

8-BIT CHRISTMAS

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

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EXT. CHICAGO - ESTABLISHING - MORNING - DAY

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

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE - MORNING - DAY

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

ADULT JAKE

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

ANNIE

Dad look! That's the tablet I want!

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

ANNIE

Can we go inside? Can we go look?

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

ADULT JAKE

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

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

ADULT JAKE

Still?! The ice?!

SALVATION ARMY SANTA

I told 'em to salt it.

ADULT JAKE

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

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

ANNIE

I'm very upset!

Jake chuckles, takes the phone back.

ADULT JAKE  
See? Get us the shipment!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The doors open. Jake exits.

ADULT JAKE  
I got this.

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

ADULT JAKE  
Totally got it.

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

Jake leads Annie through his office. Employees bustle about.

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

A coworker, BETH (30s) passes by.

BETH  
Pendrock keeps calling from New  
York, Jake.

ADULT JAKE  
I know, I know.

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

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

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

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

ANNIE  
That's boring.

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

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

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

Jake sets a pillow down and Annie reluctantly lies down.

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

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

ANNIE  
Are you gonna work over Christmas  
again too?

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

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

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

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

ANNIE  
What's that?

Annie points to an OLD NINTENDO under the TV.

ADULT JAKE  
A Nintendo.

ANNIE  
A what?

ADULT JAKE  
A video game from when I was little.

ANNIE  
Cool. Can we play?

ADULT JAKE  
Annie, I have work to do--

ANNIE  
Please? Pleeeeeese?

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

ADULT JAKE  
Beth?

BETH  
What's up?

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

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

BETH  
No problem.

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

ADULT JAKE  
Here. First you have to do this.

Jake blows on the game as is customary.

ANNIE  
Why?

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

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

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

ADULT JAKE  
They didn't.

ANNIE  
Then how did you get it?

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

ANNIE  
Uh-huh.

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

ANNIE  
Promise.

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

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

ANNIE  
Does it really matter Dad?

ADULT JAKE

You wanna hear this or not?

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

ADULT JAKE

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN CHICAGO STREET - 1988 - MORNING - DAY

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

ANNIE (V.O.)

On a bike? How fast were you going?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Super fast.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Did you wear a helmet?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Uh, yeah. We always wore helmets in the 80s. We were super safe.

A HELMET suddenly appears on Jake's head.

ANNIE (V.O.)

What color was it?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Just let me tell the story, Annie.

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

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

DR. CLAW

I'll get you next time Gadget!

MIKEY TROTTER

(to TV, disappointed)  
You kiddin' me?

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

EXT. STREET - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jake runs past her right into the house.

TIFFANY KLEEN  
--yet. Hey!

INT. TIMMY KLEEN'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

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

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

JAKE  
Wow...

As Jake smiles we see a RETAINER in his mouth.

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

TIMMY KLEEN (O.S.)  
Forget something?

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

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
Your shoes, butthead.

JAKE

Oh, sorry, sorry about that.

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

I'd prayed several times to be made  
part of his family.

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Outside, half of H.C Storm  
Elementary wrestled in the snow.  
Including my four best friends.

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Mikey Trotter. All time  
quarterback. Great at drawing army  
guys and lighting things on fire.

UN FREEZE.

MIKEY TROTTER

How much you guys think a flame  
thrower costs?

EVAN OLSEN

Flame throwers are dangerous.

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Evan Olsen. Nervous. Allergic to  
bees. Probably has to go home in  
ten minutes.

UN FREEZE.

EVAN OLSEN

I prolly gotta go home soon.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

More Nintendo for us.

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

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

UN FREEZE.

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

RYAN GRUSECKI  
The Canseco's mine.

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
Is not.

RYAN GRUSECKI  
Is too! It was in my pack!

BASEBALL CARD FREEZE ON: RYAN GRUSECKI pushing his brother.

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

UN FREEZE: Ryan and Tommy go at it.

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

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

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

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

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

BASEBALL CARD FREEZE ON: Josh's smiling face.

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

UN FREEZE.

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

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

JOSH FARMER  
 That's the one.

EVAN OLSEN  
 And he told you wrestling was real?

JOSH FARMER  
 You guys have good memories.

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
 You never saw Macho Man, Farmer.

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

RYAN GRUSECKI  
 Macho Man eats Slim Jims.

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

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

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

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

Kleen checks his wrist, revealing two Swatch watches.

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
Anyone for a little Nintendo?

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

INT. KLEEN'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
Wait, my brother's still outside.

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

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
But it's Ryan.

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

Ryan Grusecki bangs on the adjacent basement well window.

RYAN GRUSECKI  
Lemme in!

Kleen just closes the curtain shut.

RYAN GRUSECKI (O.S.)  
Jerk!

TIMMY KLEEN  
You guys want some Pop Tarts or  
something?

MIKEY TROTTER  
Yeah that'd be great.

TIMMY KLEEN  
Too bad.

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
Winner stays.

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

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
Die duck! Die! Ha ha ha!

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

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jake sits at the kitchen table eating NINTENDO CEREAL.

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

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

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Jake sits up in his chair, centers himself.

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

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

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

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

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

PATTY DOYLE  
Is that right.

CRASH! Something falls in the other room.

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

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

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

JOHN DOYLE  
Has anyone seen my bandsaw?

PATTY DOYLE  
I think it's in the shower.

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

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

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

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

JOHN DOYLE  
No.

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

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

John examines his work. Not satisfied.

JOHN DOYLE  
God bless it.

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

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

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

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

JAKE

Drywall looks really good in there  
Dad. Totally.

JOHN DOYLE

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

JAKE

We're eating.

JOHN DOYLE

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

Jake looks at his mom for some help.

PATTY DOYLE

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

JOHN DOYLE

Well it's terribly designed then.

LIZZY DOYLE

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

JOHN DOYLE

I know you would Lizzy. Good girl.

Lizzy smiles devilishly at Jake. Jake scowls.

JOHN DOYLE

You haven't seen my bandsaw have  
you?

LIZZY DOYLE

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

JOHN DOYLE

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

JAKE

Uh, I was in Timmy Kleen's basement.

JOHN DOYLE

You can't play outside?

JAKE

It's cold.

JOHN DOYLE

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

PATTY DOYLE

Probably playing the Nintendo.

JOHN DOYLE

Nintendo?

LIZZY DOYLE

Nintendo.

PATTY DOYLE

Tenda?

JAKE

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

PATTY DOYLE

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Like making them smarter? Faster? Better at sports and Karate?

PATTY DOYLE

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

JAKE

A seizure?

PATTY DOYLE

Plus they're very expensive.

JOHN DOYLE

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

LIZZY DOYLE

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

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

JOHN DOYLE

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

PATTY DOYLE

I second that.

LIZZY DOYLE

Nintendo no-friendo.

PATTY DOYLE

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

Jake just sighs and stares at his plate, crushed.

JAKE

Never mind.

MIKEY TROTTER (PRE-LAP)

Jake. Jake...

EXT. HC STORM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - DAY

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

Welcome to fifth grade.

MIKEY TROTTER

Jake!

Jake snaps out of it and looks up.

MIKEY TROTTER

You gotta focus man.

EVAN OLSEN

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

MIKEY TROTTER

Jeez. You sure you're up for this?

JAKE

Yeah...

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

DAN DELUND

Woooo! You like that?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

RYAN GRUSECKI

I think I saw hair under his pits.

Trotter keeps his eyes on Delund, focused.

MIKEY TROTTER

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

JAKE

Right now?

MIKEY TROTTER

Olsen? Goonies never say die, man.



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

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

JAKE  
No way...

MIKEY TROTTER  
Yes way.

EVAN OLSEN  
He's already practicing, look.

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

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

JAKE  
He's gonna let us in?

EVAN OLSEN  
We gotta bring him gifts, but yeah.

JAKE  
Who else knows about it?

EVAN OLSEN  
Just us. Well, and Farmer.

JAKE  
Farmer knows? Great.

SMASH CUT TO:

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

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

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

JOSH FARMER

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

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

JOSH FARMER

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

MIKEY TROTTER

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

JOSH FARMER

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

MIKEY TROTTER

No you don't Farmer.

JOSH FARMER

No I do not.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

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

MIKEY TROTTER

Nobody knows how it works, man.

JOSH FARMER

Oh, it has a suction cup that  
connects directly to your brain.  
Yeah. My uncle was on the design  
team.

(then)

At NASA.

(then, off their looks)

I hate you guys.

Suddenly the front door starts to unlock. Everybody turns.

PAPER BOY

He's coming out!

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

TIFFANY KLEEN

This is so dumb.

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

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

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

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

HYSTERICAL KID  
Yeah Kleen! YEEEEEEAAAAAH!

Jake just stares at the glove in awe.

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

Kleen silences the crowd with one swipe of his hand.

TIMMY KLEEN  
Silence children of Batavia!

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
What have you brought me?!

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

JAKE  
It was the best I could find.

MIKEY TROTTER  
You're not getting in dude.

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

KID  
Five bucks from my first communion!

TIMMY KLEEN  
One.

KID  
A bunch a Micro Machines!

TIMMY KLEEN  
Two.

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
No.

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

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
Ah! Shh! Lacy Dog, no!

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

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

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

MIKEY TROTTER  
How did you--?

Jake just smiles as he removes his shoes.

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

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

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

Kleen presses play on the dual deck boom box.

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

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
No one heard that!

Everyone stifles their laughter.

TIMMY KLEEN  
Behold! The power of the Power  
Glove!

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

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

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

Kleen starts throwing punches.

TIMMY KLEEN  
Hi-ya!

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
I said hi-ya!

Kleen has trouble controlling his character on screen.

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
You gotta kick him Kleen.

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

Kleen's character just stands there, getting pummeled.

MIKEY TROTTER  
You're getting killed man.

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

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
What's wrong with this thing?!

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

MIKEY TROTTER  
This thing sucks.

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

JAKE  
It doesn't work at all!

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
NOOOOOOOO!

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

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

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

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

MIKEY TROTTER  
You tell 'em Kleen!

RYAN GRUSECKI  
Yeah, show us your moves Kleen!

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

JAKE  
Go Kleen go! Tae Kwan Do!

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

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

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

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

TIMMY KLEEN  
RRRRRAAAHHHHHH!

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

EVERYONE  
NOOOOO!

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

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

ANNIE (V.O.)  
What?!

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

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

ANNIE

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

ADULT JAKE

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

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

ANNIE

Are you making all of this up?

ADULT JAKE

No way.

ANNIE

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

ADULT JAKE

Be my guest.

BETH (O.S.)

Jake?

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

ADULT JAKE

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

Jake approaches Beth at the door.

ADULT JAKE

What's up?

BETH

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

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

BETH

It's a big contract, Jake.

JAKE

I know, I know.

BETH  
You want another Christmas cookie  
Annie?

ANNIE  
Yes please!

JAKE  
She does not. Thank you Beth.

Jake turns to Annie who is now on his computer.

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

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

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

ADULT JAKE  
And then you'll take a nap?

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

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

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

ANNIE  
You ran away?

ADULT JAKE  
So fast.

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

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

Evan Olsen and a few other stragglers sit outside.

EVAN OLSEN  
What happened?! What happened?!

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
Get outta here!

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

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

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
Sorry Dad, I forgot.

JOHN DOYLE

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

PATTY DOYLE

It's supposed to snow tonight,  
dear.

JOHN DOYLE

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

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

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

TOM SKILLING

Just like I said. Snow! Snow! Snow!

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

JAKE

Yes!

JOHN DOYLE

God bless it.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

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

LIZZY DOYLE

Are we gonna have a snow day today  
Mommy?

PATTY DOYLE

I wouldn't count on it dear.

Patty adjusts the knob to a RADIO above the stove.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

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

JAKE  
 Come on...

RADIO ANNOUNCER  
 And that's it.

JAKE  
 No!

LIZZY DOYLE  
 Stupid.

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

Lizzy smiles slyly.

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

Jake just closes his eyes in pain.

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

EXT. DOYLE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

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

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

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

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

LIZZY DOYLE  
 Pretty.

Jake scowls and walks down the steps.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

JAKE

Just go ahead, I'll catch up.

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

LIZZY DOYLE

You shouldn't be doing that.

JAKE

I'll catch up.

LIZZY DOYLE

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

JAKE

Then wait a second and shut up.

LIZZY DOYLE

Oooh. You said a swear.

JAKE

Shut up's not a swear.

LIZZY DOYLE

You said it again.

JAKE

I got a lot on my mind Lizzy!

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - LATER THAT MORNING - DAY

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

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

KID (O.S.)  
Noooooo!

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

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

EVAN OLSEN  
Yeah?

MIKEY TROTTER  
It looked like that.

EVAN OLSEN  
Jesus.

JAKE  
The dog's dead, Olsen.

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

KID (O.S.)  
Noooooo!

EVAN OLSEN  
Are we gonna get in trouble?

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

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

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
Hey, we talked to Kleen.

Ryan comes tumbling down right after him.

RYAN GRUSECKI  
Hey, we talked to Kleen.

JAKE  
What'd he say?

TOMMY GRUSECKI

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

EVAN OLSEN

Thank God.

DAN DELUND (O.S.)

Is that all you babies got?!

Josh Farmer comes running up, out of breath.

JOSH FARMER

Hey! Did you guys hear?!

MIKEY TROTTER

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

JOSH FARMER

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

JAKE

No way.

JOSH FARMER

Yes way! A sixth grader just told me!

MIKEY TROTTER

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

JOSH FARMER

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

DAN DELUND (O.S.)

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

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

JOSH FARMER

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

(MORE)

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

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

JOSH FARMER  
 Dang it.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

Trotter leans back in his seat and whispers to Olsen.

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

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

Olsen leans back to Jake.

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

Jake leans back to Tommy Grusecki.

JAKE  
 First prize comes with--

MRS. HUGO  
 Jake Doyle!

Jake just sits there, caught.

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

JAKE  
 No.

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

JAKE  
 But--

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

The class turns to face Jake, concerned.

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

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

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

Jake closes his eyes again.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - LATER - DAY

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

Jake catches a whiff, scowls.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Unless of course they needed you on their football team.

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

MIKEY TROTTER

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

JAKE

Just play without me!

MIKEY TROTTER

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

Trotter trots over with the ball.

MIKEY TROTTER

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

JAKE

They're mine.

MIKEY TROTTER

Oh man.

Delund calls from the other end of the blacktop.

DAN DELUND

Let's go Trotter! You baby!

MIKEY TROTTER

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

Olsen runs over.

EVAN OLSEN

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

JAKE

They're mine.

Out on the blacktop Delund's had enough.

DAN DELUND

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

JAKE

What do I do?

The guys panic. Delund jogs toward the group.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

DAN DELUND

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

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

DAN DELUND

What the--?! Are those..?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

Jake takes his retainer out, preparing for the beating.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

DAN DELUND

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

Delund grabs Jake by the coat, holds him up.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

But then, I heard the voice of an angel.

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

Farmer runs across the playground waving a green flyer.

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

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

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

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

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

DAN DELUND  
"Nintendo Entertainment System."

A beat. Delayed shock.

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

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

JOSH FARMER  
Ow. Ow. Okay, ow.

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

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

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

Jake crouches behind a dumpster, giddy with excitement.

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

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

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

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

INT. KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS - DAY

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

LIZZY DOYLE  
 I learned about Brazil today.

PATTY DOYLE  
 Really?

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

Lizzy helps herself to a cookie, nibbling it thoughtfully.

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

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

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

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

PATTY DOYLE

Jake. Where are you--?

No response, Jake is out the door.

LIZZY

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

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

The door opens. An imposing FAT MAN stands there.

FAT MAN

WHAT?!

Jake freezes, scared.

JAKE  
Uh. Communists.

FAT MAN  
What? What is it?

Jake just stands there, stammering.

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

JAKE  
Uh, hello, my name is--

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

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

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

JAKE  
Wanna buy a wreath?

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

FAT MAN  
You got a learning disability?!

Jake just stares at him blankly.

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

Jake shakes his head "no".

FAT MAN  
Good.

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

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

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

JAKE  
What are you doing here Farmer?

JOSH FARMER  
Just out for a stroll.

Farmer smiles, rings the bell.

JAKE  
You can't sell wreathes here.

JOSH FARMER  
Why's that?

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

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

JAKE  
That Nintendo's mine!

JOSH FARMER  
I already sold sixty seven wreathes already.

JAKE  
To who?

JOSH FARMER  
People. Your mom.

JAKE  
You're full of it Farmer.

JOSH FARMER  
We'll see about that.

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

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

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

EXT/INT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE - DAY

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

All over town Cub Scouts pounded  
the pavement in record numbers.

Various Cub Scouts stand on different door steps and porches.

MIKEY TROTTER

Merry Christmas sir.

EVAN OLSEN

It's that time of year again.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

You're in luck.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

A swarm of snot nosed Gordon Gekkos  
had been born.

RYAN GRUSECKI

I'm talking top of the line.

EVAN OLSEN

Totally tax deductible.

JOSH FARMER

A hundred percent recyclable.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

Flame resistant.

RYAN GRUSECKI

Non toxic.

EVAN OLSEN

Christmas wreathes!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

All in the name of Nintendo. And it  
was every man for himself.

- Two CUB SCOUTS argue outside a JEWEL GROCERY STORE.

CUB SCOUT 1  
I was here first!

CUB SCOUT 2  
Were not!

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

CUB SCOUT 1  
No one goes to White Hens!

- Two CUB SCOUTS race toward the same door, then wrestle on the front porch trying to be the first one to ring the bell.
- The PAPER BOY rides down the street, chucking papers with a bright red WREATH ORDER FORM wrapped onto every one.
- The Cub Scouts at the Jewel now have each other in head locks. A SALVATION ARMY SANTA CLAUS tries to break them up.

SALVATION ARMY SANTA  
Guys, guys!

- A bare fingered glove bangs on a door.

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

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

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

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

- Jake stands on a few porches, more confident.

JAKE  
Hello sir.

JAKE  
Hello ma'am.

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

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

MISS SHERMAN  
Who?

JAKE  
JAKE DOYLE FROM DOWN THE STREET!

- Jake stands on another doorstep.

JAKE  
Wanna buy a wreath?

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

JAKE  
Wanna buy a wreath?

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

JAKE  
Wanna buy a wreath?

- Back to old Miss Sherman.

JAKE  
Would you like to buy a wreath?

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

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

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

Miss Sherman pulls him inside. Jake groans.

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

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

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

JOSH FARMER

Told ya.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

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

JAKE

Did it have to be Farmer?

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

PATTY DOYLE

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

LIZZY DOYLE

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

Jake kicks the table, coughs.

JAKE

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

PATTY DOYLE

That's a weird prize.

Lizzy smiles, delighted.

LIZZY DOYLE

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

John rummages through the refrigerator, not listening.

JOHN DOYLE

God bless it. Where the hell is it?

PATTY DOYLE

Screwdriver's in the butter dish.

John pulls a screwdriver out of the butter dish.

JOHN DOYLE

No that's not it.

John puts it back. He rummages more.

PATTY DOYLE  
What are you looking for?

JOHN DOYLE  
My gourmet sausage.

Jake looks around nervously.

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

JOHN DOYLE  
How the hell do you lose a sausage?

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

JOHN DOYLE  
I wanna eat it with dinner.

PATTY DOYLE  
We're having salads.

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

Patty sits. John sits down in a huff.

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
Whoopsie again.

JAKE  
It snowed.

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

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

JOHN DOYLE  
Too bad. And stop saying totally.

JAKE  
That's not fair.

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

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

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

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

JOHN DOYLE  
Gourmet sausage!

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

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

EXT. DOYLE HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jake scowls. John sighs.

JOHN DOYLE  
C'mere. Take a deep breath.

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

JOHN DOYLE  
Smell that?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
Poo?

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

JAKE  
Trap doors?

JOHN DOYLE  
Yeah, trap doors too.

JAKE  
Cool.

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

JAKE  
Kinda like the house?

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

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

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

JAKE  
Yeah.

JOHN DOYLE

Do that one last. Let it freeze.

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

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

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

LIZZY DOYLE (O.S.)

We need to talk.

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

JAKE

What are you doing in my room?

LIZZY DOYLE

I need your help.

JAKE

With what?

LIZZY DOYLE

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

JAKE

So what do you need me for?

LIZZY DOYLE

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

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

JAKE

What are you gonna do for me?

LIZZY DOYLE

Tell you how to win the Nintendo.

JAKE

You don't know how to win a Nintendo.

LIZZY DOYLE  
Okay never mind.

Lizzy starts to pack up her stuff.

JAKE  
Wait. Okay. How can I win it?

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

JAKE  
Sure.

LIZZY DOYLE  
Promise?

JAKE  
Yes, I promise already. What is it?

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

JAKE  
How do you know that?

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

JAKE  
Not necessarily.

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

JAKE  
What's your point?

Lizzy sets her crayon down and looks at Jake.

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

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

JAKE

Wow. That's a really good idea.

LIZZY DOYLE

I know. So we got a deal or what?

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

JAKE

Yeah...

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

LIZZY DOYLE

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

Lizzy exits the room.

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen of Prairie Pines nursing home!

INT. PRAIRIE PINES NURSING HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Jake strides down the hall.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Allow me to introduce myself.

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

I am Jake Doyle. Cutest Cub Scout alive!

Jake stops in the doorway and waves adorably.

JAKE

Hello everybody.

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

OLD FOLKS

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

That's me.

OLD MAN

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Don't mind if I do.

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

INT. DOYLE MINIVAN - THE NEXT DAY - DAY

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

JAKE

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

PATTY DOYLE

I didn't know that, no.

JAKE

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

John leans over to Patty as he drives, concerned.

JOHN DOYLE

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

PATTY DOYLE

Who knows with this one.

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

JOHN DOYLE

Oh! Just put it anywhere pal! Yeah!

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

JOHN DOYLE

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Ah yes, the annual Doyle Chicago  
Shopping Trip. Also known as my  
dad's least favorite day of the  
year.

PATTY DOYLE

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

JOHN DOYLE

Sounds great.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

The shopping. The stress. The  
traffic. The tourists.

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

JOHN DOYLE

Wisconsin plates! Shocker!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

The man held it together with  
nothing more than sheer will and a  
Steely Dan Mix tape.

LIZZY DOYLE

Can we turn on Christmas carols?

JOHN DOYLE

No Christmas carols!

HARD CUT TO:

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE SHOPPING MALL - LATER - DAY

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

PATTY DOYLE  
Just breathe honey. Just breathe.

This is John's hell.

JOHN DOYLE  
They gotta put a bar in here.

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

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

LIZZY DOYLE  
There's the Cabbage Patch section!

PATTY DOYLE  
Lead the way Lizzy.

Lizzy charges ahead toward a big Cabbage Patch Kid sign.

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

PATTY DOYLE  
I didn't know that, no.

JAKE  
(whispering)  
Lizzy really wants one.

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

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

An OLD JANITOR sadly sweeps up the remains.

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

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

PATTY DOYLE

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

LIZZY DOYLE

Yippie.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

Jake notices a BEAUTIFUL NINTENDO DISPLAY in the distance.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

--hhhhhold on a second.

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

NINTENDO (V.O.)

Hello Jake.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Who said that?

NINTENDO (V.O.)

You know who.

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Nintendo?

NINTENDO (V.O.)

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

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

PATTY DOYLE

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

JOHN DOYLE

They never get us anything.

Patty sets Lizzy down.

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

Jake hasn't heard a word she just said.

JOHN DOYLE  
Jake.

JAKE  
What?

JOHN DOYLE  
Watch your sister.

PATTY DOYLE  
We'll be right back. Okay?

JAKE  
Yeah.

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
Yeah, useless...

LIZZY DOYLE  
Who are you talking to?

Jake starts walking toward the display. Lizzy follows.

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
 Top Gun.

Beat.

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

JAKE  
 Mega Man.

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

JAKE  
 Cool.

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

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

JAKE  
 Yes I do.

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

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

As Jake punches and kicks, TIME STARTS PASSING.

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

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

BOY ONE  
Dude you're on fire.

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

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

JAKE  
YEAAAAAH!

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
Jake Doyle!

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

BOY TWO  
My man Jake.

BOY ONE  
Jake! Jake! Jake!

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

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

CROWD  
Jake! Jake! Jake!

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

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

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

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

JOHN DOYLE  
 Where. Is. Your. Sister?!

The chanting stops. The music stops. Everything stops.

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

JOHN DOYLE  
 Where is she?!

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

PATTY DOYLE  
 Lizzy! Lizzy honey?

JOHN DOYLE  
 Elizabeth!

BOY ONE  
 You're a dead man bro.

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

JAKE  
 Lizzy?! Lizzy?!

Jake runs down toy aisle after toy aisle.

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

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

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

LIZZY DOYLE  
Do they speak English at the North Pole?

SALVATION ARMY SANTA  
Yes.

LIZZY DOYLE  
Even the elves?

SALVATION ARMY SANTA  
Yes.

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

SALVATION ARMY SANTA  
Yes.

Jake comes rushing outside and sees Lizzy.

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

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

PATTY DOYLE  
Oh Lizzy!

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

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

LIZZY DOYLE  
He was playing Nintendo.

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

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

JAKE  
Sorry Dad.

JOHN DOYLE

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Oh for two.

John notices Jake's reaction.

JOHN DOYLE

Open your mouth.

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

JOHN DOYLE

Open it Jake.

Jake stands motionless, weighing his options.

PATTY DOYLE

Do you have the Marshall Field bag  
John?

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

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

I figured it cost roughly as much  
as a new car.

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



INT. DOYLE MINI VAN - NIGHT

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

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

Jake smiles to himself.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - NIGHT - FANTASY SEQUENCE

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

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

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

JOHN DOYLE  
 Jake's test scores are up again.

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

JOHN DOYLE  
 Totally.

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

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

KATIE SORRENTINO  
 I did.

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

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

JAKE

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

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

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

JAKE

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

DAN DELUND

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

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

JAKE

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

Jake pulls out a candy cigarette, takes a bite.

JAKE

(to the crowd)  
A Nintendo party!

The partygoers all cheer "woooo!".

BACK TO:

INT. DOYLE MINIVAN - NIGHT

Jake cheers quietly to himself, in a daze.

JAKE

Wooo... Wooo...

JOHN DOYLE

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

Jake snaps out of it.

JAKE

Huh?

JOHN DOYLE

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

JAKE

Sorry Dad.

JOHN DOYLE

(muttering to himself)  
Hawks can't score, kid's makin' weird noises...

The crowd noise intensifies. John turns it up.

PAT FOLEY (V.O.)

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

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

JOHN DOYLE

Ha ha! Dipsey-doo to you Lemuix!

PAT FOLEY (V.O.)

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

JOHN DOYLE

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

Jake looks over. John looks him in the eyes.

JOHN DOYLE

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

JAKE

Huh?

JOHN DOYLE

You seem to know a lot about them.

JAKE  
I don't want a Cabbage Patch Doll.

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

JAKE  
I guess.

JOHN DOYLE  
Good.

Jake looks out the window, suddenly concerned.

JAKE  
Where are we going?

JOHN DOYLE  
To see a guy.

JAKE  
About Cabbage Patch Dolls?

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

JAKE  
No.

JOHN DOYLE  
Then there ya go.

EXT. SHADY STREET - AURORA - NIGHT

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

JOHN DOYLE  
Stay close. Let me do the talking.

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

DEALER  
Help you boys?

JOHN DOYLE  
Word is you've come into a little cabbage.

DEALER

Step into my office gentlemen.

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

JOHN DOYLE

I'm gonna need a girl with freckles.

DEALER

Not a problem.

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

DEALER

Best patch in the Tri Cities.

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

JAKE

Yeah, they're legit.

DEALER

'Course they're legit.

JOHN DOYLE

There aren't any freckles on the redhead.

DEALER

The freckles are on the blond here.

JOHN DOYLE

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

DEALER

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

JOHN DOYLE

That worked?

DEALER  
Like a charm.

JOHN DOYLE  
How much?

DEALER  
Hundred.

JOHN DOYLE  
A hundred?!

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

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

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

JOHN DOYLE  
Seventy. Last offer.

DEALER  
Fine. Deal.

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

JOHN DOYLE  
Oh! Hey!

John covers Jake's eyes, grabs the doll.

JOHN DOYLE  
What the hell is this?!

DEALER  
What?

JOHN DOYLE  
Where's her clothes?

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

JOHN DOYLE

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

DEALER

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

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

JOHN DOYLE

Sixty five. I thought there were clothes.

DEALER

Seventy.

JOHN DOYLE

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

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

JOHN DOYLE

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

Jake forces a smile.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

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

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

MR. HALBERG

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

All the scouts close their eyes.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

MR. HALBERG

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

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

MR. HALBERG

It will remain with us forever.

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

MR. HALBERG

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

DAN DELUND

Get to the wreathes, Halberg!

MR. HALBERG

I'm sorry?

DAN DELUND

The wreathes.

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

MR. HALBERG

Are you in this troop?

DAN DELUND

I'm here ain't I?

Halberg stares, about to say something.

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

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

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

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

The boys cheer and stomp their feet!

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

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

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

Farmer leans over to the Gruseckis.

JOSH FARMER  
Told ya it came with the Power Pad.

Mr. Halberg steps on stage, clears his throat.

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

Applause and laughter. Josh reluctantly goes up on stage.

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

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

JOSH FARMER  
A subscription to "Boys' Life".

More mocking laughter. Josh trudges back to his seat.

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

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

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

Halberg pulls back the sheet revealing a nice GLOBE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SLOW MOTION: Halberg pulls back the sheet.

MR. HALBERG

A brand new set of World Book  
Encyclopedias!

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

JAKE

What?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It was like winning more school.

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

DAN DELUND

Where's the Nintendo? Where is it?!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

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

DR. KLEEN

Parents of Batavia. Good evening.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Doctor Timothy Kleen Senior, that's  
who.

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

EXT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

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

MIKEY TROTTER

The dog...

JAKE

This is bad.

EVAN OLSEN

This is really bad...

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Dr. Kleen continues.

DR. KLEEN

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

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

DR. KLEEN

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

JOHN DOYLE

Forty two inches. That's a nice TV.

DR. KLEEN

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

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

DR. KLEEN

Nintendo is the reason for this!

Kleen clicks to a photo of the smashed TV.

DR. KLEEN

And this!

A photo of a Timmy Kleen wailing hysterically.

DR. KLEEN

And this!

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

DR. KLEEN

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

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

MRS. TROTTER

We should ban it!

DAD ONE

Yeah! Ban it!

OFFICER MASEJEWSKI

No more dogs are dying in my town!

DR. KLEEN

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It was virtual Nintendo Armageddon.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - MORNING - DAY

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And there was nothing we could do about it.

The cartoon is suddenly interrupted by a NEWS ANCHOR.

## NEWS ANCHOR

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

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

## REPORTER

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

## DR. KLEEN

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

## REPORTER

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

## DR. KLEEN

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

## REPORTER

No it has not.

## DR. KLEEN

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

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

## ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

## MAX HEADROOM

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

He clicks to McGRUFF the crime fighting cartoon dog.

MCGRUFF

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

He clicks to A CARTOON MR. T.

CARTOON MR. T

I pity the fool who plays Nintendo!

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

FLINT

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

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

MICHAEL

Because Nintendo makes him fat?

SHIPWRECK'S PARROT

"Nintendo makes him fat. Nintendo  
makes him fat."

They all laugh heartily.

MICHAEL

Well now I know.

FLINT

And knowing is half the battle.

ALL

"GI JOE! A REAL AMERICAN--"

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

GUY

This is your brain.

JAKE

No way.

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

GUY

This is your brain on Nintendo.  
Any questions?

ANNIE (V.O.)

Yes! What is happening?!

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - PRESENT DAY - LATER

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

ANNIE

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

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

ADULT JAKE

Sometimes grownups just get really  
upset, Annie.

ANNIE

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

ADULT JAKE

--Not all the time.

ANNIE

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

ADULT JAKE

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

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

ANNIE

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

ADULT JAKE

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

ANNIE

Yes.

ADULT JAKE

Okay...

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

ADULT JAKE

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

Jake's intercom buzzes.

BETH (O.S.)

Jake, I got Pendrock on line one.

ANNIE

He'll call 'em back!

Jake smiles, a little proud of Annie.

ADULT JAKE

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

EXT. THE DUGOUT BASEBALL CARD STORE - 1988 - DAY

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

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

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

JOSH FARMER

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

Tommy scowls.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

Who needs one?

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

MIKEY TROTTER

Turn that terrible song off Farmer!

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
 Dupage County.

EVAN OLSEN  
 How do you know?

JAKE  
 I got encyclopedias.

Trotter shuffles through his pack of Topps.

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

JOSH FARMER  
 You gonna eat your gum?

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

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
I got a Clemens.

MIKEY TROTTER  
Mattingly.

EVAN OLSEN  
Chris Sabo.

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
Oh, that's a good card.

RYAN GRUSECKI  
I got a Ripken. Billy Ripken.

Ryan just stares at his card, gobsmacked.

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
Who cares about Billy Ripken?

Ryan looks like he's just seen a ghost.

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
What? What is it?

RYAN GRUSECKI  
You guys aren't gonna believe this.

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
What?

RYAN GRUSECKI  
Look! Right there! On his bat!

The guys all gather round and peer over his shoulder.

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

JOSH FARMER  
Oh, that's a bad one.

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

MIKEY TROTTER  
It's an error card.

RYAN GRUSECKI

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

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

TOMMY GRUSECKI

Billy Ripken... Ninety five bucks.

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

RYAN GRUSECKI

Careful! Don't tweak it! Careful!

JOSH FARMER

You're rich Grusecki!

EVAN OLSEN

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

Jake suddenly stops jumping around.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

JOSH FARMER

I don't get it.

JAKE

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

Olsen points to the easel.

EVAN OLSEN

I think you spelled "covert" wrong.

MIKEY TROTTER

The field trip is Monday Farmer. To Chicago.

JOSH FARMER

So?

MIKEY TROTTER

So, they still sell Nintendo's there.

JOSH FARMER

So?

TOMMY GRUSECKI

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

JOSH FARMER

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

JAKE

This can work guys.

EVAN OLSEN

I don't know, sounds dangerous.

JAKE

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

MIKEY TROTTER

Flame thrower thing would be pretty cool though.

EVAN OLSEN

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

JAKE

Forget Christmas! This is serious!

(beat, digs deep)

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

MIKEY TROTTER

I'm in.

The Gruseckis look at each other, then.

TOMMY GRUSECKI

We're in.

RYAN GRUSECKI

We're in.

JOSH FARMER

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

JAKE

Yes or no Farmer.

JOSH FARMER

I'm in.

JAKE

Olsen?

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

EVAN OLSEN

We're gonna get in so much trouble.

JAKE

That's what I'm talkin' about!

The guys all cheer! Olsen is in.

JOSH FARMER

Yeah! Woo!

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

MIKEY TROTTER

No!

JAKE

Turn it off!

RYAN GRUSECKI

I hate this song!

JOSH FARMER

You love it! You know you love it!

INT/EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE

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

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

ANNIE (V.O.)

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Just hang on Annie, I'm getting there.

EXT. FRONT OF SCHOOL - MORNING - DAY

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

JAKE

Walkie talkies?

EVAN OLSEN  
Check.

JAKE  
Blanket?

TOMMY GRUSECKI  
Check.

JAKE  
Duffle bag?

RYAN GRUSECKI  
Check.

Farmer steps forward wearing head to toe CAMOUFLAGE clothing.

JOSH FARMER  
Camouflage! Check.

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

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

MIKEY TROTTER  
You got the money. I got the Motts.

JAKE  
Let's do it.

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

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

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

JAKE  
Hey! That's ours!

DAN DELUND  
Not anymore.

MIKEY TROTTER  
You can't do that!

DAN DELUND  
Oh yeah? What are you gonna do  
about it?

Dan looms, threateningly. Trotter and Jake stammer.

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

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

MIKEY TROTTER  
Oh man. This is bad.

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
On the bus. To the Art Institute.

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

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

INT. SCHOOL BUS - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

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

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

A KID in the second row immediately stands and points.

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

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

KID TWO  
Look at those!

KID THREE  
They're so pretty!

KATIE SORRENTINO  
I have the same kind.

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

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

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

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

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

INT. SCHOOL BUS - LATER - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONNOR STUMP

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

JAKE

No.

CONNOR STUMP

You should learn some.

Trotter comes running up, crouched down to avoid detection.

MIKEY TROTTER

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

JAKE

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

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

MIKEY TROTTER

Mrs. Hugo...

MRS. HUGO

Michael, what are you doing out of your seat?

MIKEY TROTTER

I don't feel good...

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

DAN DELUND

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

JAKE

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

DAN DELUND

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

JAKE

We gotta go now or else--

DAN DELUND

Or else what? You're gonna make me?

Delund stands, he grabs Jake by the jacket.

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

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

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

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

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

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

JAKE  
You're all talk, no walk Delund.

DAN DELUND  
What's that supposed to mean?

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

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

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

JAKE  
Now.

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

JOSH FARMER  
Holy smokes...

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

MRS. HUGO

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

MIKEY TROTTER

Bluuuuuuughh!

Trotter suddenly PUKES all over Mrs. Hugo.

MRS. HUGO

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

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

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

EVAN OLSEN

Goonies never say die Doyle!

EXT. MICHIGAN AVENUE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

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

JAKE

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

EVAN OLSEN (O.S.)

Blue Bird, this is Ewok One.

JAKE

What happened to Red Dog?

EVAN OLSEN (O.S.)

I changed it.

JAKE

We get to change names now? Start over.

(then)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

Ewok One this is Millennium Falcon  
Super Cool.

EVAN OLSEN (O.S.)

Love it.

JAKE

I am crossing the street. Over.

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

SALVATION ARMY SANTA

Careful there kid. It's slippery.

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

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS

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

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

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

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

JAKE

Are you kidding me?!

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

JAKE

Ewok One. We have a problem.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

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

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

EVAN OLSEN  
 Abort! Abort!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EVAN OLSEN

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

JAKE

I don't know, something good.

EVAN OLSEN

Like what?!

JAKE

I don't know, make something up!

Farmer rises from his seat. Smiles.

JOSH FARMER

Did someone say, "make something up"?

EXT. STREET - PAYPHONE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

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

JOSH FARMER

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

INT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS

Jake nervously looks at his watch. It's down to SIX MINUTES.

JAKE

Come on... Come on...

The PA crackles on.

PA VOICE (O.S.)

Paging Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Kleen. Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Kleen. Please come to the customer service desk. You have an emergency phone call.

Surprised and concerned, Mrs. Trotter and Mrs. Kleen walk off toward the front lobby. Jake grabs his walkie talkie.

JAKE

It worked. I'm going in. Keep 'em  
on the phone.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Olsen looks out the window at Farmer across the street.

EVAN OLSEN

Copy that.

Olsen gives Farmer a thumbs up and a signal to keep the call  
going. Farmer gives him a thumbs up back. He's got this.

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - MOMENTS LATER

Jake runs through the store. Focused, determined.

NINTENDO (V.O.)

Hello Jake. How 'bout a quick--

JAKE

Not today!

Jake blows by the Nintendo display.

EXT. STREET - PAYPHONE - CONTINUOUS

Farmer does his best to keep Kleen and Trotter on the line.

JOSH FARMER

Hello Mrs. Trotter. I mean Mrs.  
Kleen, right. It's your nephew!

(then)

Yes I know you don't have a nephew.  
That's exactly why I'm calling. I'm  
with the International Nieces and  
Nephews Collective. That's right.

(then)

Well, we're based in Europe.

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - CONTINUOUS

Jake runs up to the aisle where Nintendos and games are sold.  
He grabs a Nintendo, pausing for a second to soak in the  
moment. He hoists it on his shoulder, starts grabbing games.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Okay, games, games, games, let's  
see... RBI Baseball.

(MORE)

ADULT JAKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Double Dragon, obviously. Top Gun  
 or 1943? Top-Gun or-1943? Top-Gun-  
 or-1943?

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)  
 Four minutes Super Falcon!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
 Dah!

Jake grabs Top Gun and runs off.

EXT. STREET - PAYPHONE - MOMENTS LATER

Farmer keeps the conversation going somehow.

JOSH FARMER  
 Well it makes perfect sense if you  
 think about it. You don't have a  
 nephew, you would like a nephew,  
 the Collective is here to help.  
 (then)  
 Hello?

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Jake runs up to the checkout counter to find five SHOPPERS in  
 front of him, all with loaded up arms of merchandise.

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)  
 Super Cool, come in. Farmer's  
 losing them, you gotta hurry!

Jake scrambles and heads toward the other end of the store.

INT. TOY SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake runs past the Nintendo display again.

NINTENDO (V.O.)  
 Tick tock, Jake. Tick tock.

JAKE  
 Shut up!

EXT. STREET - PAY PHONE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Farmer does his best to keep the ladies on the line.

JOSH FARMER

Oh, I have Mrs. Trotter now, yes, thank you. No I was unaware prank phone calls were a criminal offense. Well I'll get down to brass tacks then. I'm with the Book-It program. Your son's won a personal pan pizza.

INT. COSMETICS SECTION - MARSHALL FIELDS - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake reaches a checkout counter in cosmetics, out of breath.

JAKE

One Nintendo please.

The COSMETICS CLERK (50s, female) looks him over, suspicious.

CLERK

How old are you?

JAKE

Lady, I got two hundred bucks and no time for questions, ring it up.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Trotter teeters back and forth on the sidewalk, moaning. The BUS DRIVER has joined Mrs. Hugo on the sidewalk now. The two watch Trotter in amazement. This kid has been puking forever.

MRS. HUGO

Feeling better now? Think we can get on the bus?

Trotter doubles over again, "pukes", but no applesauce comes out. He's out of Motts cups.

BUS DRIVER

Yeah he's dry heavin', you're good.

The Bus driver heads back to the bus. Trotter sneaks a panicked look up at Olsen. "I'm out." Olsen grabs his walkie.

EVAN OLSEN

The sauce is gone. Repeat. We are out of sauce.

Olsen turns to see the Gruseckis pulling Farmer on the bus.

JOSH FARMER

I lost em.

EVAN OLSEN  
And Farmer's off the phone!

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

Jake sprints toward the Marshall Fields exit as he stuffs the NINTENDO and GAMES in his duffle bag.

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)  
Repeat. Farmer's off the phone!  
Look out for Kleen and Trotter!

Jake looks up to see Kleen and Trotter approaching. He has no where to hide. He dives along side A GROUP OF SHOPPERS heading toward the escalator. He army crawls along with them, using them as a screen from Kleen and Trotter.

A TODDLER in the arms of one of the shoppers notices Jake and smiles. Jake give the kid a little wink, he's in the zone.

INT/EXT. WATER TOWER PLACE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Jake runs down the escalator stairs, yells into his walkie.

JAKE  
I got past 'em! I'm in the clear!

EVAN OLSEN (V.O.)  
The bus is moving Jake. The  
stoplight is still the rendezvous!  
You're gonna make it!

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
This was it. This was it. Victory  
was mine. I could taste it...

Jake barrels through the front doors, his eyes wide as saucers as he runs onto the sidewalk. Sunlight hits his face, he's free, he's made it! We go into SLOW MOTION.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
Yes! Yes!

Suddenly Jake's feet slide out from under him.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
Nooooooooo!

Jake slips backward on a patch of ice-- the same spot that Adult Jake almost slipped at the beginning of the movie.

The momentum thrusts Jake's hands upward and the duffle bag goes flying. It glistens in the sun as it flutters down, down, down onto the street.

Jake scrambles up on his side just in time to see THE BUS come flying by and RUN OVER THE NINTENDO.

JAKE

Nooooooo!

Front tire, then back tire. On the bus Olsen, Farmer, Trotter and the Gruseckis all peer out the back window, their faces pressed against the glass in horror, witnessing the damage.

THE GUYS

Nooooooo!

The bus stops at the stoplight at the end of the block. Jake just stands in the street, devastated. The Nintendo lays SMASHED TO BITS at his feet. The bus drives off.

INT. TAXI CAB - A LITTLE BIT LATER - DAY

Jake sits in the back of a CAB, totally dejected holding a broken piece of Double Dragon. A CABBIE (60's, South Side, gruff) looks Jake over in the mirror, a little concerned.

CABBIE

Where to chief?

JAKE

Art Institute.

A beat. The Cabbie looks Jake over again.

CABBIE

So what gives?

JAKE

I got money, don't worry.

CABBIE

No, what gives? Why the long face?

JAKE

I don't want to talk about it.

CABBIE

You on Christmas vacation?

JAKE

Yeah, almost.

CABBIE

So, you should be happy. Go on tell me what the problem is.

A beat. Jake sighs. Okay.

JAKE

I'm not gonna get what I want for Christmas. Nobody is.

CABBIE

Yeah, that's a tough one.

The Cabbie sighs, then gets reflective.

CABBIE

One year when I was a kid I wanted a horse. Can you believe that? We live eight blocks from Comiskey and I want a horse. All November, all December that's all I talk about. My grandparents, my parents, they all ask "Chester what do you want for Christmas?". "A horse" I says, over and over "a horse". That's it, nothing else. Everybody tells me "Chester we can't get a horse and that's final." I don't listen, I spend all Christmas waiting for the horse, figuring out how to get the horse. And then you know what happened Christmas morning?

JAKE

You got the horse?

CABBIE

No, I don't even know what I got that year. But no horse. I realized later, I wasted a whole Christmas worrying about something that didn't really matter anyway.

A car cuts the Cabbie off.

CABBIE

You see that? Come January I'll call that yuppie every name in the book. But now, well, it's Christmas. You only get so many of 'em and you gotta make 'em count. Like with you. Betch-ya you haven't even told somebody Merry Christmas this year have you.

A beat. Jake thinks about that. The cab pulls into the back driveway of THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

CABBIE

Who you meeting here?

JAKE

My class. We're on a field trip. I kinda left. I'll probably get held back now. How much do I owe you?

CABBIE

Hold on. You cut out on a field trip?

JAKE

Yeah.

The cabbie chuckles a bit, impressed.

CABBIE

Is it a big class?

JAKE

Pretty big.

CABBIE

This is the back entrance to the place. Tell the guard at the door there you got lost, the place is huge. He'll let you in, just hop right back in with your class, you'll be fine.

JAKE

Thanks. How much is it?

CABBIE

Ah don't worry about it. You gotta do me a favor though chief.

JAKE

What's that?

CABBIE

Have a merry Christmas.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - CHRISTMAS MORNING - DAWN

"HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS" plays. It's Christmas morning at the Doyle house. Stockings hang from exposed wall studs. Presents rest under the tree. Cookies left for Santa have been nibbled on. All is calm and bright.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - JAKE'S ROOM - DAWN - CONTINUOUS

Jake sleeps soundly. A hand rustles his shoulder. He opens his eyes to see Lizzy standing there in her PJ's, BEAMING.

LIZZY DOYLE  
Is it time yet?

Jake manages a small smile.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - PATTY AND JOHN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lizzy bursts into the room yelling and jumping on the bed.

LIZZY DOYLE  
It's Christmas! It's Christmas!  
Wake up! Wake up!

PATTY DOYLE  
Merry Christmas Lizzy, dear.

LIZZY DOYLE  
Dad, wake up it's Christmas!

John groans, puts a pillow over his head.

JOHN DOYLE  
Christmas is canceled.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - A FEW MINUTES LATER - DAY

A giddy Lizzy crawls around the tree inspecting packages. Jake stands a few feet away, pessimistically looking it over.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
Nine years of visual unwrapping  
experience, I could tell right away  
that there was no Nintendo under  
the tree. Fat ladies standing by  
quietly warmed their vocal chords.

John and Patty descend the stairs, still half asleep.

PATTY DOYLE  
No touching packages till we pass  
them out Lizzy. You know the rules.

Lizzy doesn't listen, she shakes a package. It rattles.

LIZZY DOYLE  
Legos?

JAKE

Legos.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

All I wanted at this point was to get the whole thing over with.

John plops on the couch.

JOHN DOYLE

Alright, lets have some Christmas.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - MONTAGE - TIME PASSING - DAY

The 8-BIT TETRIS THEME SONG plays as Patty hands out presents. The Doyles happily tear into packages. Jake just mopes his way through it.

- Lizzy opens up a My Little Pony.
- Patty opens a pair of leg warmers.
- Jake opens some Legos. He nods, knowingly.
- John opens an electric sander. He's impressed.
- Patty opens up another pair of leg warmers.
- John starts sanding a nearby wall. It's very loud.
- Jake opens some ear muffs. He puts them on.
- Lizzy opens her Cabbage Patch doll. She's ecstatic!

LIZZY

A CABBAGE PATCH!

The doll wears nothing but a child sized Chicago Bears T-shirt. It also has PURPLE HAIR. Jake gives his dad a look. John shakes it off.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER - DAY

Post presents bliss. The floor is a mess with wrapping paper. Jake and Lizzy sit on the couch on either side of Patty.

PATTY DOYLE

Well that was another great Christmas, wasn't it?

John sands the wall behind the tree.

LIZZY DOYLE

What?!

PATTY DOYLE

I said that was another-- John! Do you have to do that right now?!

John shuts the electric sander off.

JOHN DOYLE

You bought it for me.

John pulls the cord taught, inadvertently knocking over an unseen PACKAGE wrapped in brown mailing paper by the door.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And that's when I saw it.

The sun suddenly illuminates the package. A choir of ANGELS SING. Jake's eyes widen. Lizzy's eyes widen. Elwood's friggin' eyes widen. Could it be?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It was the exact size and shape of the box I'd held in my hands not three days before. I knew that box. I'd felt that box in my sleep. *That* was a Nintendo box.

Lizzy runs over and sneaks a look at the shipping label.

LIZZY DOYLE

To Jake. From Uncle Dan.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Uncle Dan! Of course! Unreliable, stinking rich, crazy Uncle Dan! Uncle Dan who hadn't so much as sent me a postcard in three years.

JOHN DOYLE

Dan sent a gift? Great.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Clearly he was making up for it. With a Nintendo!

JOHN DOYLE

Where's he living again now?

PATTY DOYLE

Japan.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
 Japan! Japan! The home of Nintendo!  
 The land where dreams came true! Oh  
 God don't mess with me now...

JOHN DOYLE  
 Well, it's got your name on it  
 Jake.

Jake slowly walks toward the package. John sits on the couch.

JOHN DOYLE  
 (aside to Patty)  
 What'd he say he was sending?

PATTY DOYLE  
 I have no idea.

Jake cautiously brings the package to the middle of the room.  
 He kneels before it. Everyone waits with baited breath.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
 I'd later read of Olympic athletes  
 training their entire lives for one  
 five second moment. This was it.

Jake tears open the package, his eyes widening.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
 It had to be. It had to be...

Jake gasps.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
 Lite Brite!

JAKE  
 Lite Brite?

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
 Lite Brite. Japanese Lite Brite.

We now see the box. It's dotted with Japanese lettering and  
 strange English phrases. TWO PREPPY JAPANESE CHILDREN smile  
 as they make an ornate picture of a CLOWN on a LITE BRITE.

PATTY DOYLE  
 Oh look Jake, it's the "super happy  
 yum" version. That's great.

JOHN DOYLE  
 Jeez, for a second there I thought  
 it might be a Nintendo.

Patty and John both start laughing.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

As I slowly tried to grasp the situation I began to fear that I might never recover from this. That this was a tragedy so great I'd never go to prom, never go to college, never leave the house. I'd become a thirty year old balding man in his parents' basement making elaborate pictures of Zelda on his Lite Brite.

Jake just sits there in pain.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Christmas was dead to me now.

INT. DOYLE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER - NIGHT

Jake looks out his kitchen window, still in a daze.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

By nightfall I got word that despite the panic, level headed grandmas had come through. And half my friends went to bed with blistered thumbs from ten hours on their new Nintendos.

Jake sighs and sits on the floor.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

It was a tough pill to swallow.

Lizzy and Patty sit next to a HUGE PILE OF LUGGAGE. Lizzy holds her doll. John storms in and out, picking up bags.

JOHN DOYLE

We're going to Minnesota for three days Patty. You've been in our car before, I've seen you in it. You know how big it is.

PATTY DOYLE

Let's just go in the morning John.

JOHN DOYLE (O.S.)

I'm not hitting traffic!

LIZZY DOYLE  
Can I bring Dawn outside at  
Grandma's, Mom?

PATTY DOYLE  
Sure you can honey.

LIZZY DOYLE  
We need to get her a hat though.  
(whispering)  
Her hair. It's an embarrassment.

John walks back inside. He exchanges a glance with Patty.

JOHN DOYLE  
Jake.

JAKE  
Yeah?

JOHN DOYLE  
There's still a ton of poop out  
there. Go grab the shovel and pick  
it up.

JAKE  
Right now?

JOHN DOYLE  
Yes right now. You've had all day  
to do it. And start by the shed.  
You haven't been back there in  
months.

Jake sighs, grabs his coat and exits.

EXT. DOYLE HOUSE - BACKYARD - A LITTLE BIT LATER - NIGHT

We have not seen this part of the yard yet. It's tucked away behind the shed next to a small wooded area. Jake mopes through the snow and sits down on an overturned bucket. He watches his breath in the darkness. A sad beat.

JAKE  
You forgot to turn on the lights  
Dad. Dad! The flood lights!

The flood lights suddenly flick on. Jake slowly gets up. He looks toward the heavens and stops short.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

And there, high above the frozen dog poo that had become the bane of my existence was the most beautiful structure I had ever laid eyes on.

JAKE

Whoa...

We see what Jake sees. A picture perfect TREE FORT, freshly painted and slightly hidden by the snowy branches.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

A tree fort. A spectacular, two level, solid wood, tree fort.

Jake stands awestruck. He drops his shovel and walks towards it. He climbs the ladder and slowly looks around.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)

Oh it was breath taking.

John, Patty and Lizzy walk outside to have a look.

LIZZY DOYLE

Wow-ee.

PATTY DOYLE

Maybe I should ask Santa to finish the kitchen next year Lizzy, what do you think?

JAKE

It's got a trap door!

JOHN DOYLE

Careful by that paint. It still looks wet.

PATTY DOYLE

Why don't I go get the video camera, John?

JOHN DOYLE

Nah. Let him be.

John looks on, happy, proud.

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

It's almost dusk now. A Christmas tree twinkles in the park below. Headlights flicker on the street. Jake and Annie sit on the floor of his office, holding controllers.

ANNIE

But the Nintendo was hidden in the fort wasn't it?

JAKE

Nope.

ANNIE

Then how did you get it?

JAKE

I didn't get one until I worked a whole summer outside as a caddy. Grandpa said I could buy my own then.

ANNIE

I would've got you a Nintendo, Dad.

JAKE

Thank you Annie.

Jake puts his arm around her. The two sit there together.

JAKE

But I think the tree fort ended up being a pretty good present.

ANNIE

Yeah.

Annie and Jake look to the wall in front of them. Only now do we see that it is filled with BLUEPRINTS and PICTURES of TREE FORTS-- ornate and elaborate structures built for hospitals, yards and schools. Smiling kids are in each and every one.

A prominent plaque reads 2018 CHICAGO BUSINESS of the YEAR: ALL SEASONS PLAYGROUNDS, FOUNDER & CEO JAKE DOYLE. Jake builds tree forts for a living now. This is his business.

BETH

(knocking)

Sorry to interrupt. Jake, I told Pendrock we'd just get back to them tomorrow.

ADULT JAKE

That's okay. We can get back to them today. The answer's no.

BETH

You sure?

ADULT JAKE

If we took that job we'd end up working straight through New Year's. The whole office.

BETH

Central Park, it's a huge contract.

ADULT JAKE

It's a restaurant deck. We build forts for kids. Do me a favor Beth, send everybody home. It's Christmas.

BETH

You got it boss.

Beth smiles, exits. Jake looks back to see Annie now standing at his window, staring at the hustle and bustle below.

ADULT JAKE

You feeling any better?

ANNIE

Yeah.

ADULT JAKE

You wanna go check out that tablet on our way home?

ANNIE

You think we could go to the park instead?

Jake smiles, proud.

ADULT JAKE

Totally.

Annie runs over to grab her coat. Jake goes to turn off the light. As he does we notice a SMALL FRAMED PICTURE on the wall. It's of JAKE, TROTTER, OLSEN, THE GRUSECKIS and FARMER playing in Jake's fort circa summer '89. We see JOHN near the back, about to hammer a nail. He's smiling.

EXT. BACKYARD/TREE FORT - A LITTLE BIT LATER - 1988 - NIGHT

John pops his head through the open trap door of the fort. He looks around and takes a deep breath.

JOHN DOYLE

Smell that?

JAKE  
Fresh air?

JOHN DOYLE  
Fresh air.

A nice father-son beat. Jake watches his dad soak it in.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
From that moment on I saw John  
Doyle a little differently. He was  
more than just a guy who hated  
traffic and could never quite  
finish the kitchen. He was a  
magician. He was a hero. He was my  
dad.

JOHN DOYLE  
Come on. It's getting late. We  
don't want to hit the traffic.

Jake climbs down the rope ladder after John. At the bottom of  
the ladder, John grabs Jake and slings him over his shoulder.  
He carries him through the snow toward the house.

ADULT JAKE (V.O.)  
Peacefully, my mind unfolded all  
the tree fort adventures that  
undoubtedly lay ahead. Ghost story  
campouts by flashlight. Week long  
snow ball battles. And round the  
clock sky gazing for Soviet spy  
planes.

JAKE  
Hey dad.

JOHN DOYLE  
Yeah?

JAKE  
Merry Christmas.

JOHN DOYLE  
Merry Christmas, Jake.

FADE OUT.