couple faces each other, with a MINISTER in between them.

Mom, Dad and Mom's Sister sit on one side and Lifen's parents sit on the other.

MINISTER

Do you take Lifen Xiao to be your lawfully wedded wife?

WILLIAM

I do.

Mom leans over to her sister.

MOM

Don't worry sister, someday your son will be as successful as mine.

MINISTER

And do you take William Hung to be your lawfully wedded husband?

LIFEN

I do.

MOM'S SISTER

He will. He just got his masters degree.

Mom eyes her sister at the underhanded insult.

William gives his new wife a goofy smile. Dad lights up at what he helped create.

INT. SAN GABRIEL VALLEY HOUSE - DAY

A beautiful staircase with marble floors and lots of daylight, and a golden lion, this is a McMansion.

We have never seen so much joy and amazement on Mom's face before.

The same sales agent from the development center:

SALES AGENT

This is only the model home, you can customize which finishes you want, appliances, you can really make it your own.

Mom turns to William. Dad stands behind Mom.

MOM

William, I'm in love.

WILLIAM

I only need another fifty thousand and we're going to get it.

Mom is already imagining where she's going to hang her pictures.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

William wheels Lifen's large pink suitcase and Lifen, wearing a pink beret, carries a small purse in one hand and a large Hello Kitty stuffed animal in the other.

WILLIAM
I missed you.

LIFEN
If you didn't take so long to get the visa sorted, I would be been here sooner.

William puts his arm around her and squeezes. Lifen squeezes back, it's awkward.

WILLIAM
Well... welcome to America.

William pulls out his keys. Lifen follows him.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I'm right over here.

William gestures and Lifen stops behind a Mercedes, expectantly. William moves to the old Toyota Corolla beside it and opens the trunk. Lifen looks over, her face revealing her disappointment.

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT | WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

William opens the door and proudly presents an empty closet. He turns around and her face puts on a smile.

WILLIAM
(in broken Mandarin)
I cleared out the closet for you.

Lifen looks like she wants to die.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Do you have a preference for side of the bed?

LIFEN
This apartment is smaller than my house in China. I thought you said we had a nice big house to live in.

WILLIAM

It is only temporary. With my movie paycheck, we are so close to buying our dream house.

LIFEN

Our?

WILLIAM

Oh, yes my parents and I.

Lifen looks out the door and then back in the bedroom. Well, she's stuck now. Lifen forces a smile and sits on the edge of the bed.

They look at each other. An awkward moment.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

So... do you have any pet peeves I should know about?

LIFEN

I'm pretty normal. Just don't use my toothbrush.

WILLIAM

Who shares a toothbrush? That's gross!

Lifen starts to warm.

LIFEN

I know!

William smiles.

LIFEN (CONT'D)

And I don't really like to do laundry.

WILLIAM

That's okay I will do your laundry with mine.

LIFEN

When will I get to meet your friends?

WILLIAM

I don't have a lot of friends, my best friend is Mei Ling. I haven't even told her about you yet!

LIFEN
Mei Ling? She's a girl?

William nods, but Lifen's jealousy rises.

INT. MEI LING'S BUNGALOW - DAY

William and Mei Ling stand on the driveway in a middle-class suburban neighborhood. Mei Ling holds a remote control.

MEI LING
Okay, are you ready?

WILLIAM
Ready.

Mei Ling is about to push the button, but stops herself.

MEI LING
Other than my team, you are the first person to see this.

WILLIAM
Okay, ready.

Mei Ling pushes the button and the garage door starts to open. She pushes it again and the door stops.

MEI LING
It worked last night, but sometimes things get jammed, so if it doesn't work, don't laugh.

WILLIAM
I am very very ready.

Mei Ling pushes the button again and allows the garage door to reveal a three-foot robot contraption on wheels with a broom sticking out the back and dust pan to scoop things in the front.

MEI LING
In a battle, the way robots lose is when they get flipped on their back, so the broom will stop The Sweeper from flipping over.

WILLIAM
But a broom isn't a good weapon to attack the other machines. You should have an axe or a spinning saw blade. Maybe a flamethrower.

MEI LING

It is still a work-in-progress. But I've submitted to BattleBots. The auditions are next week. Will you come with me?

WILLIAM

I cannot. My wife says does not want me to hang out with any friends who are not male.

MEI LING

Your-- excuse me, your what?!

WILLIAM

I got married.

MEI LING

TO WHO?!

WILLIAM

Her name is Lifen. She is afraid we might like each other as more than friends. I told her she didn't have to worry, you are not my type.

MEI LING

So-- wait-- so are you telling me we can't be friends anymore?

WILLIAM

We can still be friends, I just can't-- see you anymore.

Mei Ling takes this in. She takes in a curt breath.

MEI LING

Thanks William. I really appreciate you coming all the way down here to tell me that my robot is stupid and that you can't be my friend anymore.

Mei Ling shuts down and walks into her garage.

WILLIAM

You're welcome.

The door starts closes behind her, leaving William on the driveway alone. The battlebot starts racing toward the garage and gets in just before it reaches the ground. William stares at the door for a while, and then walks away.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

William, Lifen, Mom and Dad eat dinner around a table.

MOM

Lifen, how are you enjoying America so far?

LIFEN

It's hard when you don't speak the language.

WILLIAM

When I first came to A-mer-ic-a, I did not know how to speak Eng-lish ei-ther.

Lifen nods in understanding.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I learned o-kay. I will teach you.

LIFEN

O-kay.

The family awkwardly smiles.

DAD

Have you found any places you like to go?

Lifen's eyes lights up.

LIFEN

I saw a dancing club as we drove in.

WILLIAM

Oh not tonight, it has been a long week at work.

Lifen slumps. William doesn't notice, but Dad does.

LIFEN

I think I'll go by myself.

WILLIAM

It's close by right?

INT. PARENTS' APARTMENT | WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

William plays Final Fantasy while lying in the middle of his bed.

Dad knocks on the open door.

WILLIAM
Hey Dad.

William pauses the video.

DAD
Son, how long you been married?

WILLIAM
Couple of months?

DAD
And how long have your mom and I
been married?

WILLIAM
Forever?

DAD
Just listen to me when I say that
sometime you have to put up with
things you don't want to do or
necessarily like, to make a
marriage work.

WILLIAM
Uh-huh.

DAD
William, you wife wanted you to go
with her to the nightclub.

WILLIAM
She seemed okay going by herself.
I like that she's independent.

DAD
William, she wanted you to be
there.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

William and Dad approach. A bouncer stops them

BOUNCER
I.D. please.

William pulls his driver's license out of his wallet and
hands it over. The bouncer checks it and hands it back. Dad
hands his driver's license to the Bouncer who looks at him
and just waves him through. Dad looks insulted.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

William and Dad enter a dark night club, with loud music and chili pepper lights lining the walls.

William and Dad work their way through the crowded dance floor. No sign of Lifen.

William turns and keeps looking. Dad follows him.

William emerges from the crowd and looks up to see a couple kissing. The woman pulls back and it is Lifen KISSING ANOTHER MAN. He is stopped in his tracks, heart sinking through the floor.

Dad finally finds his way out of the crowd and sees what William is looking at. Dad's anguish is palpable, even though his face doesn't move.

William is frozen.

NIGHTCLUB PATRON
Oh hey! Aren't you the She Bangs
guy?

The nightclub patron mocks the dance to the beat of the song that's playing.

NIGHTCLUB PATRON (CONT'D)
She Bangs! She Bangs!

William doesn't move.

Lifen takes the other man's hand and leads him onto the dance floor and dances with him, not knowing her husband is watching.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

CHYRON: 10 MONTHS LATER

Sat behind the bench, a Caucasian JUDGE looks down at William and Lifen separated across the aisle.

JUDGE
As California is a no fault state, it is very simple. Because you are the provider, Ms. Xiao is awarded fifty percent of your savings. You are now allowed to be granted a divorce.

William nods on the outside, though his heart falls into his stomach on the inside. Nothing he can do. His parents, who sit behind him, cry. Lifen and her parents smile.

William sits. Still. By himself, as everyone leaves the courtroom.

INT. TOYOTA COROLLA - DAY

Dad drives, Mom is in the passenger seat and William sits between them in the backseat.

MOM

*I can't believe I trusted you to
pick the right person for our son,
how could you not see this coming?*

DAD

You met her and her family too.

MOM

*You spoke to her for three months
on the computer! You probably told
her everything she needed to plan
to bleed us dry.*

DAD

*Not everything is my fault. You
were the one who took the movie gig
in China. He wouldn't have met her
so soon if it weren't for that.*

MOM

*I'm Chinese and I can't divorce you
unless you lose all our money
gambling, physically beat me, or
cheat on me. Why don't you do one
of those things so I can finally
leave you!*

William is pained this fighting, but he's stuck in the backseat with nothing to say. He puts on his headphones, which are attached to an iPod.

INT. CONDO - DAY

William opens the door to an empty, carpeted, mid-sized condo. Mom and Dad take in the new space.

WILLIAM

It's not much bigger than our old place, but at least this time, we own it.

William gifts mom the keys.

MOM

I always wondered what condominium meant. Now I know. It's half a house.

WILLIAM

There's a Chinese salon across the street...

MOM

Kevin bought his mom a... what do they call them... mansion. With a pool. And a waterfall.

WILLIAM

You don't know how to swim, mom.

Dad takes the keys from her and pats William on the back.

DAD

It's very nice William. We can be happy here.

INT. LA SHERIFF'S OFFICE | HUMAN RESOURCES - DAY

In the most boring office you can imagine, William sits across from an INTERVIEWER.

WILLIAM

... because I love statistics.

INTERVIEWER

What do you like about it?

WILLIAM

Why, what makes, what's fascinating? I love, I love how statistics allow us to quantify risk, ah, in our lives. I love assigning a number to things, you know, like I-I'm a big believer in taking calculated risks in my life. It's good to know, it's not always just 50/50.

(laughs)

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

There's actually a real way to predict things.

INTERVIEWER

I have one last question.

WILLIAM

Sure.

INTERVIEWER

This whole interview... why didn't you talk about American Idol?

WILLIAM

Oh, you know about that?

INTERVIEWER

Of course I recognize you!

William shrugs.

WILLIAM

I didn't think it was important.

INT. TOYOTA COROLLA - MORNING

William, wearing a golf shirt and slacks, drives and Mom, dressed in a cashier uniform, sits in the passenger seat. He pulls up to a discount store.

Mom takes one lunchbox and gets out of the car.

MOM

Remember to put the chicken in the fridge. And microwave it at least two minutes before you eat it.

She leaves the second lunchbox in the passenger seat. She is greeted by TWO OTHER CASHIERS in the same uniform.

William pulls away and continues driving.

INT. LA SHERIFF'S OFFICE | WILLIAM'S DESK - REALITY

William's sparse light grey desk has no pictures as compared to the desk next to him. Bored out of his mind, William stares at statistics.

He copies the file number from a file that says murder and copies that into an excel sheet. He changes the status to Open.

He copies the file number of the next file. It says rape. He changes the status to closed.

He copies the file number of the next file. It says robbery. He changes the status to open.

William's BOSS peeks over his cubical wall.

BOSS
Will. How's the spreadsheet coming?

WILLIAM
I was thinking it would be much better if we created a database to gather and analyze these statistics. I can do it on Microsoft Access.

BOSS
Don't be too creative Willy, just send it to me by the end of the day.

WILLIAM
But this could be used for future analytics and no one would have to repeat their work and--

BOSS
You work for the government now.
Just do as you're told.

William sulks. Boss walks away.

INT. WATER COOLER - LATER

William shoves his mug under the water dispenser and pushes the button. He looks at the bulletin board above and sees a sign with a microphone. He stands up to read: SPEAK YOUR TRUTH. INSPIRE PEOPLE. TOASTMASTERS. He takes the poster.

INT. SMALL BOARD ROOM - NIGHT

TOASTMASTER stands at a podium in front of a classroom of adults. William enters and sits in the back.

TOASTMASTER

One of our veteran speakers, she will be giving a Ted Talk this weekend and we have the honor of listening to and giving feedback on his speech before it is recorded and performed for a live audience of over a thousand people. And once TED posts it on YouTube, he will reach millions.

ABEEKU (40's), African, confident with a warm smile, walks up to the podium.

TOASTMASTER (CONT'D)

Please welcome Abeeku Mensah to the stage.

ABEEKU

Sawubona. This is how we greet each other in my country. Many people think it is the Zulu word for "hello", but what it signifies is that "I see you." And like in English, when people say "Thank you", you say "You're welcome". The common response to Sawubona is "I am here."

William watches Abeeku speak with grace and passion.

ABEEKU (CONT'D)

What gets lost in translation is a gratefulness that in recognizing me, you bring me into being. And until you saw me, I didn't exist.

Abeeku smirks.

ABEEKU (CONT'D)

What a great gift we can bestow upon another person. Everyday. No matter what our status, wealth, race, gender... taking a moment to truly see the soul of another person is something we all can give.

William looks around and sees the respect in people's eyes. He admires this.

INT. SMALL BOARD ROOM - LATER

The room has cleared out, a few stragglers are cleaning up. William approaches Abeeku.

WILLIAM

Sir, I really liked what you said up there.

ABEEKU

You should join Toastmasters.

WILLIAM

Oh, I don't think people would want to listen to what I say.

ABEEKU

Didn't you perform on the world stage?

WILLIAM

Yeah, but those were other people's songs.

ABEEKU

I remember your rise to fame. It wasn't about what you sang, it was what you said that made people smile. You gave us hope. And we all need that.

This strikes a chord with William.

WILLIAM

Some people laughed at my singing. If I speak, won't they laugh?

ABEEKU

But smiling is a pitstop on the way to laughing. And, even if they laugh, it means people are looking at you.

William moves to leave.

WILLIAM

I've already been looked at. I want to be seen.

INT. CHINESE GROCERY STORE - DAY

Mom pushes a cart down the aisle as William reads from a piece of paper. Dad strolls beside them, looking at packages on the shelves.

WILLIAM

... And then I got my first "D." It was in one of my civil engineering classes, and I was put on academic probation. My spirits sank and I became depressed.

Mom grabs a box off the shelf and puts it in the cart. Her face doesn't seem to like what he's saying, but she continues to listen.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I felt like I would never be able to live up to my parents' expectations and I didn't want to let my parents down after they had put in so much effort to get me where I was. To cope with my depression, I dove into a video game: Final Fantasy X and logged 200 hours in that world while escaping this one.

MOM

Stop.

WILLIAM

Do you like it so far?

MOM

Why you want to lose face and show people your ugly scars?

WILLIAM

Because it's true.

MOM

People only know what you tell them, see what you show them. You should only show them your good side.

WILLIAM

But I want to share these things with people so they know that you get to choose how to face what the world throws at you.

MOM

People are who they are, you can't change them.

WILLIAM

There's more...

MOM

I will help you fix it.

WILLIAM

I don't think it needs fix--

MOM

William, I am just protecting you.

WILLIAM

But I want to--

MOM

I'm tired of being embarrassed by you.

Mom rounds the corner, leaving William his piece of paper. Dad watches William from behind and sees his son deflate.

EXT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

William pulls up in his old Toyota Corolla and backs into a just-big-enough-space on the street. He walks up the driveway past a Porsche 911 and a Ducati motorcycle. He knocks on the door. No one answers, so he opens it and walks in.

INT. KEVIN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A banner states "Happy 30th Birthday Kevin!". Groups of husbands and wives chit-chat with each other.

William enters holding a present wrapped in Christmas paper. He sees Kevin with his arm around a pretty WIFE, speaking to a group of COLLEAGUES, all male, all Asian-American, no accents. They wear dress shirts and look like gym rats.

William approaches and stands awkwardly behind the closed group but can't find an opening to say hi to Kevin.

William moves to the drinks table, close by, and pours himself a ginger ale.

COLLEAGUE #2

Okay, I've been dying to know...
was he for real? Did he really
think he was good?

KEVIN

He was for real, dude. He wasn't
putting on an act. That I can say
for sure.

COLLEAGUE #3

I totally remember seeing William
Hung on the news.

William perks up when he hears his name.

COLLEAGUE #3 (CONT'D)

He went viral before viral was a
thing! I don't know how, it was
before Facebook, before YouTube.

COLLEAGUE #1

I hated it. It made all of us look
so bad.

William's brow furrows.

COLLEAGUE #2

He was the epitome of the
infantilized, incompetent, impotent
image I tried so hard to get away
from.

KEVIN

Yeah, it was like they had a new
Long Duck Dong to make fun of, but
in real life! I tried to convince
him not to do it.

COLLEAGUE #3

Asians with real talent can't get
jobs because they think we all look
and sound like that.

KEVIN

I was so ashamed of being his
roommate. God, he was such a joke.

William's face shows how this comment affects him.

At that point, William finds and opening and walks up. He
hands Kevin the present.

WILLIAM
Happy Birthday Kevin. You have a
very nice house.

William turns and leaves.

MUSIC CUE: RAINY DAYS AND MONDAYS BY THE CARPENTERS

INT. CUBICLE - DAY

William types data into a spreadsheet. The monotony of the cubicle looks like it's killing his soul.

EXT. STREET - DAY

William walks down a neighborhood street. He walks past the house that he was going to buy. He sees a car pull into the driveway. A HAPPY COUPLE opens the front door, the WIFE is holding a BABY. PARENTS get out of the car and the whole family hugs.

William keeps walking.

INT. CONDO | KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mom and Dad yell at each other.

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - NIGHT

William eats Panda Express out of a styrofoam container. Alone at a four person table. A FOOD COURT PATRON a couple of tables over, raises his cell phone and sneaks a picture of William, but William sees this. Food court patron pretends he didn't take the picture and goes back to eating.

INT. CONDO | WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

William, sitting alone in the dark, huddled on his bed, lit only by the glow of the television he's watching.

The American Idol logo radiates from the screen with a graphic that crashes into it stating "Season 15".

William flips the channel and sees two battlebots running into each other. He sits up as he recognizes Mei Ling's Sweeper bot getting flipped over and the other bot pushes hers into a pit. The camera cuts to a shot of Mei Ling, holding the controller, defeated.

END MUSIC CUE

EXT. CONDO SHARED YARD - DAY

William sits in an old lawn chair. Dad, holding two glasses of iced tea, joins him.

DAD

There's air conditioning inside,
why don't you go where it's more
comfortable?

WILLIAM

The heat reminds me of Hong Kong,
where we didn't have any A/C.

DAD

Do you miss home?

WILLIAM

If we couldn't get such
good Chinese food in San Gabriel
Valley, I would probably miss it
more. But I don't remember much.

Dad takes a sip from his iced tea and leans forward.

DAD

I had a decent life there. I
actually enjoyed driving a taxi
cab. I remember telling all my
passengers that I was moving to the
USA and they were all very
impressed. Some envious.

WILLIAM

Are you glad you came?

Dad looks at William.

DAD

I don't know. I came to America for
the American dream, but
(a bitter laugh)
I forgot to dream.

William looks at his Dad and really sees him for the first time.

INT. CONDO | DINING ROOM - DAY

Mom, in her cashier uniform, hands William back his speech with lots of red "X"s and black redacted marks across it, not unlike the record contract.

MOM
Here are my corrections.

William looks over the first page.

WILLIAM
Mom.

MOM
You are welcome.

WILLIAM
Are you ashamed of me?

MOM
What you talk about?

WILLIAM
You've crossed out all the parts
that show who I am.

MOM
Only the parts that make us lose
face.

William thinks.

WILLIAM
You told me you wouldn't have let
me audition if you had known. Why
not?

MOM
Well, it all work out for a while
didn't it?

WILLIAM
You didn't want me to sign the
record contract.

MOM
I supported you. I become your
agent and your manager for goodness
sake.

WILLIAM

Mom, I had three record albums. I sold over three hundred thousand copies. Hundreds of thousands of people have come out to see me perform. But none of it was enough.

Did you think I was a joke?

MOM

William... they all thought you were a joke.

The truth hits William. His nose wrinkles to avoid emotion.

MOM (CONT'D)

William...

(big breath)

you didn't see that they all were making fun of you.

William shows a BURST of emotion we have never seen.

WILLIAM

I know! I know they were making fun of me! I heard what people were saying! I saw them mock me! Sure, that stuff hurts. I don't want people to look at me like I'm stupid or silly or whatever! But-- but-- but why did you let me do it if I was an embarrassment to you?!

MOM

William. When you put your mind to something, I know there is nothing I can do to stop you.

WILLIAM

Is that what you tell yourself? Or did you want me to be famous so you could look good?

MOM

I just wanted to safeguard you as much as I could.

WILLIAM

You were willing to send me out to slaughter so you could get the house you wanted and brag to your sister!

Mom's jaw drops.

MOM

Well, if you knew, why did you do it? Why did you send yourself out to slaughter?

WILLIAM

Because I wanted to be a somebody to make you proud!

This stops Mom in her tracks.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I was able to put smiles on a lot of people's faces, but I can never put a smile on your face. You always want me to change who I am, or look better or save face. But what if who I am isn't pretty, what if I do have ugly scars?

Mom looks down.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You chose to be silent when your family shut you down, are you trying to silence me now?

William walks out the door, leaving Mom to think about that last statement.

EXT. CONDO - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC CUE: SLOW INSTRUMENTAL VERSION OF A MOMENT LIKE THIS BY KELLY CLARKSON

William walks out the front door, past the garbage bins. He throws the redacted speech into the recycling bin and keeps walking.

William walks and walks.

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

Mom sits, still as a statue, as the stylist works on her hair.

INT. DISTRICT FINALS BACKSTAGE - INTERCUT

Toastmaster District Finals banners are hung across the stage. William watches the CURRENT SPEAKER from the wings of the stage.

STAGE MANAGER comes by.

STAGE MANAGER
William, you're on deck.

INT. HAIR SALON - INTERCUT

The other Chinese women chitter-chatter like birds around Mom. She just stares at herself in the mirror. Silent.

INT. DISTRICT FINALS BACKSTAGE - INTERCUT

William scans the audience and sees Dad in one corner and Abeeku in the other. No sign of Mom.

INT. STAGE - DAY

TEDX HOST stands in the middle of the stage.

TOASTMASTER HOST
Our next speaker is William Hung.

A polite applause from the small audience. William walks to the podium in the center of the stage. He looks out at a sea of unfamiliar faces.

WILLIAM
I'm a relentless optimist, but I think there is also another bitter truth: the world can be a cruel place.

A hush takes over the crowd as they are drawn in.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You've probably experienced some degree of mean-spiritedness if you've ever been on the internet. I feel I came of age when people being open about their insults made their public debut, and I think that maybe some of the blame belongs to my ticket to fame: American Idol. The talent show with a panel of judges served as a way not only to admire performers with singing ability but to publicly shame those without it, and no one more so than yours truly.

William sees a person enter from the back. It's mom, with her hair done nicely. She quietly moves to the seat Dad saved.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

In fact, it's quite possible that my performance marked something of a turning point in which we were all given license to play Simon Cowell in our own lives with the power to sit back and scorn the people around us. Even though most people didn't make fun of me to my face, I heard what people were saying. I saw them mock me. I felt the bruises and grew the scars. It hurt when people laughed at me. But then I ask why? Why make fun of someone who is giving it a go? Someone who is on the court, trying it out. You know, so many people get criticized and then give up...

William looks at directly at his Mom, who shifts uncomfortably.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

...before they even get started. And that makes me so sad. That because someone once judged you, that you never let yourself be heard again.

Mom's face stays still, but a flicker emotion may have escaped through her eyes. We can't tell.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

To those who snicker and ridicule, do you ever think that maybe, that person who could have become your favorite artist, stopped painting, that the person who might say that thing you needed to hear, shut her voice down, or who might have sang the song that captures how you feel, stopped singing, because you put them down?

William looks at Dad.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

But listen, I don't fault Mr. Cowell for doing his job. I get it. In fact, I participated in it.

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

But his criticism was just the beginning of what I experienced because of my audition. Some media critics accused me of perpetuating an Asian stereotype.

William makes eye contact with Kevin.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

They suggested my notoriety would set back legitimate Asian performers in the entertainment industry. That bothers me more than anything Mr. Cowell said.

William holds his head high.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Think about what those critics are suggesting when they urge me to step aside for other Asians. Aren't they saying that because other people might stereotype me, that is my problem rather than their problem? And that because I look or talk a certain way, I should go away and hide somewhere so that other, more TV-friendly Asian types should be showcased in the spotlight? I don't want to throw around labels, but that strikes me as a being kind of racist.

William pauses. And then softens.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I saw and understood how most Asians tended to get mostly negative acting roles, like geeks or prostitutes. However, I haven't and won't apologize for my audition or my subsequent fame. If others want to claim I represent a negative stereotype, they can explain what they mean and try to justify it.

Kevin shrinks in his seat. A slight nod acknowledges that William is right.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I am a unique person. And you are too.

(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

No matter what people say, you deserve to have dreams like anyone else, and I encourage you to pursue them.

William looks at his dad, who looks at him, very proud, maybe even a tear might be forming.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

What's your dream? Are you willing to sing like no one's listening or dance like no one's watching? If you are, the world will be a better place. I wish you every success in your noble endeavor to better this globe. We need you and your dreams!

The audience claps heartily. Kevin starts clapping slowly.

Mom stays seated and stares straight ahead. Dad looks at her and is scared to stand up.

Kevin is so moved, he stands up and claps harder. William sees him.

EXT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The crowd is dwindling and William is still accepting praise from audience members.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

I really appreciate what you said today. Because I was one of those people who laughed.

(bows his head in apology)
But I'm glad you didn't shut down your voice.

WILLIAM

Thank you for listening.

Kevin is next in line.

KEVIN

William.

WILLIAM

Kevin.

Kevin pulls a card out of his wallet.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Oh, I don't accept tips.

Kevin smirks and hands William the holographic Mewtwo Pokemon card.

KEVIN
I kept it in my wallet.

William takes the card and studies it.

WILLIAM
That was very silly Kevin, this is a collectors item. If it were in mint condition, you could sell it for a thousand dollars.

KEVIN
It's worth more than that to me.

DAD (O.S.)
William!

William turns and sees his dad and stern-looking mom waiting for him.

INT. CAR - LATER

William sits in the center back seat. Dad and Mom stare straight out the windshield. SILENCE. Uh-Oh.

William stares at the back of his mother's head, waiting for her to say something. She doesn't move.

They drive, their three heads sway in unison as the car turns.

Then... softly...

Mom starts sing.

MOM
DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART

Mom looks straight ahead and sings the next line, tentatively. William's eyes widen.

MOM (CONT'D)
YOU COULDN'T IF YOU TRIED

Dad looks at Mom out of the corner of eye, processing what is going on.

MOM (CONT'D)
HONEY, IF I GET RESTLESS

Mom's voice starts to build and she sways slightly to her own beat.

MOM (CONT'D)
BABY, I'M NOT THAT KIND

Dad looks at Mom, he can't hide his smile.

MOM (CONT'D)
Don't go breaking my heart

MOM (CONT'D) DAD
I TAKE THE-- YOU TAKE THE WEIGHT OFF ME

Mom smiles and squeezes her husband's hand. She turns to William in the backseat and thanks him with her eyes.

William smiles.

DAD (CONT'D)
OH, HONEY, WHEN YOU KNOCK ON MY
DOOR

MOM
OOH, I GAVE YOU MY KEY

WILLIAM
(bops to the beat)
OOH-HOO, NOBODY KNOWS IT

The music starts to join the acapella.

MOM
WHEN I WAS DOWN

WILLIAM
I WAS YOUR CLOWN

The instrumentals build.

WHOLE HUNG FAMILY
OOH-HOO, NOBODY KNOWS IT,

MOM
NOBODY KNOWS

William grooves in the backseat.

DAD
RIGHT FROM THE START

MOM
I GAVE YOU MY HEART

DAD
OH OH, I GAVE YOU MY HEART

WHOLE HUNG FAMILY
SO DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART
I WON'T GO BREAKING YOUR HEART
DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The trio sings as they drive along.

INT. STADIUM - DAY

The spotlight is on a small stage, the rest of the audience surrounding the platform on all four sides is dimly lit. Everyone is cheering and shouting as if they are at a WWF match, except everyone here is wearing matching T-shirts and glasses.

On one side is a PLAYER, tough-looking male, wearing a bandana, vigorously maneuvering the controls. And on the other side is Mei Ling, full head of hair dyed red kicking ass with her controller. She yells aggressively as her bot tips the other bot over to it's side. And then she flips it over onto it's back. And while it's on it's side, she pushes it into the pit of death!

Mei Ling jumps and cheers. Her teammates crowd around and hug her. The audience jumps up from their seats!

INT. STADIUM - LATER

Some NERDY AUDIENCE MEMBERS give Mei Ling a high five and some praise. William stands next in line. He catches Mei Ling's eye. She blinks in surprise at seeing him.

MEI LING
You must have put the wrong date in
your calendar. The Pokemon
Tournament is here next weekend.

William giggles.

WILLIAM
Hi Mei Ling.

Mei Ling walks William to a quiet corner and they sit next to each other.

MEI LING
Did you see the match?

WILLIAM
Yes, the double flip was very cool.

MEI LING
I call it the death roll.

WILLIAM
But I thought robots can't die.

Mei Ling makes a face.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I just made a speech about failure
and it made me think about you.

MEI LING
I'm glad you associate me with
failure.

WILLIAM
No, I mean... everyone thinks
American Idol was my worst failure.
But it was... what I did to you.

William bows his head in an apology.

MEI LING
Well, what can you do, it's in the
past and I haven't built my time
travel robot yet.

Mei Ling smiles and William takes this as an acceptance of his apology.

INT. VEGAS STAGE - NIGHT

An empty stage. A huge crowd. The light splash on.

MUSIC CUE: "SHE BANGS" BY RICKY MARTIN

We recognize the beat that wafts over the crowd. Ricky Martin walks on stage holding a microphone.

RICKY MARTIN
Y'all may remember this one.

RICKY MARTIN (CONT'D)

TALK TO ME
TELL ME YOUR NAME
YOU BLOW ME OFF LIKE IT'S ALL THE
SAME

Mei Ling has a front row center seat. Her head bops to the music.

RICKY MARTIN (CONT'D)

YOU LIT A FUSE AND NOW I'M TICKING
AWAY
LIKE A BOMB
YEAH, BABY
TALK TO ME
TELL ME YOUR SIGN
YOU'RE SWITCHING SIDES LIKE A
GEMINI
YOU'RE PLAYING GAMES AND NOW YOU'RE
HITTIN' MY HEART
LIKE A DRUM
YEAH, BABY

Ricky stops shaking his hips and speaks into the mic.

RICKY MARTIN (CONT'D)

We have a special surprise for you
today... please welcome William
Hung to the stage!

William emerges from the wings and the crowd goes WILD!

WILLIAM

WELL IF LADY LUCK GETS ON MY SIDE
WE'RE GONNA ROCK THIS TOWN ALIVE

The joy in the audience is palpable. William sings to Mei Ling. They make eye contact and smile. Mei Ling's body grooves to the music.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

I'LL LET HER ROUGH ME UP
'TILL SHE KNOCKS ME OUT
SHE WALKS LIKE SHE TALKS
AND SHE TALKS LIKE SHE WALKS

People anticipate the chorus and jump up to dance and sing and join in.

RICKY MARTIN

AND SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS
OH BABY
WHEN SHE MOVES, SHE MOVES
I GO CRAZY

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

AND SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS
OH BABY
WHEN SHE MOVES, SHE MOVES
I GO CRAZY

Mei Ling finally gets up and DANCES with everyone else! She's TERRIBLE, awkward, uncoordinated and flailing. But it's awesome and she dances like no one's watching.

RICKY MARTIN (CONT'D)	WILLIAM (CONT'D)
'CAUSE SHE LOOKS LIKE A	'CAUSE SHE LOOKS LIKE A
FLOWER BUT SHE STINGS LIKE A	FLOWER BUT SHE STINGS LIKE A
BEE	BEE
LIKE EVERY GIRL IN HISTORY	LIKE EVERY GIRL IN HISTORY
SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS	SHE BANGS, SHE BANGS

FREEZE FRAME on Ricky Martin with his arm around William. Both of their mics in the air.

END