

SAVAGE SCHOOL DAYS

by

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Registered WGAw
Property of Screen Gems

AGAINST A BLACK SCREEN:

We hear two loud, startling GUNSHOTS... followed by the sound of someone FALLING and labored BREATHING as we

FADE IN:

EXT. STAR-FILLED SKY - NIGHT

A full moon rests in the star-filled sky. Dark clouds pass over the moon, blackening the screen.

We see JAKE NEAL, flat on his back against a patch of grass. His face is streaked with blood as he stares up at the night sky. Jake bites his lip, wincing in pain.

JAKE'S VOICE

I knew I had to get up and get back to the car. If I could just do that, then maybe I'd have a chance.

Jake struggles to his feet. As he staggers forward we see he's in some kind of open-air football stadium.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Jake falls against his car, leaking blood. He gets the door open and slides in.

JAKE'S VOICE

And I was running out of time. It was after midnight and I had to be cleaned up for school the next day. It'd look suspicious if I ditched.

INT. JAKE'S SWERVING CAR - NIGHT

Jake's face is pale white. He fights to stay conscious as he steers through traffic, clutching the wheel.

JAKE'S VOICE

I always figured I was a good judge of character. But when I think about the choices that led me to this fucked-up moment, I don't know... Maybe it was just bad luck.

Move in on Jake, gritting his teeth.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROSEDALE HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Superimpose: Eight weeks earlier.

The flag is raised above a well-tended campus with an open-air commons. A stereo BLARES Everclear's "I Will Buy You A New Life" as students arrive in flashy gift cars.

JAKE'S VOICE

It started the first day of school,
senior year. It was my third school
in as many years...

A VINTAGE 1968 MUSTANG cruises into the lot. All rust and dents, it is the only American-made muscle car visible.

A cleaned-up version of JASON "JAKE" NEAL (18) is behind the wheel. He's lean and pale, dressed in a worn T-shirt, black work pants and boots.

He parks and gets out, catching looks from the ladies.

EXT. MAIN COMMONS

Jake moves through a crowd. His T-shirt and jeans are in marked contrast to the Abercrombie & Fitch-clad students.

Jake asks a PRETTY GIRL for directions. She happily points the way.

INT. FRONT OFFICE, CONFERENCE ROOM

Jake sits in front of counselor TEDDY LARKIN (30s), a career educator in a sweater vest and wire-frame glasses. Jake's file is open in front of him.

LARKIN

(scanning file)

In and out of youth detention since
you were twelve: criminal mischief,
shoplifting, destruction of school
property.

Jake shifts uncomfortably in his chair. Larkin closes the file and gives Jake a sympathetic look.

LARKIN (CONT'D)

Even with your family history, you
know this is unacceptable behavior.

JAKE
(defensive)
I was hoping for a fresh start.

LARKIN
That's why you're here, Jake. I sponsored your enrollment in order to give you another chance.

JAKE
Why help me?

LARKIN
I flagged your file because you scored high on your SATs and seem to do well in class... when you're not in trouble. The only question is, can you stay out of trouble?

Larkin waits for an answer.

JAKE
I'll try. But it seems to find me, you know?

LARKIN
Look, you screw up again you get shipped to youth detention. You're running out of options.

Jake nods, looking down at his shoes.

JAKE
Okay. I'll try.

LARKIN
You have to meet with me twice a week for counseling.

JAKE
I don't need that.

LARKIN
Sessions are required.
(checking watch)
Now lets get you a class schedule and locker assignment.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jake reads from a sheet of paper, looking for his locker. He hears a commotion down the hall: three football JOCKS are harassing an undersized NERD.

TRENT (the quarterback) shoves the nerd into a locker. The others force-feed him nickels and dimes.

TRENT
Bitch, relax your throat!

Jake joins a circle of onlookers. The nerd's head is jammed against a locker. He's choking. Jake debates whether to get involved. He finally steps forward.

JAKE
Hey, boss. Don't you think he's had enough?

Silence. Trent slowly turns and faces Jake.

TRENT
What did you say?

JAKE
He's turning purple.

Trent drops his fistful of coins that SCATTER on the floor as he steps closer to Jake. The crowd goes tense.

TRENT
Dudley-fucking Do-Right, do you have a problem?

JAKE
Yeah, you're in front of my locker.

Jake looks up at the hulking Trent. He doesn't bat an eye. Onlookers are impressed by Jake's cool.

Trent glares at him, then slowly cracks an amused smile.

TRENT
Let the man get to his locker.

The other jocks step aside. Jake moves past Trent and starts working his locker combination as the BELL rings.

INT. SCHOOL LUNCHROOM

Students sit in clusters. The social food chain is intact.

Jake eats alone at an empty table until DANNY MULLEN sits down across from Jake. Danny is the undersized nerd from earlier. He's just looking to survive high school.

DANNY
I'm Danny Mullen.

Jake nods. Danny watches him eat.

DANNY (CONT'D)
From this morning in the hall.

JAKE
I remember. Are you okay?

DANNY
Yeah. Believe me, I've crapped
enough change to pay for my first
two years of college.
(more serious)
Thanks for stepping in.

JAKE
Why do you let them do it?

DANNY
I stood up to Trent once. He fed
me a biology textbook. I started
projectile vomiting halfway through
chapter three, which ironically
covered the digestive system.

Jake LAUGHS and shoves his lunch tray away.

JAKE
Lunch is over.

DANNY
I heard you got expelled from
Marshall for torching the place.

JAKE
(not amused)
Where did you hear that?

DANNY
I work for the school paper. If
you want to know anything about
anybody, I'm the guy.

Jake realizes Danny is trying to impress him. He points to a
dark-haired girl sitting alone in a wheelchair.

JAKE
Okay. How about her?

DANNY
Shannon Briggs. She got shit-faced
at a party sophomore year and did a
swan dive off the balcony.

JAKE
You saw it?

DANNY
Yeah. She couldn't breath for like
three minutes until they cut a hole
in her throat.

Danny rambles on, but Jake is no longer listening. Someone
ACROSS THE LUNCHROOM has caught his eye:

ELENA HOOKS, a blonde cheerleader in uniform, glides by
chewing red licorice. She glances over, noticing Jake's
gaze, before sitting down at the popular jock table.

Jake is struck by her cool confidence, her perfectly tanned
shoulders and her ice-blue eyes. She is splendid.

JAKE
(to Danny)
Who is she?

DANNY
Elena Hooks.

Jake can't keep his eyes off her.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Forget her. It's a waste of time.
She hangs with those steroid pricks
from the deep end of the gene pool.

JAKE
Is she hooked up with anybody?

Danny points to TRENT SHELTON, the oversized jock who was
tormenting Danny earlier. He sits down next to Elena.

DANNY
Trent Shelton. Star quarterback
and all around golden boy. He's
what passes for a stud around here.

Jake watches Elena spoon-feed Trent frozen yogurt.

JAKE
Tell me more about her.

DANNY
Like what?

JAKE

Like anything. What kind of music does she listen to? Who's her favorite cartoon character?

DANNY

Hey, we don't exactly run in the same circles.

Frustrated, Jake turns to Danny.

JAKE

Any idea where she'll be next period?

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Jake enters and looks around for Elena. He searches THE STACKS until he sees her between two large bookshelves.

He grabs a book off the shelf and pretends to browse.

ELENA

Ces livre sont en francais.

JAKE

Excuse me?

ELENA

(pointing)

I said that book is in French.

Jake looks at the text and realizes he's busted. He shakes his head, shoots her his best smile.

JAKE

And obviously I don't speak French.

ELENA

Obviously.

JAKE

So the questions is, what am I doing here?

ELENA

(amused smile)

Maybe you were trying to run into me sort of accidentally on purpose.

JAKE

I'm Jake.

ELENA
I've heard about you.

JAKE
Heard what?

Jake steps closer. Her eyes quickly race over his body.

ELENA
That you spent last summer at a
youth detention facility.

JAKE
News travels fast.

ELENA
Tell me, are you trouble?

JAKE
Maybe to a spoiled cheerleader
whose idea of a hot time is the
Spring sale at Bloomingdales.

She laughs.

ELENA
You need to be at least twenty
before acting all jaded.

They look at each other, smiling. Sex-charged silence.
Elena moves away, browsing.

JAKE
I was thinking you could show me
around after school.

ELENA
(shaking her head)
No. I have a rather large
boyfriend.

She shows him a CLASS RING on a chain around her neck. Jake
looks at it.

JAKE
Doesn't he have football practice?

ELENA
Not that it's your business, but I
wait for him. It gives me time to
study.

JAKE
We'll study together.

ELENA

I don't need a study partner.

JAKE

Doesn't it depend on the subject?

Elena smiles.

ELENA

Tell me, does this alienated youth act work with all the girls or just freshmen?

JAKE

(a joke)

Mostly older women, like seniors.

Elena climbs a footstool, reaching for a book. Her blouse rises up, revealing her lean, flat stomach.

JAKE

Come with me Friday. This band is playing at a club downtown -

ELENA

Tempting, but I have plans.

JAKE

Bloomingdales and a movie with the oversized boyfriend?

ELENA

A party at his house... for his birthday. Everybody'll be there.

JAKE

And you're inviting me?

She looks at him for a moment.

ELENA

I don't know. Am I?

The BELL RINGS, startling both of them. Elena smiles and walks past Jake. He watches until she is gone.

LARKIN'S VOICE

I want you to feel free to talk about whatever is on you're mind.

INT. LARKIN'S OFFICE

A fish aquarium bubbles in the background. Larkin sits at his desk, his psychology diplomas on the wall behind him.

Jake is "on the couch", body language closed and defensive.

JAKE

We barely know each other.

LARKIN

Sometimes that makes it easier.

Larkin waits. After a beat:

JAKE

What do you want me to say?

LARKIN

Start with foster care. How's it going?

JAKE

It smells like a hospital, the food is awful and the old man builds model planes. They watch "Wheel of Fortune" like five times a day.

LARKIN

And your relationship with them?

JAKE

I just described it.

Larkin scribbles on a legal pad.

LARKIN

You don't talk to them?

JAKE

Not much.

LARKIN

What about your dad? Has he been in contact?

Jake just looks at the fish tank.

LARKIN

Have you been to visit him?

No answer. The WARNING BELL rings. Jake grabs his bag and walks past Larkin out the door.

EXT. PARKING LOT, AFTER SCHOOL

Jake drives past CHEERLEADERS stretching. Elena lounges in shorts and a halter. She returns Jake's gaze.

INT. JAKE'S FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

Frozen in time, circa 1962: plastic covers on the furniture and a portrait of John F. Kennedy over the fireplace.

At dinner, Jake eats in silence with RUTH, a frumpy woman in an apron. All we hear is forks CLINKING against plates.

Ruth's husband, ARCHIE, sits assembling a model airplane. Ruth pulls a letter out of her dress and hands it to Jake.

RUTH

This came for you today.

Jake sees the return address: **Dorian State Prison.**

He tears it open and pockets a \$10 bill from inside. There is also a pencil-written note from "Dad", which Jake begins to read with interest.

EXT. SHELTON MANSION - NIGHT

The jewel of an affluent gated community. Cars are parked up and down the street. Party music BLARES from inside.

INT. SHELTON MANSION

Jake and Danny are frisked at the door by HECTOR DIAZ (40s), a well-dressed Hispanic bouncer. Diaz pats Jake down as he grumbles to another bouncer.

DIAZ

Eight years on the job and I'm door patrol at a freaking kegger.

(finishes the frisk)

Okay. Go.

As Diaz signals them through, Jake sees a holstered .38 inside his jacket. Jake glances back, whispering to Danny.

JAKE

I've never been frisked for a high school party. Who was that?

DANNY

Hector Diaz. He used to be a cop,
now he works for old man Shelton.

JAKE

Doing what?

DANNY

Whatever bullshit job the old man
needs, mostly keeping Trent out of
trouble.

The MUSIC grows louder as they move outside.

EXT. PATIO & POOL AREA

The party RAGES as teens groove around the pool. Girls in
swimsuits move to Snoop Dogg's "Lollipop".

Jake scans the crowd for Elena, but doesn't see her.

JAKE

Trent needs a baby sitter? What's
he ever done?

DANNY

He was involved in a hit-and-run on
an eight-year-old girl last summer.
The dude was tanked, but Diaz got
the charges dropped.

JAKE

How?

DANNY

He reached out to his pals on the
force, spread the old man's money
around. The whole thing just went
away.

Danny points to a cabana at one end of the pool.

DANNY

Open bar. Let's do it.

Jake moves through the crowd, looking for Elena. He drifts
over near THE POOL when he sees

ELENA

in a sarong and red bikini top, dancing, hips swaying to the
beat.

Jake watches Elena remove her sarong and dance onto the springboard. She DIVES in and swims to the shallow end. She gets out and strolls inside the house.

Jake holds out as long as he can, then goes after her.

INT. SHELTON MANSION

He follows her trail of water through an ornate LIVING ROOM which conveys extreme wealth. It leads to --

INT. BILLIARD ROOM

It has an oak table, leather armchairs and a full bar. On the wall is a shrine to young Trent Shelton: trophies, framed clippings and sports photos.

BEHIND THE BAR - Elena is toweling off with her back to Jake. He sees her perfectly arched back as she slips a T-shirt over a wet bikini top.

She notices him and isn't embarrassed.

ELENA

I didn't see you.

JAKE

I didn't want to startle you.

ELENA

Thanks. Any luck finding a study partner?

JAKE

The search continues. You still waiting on the large boyfriend?

ELENA

Yes. This is his large house and his dad's large supply of expensive liquor.

Elena pours two glasses of whiskey. She hands one to Jake. He can't keep his eyes off a bead of water sliding down her chest.

ELENA

How did you find me?

He points to the water on the wood floor.

JAKE
Followed your trail.

ELENA
Do you really think I'd slag over
my boyfriend at his own party?

JAKE
I wasn't thinking at all. You
walked inside and I followed.

ELENA
So it was like a natural reflex?

JAKE
That's right.

He moves around behind the bar, closer to her.

ELENA
(smiling)
You shouldn't have come. It's not
going to happen.

JAKE
Then why give me the time of day?

ELENA
Maybe I like to play games. Maybe
I'm bored and it's fun to flirt.

JAKE
Maybe you're looking for something
new, to shake things up.

ELENA
Or maybe I'm wasted. Jake, there
are plenty of girls here tonight -

JAKE
They didn't invite me.

Elena gives him a look.

ELENA
Neither did I.

EXT. MANSION, POOL AREA

The party rages as Trent looks around for Elena. He pulls
Diaz aside and yells over the LOUD MUSIC.

TRENT
(pissed off)
Where's Elena?

Diaz shakes his head, doesn't know. Trent storms off.

INT. BILLIARD ROOM

Jake and Elena are in mid-drink behind the bar. He points to Trent's shrine.

JAKE
Why are you with this guy?

ELENA
Hey, we all worship at the shrine
of Trent.

JAKE
You don't sound convinced.

ELENA
I'm happy enough.

JAKE
What does that mean?

ELENA
It means I like you but it's time
to finish your drink and go back to
the party.
(noticing his look)
It's just chemistry. Don't let it
go to your head.

They hear the DOORKNOB RATTLE as the doors begins to open.

TRENT'S VOICE
(behind the door)
Elena?!

Elena signals Jake to hide. He dips down, crouching below the bar. He hears Trent walk up to Elena.

TRENT
What are you doing?

ELENA
What does it look like? I'm
changing into dry clothes.

TRENT

There are six fucking bathrooms in this house. You're not supposed to be in here.

ELENA

I'm sorry.

Elena sees Jake's whiskey glass on the bar. She quickly looks the other way.

TRENT

And tell me when you decide to go off somewhere. I look like a dick chasing you around.

ELENA

Then don't chase me, asshole. I said I was sorry.

Trent points to Jake's glass.

TRENT

The extra drink. Who's it for?

ELENA

(thinking fast)

I don't know. It was here along with the bottle when I came in.

Trent gives her a suspicious look. She holds his gaze as Jake sweats it out under the bar.

TRENT

Just stop swilling my dad's booze and shut the door when you leave.

ELENA

Happy Birthday, jerk.

Trent leaves, SLAMMING the door. Jake stands up.

JAKE

Excuse me, but *what a dick*.

ELENA

(upset and shaky)

It's like that all the time. It makes him feel like a big man.

JAKE

You don't have to take it.

He puts a comforting hand on her shoulder. She moves away.

ELENA

I have to get out of here.

JAKE

I'll drive you.

ELENA

No. That's not what I meant.

JAKE

We'll go somewhere and talk.

She looks up at Jake for what seems like a long time.

ELENA

(intense whisper)

Just talk. That's it. I'm serious. You don't know what he'd do to me if he found out.

JAKE

I get it.

As they move to the door:

ELENA

I'll meet you down the block in five minutes.

Jake leaves.

EXT. SHELTON MANSION

Eager, Jake waits in his Mustang a few houses down. He sees Elena exit the front door and flashes his headlights. She runs over, gets in and slides down on the floorboard.

ELENA

Drive.

He accelerates down the block, sees Danny on the front lawn and waves as he RACES past.

INT. JAKE'S MOVING CAR

He drives while Elena slides cutoff shorts over her bikini bottoms. He sneaks a glimpse of her tanned legs.

JAKE

Where're we going?

ELENA

I know a place. Next left.

Jake accelerates through traffic.

EXT. LAKE WEATHERBY DOCKS - NIGHT

The lake is calm, reflecting a three-quarter-moon.

Jake's Mustang cruises down a gravel road. It pulls to a stop overlooking the docks. Nelly's "Gettin' It Started" plays from the stereo.

INT. JAKE'S PARKED MUSTANG

Jake waits for Elena, who glances over like she wants to kiss him. Instead, she steps out.

EXT. THE DOCKS

Jake follows her down the ramp. The splendor of the lake appears in front of them.

JAKE

It's beautiful.

ELENA

I love it at night. Sometimes I'll swim out to the center of the lake and tread water under the stars.

She kicks off her sandals and strips to her swimsuit. She takes in a breath of night air.

JAKE

Thanks for bringing me.

ELENA

I can't even believe I bailed on Trent's party. I must be insane.

JAKE

Hey, you're safe with me.

ELENA

I believe you.

Jake moves close to her. Elena nervously moves away and DIVES in the water. She swims off.

Jake pulls off his shirt and jeans and dives in. They swim to a nearby SHALLOW COVE.

JAKE

It's warm.

ELENA

The sun heats the rocks during the day and it warms the water. It's like a hot spring.

Jake swims up to her. He pulls her close, kissing her. She kisses him back, but fights it.

We hear distant THUNDER as the WIND picks up.

ELENA

Jake, please... we should get out.

JAKE

We just got in.

He kisses her again. This time she breaks free.

ELENA

No. The rains are coming.

She swims to the dock, climbs up and runs for the car as a light RAIN begins to fall. Jake follows her.

AT THE CAR -

She is standing at the passenger door. The body of the car is between them. They stare at each other over the roof as the skies open and it RAINS harder.

Jake gets in and turns the heat up. He leans over, opening the passenger door.

Elena is standing in the pouring rain. His eyes lock with hers for a long beat. Imploring her.

JAKE

Come inside.

He offers his hand. She takes it and climbs inside.

INT. JAKE'S MUSTANG

It's like a sauna with the heater blowing warm air. They slide into an embrace.

Elena kisses Jake hungrily. She runs her hands through his hair. Jake pulls her tight. She bites her lip, breathing excitedly.

Jake looks deep into her eyes. Elena is feral, flush with heat. They slide down the seat and he moves over her.

A HEAVY RAIN beats down on the car roof.

EXT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The rain has stopped, but the streets are still wet. Jake's Mustang pulls up in front of a rundown courtyard apartment.

Jake walks her up, looks over the dreary dwelling.

ELENA

Can you stay the night?

JAKE

Sure. I won't be missed. You live here?

ELENA

Surprised?

JAKE

Yeah. It's like coming home.

EXT. BALCONY

Elena's step-dad, LONNIE, opens the screen door. Lonnie wears a Scooby-Doo T-shirt and has Bob Marley tattoos on each arm. He looks stoned and happy.

ELENA

Dad, this is Jake.

Lonnie gives Jake a friendly handshake.

LONNIE

What happened to Richie Rich?

ELENA

I gave him the night off.

She leads Jake inside.

INT. ELENA'S APARTMENT

Jake enters and sees a WATER BONG on the coffee table next to a bottle of Cuervo 190. A "Green Acres" re-run plays on the tube.

Jake doesn't know what to make of the scene.

LONNIE

Don't blow it with the rich kid.
(to Jake)
No offense, pal.

JAKE

None taken.

Lonnie pulls him aside.

LONNIE

(whispering)
Is that your Mustang outside?

ELENA

Forget it, Lonnie. He's not going on a food run. Call Pink Dot. You got them on speed dial.

Lonnie sits on the couch. He fires up the bong and inhales deeply. His eyes glaze over as he switches channels.

LONNIE

Sit down, Jake. They're replaying South Park on Comedy Channel -

ELENA

Time for bed.

INT. ELENA'S BEDROOM

Elena closes the door. Jake collapses on the bed while she checks her answering machine.

ELENA

Twelve messages.

She hits play.

TRENT'S VOICE

(message #1)
It's Trent! Where the fuck -
(message #2)
Elena! I'm really pissed -
(message #3)
(MORE)

TRENT'S VOICE (cont'd)

It's Trent!
(message #4)
You bitch -

Elena shuts off the machine and sits next to Jake.

ELENA

You're going to get me in a lot of
trouble, you know that?

She kisses him softly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROSEDALE HIGH - DAY

Monday morning. The flag is raised as students arrive.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jake hangs out before class. He glances through the crowd at Elena who in a heated argument with Trent. It ends when he angrily PUNCHES his locker and walks off.

Elena's friends, LAUREN and STACEY crowd around Elena to see if she's okay.

STACEY

You shouldn't have left without
telling him.

LAUREN

Fuck him if he can't take a joke.

The girls walk Elena to class. As they pass Jake, Elena flashes him a killer smile.

LAUREN

You should've seen him after you
left. He was trashed and pissed
off.

STACEY

He even tried to fight Angus. It
was insane.

Jake moves off in the other direction.

INT. GYM CLASS

Jake and Danny are lifting weights. Jake is doing bench-presses with his shirt off. Danny is spotting him.

DANNY

You disappear, leave me alone with free booze and a party full of wasted girls in bikinis. I think deserve to know what happened.

JAKE

I was bored so I left.

DANNY

Bullshit. Who is she?

JAKE

Nobody.

Jake finishes his cycle. They remove all the weights except two five-pound discs. Danny gets on the bench.

DANNY

It's definitely a girl. Just tell me. I'm going to find out anyway.

JAKE

There's nothing to tell. I lead a lonely life.

DANNY

No, that would be me. Which is why I need all the sordid details.

JAKE

(laughing)

You are seriously pathetic.

Danny strains under the weight, arms shaking as the bar begins to choke him.

DANNY

Need a little help!

Jake leans over and lifts the bar with one hand.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Jake comes out of the shower, a towel around his waist. He opens his locker and sees a note taped inside the door. He reads it and breaks into a smile.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS

MISS DANVERS runs through the roll call. Students reply with "here" or "present" until she gets to Elena.

DANVERS
Hooks. Elena Hooks?

No answer. Elena's chair is empty. Danvers then moves onto Jake's name.

DANVERS
Neal. Jake Neal?

Again, no answer. Jake's chair is also empty. Fade up on Coldplay's "Warning Sign".

CUT TO:

EXT. JAKE'S MUSTANG, MOVING

Jake and Elena glide down a stretch of road, top down, wind blowing through their hair.

INT. JAKE'S MUSTANG, MOVING

Elena sits with her feet on the dash. She lights a joint, takes a hit and offers it to Jake. They talk over the wind and music.

JAKE
(re: the joint)
Where did you score this?

ELENA
I swiped it from Lonnie's stash.

Jake takes a hit and hands it back to Elena.

ELENA
(very casual)
He's got a footlocker under his bed filled with handguns, a ton of weed and other pharmaceuticals.

JAKE
He's a dealer?

ELENA

Lonnie's a decent guy. He gives me a place to stay and money when he's got it to give. There's only one house rule -

JAKE

(laughing)
Stay clear of his stash.

Sublime's "Santeria" comes on the radio. Elena rests her head on his shoulder.

EXT. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Establishing.

INT. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

VARIOUS SHOTS: Jake in front of a Pollack abstract; Elena staring at a wall-size Rothko; Jake and Elena, both wearing sunglasses, stare at Francis Bacon's "Self Portrait".

EXT. RETRO CLOTHING STORE

Jake's Mustang is parked on the street.

INT. RETRO CLOTHING STORE

MORE SHOTS: Jake and Elena check out lava lamps, strobe lights, and magic eight-balls; Jake shows Elena a vintage Ford Mustang key chain, checks the price and puts it back.

EXT. CITY SQUARE PARK

Jake and Elena sit on a park bench eating pizza. The sun is warm.

ELENA

So... they killed him?

JAKE

My dad didn't, but he was in on the robbery. It was bad luck.

She feeds him a bite of her pizza.

ELENA

Do you ever visit him?

JAKE

I go upstate once a month. He sends letters telling me how he found Jesus and it was the best thing that ever happened to him.

ELENA

How old were you?

JAKE

Like thirteen.

ELENA

I'm sorry.

JAKE

Don't be. He's a better dad now than before he got sent up.

Jake laughs and shakes his head. After a beat, Elena slides her hand inside his.

ELENA

My mom split for Nashville when I was twelve...

Elena continues talking as we pull away.

INT. HIP USED CD STORE

Jake and Elena sit together, wearing headphones. FADE UP on the song they're listening to: Radiohead's "Sail To The Moon".

EXT. LAKE WEATHERBY DOCKS - NIGHT

The song plays as we move across the dock, over discarded shoes and clothes, across sunglasses and car keys.

CENTER OF THE LAKE - Elena and Jake tread water together under a full moon. It's the end of a perfect day.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LARKIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Larkin feeds his fish. Jake sits for another session. He seems more relaxed than before. Larkin studies him.

LARKIN

Your teachers tell me you're a model student.

JAKE

I'm just trying to fit in.

LARKIN

And doing a great job of it. I confess I'm a little surprised.

JAKE

You expected me to flunk out?

LARKIN

I thought there would be a period of adjustment... trouble making new friends, that sort of thing.

JAKE

Did I disappoint you?

LARKIN

On the contrary, whatever it is you're doing, keep it up.

Jake conceals a small grin.

JAKE

I definitely will.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jake leaves LARKIN'S OFFICE, nearly running into Elena who is on her way in. Startled, he looks to see if anybody is watching.

JAKE

I didn't know you had counseling.

ELENA

Don't look so surprised. You're not the only screw-up.

JAKE

When can I see you?

Elena grins and slides a book of matches into Jake's breast pocket. She moves past him into Larkin's office.

Jake looks at the matches: **Dandelion Inn Motel**. Elena has written: "Room #6, 3:30 today." Jake pockets the matches and walks off.

DOWN THE HALL, Danny watches. He knows something is going on between Jake and Elena.

INT. JAKE'S MUSTANG

He drives a two-lane highway past a wooded lake outside of town.

EXT. DANDELION INN MOTEL

A roadside hideaway with a neon dandelion outside the manager's office. Jake pulls into the lot and gets out.

As he walks to ROOM #6, Jake notices a FORD TAURUS parked across the otherwise empty lot. He can't see the face of the driver through the tinted windows. It creeps him out.

INT. DANDELION INN, ROOM #6

Jake and Elena lay next to each other, covered by a white sheet. She rests her head on his shoulder.

ELENA

Do you really mean it?

JAKE

Yeah. I want you with me.

ELENA

I'll break up with him. I don't care as long as I can be with you.

Jake brushes a strand of hair from her face. They kiss, her hair falling over his face.

ELENA

I got you something.

She grabs a small gift box from under the bed.

Surprised, Jake opens the box and smiles broadly. It's the vintage Ford Mustang key chain from earlier. Jake holds it up so the wild horse dangles in front of them.

ELENA

You like it?

JAKE

I love it.

She kisses him.

ELENA

About Trent, there's just one small problem. It's sort of complicated.

JAKE

Whatever it is, it doesn't matter.

ELENA

Me and Trent... we're married.

Jake stares at her in dismay.

ELENA

It happened one weekend. We drove into the city with Todd and Stacey. We were all really drunk and Trent dared me.

JAKE

What do you mean he dared you?

ELENA

It was a bet between the guys. Trent didn't want to lose so we went to city hall -

JAKE

It's legal?

She nods.

ELENA

Trent made me promise not to tell anyone. He didn't want his parents to know until after graduation.
(frightened)
Tell me. Does it matter?

JAKE

No. It's a piece of paper.

Jake slides out of bed, starts dressing.

JAKE

How do you think he'll take it?

ELENA

He'll want to kill me.

Jake looks at her funny. She doesn't smile.

ELENA

You know if I toughed it out for a few years. We could really cash in on the divorce.

JAKE

I couldn't stand us being apart.

ELENA

I was just thinking of the money his family's got.

Jake stops dressing and gives Elena a suspicious look.

ELENA

(innocent)
What?

JAKE

This is getting weird.

ELENA

What is?

JAKE

Let's not talk about Trent anymore.

ELENA

Sure, but I can't just break it off. We have to go slow or he'll make trouble.

Jake peeks outside: the Ford Taurus is gone.

ELENA

(from behind Jake)
As much as I hate it I still have to spend time with him.

INT. MALL MUSIC STORE - NIGHT

Alone, Jake listens to the White Stripes "Be Gone" on headphones. He glances ACROSS THE MALL and sees

Elena and Trent leaving a movie theater with two other couples, laughing and talking like a Gap commercial.

Jake watches the happy group through withdrawn eyes.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Jake sits alone in his car, watching Elena and Trent as they get into TRENT'S BMW and drive off together. Jake stares at his steering wheel, looking forlorn.

SNAP! SNAP! - Danny is taking pictures of him through the side window with his 35 millimeter camera.

DANNY

I haven't seen you around lately.

JAKE

I've been busy, studying.

DANNY

I thought you'd made some real friends and didn't need me anymore.

JAKE

Don't be an idiot.

DANNY

It's usually the pattern with new students.

JAKE

Get in. I'm hungry.

Jake opens his passenger door. Danny happily gets in and they drive off. We hear a phone being dialed and RINGING.

ELENA'S VOICE

Hello.

EXT. QUICK-STOP - NIGHT

Jake is at a pay phone, looking tense and impatient.

JAKE

It's been three weeks. Why haven't you ended it yet?

ELENA

Jake, I'm scared. I said I wanted to break up and he threatened me.

Silence over the phone.

ELENA

Where are you?

JAKE

At a quick-stop down the street. I can be there in two minutes.

ELENA

Come pick me up.

Jake SLAMS the receiver down.

EXT. LAKE WEATHERBY DOCKS - NIGHT

Jake's parked Mustang overlooks the lake. He and Elena lay on the hood, against the windshield.

ELENA

It kicked in at eighteen. That's why he had the party, to celebrate.

JAKE

How much is it worth?

ELENA

A quarter million a year. It's tied to stock options in his dad's business. Like a portfolio.

Jake stares up at the stars.

JAKE

So he has a trust fund. What of it?

ELENA

As his wife I'm entitled to the money if anything happens to him.

Elena looks out over the lake.

JAKE

How do you know that?

ELENA

I looked it up on the web.

He looks at her sideways.

ELENA

Don't look at me like that. Ever since the motel, it's like I can't get it off my mind. With all the money his family's got, it's a drop in the bucket to them. But for us, it would mean so much.

JAKE

What would it mean?

ELENA

We could go to college together. A good school, far away. A chance to have what guys like Trent take for granted. Jake, it would change our lives.

JAKE

If something happened to Trent?

Long beat. The WAVES beat against the docks.

ELENA

An accident. I already know how to do it. Eight months ago, Trent was driving drunk. He ran into a little girl. The family covered it up, but the police know -

JAKE

You're joking, right?

Jake sees that she isn't joking.

JAKE

Forget it.

ELENA

But, Jake -

JAKE

(cutting her off)

Just put that shit out of your mind. Trent's a young man. He's an athlete, the picture of health. His whole life is stretched out ahead of him.

Jake leans back against the windshield.

JAKE

(resolute)

Nothing's going to happen to him.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY

Cheerleaders and football jocks paint banners for an upcoming game. Elena and Trent are having a playful paintbrush fight.

REVEAL JAKE, watching them through an open gym door. After a few moments, he moves on.

INT. JAKE'S HOME - NIGHT

Jake is on the phone, listening to an answering machine.

ELENA'S VOICE

I'm not home right now, please
leave a message...

Jake hangs up. He looks over at Archie and Ruth, watching "Wheel of Fortune". Frustrated, Jake grabs his jacket and storms out of the house.

EXT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake sits in his car, watching Trent and Elena leave for a date. She looks sexy a short black dress.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS - DAY

Jake stares at Elena, who ignores him. Upset, he shakes his head.

INT. SCHOOL LUNCHROOM

Jake sits, watching Elena at the JOCK TABLE in a pair of sunglasses, feeding Trent a spoonful of yogurt.

She walks to the SALAD BAR. Jake follows her. Elena nervously and tries to put distance between them.

ELENA

What are you doing?

JAKE

We have to talk.

ELENA

Not now, please -

JAKE

Why haven't you told him? Is this
all a big joke?

ELENA

(near tears)

How can you say that? You don't
know what I'm going through.

JAKE

Then, what's the problem?

Jake realizes she's crying. His wants to comfort her. He looks around the cafeteria and thinks better of it.

JAKE

What happened?

ELENA

I tried to break it off, but he went nuts.

She removes her sunglasses, revealing a bruised left eye.

JAKE

(controlled rage)

He hit you?

ELENA

I said he was dangerous. Jake, there's only one way out of this whether you help me or not.

Jake instinctively touches Elena's arm to calm her.

AT THE JOCK TABLE - Trent sees Jake touch Elena's arm as they talk. He strides over.

TRENT

(to Jake)

What the hell is going on?

JAKE

You tell me, asshole. You get your rocks off slapping girls around?

TRENT

(stunned)

What?

Elena tries to pull Trent away.

ELENA

Forget him, baby. He's nobody!

Trent shoves her aside and towers over Jake, who doesn't back down. They are attracting a crowd.

TRENT

Bitch, what's your name?

JAKE

Man lose that rap shit, you're
white as Wonder Bread.

TRENT

(grin evaporates)
You looking to get your ass kicked,
motherfucker?

Jake looks at him, eyes cold and hard.

JAKE

How many real punches have you
thrown, tough guy?

Trent grabs for Jake, who SLAMS a Snapple bottle across his
face. Trent recovers and TACKLES Jake onto a lunch table,
sending students and food trays flying.

They roll to the floor, WRESTLING with wild intensity.
Teachers try and separate them. In mid-pandemonium

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE, WAITING ROOM

Trent and Jake sit across from each other, both bruised and
scraped up. Trent rubs his chin.

TRENT

Decent punch. I wasn't expecting
it. You sort of look like a pussy.

JAKE

That's by design. It gives me the
element of surprise.

Trent shakes his head, amused.

JAKE

Something funny?

TRENT

Yeah. You make me laugh.
(re: Jake's clothes)
You think this existential grease-
monkey look is going to play with a
fine piece of ass like Elena?

JAKE

What're you getting at?

TRENT

Straight up? Punks like you think high school is the great equalizer. But it's not the real world and it's over like that.

(snaps his fingers)

Then what?

Jake doesn't answer. Trent is cutting right through his bravado.

TRENT

Look at me. In four years, I'm either in the NFL or vice-president of my dad's sporting goods company. Worst case, I'm pulling down 300k a year waiting for my old man to drop dead so I get to be CEO.

Trent leans back, the master of his universe.

TRENT

Where are you going to be in four years, stud? My prediction, you'll be working a shit job at the local burger joint and hating your life.

JAKE

Is that right?

TRENT

Let me finish. It gets better. You'll shop for your clothes at Target and drive second-hand cars and save up for vacations you can't afford. And in the real world you won't even get close to trimmed-up pussy like Elena.

(smug-ass grin)

That's your future, so you better enjoy high school.

Jake forces a smile, swallowing his rage. The PRINCIPAL opens his door and motions Trent inside.

TRENT

Anyway, that's what's funny.

The door SHUTS, leaving Jake alone in thought.

EXT. GYM LOCKER ROOM

Jake sits alone against the building, watching Trent and the team coming in after practice. Elena gives Trent a kiss and walks him inside.

Jake fears he is losing her.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

Jake hangs out after another football victory. A crowd of parents and students exit, returning to their cars.

Jake sees Elena with the CHEERLEADERS. She signals him to follow. They move away from the crowd, dipping into an empty GYMNASIUM.

Elena unloads on Jake.

ELENA

Stop following me and watching me all the time.

JAKE

What else can I do? You two are like Ken and fucking Barbie.

ELENA

Jake, he threatened to kill me.

JAKE

My car is outside. We can leave here, just disappear together!

ELENA

And go where? We don't have any money. He'd find us.

JAKE

You want me to tell him? I will because I don't care anymore.

Elena is crying. There's a wild look in her eyes.

ELENA

Do you want to be with me?

JAKE

Of course.

ELENA

Prove it. I said you were going to get me in a lot of trouble and I was right. I'm in trouble, Jake. What are you going to do about it?

Jake knows what she's asking. He doesn't answer.

ELENA

(tears flowing)

That's what I thought. Look, it's best if we don't talk anymore. I'm with Trent and there's no place for you.

JAKE

Elena...

He reaches for her. She pulls herself free.

ELENA

No!

She hurries off, leaving Jake alone in the dark gym.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD

Linemen POUND blocking dummies as the football team runs drills. Trent throws passes with his helmet off.

IN THE BLEACHERS - Jake sits alone in the last row staring down at Trent through deadly serious eyes.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

The halls are empty, growing dim as sunlight fades. In the LOBBY, Jake paces in front of a pay phone looking grim.

He deposits coins and dials. The phone RINGS.

ELENA'S VOICE

Hello.

JAKE

It's me.

ELENA

Where are you calling from?

JAKE

Pay phone. I'm still at school.

Silence over the phone.

ELENA
Jake? What's wrong?

JAKE
That thing you told me about at the
docks. The thing with Trent...

ELENA
Uh-huh?

JAKE
I'm in.

Jake holds the phone. Long beat.

ELENA
I love you.

JAKE
I love you, too.

Another long beat.

ELENA
Meet me tomorrow in the library.
Sixth hour.

JAKE
I'll be there.

Jake hangs up.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Move past rows of bookshelves.

ELENA'S VOICE
Trent is eighteen years old with a
bad reputation for drinking. Plus,
this past trouble with the hit-and-
run.

Jake and Elena are in the STACKS where they first met.

They pretend to browse and speak in WHISPERS. Jake looks
through her file of articles related to teen drunk-driving
accidents with headlines and statistics.

JAKE
With his history, it's perfect.

ELENA

After football games there's always a celebration. If they win everybody goes across state line to drink.

JAKE

If they win?

ELENA

Don't worry. They always win.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

Jake sits in the BLEACHERS as the game clock runs out. Trent and his teammates celebrate another victory.

EXT. UNDER-21 BAR - NIGHT

Trent's BMW pulls in amidst a convoy. He and Elena walk inside.

Jake watches them from his car, then gets out and cases the lot. He checks the exits, foot traffic and a nearby alley.

ELENA'S VOICE

They all go to this under twenty-one bar. Lots of witnesses will see Trent slamming beers.

JAKE'S VOICE

How can you be sure?

INT. BAR BOOTH

Trent plays a drinking game with his teammates. Elena moves to the bar and orders another pitcher.

ELENA'S VOICE

I'll feed him drinks and make sure he leaves when we want him to.

She returns to the table.

ELENA'S VOICE

End of the night we leave together. Then I run back inside, very upset. I say we got into a fight and Trent sped off in a huff.

(MORE)

ELENA'S VOICE (cont'd)

On the drive home he loses control
of the car.

(a beat)

He doesn't survive the accident.

JAKE'S VOICE

What road?

EXT. LAKE WEATHERBY DRIVE - DAY

Jake approaches a hairpin turn overlooking the lake with a guardrail and yellow warning sign. Jake pulls over.

ELENA'S VOICE

Weatherby Drive. It's a two-lane highway north of town. There's a turn in the road called Dead Man's Curve. Two teens died there last year. It was all over the papers.

Jake steps over the rail and looks down at a 30 foot drop to the lake shore. He drops to a knee and quickly starts loosening the guardrail bolts.

ELENA

That's where we'll do it.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - BACK TO SCENE

Jake and Elena are between two bookshelves. They stand very close and speak in conspiratorial whispers.

JAKE

Won't it look strange if you're not with him?

ELENA

Not to anyone who knows Trent. We fight all the time. (beat) I'll hit Lonnie's stash.

JAKE

What for?

ELENA

Trent is twice your size and strong. Two or three Quaaludes in his beer gives us the advantage.

Jake gives her a sideways look.

ELENA
What's wrong?

JAKE
I'm just thinking what happens if
we're not real smart about this.

A LIBRARIAN passes by.

Jake and Elena move apart, pretending to browse. After the
librarian re-shelves a book and leaves, they come together.

JAKE
One rule: we can't have any secrets
between us.

ELENA
No secrets and no surprises.

EXT. DANDELION INN - DAY

A few cars parked in the lot.

ELENA'S VOICE
So?

JAKE'S VOICE
I don't know. I'm not a lawyer.

INT. DANDELION INN

Jake and Elena are in bed together. He is looking over the
marriage certificate with Trent's signature, witness names
and a notarized stamp.

ELENA
We need to plant it. So it'll be
found after the accident.

JAKE
His bedroom?

ELENA
We run the risk of his parents or a
maid coming across it.
(dawns on her)
His locker. I know the combo.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

After school, Jake works Trent's locker combination and plants the marriage certificate (inside a manila envelope).

Fade up cheesy high school MARCHING BAND MUSIC.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

The STUDENT BODY is assembled for a spirit rally. The band finishes to wild APPLAUSE. Elena and the cheerleaders jump up and down.

Counselor Larkin steps up to the microphone in a Rosedale Tigers football cap.

LARKIN

Put your hands together for team captain and all-state quarterback, Trent Shelton.

APPLAUSE. Trent steps up to the microphone.

IN THE BLEACHERS, Jake gets up and leaves. He and Elena exchange glances.

TRENT

It's been an awesome season. For the first time in school history we're about to go undefeated!

Elena watches Jake walk back to the school building.

EXT. AWAY FROM STADIUM - DAY

Jake waits nervously against the side of the building. He hears the assembly in the distance.

TRENT'S VOICE

The team needs you at the stadium tonight kicking ass at full volume!

Elena rushes around the corner. Jake grabs her and pulls her inside a DOORWAY where they are hidden.

JAKE

It's all set. If they win the game then we do it tonight.

ELENA

They'll win. Here.

She hands Jake three Quaalude capsules in a zip-lock bag.

JAKE

You'll give me the signal for the switch?

ELENA

Yeah. I'll make sure he drinks the whole glass. You be back with the car keys in twenty minutes.
(mind racing)
He'll be out of it by then.

JAKE

Once you get the keys -

ELENA

(overlapping)
I'll get him out of there fast.

JAKE

And I'll be waiting in the alley.

Elena's eyes widen with excitement.

ELENA

We're actually doing this.

JAKE

Yes. It's happening.

They are both scared and thrilled. Elena kisses him. Her legs wrap around as he lifts her against the wall.

ELENA

Oh, Jake!

Distant APPLAUSE. At the height of passion,

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

Pads SMASH together! The crowd CHEERS Trent's completed pass. His team trails by 3 points with time running out.

On the SIDELINES, Elena shoots Jake a look. He signals for her to keep cool. Jake sees Danny taking photos for the school paper.

Danny snaps a picture of Jake, who waves and checks the GAME CLOCK: seconds remaining. It'll take a miracle for Rosedale to win. Jake seems relieved to be off the hook.

He looks around at students socializing, Larkin sitting with the other teachers and parents cheering their kids.

For a moment Jake relaxes.

ON THE FIELD - Trent drops back for a last-second Hail Mary pass. He spots a receiver running free down the sidelines.

IN THE BLEACHERS - Jake watches the play develop. The crowd sees the receiver and CHEERS. Three seconds left.

ON THE FIELD - Trent scrambles away from a rushing lineman and heaves a desperation pass. The ball sails through the air as the clock runs out.

The receiver catches the ball in the end zone, sealing the victory. The fans rush the field. Trent is carried atop his teammates' shoulders.

Jake looks like he's just been handed a death sentence.

ON THE FIELD, Jake walks through the celebration, passing Elena. They look at each other, acknowledging the plan is already in motion.

EXT. LOCKER ROOM

Elena waits with her cheerleaders. Trent exits and she jumps into his arms and gives him a kiss.

TRENT

The guys want me to go in Todd's van. He's got a case of beer.

ELENA

(going tense)

I told Stacey I was riding with you.

Todd's VAN PULLS UP with six guys inside drinking and YELLING for Trent to get in.

TRENT

Come with us. I'll grab the car in the morning.

ELENA

You're not serious.

TRENT

What's the problem?

ELENA

I want us to ride together. You'd rather pull a circle jerk with your idiot friends in Todd's van.

Elena storms off in a huff, feigning tears. Trent runs after her. His jock buddies SHOUT wisecracks from the van.

TRENT

(caving in)

Okay. Shit. Let's hit the road.

ACROSS THE LOT - Jake watches Elena and Trent get in the BMW and drive off. He follows them.

INT. BAR

Elena and Trent enter to APPLAUSE, making their way through the crowd.

At a booth, Trent is greeted with hand-slaps and raised glasses. Elena takes off her coat.

ELENA

It's burning up in here. Give me your jacket.

She helps Trent out of his letter jacket. Before hanging it up she picks and pockets his car keys.

EXT. BUS STOP NEAR BAR

The bus slows to a stop and the doors open. Jake steps off. He keeps to the shadows, looking around the PARKING LOT until he spots Trent's BMW. Then, he heads inside.

INT. BAR

Jake sips a beer. He looks across at Elena, who sits with her arm around Trent. She gives Jake a little nod.

Jake takes a deep breath. He grabs his beer, heading for the MEN'S ROOM.

DANNY

Jake!

Startled, Jake turns to face Danny,

DANNY

I looked for you after the game.

JAKE
What's up? You still working?

DANNY
(holding up camera)
Gonzo photography. Party shots for
the yearbook.

Jake shoots Elena a look. He knows he's behind schedule and needs to get rid of Danny.

DANNY
I just scored some serious weed if
you care to partake.

JAKE
I have to piss. I'll come find you
later.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM

Jake enters and moves into a CORNER STALL. He opens the Quaalude capsules. He pours the powder substance into his mug and stirs the beer with his index finger.

Jake wipes sweat from his brow. He steels himself for what comes next.

INT. BAR

Jake reenters and nods to Elena. She moves up to the bar and orders two beers. She and Jake don't speak or make eye contact.

The BARTENDER slides two mugs toward Elena. She leaves Trent's car keys on the bar and grabs Jake's drugged beer, switching it with one of hers.

Elena returns to the booth, handing Trent the drugged beer. Jake watches as Trent gulps it down.

After a hesitation, Jake grabs the car keys and walks out.

INT. TRENT'S MOVING BMW

Jake approaches DEAD MAN'S CURVE at 70 miles per hour. He SLAMS on the breaks and SKIDS across the blacktop. The car SLIDES off the shoulder, stopping inches from the rail.

Jake does a U-turn, checking the skid-marks - mission accomplished. Jake races back to the bar.

INT. BAR

Trent sways back and forth in his seat. His jock pals, TODD and ANGUS, are also drunk. Elena bounces a quarter into the full mug. She slides the mug to Trent.

TRENT
(slurring words)
You're on me all night.

ELENA
I only have eyes for you, stud.

TODD
He looks like he's one gulp away
from blowing chunks!

ANGUS
Just say the word, bro. We'll let
you off the hook!

TODD
And the word is *pussy!*

Todd has thrown down the gauntlet. Trent lifts the mug.

ELENA / ENTIRE TABLE
(chanting)
Drink! Drink! Drink!

Trent drains the glass in one huge gulp. He SLAMS it down on the table. Everyone CHEERS. Trent is sweating bullets.

TRENT
(to Elena)
I feel sick. Get me out of here.

She goes tense. Jake still has the car keys.

ELENA
It's just the beer -

TRENT
Fuck it! I said I need air!

ELENA
(to the others)
We'll be right back.

Elena helps Trent out of the booth. He has beer running down his chin. She leads Trent through the bar into.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Elena and Trent stagger into a corner stall. She locks it and pulls Trent against the divider, kissing him.

TRENT
We'll get caught.

Trent sloppily pulls her close. She feigns passion and slides her arms around him. She checks her watch.

EXT. BAR PARKING LOT

Jake drives Trent's BMW into the lot, turns into the nearby alley and kills the headlights.

INT. BAR

Jake enters, looking around for Elena. She and Trent are missing from the booth. He moves through the crowd into

INT. MEN'S ROOM

He hears heavy BREATHING and peeks under the stalls. Jake sees a SET OF LEGS with jeans in a bunch around ankles. He sneaks in a neighboring toilet and peeks over THE DIVIDER.

Elena has her legs wrapped around Trent. She looks at Jake for a tense moment, then coolly holds out her hand.

Jake gives her the keys and leaves.

INT. BAR

Elena and Trent reappear, looking sheepish. LAUGHTER erupts at the table as they everybody knows what they've been up to.

TRENT
(staggering drunk)
You think it's funny?

ELENA
It's cool. Let's just go.

She hands Trent his jacket. Holds up his keys.

ELENA
You're a mess. I'll drive.

TRENT
No way! I'm good to go.

TODD
C'mon, tough guy! Let her drive!

ANGUS
Yeah, give up the keys.

TRENT
I said I'm good!

Trent grabs his keys from Elena. She doesn't argue. After hip handshakes all around, they leave.

EXT. PARKING LOT, ALLEY

Elena and Trent walk together, arguing. He's staggering and slurring words. She tensely leads him through the lot.

TRENT
It's not right to give me a diamond
cutter hard-on, then come down with
a case of stage fright.

ELENA
I heard somebody come in.

TRENT
That's what happens when you agree
to screw in a public toilet.

ELENA
It creeped me out. Can we drop it?

She moves around the side of the building. Trent notices they're walking off track.

TRENT
Hey, where are we going?

ELENA
I want to show you something.

She leads him into the dark alley.

INT. BAR

The jock group parties on. Todd hits a shot and slides the mug to Angus, who looks concerned.

ANGUS

Trent was totally wrecked. You think he's okay to drive?

TODD

Dude, I've seen Trent drive home blind before. He always makes it.

Angus shakes his head and slides out of the booth.

ANGUS

No. We should stop him.

The group moves toward the front exit.

EXT. BAR ALLEY

Elena leads Trent away from the parking lot. She looks around and sees the shadow of Trent's BMW up ahead.

TRENT

No more surprises.

ELENA

You'll like this one.

DOWN THE ALLEY, Jake hides behind a trash bin, gripping an aluminum bat, heart pounding. He hears VOICES approaching.

ELENA

It's just ahead.

She walks ahead of Trent, past the trash bin. She catches sight of Jake and continues walking.

Trent sees his BMW and stops in his tracks.

TRENT

(surprised)

Who the fuck moved my car?

He moves toward it, clearing the trash bin. We see Jake in the shadows, poised to strike.

It's a perfect ambush... only Jake hesitates.

ELENA

Do it!

TRENT

(confused)

Do what?

That's when Trent sees Jake.

TRENT
Motherfucker!

He SHOVES Jake against the trash bin. The bat falls to the ground with a CLANG and ROLLS under the car.

They struggle, making far too much noise.

Elena pulls a STUN-GUN from her purse and ZAPS Trent's rib cage. He CONVULSES and falls limp to the ground.

JAKE
(out of breath)
What the hell was that?

ELENA
Get his keys! Open the trunk!

Jake fishes the keys out and pops the trunk. Together, they lift Trent's body in and SLAM it shut.

They hear VOICES from the parking lot.

TODD'S VOICE
Trent! Elena!

ANGUS' VOICE
Maybe they already left?

Elena runs up the alley and peeks out.

WHAT SHE SEES: The jock group is fanning out across the lot, getting closer. She retreats back to the passenger side of the car.

ELENA
Get in! I'm coming with you.

INT. TRENT'S BMW

Jake slides behind the wheel. Elena rides shotgun.

ELENA
(pointing behind)
Back that way!

He puts it in reverse and KILLS the engine. Near panic, he tries to start it again. It grinds, not turning over.

ELENA
You're flooding it!

Jake takes a deep breath and turns the key. The engine ROARS to life. He speeds out of the back of the alley.

A PEDESTRIAN comes out of nowhere! Jake SLAMS the brakes.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - Jake sees Danny who instinctively raises up his camera and SNAPS off a picture.

Jake switches on his hi-beams, blinding Danny.

JAKE

Did he snap a shot?

ELENA

Forget it. Let's go!

Elena presses the HORN. Danny jumps out of the way. Jake RACES past him out through the back of the alley and away.

INT. TRENT'S BMW, MOVING

It's a tense drive. They're both scared. Jake is rattled, trying to hold it together as Elena fumes.

ELENA

Goddamn! What happened back there?

JAKE

What did it look like? I hate him as much as you, but there're easier ways to break up!

ELENA

Shit! This is completely fucked!
(reworking plan)
We got to change the plan. Now it's got to look like I was in the accident.

JAKE

Look, there may be a witness -

ELENA

What are you saying?

JAKE

I'm saying this is a mess! Trent's out of it. He won't remember shit. You could say he fell -

ELENA

Are you insane? Jake, we're doing it. We're in the middle of doing it!

Jake speeds up, keeping his eyes on the road.

JAKE

(pissed off)

You never told me about the stun-gun.

ELENA

I didn't think we'd need it.

JAKE

No secrets or surprises. That was the agreement.

ELENA

Jesus! I'm sorry for saving your ass. Here, get rid of it.

She hands him the stun-gun, glancing at the speedometer.

ELENA

And slow down! We don't really want to get pulled over right now.

Tense silence. Jake doesn't like Elena's in-charge tone. He grips the wheel as the car chews up the road.

EXT. DEAD MAN'S CURVE

Empty road. Full moon. The BMW pulls onto the shoulder a hundred yards shy of the curve - emergency lights flashing.

IN THE CAR, Elena opens her door to get out. Jake stays behind the wheel.

ELENA

Jake, please... I need you.

She climbs out and SLAMS the door shut.

Jake gets out. The emergency lights play across his taut face as he and Elena move to the rear of the car.

There is no sound from inside the trunk.

ELENA

(imploring)

Open it.

Jake looks up and down the road. He opens the trunk and Trent LUNGES OUT at both of them.

TRENT
Fucking bitch!
(screaming)
HELP! Somebody HELP ME!!

The three struggle chaotically. Elena tears herself free. Trent's CLASS RING breaks loose from around her neck.

It falls onto the gravel, unnoticed.

Trent CHOKES Jake, who is GASPING for breath. They fall to the ground and roll off the shoulder into an open ditch.

Elena grabs a tire iron from the OPEN TRUNK. She jumps into the ditch and brings it down on Trent (out of frame) with a sickening CRUNCH!

Jake is splashed with Trent's blood. He rolls free, taking in deep breaths. Behind him, Elena raises up and savagely STRIKES Trent again with the tire iron.

Jake rushes over and grabs it away from her. She looks at him through fierce eyes. He looks back at her in stunned silence.

It's quiet, except for the WIND and their heavy BREATHING.

EXT. TRENT'S BMW, PARKED

Trent is slumped behind the wheel. No seat-belt. Jake closes the driver door and walks around the car.

Elena opens the passenger door for him.

ELENA
I'll get down the embankment and
stay clear of the drop till the car
goes over. I'll meet you where it
lands.

Jake is emotionless. He nods and gets in.

INT. TRENT'S BMW

Jake sits in the passenger seat. He doesn't look at Trent as he puts the car in gear, racing toward dead man's curve.

APPROACHING THE GUARDRAIL - He lines up with the skid-marks, speeding to 35 miles-per-hour.

Before impact, Jake LEAPS from the passenger seat. The car PLOWS THROUGH the loosened guardrail and

g o e s a i r b o r n e...

It LANDS and FLIPS three times down the embankment, CRASHES hard on the rocky surface below.

ON THE SHOULDER ABOVE, Jake rolls to a stop. Banged up, he gets to one knee and shakes his head, clearing the cobwebs.

That's when he sees the HI-BEAMS of an approaching car.

JAKE
(eyes wide)
Shit. Car coming!

Jake scurries over the guardrail and down THE EMBANKMENT next to Elena. They hide, frozen in fear.

ELENA
Did they see the crash?

JAKE
I don't know.

Headlights flood the area as the car SPEEDS past them and drives on. It's dark again. They run down the hill.

EXT. WRECKAGE SIGHT

Trent's BMW is a mess of twisted metal and broken glass. Jake looks through the driver-side window.

We can tell from his reaction that Trent is dead.

ELENA
(behind Jake)
Is he dead?

JAKE
Yeah.

Jake moves to the passenger side and forces the door open.

ELENA
We have to make sure.

JAKE
His brains are all over the dash!
Come on! We're running out of time.

Elena approaches, preparing herself. She kisses Jake hard, then backs against the wrecked car - an oddly sensual pose.

ELENA

Don't hold back, Jake. Make it
look real.

He rears back and SLAMS her chin with his forearm. She drops to a knee, then rises, spitting blood in his face.

ELENA

Harder!

Jake gives her a brutal BEATING until she collapses inside the passenger seat, cheerleader uniform stained with blood. Trent's tangled body is next to her.

Jake backs away, then runs and KICKS in the window. Glass SHATTERS inward across her cheek and forehead. Breathless, he hears POLICE SIRENS and runs.

EXT. DENSELY WOODED PATH

Jake sprints through the brush along the lake.

He emerges onto a dirt road where his Mustang is parked. He jumps in and drives off.

INT. JAKE'S MOVING MUSTANG

He pulls out onto Weatherby road, turning on his lights. He drives past Dead Man's Curve, past the arriving patrol car and ambulance.

Jake sees the POLICE SCENE forming behind him. Then he catches his frightened reflection in the rearview mirror.

He knows there's no turning back now.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROSEDALE HIGH - DAY

Monday morning. The FLAG flies at half-mast.

Jake pulls into the lot. He sees two POLICE CARS parked in the yellow zone. Jake steels himself for the coming storm.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

It is BUZZING with the news of Trent's death. Jake moves past cheerleaders consoling TODD and ANGUS. He sees Danny waiting at his locker.

DANNY

Did you hear the news?

Jake shakes his head, unsure how much Danny knows.

DANNY

It's all over the school. Golden boy Trent Shelton dies horribly in a car crash.

JAKE

Christ, what happened?

DANNY

The genius got wasted after the big game on Friday and ran his beemer off Dead Man's Curve. He was DOA at the hospital.

JAKE

That's horrible.

DANNY

Yeah. It was a nice car.

Jake glances at Trent's clique, grieving down the hall.

JAKE

You want to keep it down?

DANNY

As far as I'm concerned the world's a better place. At least safer for a guy like me.

(conspiratorial)

Plus, it's a huge story. Good for my portfolio.

JAKE

Anyone else in the car?

DANNY

Princess Elena was riding shotgun. She came away with a broken wrist and some facial cuts.

The BUZZ dies down. Jake sees PRINCIPAL WILKES escorting a COP, two DETECTIVES and Hector Diaz (the party bouncer) to Trent's locker.

The cop loads Trent's stuff into a box. He pulls out the manila envelope and hands it to Diaz. Jake watches Diaz react after reading the marriage certificate.

Diaz quickly speed dials his cell phone.

DIAZ
(into phone)
Sir, there's been a development -

Jake eavesdrops until the CLASS WARNING BELL startles him, forcing him to move past Diaz and head for class.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS

MISS DANVERS reads the poem: "To an Athlete Dying Young."
Jake sits in the BACK ROW. He watches students fighting back tears.

The INTERCOM interrupts.

SECRETARY'S VOICE
Jason Neal, report to the front
office immediately.

Jake's heart races. He collects his books and leaves.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jake walks slowly, mind racing. He sees two COPS, who signal him from down the hall. They escort him into

INT. FACULTY ROOM

Detectives O'BRIEN and ROLLINS have created a makeshift police headquarters. Rollins, a lanky black detective, motions Jake to sit.

ROLLINS
Don't be scared, son.

The door opens and Diaz enters. In his mid-40s, he stands against the wall in a suit and sunglasses.

ROLLINS
This is Hector Diaz. He's head of
security for the Shelton family.
(MORE)

ROLLINS (cont'd)
Trent's father has asked that he be
involved in the investigation.

Diaz sits across from Jake.

DIAZ
You're Jason Neal?

JAKE
(nervous)
Yes.

DIAZ
The police put together a list of
kids at the bar. You're here only
because your name was on the list
so try and relax.

JAKE
Cops make me nervous.

DIAZ
Just be straight with me and you're
out of here in ten minutes. Okay?

Jake nods. Diaz smiles at him.

DIAZ
And remember to keep breathing.

INT. FACULTY ROOM - LATER

Jake is answering softball questions. Diaz scribbles down
every answer.

DIAZ
See or talk to anybody?

JAKE
Danny Mullen. He was taking snaps
for the school paper. I just
transferred in so I don't know too
many people.

Jake studies Diaz with concern. Diaz looks up, catching
Jake's worried expression. They smile at each other.

DIAZ
Did you know Trent?

JAKE
No.

DIAZ
And the girl?

JAKE
Not really. She's in my English
class.

Diaz seems unhappy with Jake's answer.

DIAZ
You didn't know Trent or the girl?

JAKE
(in too deep)
That's right.

DIAZ
The word is, you and Trent got into
a pretty good fight. What was that
about?

JAKE
(casual shrug)
He was just goofing on the new guy,
showing off for his steroid buds.

DIAZ
Why pick on you?

JAKE
Guys like Trent don't need a
reason. It's like burning bugs
with a magnifying glass.

Diaz smiles, amused.

DIAZ
You didn't like him?

JAKE
I didn't know him. But, what I saw
I didn't like.

Diaz closes his note-pad, satisfied.

DIAZ
Okay. Thanks for stopping by.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Diaz walks Jake out and shakes his hand. Jake walks off,
passing Danny, who has been called down.

DANNY
They give you the third degree?

JAKE
No sweat.

Jake keeps walking. After a few seconds he turns and sees Diaz leading Danny inside. Jake watches with concern.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Trinity Hospital.

INT. TRINITY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Jake sneaks up the dark stairs to the fifth floor recovery ward. He cracks the door and peeks in.

JAKE'S VOICE
I'm calling for a patient, Elena Hooks. What room is she in?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Hooks... room 536, recovery ward.
No visitors after eight.

INT. RECOVERY WARD

It is shadowy and quiet. Jake moves down the hall, checking names on the doors.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM

Elena is in bed in her pajamas. She wears a wrist-cast and bandages on her face. Jake enters.

ELENA
Jake? What are you doing here?

JAKE
I had to see you.

He kisses her on the forehead.

ELENA
Look at this face. How can I walk around school like this?

JAKE
 (cutting her off)
 Look, the police found the marriage
 license in Trent's locker. They'll
 likely question you tomorrow -

ELENA
 It's good you came. We've got a
 problem. Trent's class ring... I
 can't find it.

JAKE
 It could be anywhere.

ELENA
 No. I was wearing it. He tore it
 loose during the struggle. Jake,
 if they find it -

JAKE
 Relax. I'll go back and look.

Jake hears voices. He peeks out into the hall.

WHAT HE SEES: Diaz is EMERGING from the elevator, flanked by
 a POLICE OFFICER and PIERSON, a lawyer in a \$1000 suit
 holding a briefcase.

INT. ELENA'S ROOM

Jake retreats, searching for a place to hide.

JAKE
 It's Diaz. He's coming!

ELENA
 (thinking fast)
 It's a double room. Hide behind
 the curtain. And don't breathe!

Jake darts behind the CURTAIN and slides it closed. He hears
 Diaz enter along with the entourage.

DIAZ
 Miss Hooks. We're sorry for your
 loss.

ELENA
 Thank you.

DIAZ
 I hope you're not in pain.

ELENA

I'll manage.

DIAZ

Apologies for the late hour. It's best to run through the events while they're fresh in your mind.

Diaz points to the lawyer.

DIAZ

This is Dennis Pierson, senior partner at Pierson, Weinberg & Shaw, the law firm representing the Shelton family.

Diaz motions Pierson, who UNSNAPS his briefcase, pulls out the marriage certificate and hands it to Elena.

DIAZ

The police found this in Trent's locker this morning.

Elena reads it. Diaz studies her reaction.

DIAZ

Is that your signature?

ELENA

(nodding)
Yes.

DIAZ

You want to tell me about it?

ELENA

We were married. We planned to tell his folks after graduation.

DIAZ

Why the big secret?

ELENA

Trent had this thing against his dad. Our eloping was his way of saying "screw you" to his old man.

DIAZ

It was his idea?

Elena knows what Diaz is implying. She doesn't show it.

ELENA

(voice trembling)

Yes. He said he loved me and this way his folks would have to accept us. We drove across state line -

DIAZ

Who knew about the marriage?

ELENA

Just me and Trent. We slipped away for a quiet weekend. He might have told his friends. I didn't.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN - Jake listens to Elena's answer and seems confused. This isn't what she told him earlier.

DIAZ

Why not?

ELENA

His parents never approved of me. To them I was poor white trash...
(changing subject)
Why is this marriage such a big deal?

PIERSON

(stepping forward)

The Shelton family established a trust for Trent, commencing on his eighteenth birthday, which as you know was six weeks ago. Since the trust was issued and since Trent was considered by law an adult at the time of his death -

ELENA

(feigning ignorance)

An adult?

PIERSON

Yes, ma'am. If the marriage is upheld by a judge, given that Trent died without a will, a spouse would have legal claim to the trust.

ELENA

I don't get it. Legal claim?

PIERSON

To the money. It is substantial.

ELENA

How much?

PIERSON

Given the vagaries of the market,
in the neighborhood of six hundred
thousand a year.

Silence. Diaz stares at Elena. Her face is a mask of
stunned disbelief.

ELENA

(overwhelmed)

You're saying I get the money?

DIAZ

If the marriage is upheld.
(pulling out a note-pad)
I do have some questions about the
accident -

Elena rests her head back on her pillow.

ELENA

I'm tired. Can we do this later?

DIAZ

Of course. Maybe you can sit for
questions in the morning?

Elena nods. Diaz signals Pierson and they head out.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN - Jake hears Diaz leave. He waits a few
seconds, then peeks down the hall. The coast is clear.

ELENA

How much did you hear?

JAKE

All of it. You were good.

Jake sits on the bed.

ELENA

Diaz wants to ask more questions.
Jake, he scares me.

JAKE

He scares me, too. We just have to
tie up any loose ends.

ELENA

If Danny-the-nerd snapped pictures of us in the alley you have to get the film. And *find the ring*.

JAKE

I will.

Elena takes Jake's hand.

ELENA

Think of how it'll be a year from now. The two of us together, with the money. Jake, we could live in Paris.

JAKE

I could learn French.

They kiss until Jake pulls away and slips out of the room.

EXT. DEAD MAN'S CURVE - NIGHT

Jake's car is parked. He uses a flashlight to search for Trent's class ring. He glances down the road and sees LIT CANDLES where the car went over.

Jake approaches a SHRINE OF FLOWERS placed at the guardrail along with a giant photo of Trent that seems to stare back at him.

Jake feels the chill of the night air.

INT. SCHOOL NEWS LAB - DAY

Danny sits outside the darkroom, reading *Catcher in the Rye*. An egg-timer TICKS away next to him. Jake enters.

DANNY

Hey! What brings you down?

JAKE

I'm ditching study hall. How did it go with the cops? You give them anything?

DANNY

I confessed to pouring a case of beer down Trent's throat and shoving him behind the wheel of his car.

Jake laughs.

JAKE
(offhand)
Who was asking questions?

DANNY
The family rent-a-cop, Diaz. Did you tell him I was snapping photos the night of the accident?

JAKE
I mentioned it.

DANNY
He was just here going through a pile of photos.

Jake goes tense. He picks up Danny's camera and looks through the lens.

JAKE
(casually probing)
He see anything interesting?

DANNY
Football shots, mostly. I haven't developed the second roll yet.

JAKE
Second roll?

DANNY
I reloaded high speed film for inside the bar. I have to bring him that stuff in the morning.

The egg timer BUZZES.

DANNY
Be right back.

Danny disappears into the DARKROOM.

Jake hurriedly opens the camera. No film. Jake looks over at the darkroom. The film is inside.

Jake sets the camera down and leaves.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE NEWS ROOM

After school, the halls are empty. Jake watches Danny lock up and leave. The coast is clear.

Jake sneaks into a NEARBY CLASSROOM and climbs through an open transom into

INT. SCHOOL NEWS ROOM

Jake moves into the DARK ROOM where photos from the game and the bar are hung all over the place: Trent throwing the touchdown pass; Jake waving from the bleachers.

Jake looks for the incriminating photo. He realizes he's not alone. Danny is standing in the doorway behind him.

DANNY

It's not there. I pulled it along with the negative.

Danny opens the safe. He hands Jake a manila envelope.

DANNY

Go ahead. Look at it.

Jake pulls out a BLOWN-UP PHOTO: Through the arced glare of the headlights we see a grainy image of Jake behind the wheel of Trent's car. Elena visible at frame's edge.

Stunned, Jake looks up at Danny.

JAKE

Why didn't you tell Diaz?

DANNY

I wouldn't do that to a friend.

JAKE

You've known me six weeks. Why you doing this?

DANNY

I've been eating Trent's shit for going on three years. You treated me like a real person.

Jake tries to explain.

DANNY

Don't say anything. Like I said, the world's a better place.

Danny drops the photos into a basin of chemicals. The incriminating image slowly disappears.

DANNY

We have to destroy these.

He pulls out his lighter, lights the negative and drops it in a trash can. Jake's negative image melts in flame.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Dusk. The lot is almost empty. Jake and Danny walk to their cars in silence. Danny finally breaks the ice.

DANNY
Need to ask you something.

JAKE
You want to know why.

Danny nods. They reach the car. Jake searches his mind for the truth.

JAKE
I don't know. It was something
that built up inside and took on a
life of its own. I can't remember
when I knew we were going to do it.
(deep in thought)
I've never been in love.

Jake shakes his head, giving up.

DANNY
And now?

JAKE
Now, it's about survival.

DANNY
I've known Elena since junior high
and I'm warning you she's bad news.

JAKE
You don't know her.

DANNY
What did she tell you? I bet she
said Trent beat on her. Said it
was so you two could be together,
forever.
(after a beat)
Dude, she's working you.

Jake doesn't want to believe it.

DANNY
You know Shannon Briggs?

JAKE

No.

DANNY

Do yourself a big favor and take a ride with me.

Jake nods agreement.

EXT. SHANNON BRIGGS' HOUSE

Danny rings the doorbell. Jake notices a wheelchair ramp along the front porch. SHANNON'S MOM opens the door.

DANNY

I'm Danny Mullen. I spoke with you on the phone.

INT. BRIGGS' LIVING ROOM

Jake and Danny sit on the sofa. Jake hears a WHIRRING sound as SHANNON BRIGGS enters in a motorized wheelchair, legs thin from atrophy.

Her mom follows her, setting down a tray of lemonade.

SHANNON'S MOM

If you kids need anything I'll be in the kitchen.

Shannon waits for her mom to leave. She glances from Jake to Danny.

SHANNON

(to Danny)

Are you writing another piece on the courageous cripple?

DANNY

It's not about that.

SHANNON

Who's this?

DANNY

A friend. He needs to hear about the accident.

SHANNON

That was a long time ago. I don't talk about it anymore.

DANNY
It's important.

JAKE
Danny mentioned you fell from a
balcony.

SHANNON
(no hesitation)
I was pushed.

Shannon bristles. Jake has touched a nerve.

SHANNON
My shrink tells me I need someone
to blame, but I know what happened.
(a beat)
Only I'm not supposed to talk about
it.

JAKE
Please, tell me.

Shannon studies Jake. Something in his face convinces her to
spill it.

SHANNON
Me and Trent had been going out for
like three months. He liked me and
I thought he was cool.

Shannon motors closer to Jake.

SHANNON
(secretive whisper)
Last day of school, sophomore year.
Trent throws this huge party at his
house, right. I was on the balcony
overlooking the pool with Elena and
a few others. We were drinking and
dancing.
(voice cracking)
She says she fell into me, says she
was drunk. No fucking way. I saw
her eyes right before I went over.

Shannon tries to find the words.

SHANNON
Hard to describe... It was like
those National Geographic shows on
animal wildlife. When the tiger
attacks the zebra watering hole.
The look on her face was predatory.
(MORE)

SHANNON (cont'd)
 (with certainty)
 It was no accident. She pushed me.

JAKE
 Elena Hooks?

SHANNON
 She wanted Trent. She got next to me to get next to him and when the time was right she attacked, just like that tiger.
 (an afterthought)
 They were together before I left the hospital.

Shannon notices Jake's sympathetic look.

SHANNON
 I'm glad he's dead. It's a crying shame she survived the crash.

EXT. BRIGGS' HOUSE

Jake and Danny sit inside DANNY'S CAR. Jake stares at the dash. Danny glances over a few times, concerned.

DANNY
 This girl's looking to hurt you.

JAKE
 Start the car.

DANNY
 Why won't you believe me?

JAKE
Just drive the car.

Danny nods and turns the key.

EXT. DOWN THE STREET

Reveal a FORD TAURUS with tinted windows (like at the Dandelion Inn). Behind the wheel, Hector Diaz watches Danny's car pull away.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jake closes his locker, sees Elena accepting condolences from friends. It's her first day back. She wears a soft-cast around her wrist and has a few scrapes on her face.

Jake watches as Todd gives Elena a sympathetic hug... his hand moving around her waist.

INT. LARKIN'S OFFICE

Jake lies on the couch, staring at the ceiling.

Larkin is in a nearby chair. The lights are dim and soothing music is playing.

LARKIN

What's going on? Your teachers say you seem preoccupied in class.

JAKE

Just trying to fit in.

LARKIN

The secret to happiness is keeping a productive routine.

(leaning forward)

Have you thought about joining the drama club or student counsel?

Jake closes his eyes. There's a KNOCK at the door. Larkin gets up and opens it a crack.

DIAZ

(behind the door)

Ted Larkin? They told me Jason Neal was in here with you.

Jake opens his eyes.

LARKIN

We're in session.

DIAZ

I need him for five minutes.

Jake sits up as Diaz enters. Larkin realizes he's a third wheel.

LARKIN

Of course. Well, if you'll excuse me.

Larkin leaves, closing the door behind him. Diaz reaches over and taps the aquarium, sends fish scurrying.

DIAZ

How goes it, Jake Neal?

JAKE

It goes.

Diaz sits down in Larkin's seat.

DIAZ

You like coming in here and getting stuff off your chest?

JAKE

I don't have a choice.

DIAZ

On account of your past troubles?

JAKE

That's right. They all think I'm some kind of future arsonist.

Diaz pulls his note-pad out of his jacket.

DIAZ

I asked around and word is the lunchroom fight was over the girl.

JAKE

(burning)
Yeah. I guess so.

DIAZ

So, you *did* know her.

JAKE

(scrambling)
She's hot so I chatted her up. I guess Trent didn't like it.

DIAZ

Why not tell me that up front?

JAKE

It didn't seem right what with her boyfriend in the morgue.

Diaz studies Jake for what seems like an eternity. Jake can't stand the silence.

JAKE

I thought this guy wrapped his car around a tree.

DIAZ

The police think so. They already closed their investigation.

Jake relaxes for a short second.

DIAZ

But Trent's old man won't let it go
and there are a few snags...

JAKE

Is that right?

Diaz feeds the fish as he lays it out.

DIAZ

First, the coroner found traces of
methaqualone in Trent's blood.
It's a synthetic barbiturate, which
I wouldn't look twice at seeing as
Trent's experimented with all sorts
or drugs, only there was also this
puncture mark on his back, like a
stun-gun.

Jake sits, hardly breathing.

DIAZ

Plus, I got a bartender dumping
trash who puts Trent's beemer in
the alley just before midnight.
Only his buddies swear up and down
he parked in the lot.

Jake pretends he doesn't get it.

JAKE

So, he moved the car?

DIAZ

Jesus, you don't need Cliff notes
to see the kid was ambushed.

JAKE

Any suspects?

DIAZ

I like the girlfriend with the nice
ass who survived a fifty mile-an-
hour car crash with a simple wrist
sprain and some glass in her cheek.

JAKE

Why her?

Diaz sits down, like he's sharing a secret.

DIAZ

She saw a chance to change the course of her miserable life before Trent left for college and forgot all about her, right?

JAKE

Right.

DIAZ

So this little piece of trash turns the golden boy's head around and gets herself hitched to him on the sly. Now she's sniffing after his trust fund.

JAKE

Will she get it?

DIAZ

No chance. The family is jamming up the works, stalling until I get something on her.

Diaz checks his watch and gets up.

DIAZ

If there's one thing rich people are good at, it's holding onto their money.

(getting up)

We're done. Stay out of trouble, son.

Diaz is nearly out the door when he re-enters with an amused smile on his face.

DIAZ

You didn't ask how much.

JAKE

Excuse me?

DIAZ

The trust fund. You didn't ask how much she stood to collect.

JAKE

(frozen)

How much?

DIAZ

Six hundred large. Big money for a seventeen-year-old girl.

Diaz leaves, closing the door.

EXT. QUICK-STOP - NIGHT

Jake dials a pay phone. He looks around to make sure he is not being watched as it RINGS.

ELENA'S VOICE

Hello.

JAKE

We have to talk.

ELENA'S VOICE

(speaking in code)

I'm sorry. You must have the wrong number.

JAKE

Is it Diaz?

ELENA'S VOICE

Yes. Thank you.

JAKE

Meet me at the docks, okay?

Elena hangs up. Jake slowly puts the phone down, fear creeping into his eyes.

INT. ELENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Diaz sits across from Elena, who is on the sofa next to Lonnie. Detective Rollins stands near the door.

DIAZ

Where was the car?

ELENA

In the parking lot.

Diaz scribbles, then casually pulls out Trent's class ring and dangles it in front of Elena.

DIAZ

We searched the accident site and found this. Is it yours?

ELENA

(unshaken)

Yes.

DIAZ

Strange. We found it up the road from where the car went over. You two didn't pull over, did you?

Tense moment. Elena doesn't blink an eye.

ELENA

(shaking her head)

No. We didn't stop.

DIAZ

How did the ring get from around your neck to where it was on the shoulder?

Elena glances at Lonnie, then turns back to Diaz.

ELENA

We were having a fight in the car right before the crash. I didn't mention it because I didn't want my step dad to find out.

DIAZ

Find out what?

LONNIE

(interrupting)

Yeah. Find out what?

Long beat. Elena gives it a dramatic pause.

ELENA

I thought I was pregnant. I told Trent on the way home from the bar.

DIAZ

He wanted an abortion?

ELENA

(nodding her head)

Yes. We were arguing, yelling at each other. That's when I tore off the necklace and threw it out the window.

Elena sheds tears - a stellar performance.

DIAZ

You threw it out?

ELENA

Right before the crash.

EXT. LAKE WEATHERBY DOCKS - NIGHT

Jake stares out at the lake. He sees Elena pull up in Lonnie's Buick. She gets out and walks down to the docks.

JAKE

What took you so long?

ELENA

I just spent an hour lying my tits off because your couldn't find Trent's ring. Not to mention I have an Algebra mid-term tomorrow -

Elena reaches Jake and senses something is wrong.

ELENA

What's wrong?

JAKE

Diaz came to see me. He knows how we did it and he's looking at you.

ELENA

He won't come after me unless he's got hard evidence.

JAKE

If we don't make a claim on the trust it'll end his investigation.
(dead serious)
We should walk away.

ELENA

(laughing)
We've already done the deed. Now you don't want us to collect.

JAKE

The family isn't just going to hand over the money. They're stalling until Diaz finds something.

ELENA

There's nothing to find.

Jake walks to the edge of the dock. Elena follows him.

ELENA

You got the photos, right?

JAKE

I didn't need to. Danny's on board.

ELENA
On board? What does that mean?

JAKE
It means he's cool.

ELENA
What does he know?

JAKE
He developed the photos. We were
both in the frame, clear as day in
Trent's car -

ELENA
Are you insane?

JAKE
We burned the negative together.
He gave his word he won't squeal.

ELENA
And you trust him?

Jake looks straight at Elena.

JAKE
I don't know who to trust anymore.

ELENA
(thrown off)
What's that supposed to mean?

JAKE
Danny told me about an old friend,
Shannon Briggs. You know her?

Elena looks at him sharply.

ELENA
I know her.

JAKE
She's got ideas in her head about
her accident.

ELENA
She's mental. It's why I stopped
hanging out with her.
(perturbed)
Are you investigating me?

Jake grabs her by the wrist.

JAKE

No, but Diaz is. And if you file a claim, he'll keep digging.

ELENA

Jake, you're hurting me!

JAKE

He might even talk to Shannon.

Elena pulls free, rubbing her wrist.

ELENA

(near tears)

Christ! Look at us! We did this so we could be together and instead it's ripping us to shreds.

Jake sits down on the dock, rubbing his face in fatigue, staring out at the water. Elena sits next to him.

ELENA

We're close to having everything we talked about. Don't go to pieces on me now.

She slides an arm around him.

ELENA

You're scaring me.

JAKE

(exhausted)

I don't want to scare you. I want to trust you.

She kisses him softly on the lips.

ELENA

Then, stay here with me.

They kiss again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAKE'S MOVING CAR - MORNING

Jake drives to school, hair wet from a fresh shower. He pulls into the PARKING LOT and shuts off the car, noticing his vintage key chain is missing.

Jake gets out and walks ACROSS THE LOT. He sees a bevy of POLICE CARS parked in the drive, cherries flashing.

Jake's face goes white.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jake moves past BUZZING students. He sees police tape and cops gathered outside the school NEWS ROOM.

Jake passes a solemn-looking Larkin.

JAKE
What happened?

LARKIN
The janitor... he found him this morning.

Jake runs past a throng of onlookers. He darts under the tape. TWO COPS stop him outside the door.

But not before he sees DANNY'S NUDE BODY hanging from a rope, his clothes folded neatly on a nearby desk.

A cop pulls Jake away.

UNIFORM COP
Come on, son. You don't want to look at that.

Jake staggers into the hall. He leans on a locker, trying to catch his breath. He hears the cops talking inside the room.

COP #1
They should send these kids home today.

COP #2
Did he leave a note?

COP #1
Nothing. Word is, the boy was a loner.

PARAMEDIC
Okay. Cut him down.

Jake closes his eyes, devastated.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS

Jake glares at Elena who is studying as if nothing happened. We hear a SNAP as Jake breaks his pencil.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Students and wealthy family friends pour into the church for Trent's funeral. School buses are parked in the lot.

MINISTER'S VOICE

Trent Shelton was a young man full
of promise... in the prime of life.

INT. CHURCH

The casket and a photo of Trent are in front of the altar. Sunflowers adorn the shrine. A MINISTER sermonizes.

MINISTER

We offer his tragic death as an act
of faith. Jesus embraced the cross
so that Trent may have everlasting
life.

SECOND ROW - Elena sits with Trent's friends behind the Shelton family. She glances over her shoulder at Jake.

IN THE BALCONY - Jake signals her then gets up and leaves.

Elena excuses herself and walks to the rear of the church. A few rows back, Diaz watches her exit.

INT. EMPTY CHURCH LOBBY

Elena emerges. Jake GRABS her and rudely pulls her down a side hall into a nearby chapel. He SHOVES her inside and SLAMS the door shut.

Elena nearly falls, then regains her balance.

ELENA

Watch the dress!

JAKE

Why did you do it!?

ELENA

Do what?

JAKE

WHY?

Elena realizes the jig is up.

ELENA

To protect us. To keep us out of
jail.

Her confession slows Jake a little.

JAKE

(breathing hard)
Who helped you?

ELENA

Nobody.

JAKE

That's bullshit!

ELENA

I called Danny and told him to meet
me before school -

JAKE

No way. He would've been too heavy
for you to lift alone.
(mind racing)
Was it Lonnie? Are you screwing
your step dad?

Elena goes cold and hard - a scary transformation.

ELENA

Unlike you, I didn't need any help.
I knocked him out. After that it
was easy -

JAKE

He gave me his word. He was *not* a
risk -

ELENA

Wrong! He isn't a risk now. Look,
today he's your friend. Tomorrow,
who knows? Maybe after a month or a
year Danny gets religion, grows a
conscience.

Jake walks away shaking his head. Elena follows.

ELENA (CONT'D)

He would've always been out there,
carrying around our secret.

JAKE

Aren't you worried about me?

ELENA

We did this murder together, which means we both have a great deal to lose. Danny had nothing to lose, which is why he had to go.

Jake backs away from her.

ELENA (CONT'D)

It's simple. Either we both get away with it or we both get caught. I vote for getting away with it.

JAKE

Okay. But, I don't want to see you anymore.

ELENA

(amused)

You're breaking up with me?

JAKE

That's right.

Elena nods agreement.

ELENA

Fine. But just so we're clear. I only thought about getting rid of Trent. It didn't happen until you came along.

JAKE

Meaning what?

ELENA

Meaning I love you and I'll miss fucking you. But, I'm only seventeen and you're an eighteen year old adult with a convicted murderer for a dad.

(a threat)

How do you think it would play out in court?

Elena straightens her dress and walks past Jake on her way out.

JAKE

I'm begging you. Walk away from the trust fund.

ELENA
(not looking back)
I filed the claim yesterday.

She leaves.

INT. HISTORY CLASS

Jake looks like hell. He hasn't slept. The class settles down as the HISTORY TEACHER closes the door.

HISTORY TEACHER
Books under your desk. You have
fifty minutes to finish the test.

The teacher puts the test booklet in front of Jake, who just stares at the blank page.

INT. LARKIN'S OFFICE

Jake is slumped in a chair, staring off into space. Larkin sits behind his desk.

LARKIN
Three tests this week, Jake. Keep
it up and you'll be back for summer
classes. Is that what you want?

Jake doesn't answer.

LARKIN
You're flushing your future down
the toilet. Tell me, is it drugs?

Jake opens his mouth to respond. The phone RINGS, stopping him. Larkin picks up.

LARKIN
I'm sorry. One moment.
(into phone)
Yes, I see. Where are you?

Jake waits, looking around the room: at the fish aquarium and the diplomas on the wall. He casually glances across the desk and sees something that freezes him.

A book of matches from the Dandelion Inn Motel.

The same motel where Jake and Elena went to have sex. It hits Jake like a bullet: Larkin and Elena.

LARKIN
(into phone)
Good. I'll see you, then. Same
place... as soon as I can.

Larkin hangs up.

LARKIN
Jake, what's wrong?

JAKE
(concealing suspicion)
Nothing. Look, I just feel like
shit. My only friend just hung
himself so I'm sorry if I didn't
study up on Manifest Destiny.

LARKIN
Just relax.

JAKE
Can we cut it short today?

LARKIN
Sure. But remember, I'm here
whenever you want to talk.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Jake sits behind the wheel of his car. He watches Larkin get
into his Volvo and drive off. Jake follows.

EXT. WEATHERBY ROAD

Jake tails Larkin past Dead Man's Curve where road workers
are repairing the wrecked guardrail.

EXT. DANDELION INN

Jake watches Larkin check in. A minute later, Elena pulls up
and gets out. She meets Larkin at the door to a room.

They kiss and disappear inside.

INT. JAKE'S MUSTANG

Jake watches in disbelief, piecing together past scenes.

FLASHBACK: INT. FRONT OFFICE

Jake's first day at school.

LARKIN

I sponsored your enrollment to give
you another chance -

FLASHBACK: INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Jake runs into Elena outside of Larkin's office..

JAKE

I didn't know you had counseling.

FLASHBACK: INT. DANDELION MOTEL

Elena's face as they cling to each other.

ELENA

I love you, Jake.

INT. JAKE'S MUSTANG - RESUME SCENE

Jake furiously PUNCHES his dash. He stops and looks at
himself in the mirror. He starts the car and pulls away.

INT. JAKE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's late. Jake sits alone at the table, looking through a
school yearbook at various pictures of Elena.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Jake answers it. It's Diaz.

DIAZ

Sorry about the late hour. It
couldn't wait.

JAKE

Come in.

Diaz enters.

DIAZ

Nice place.

JAKE

If you like it quiet.

DIAZ
Quiet is good.

Jake nods. He waits as Diaz looks in the refrigerator. He pulls out a carton of milk and pours two glasses.

JAKE
This isn't a social call, is it?

DIAZ
Trent Shelton was a bad kid. I know this because I saw him grow into the adult-sized prick he was. And knowing what I know about him, I'm not unhappy he's dead.

Diaz hands Jake his milk glass.

DIAZ
I don't really care who killed him or who gets rich because of it.
(shakes his head)
Your friend Danny on the other hand seemed like a real good kid.

JAKE
He was.

DIAZ
The police have determined his death was a homicide. They've opened an investigation.

Diaz reaches into his pocket and pulls out a transparent evidence bag. Jake stares at the bag, stunned.

Inside, we recognize the vintage Ford Mustang key chain that Elena gave to Jake.

DIAZ
Yours?

JAKE
Yes. Where did you find it?

DIAZ
Under a desk in the classroom where the boy was hung.

Diaz gives Jake a moment for this to register.

DIAZ
(sits back in chair)
Drink your milk.

Jake stares at Diaz, sitting across the kitchen table.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Jake walks past Elena without saying a word. He shoots her a cold, hard glance. She ignores him.

EXT. WEATHERBY DOCKS - NIGHT

Deep in thought, Jake stares out over the lake.

EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Larkin strolls past lockers, whistling a tune. He enters his OFFICE and is startled to see Jake already there.

Larkin scans the room to see if anything has been moved.

LARKIN

Jake? You're early.

JAKE

I hope you don't mind. I let myself in.

LARKIN

Let's get started.

INT. LARKIN'S OFFICE - LATER

Mid-session. Larkin is reacting to something Jake has just said. He seems distressed.

LARKIN

What do you mean *last session*? Are you in some sort of trouble?

JAKE

I can't talk about it.

LARKIN

Why not?

Long beat.

JAKE

Have you ever done something wrong that you thought you could live with, but then you realize it's too much to keep inside?

LARKIN

Jake, tell me what's bothering you.

JAKE

I know what I have to do. It'll be a relief to have it over with.

Larkin takes a seat near Jake.

LARKIN

(scrambling)

Jake, promise me one thing... That you'll sleep on it. If you feel the same way in the morning, I'll support whatever decision you make.

Jake nods. He gets up and offers Larkin his hand.

JAKE

Okay. I'll sleep on it.

Jake leaves, closing the door.

Larkin stands there a second. Then he pulls down the fish aquarium. It SHATTERS, leaving fish flopping amidst broken glass.

INT. HALLWAY

Jake listens at the door, satisfied.

INT. JAKE'S HOME - NIGHT

Jake eats dinner with his foster parents. He barely touches his food. He checks his watch, waiting.

The phone RINGS in the kitchen. Ruth leaves to answer it, but Jake already knows who is on the other end.

RUTH

Jake, it's for you.

Still chewing, Jake walks to the KITCHEN and picks up the receiver. He puts it to his ear and listens for a second.

ELENA'S VOICE

Jake? Is that you?

JAKE

It's me. Where you calling from?

ELENA'S VOICE

Pay phone. I need to see you.

JAKE

I said no more calls.

ELENA'S VOICE

We're still partners and there are loose ends to tie up... We have to meet.

JAKE

Why tonight?

ELENA'S VOICE

Diaz called. He wants to question me again tomorrow.

He knows she's lying.

JAKE

Where?

ELENA'S VOICE

Midnight. At the football stadium.

JAKE

I'll be there.

Jake hangs up.

INT. JAKE'S MOVING CAR - NIGHT

Jake steers through traffic.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL

Jake pulls into THE LOT and parks in full view, under a light. He gets out.

EXT. STADIUM

Jake enters through the fence. He sees Elena down on the field. She's alone. Jake walks down the stadium steps.

EXT. ON THE FIELD

Elena sees Jake approaching. Her eyes flash over to a section of bleachers where Larkin is hidden.

Jake and Elena meet at mid-field.

JAKE

What is there to discuss?

ELENA

It's Diaz. I'm worried someone else saw the car in the alley.

JAKE

Just stick to the story we agreed to and we're safe.

Larkin sneaks out of the bleachers. He moves in on Jake, whose back is to him. Jake doesn't see Larkin until the gun is shoved in his back.

LARKIN

Don't move!

Jake goes stiff as Larkin walks him closer to Elena.

JAKE

(bitterly to Elena)

I guess you couldn't take a chance with me either.

ELENA

There's nothing left to connect me to the murders.

Jake gestures to Larkin.

JAKE

Except him.

(to Larkin)

You're next. You know that, don't you?

LARKIN

Shut up.

JAKE

Is this how you help your students?

Larkin kicks Jake's legs, dropping him to his knees. He puts the gun to Jake's head.

JAKE

(to Elena)

I hope the money is worth it.

ELENA

Six hundred thousand transferred to my account yesterday. I wanted you to know the plan worked.

Larkin COCKS the trigger. It looks bad for Jake, when out of the shadows DIAZ APPEARS - gun aimed at Larkin.

DIAZ

Drop it!

Larkin tosses the gun down. Jake is relieved that Diaz is in control.

JAKE

A little late, aren't you?

Elena realizes Jake has outsmarted her.

ELENA

Motherfucker! You sold me out!

Elena SPITS in Jake's face. He wipes it off and looks around. He doesn't see any other cops.

Jake senses something is fishy.

JAKE

(to Diaz)

What's going on? Where are the others?

Diaz turns and SHOOTS Larkin in the head, point blank range. Diaz raises his gun again, aiming at Elena.

Jake rushes Diaz and grabs the gun. Diaz fires a SHOT into Elena's chest. She falls.

Jake and Diaz struggle for the gun until Diaz shoves Jake to the ground. He KICKS him repeatedly.

JAKE

Christ! What are you doing?

DIAZ

This bitch and her lover set a trap but you brought a gun as well...

(holding up his gun)

You squabbled over the split and took each other down. The case is closed. It's a neat little package that should make everybody happy.

ON ELENA - Barely alive in the grass behind Diaz. She opens her eyes and crawls toward Larkin's tossed gun.

Diaz is oblivious. Jake sees her and stalls for time.

JAKE

Why?

DIAZ

Six hundred grand transferred into her account yesterday. Only it wasn't there long and it can't be traced.

Elena reaches Larkin's gun. She picks it up.

DIAZ

See, as head of security I was involved in the transfer of funds with complete access to account numbers. Get the picture?

Diaz sees Elena and spins around to fire. Jake LUNGES and tackles him as Elena fires - BAM! BAM! BAM!

The first two bullets hit Diaz, killing him instantly. The third GRAZES Jake's shoulder and drops him onto the grassy field. He lays flat on his back. Staring up at the stars.

It is the first image of the movie.

Jake struggles against the pain. He kneels beside Elena, who is fading fast, barely able to speak.

ELENA

I knew you were going to get me in trouble.

JAKE

I loved you.

She looks at him, frightened.

ELENA

Jake?

Jake watches her drift away. It's quiet on the field. He stands and looks over the grim scene.

Jake walks off, clutching his bloody shoulder.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Jake staggers to his car, dripping blood. He drops his keys, then slides in and starts the car.

INT. JAKE'S SWERVING CAR

Jake drives through light traffic, clutching the wheel and fighting to stay awake. His face is blanched.

EXT. INTERSECTION

Jake races through a red light, forcing a truck to SLAM ON BRAKES to avoid collision.

EXT. JAKE'S HOME

Jake gets out and staggers along the side of the house. His clothes are wet with blood.

INT. JAKE'S HOME

Jake passes through the dark hall. He grabs towels and a sewing kit from the linen closet.

INT. BATHROOM

Jake locks the door and turns on a night-light. He checks his blood-streaked face, then removes his clothes.

INT. SHOWER

Jake sits sprawled in the tub. Seaming hot water pours over him, washing blood from his wound down the drain.

SERIES OF SHOTS: Jake rummaging through the medicine cabinet; finding iodine and gauze; swallowing prescription painkillers; double-threading a needle and pouring iodine over his flesh wound.

MORE SHOTS: Jake sewing himself up with a needle; bandaging himself; cleaning the bloody bathroom and the inside of his car.

Jake finally collapses into bed. He drifts off to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAWN

A JANITOR discovers the THREE BODIES on the blood-soaked grass field. He runs inside to phone the police.

INT. JAKE'S MUSTANG, MOVING

Jake drives to school, pale and stiff. He pulls into the lot and sees police cars with cherries flashing.

JAKE'S VOICE

I followed the story in the papers for a few weeks. It went pretty much how Diaz planned... except for him ending up dead.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

Students and reporters crowd the police tape. Detective Rollins stands over Elena's body. He takes the gun from her hand and bags it.

JAKE'S VOICE

Elena and Larkin were blamed for both murders. The papers had a field day.

Rollins notices Jake behind the police-tape. Their eyes meet for a brief second.

JAKE'S VOICE

Hector Diaz was praised as a loyal family friend who lost his life while investigating the murders. Nobody asked what he was doing out there at night with no police back-up.

INT. LARKIN'S OFFICE

The police search it. Rollins finds photos of Larkin and Elena in a desk drawer. He bags them for evidence.

JAKE'S VOICE

When the Shelton family filed claim to retrieve the trust, they were told by the bank that the balance had been transferred to an offshore account. The money still hasn't been recovered.

INT. ENGLISH CLASS

Jake sits in the back row, looking weak and pale. He's nearly made it through the day.

JAKE'S VOICE

As for me, you could say I'm lucky because I got a second chance at a normal life.

INT. EMPTY HALLWAY

The school BELL rings and students pour out of class. Jake is a face in the crowd. Pale and thin, he seems ghostlike compared to the other kids.

JAKE'S VOICE

I'm eighteen years old and there's one thing I'm certain about. My life will never be "normal" again.

Jake moves through a sea of students. He approaches the sunlit exit and disappears into the light.

FADE OUT:

THE END