

When The Street Lights Go On

Written by

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EXT. TOWN OF COLFAX - DAY

It is the summer of 1983. Colfax, Illinois. A suburban utopia. John Hughes' vision of America.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The summer of 1983 was the hottest summer in years.

The SOUNDS of July play over the following string of images:

I. A group of CHILDREN play on a Slip-n-Slide.

II. Two teenage GIRLS sunbathe on the hood of a newly washed Trans Am. Journey BLASTS from the radio.

III. The high school FOOTBALL TEAM practices drills under the sweltering sun.

INSERT - STOCK FOOTAGE

Clips of each of the Narrator's talking points flash across the screen as they are mentioned.

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

The single of the season was "Every Breath You Take" by The Police and Eddie Murphy was the biggest star in Hollywood. Under manager Tony LaRussa, The Chicago White Sox appeared in their first postseason game since 1959. They would lose the ALCS to Baltimore.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A MAN exits his cozy ranch home to fetch the morning newspaper. Cicadas are everywhere.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

On top of the heat, that summer the cicadas had woken from their seventeen year hibernation and were covering everything -- mailboxes, parked cars, tree trunks and trampolines.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A group of junior high school BOYS charge through a public park.

One of them swings a baseball bats at a tree trunk and a swarm of cicadas emerge like black smoke from within the leaves.

The boys fall over in fits of laughter.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In June, the eighty year old Frank Lloyd Wright house by the library burned down.

EXT. FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT HOUSE - NIGHT

Violent flames consume a beautiful, antique home. It's the kind of house they don't make anymore. A relic of old American values and ingenuity.

In the distance, SIRENS blare.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was built in 1908 and FDR was said to have stayed there once while on the campaign trail. And overnight it was destroyed.

FIRE FIGHTERS struggle to put out the blaze.

EXT. RESERVOIR - DAY

It's the Fourth of July. The entire TOWN vacations at the small lake in the center of the city. A MAN sets off a string of roman candles. The EXPLOSIONS are met with APPLAUSE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The fire was followed almost immediately by another controversy which occurred on the Fourth of July.

EXT. RESERVOIR - NIGHT

OLIVIA COOPER and six FRIENDS sit on a pier drinking wine late into the evening. Distant fireworks can be seen in the night sky, far away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Olivia Cooper, a Catholic school chick, apparently got drunk on boxed wine shortly after midnight.

FRIEND

Who wants to go skinny-dipping!?

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Went skinny-dipping--

LATER

Olivia and her friends run naked down the pier and cannonball into the ink-black lake.

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

--and drowned when her foot got caught on a buoy chain.

EXT. RESERVOIR - DAY

Olivia Cooper's body floats face down in the murky, green water.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She was found by a fisherman and his beagle the next morning when what they thought was a large trout turned out to be the body of a seventeen year old girl.

The BEAGLE paddles to her body and BARKS.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DUSK

CHARLIE CHAMBERS, the Narrator as a fifteen year old, rides his Schwinn STING-RAY down the suburban streets. His baseball mitt dangles from the left handlebar.

Charlie looks like a young Spielberg. He wears an old bomber jacket and a pair of Coke bottle glasses. Thoughtful. Boyish, but cool. The kind of kid who's had character since he could walk.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Our town was put under a dark spell in the summer of 1983. I observed it all from my Schwinn Sting-ray. It began with a fire and didn't end until six months later when the Monroe sisters were finally dead--

The street lights flicker on.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Charlie pulls into a parking lot behind the bleachers.
FOOTBALLERS scrimmage beneath the stadium lights.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

--robbing us of our juvenescence
and spreading unshakable anxiety
like cyanide in the minds of those
who remember.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - CHRISSY'S ROOM - NIGHT

CHRISSY MONROE (17), dances around her room, changing and making herself up in the vanity at the center of her teenage temple.

She is the quintessential girlfriend; the baby-sitter you always had the hots for. She applies a thick layer of red lip stick, smacks her lips and winks at herself.

A car horn HONKS three times outside her window.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Chrissy flies down the stairs and into the foyer of her home. MR. MONROE (drinking a Bud) and MRS. MONROE (doing a crossword puzzle) watch television in the adjacent living room.

They are a handsome couple. Ivy League style with a touch of Midwestern frump.

MRS. MONROE

Chrissy, where are you going,
sweetheart?

CHRISSY

I'm going to the movies with Ben.
I'll be home at eleven.

MR. MONROE

Curfew's 10:45!

The door slams.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Chrissy makes her way through her blue front lawn amid dozens of FIRE FLIES. The sound of the CRICKETS and CICADAS form a nighttime symphony around her.

She struts toward a parked Saab which idles across the street and down the block a few houses. She spins for the driver like a disco dancer. The driver WHISTLES at her.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Chrissy hops in the car and smothers the driver with a string of kisses.

His name is MR. PULASKI (32). He wears a sharp tweed sport coat over a black turtleneck sweater and hides his handsome features beneath a beaten, old baseball cap.

CHRISSY

Don't worry they're watching TV.

Pulaski whips the hat into the backseat before she can finish the sentence.

PULASKI

(sarcastic)

Weird, you're parents are watching television?

CHRISSY

Well when you don't have sex anymore that's what you do.

Mr. Pulaski lights a cigarette.

CHRISSY (CONT'D)

So anyway, what's the big news, huh?

MR. PULASKI

Well...you got a D on your Crime and Punishment essay.

Chrissy laughs and slaps him on the shoulder.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Mr. Pulaski, was the young, hip English teacher who let kids in class talk about movies and philosophy and things unrelated to the texts.

FLASHBACK - INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - PULASKI'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. Pulaski sits in silence before two dozen curious STUDENTS in his cluttered yet refined classroom. A Beatles RECORD spins on a turntable at his desk.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When John Lennon was shot in 1980 legend had it that Mr. Pulaski played The Beatles' albums back-to-back all day and didn't say a word in any of his classes.

Sitting near the front of the classroom is Chrissy. She and the rest of the GIRLS in class look upon Mr. Pulaski with dreamy, puppy dog eyes.

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

He was the teacher all the guys wanted to be and all the girls wanted to be with.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Chrissy and Mr. Pulaski continue their conversation in Mr. Pulaski's cramped sedan.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And he was indeed *with* Chrissy Monroe.

CHRISSY

What did I really get?

MR. PULASKI

I dunno -- I haven't graded it yet.

Mr. Pulaski turns down the radio a touch. He takes a deep drag of his cigarette.

MR. PULASKI (CONT'D)

I think I'm leaving Suzanne.

CHRISSY

What?! Why?

MR. PULASKI

Because I'm in love with you.

Chrissy doesn't know how to take this information. Many boys have told her they love her before but this one is different.

She is silent.

MR. PULASKI (CONT'D)
Hey now, don't get all excited or anything.

CHRISSY
Well wait, I mean, I think that's fantastic but is that really what you want?

MR. PULASKI
Yes. It is. And look, I know you're young but who cares what they say? We'll go somewhere else. I can teach anywhere.

There is a long silence. Chrissy really takes in the possibility. She smiles to herself.

CHRISSY
Okay.

MR. PULASKI
Okay?

CHRISSY
I love you.

They go in for a kiss when suddenly--

CLICK.

The back door opens on the driver's side and a FIGURE enters the vehicle. Chrissy and Mr. Pulaski both turn in confusion. The Figure's face is obscured in shadow.

FIGURE
I have a Smith & Wesson .44 Caliber pointed at the back of your head. Now drive the car.

The Figure isn't lying. He does indeed have a gun pointed at the back of Mr. Pulaski's skull. It is a long, silver hand-cannon with a cool black handle. Travis Bickle shit.

MR. PULASKI
Ok, man. Ok.

Chrissy is in a state of shock as Mr. Pulaski puts the car in gear and pulls away from the curb.

MR. PULASKI (CONT'D)
So...where are we going?

FIGURE
Keep driving.

A smooth power BALLAD comes on over the car's radio. It contrasts starkly, almost humorously, with the situation.

Chrissy clutches Mr. Pulaski's hand in trepidation. She glances back at the assailant for a moment but can't make out any distinguishing features.

MR. PULASKI
Hey man, look, if it's money you're looking for you're welcome to anything I have.

FIGURE
I'm not interested in money. In a quarter mile there will be a gravel road; turn left onto it.

Chrissy's shock passes and she begins to cry as Mr. Pulaski's car approaches a tiny gravel road which leads into the woods.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Mr. Pulaski's sedan pulls into a clearing in the thick, dark forest. Even under normal circumstances these woods would be sinister.

The car comes to a stop and the engine is killed.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Mr. Pulaski, Chrissy and the Figure sit in silence.

FIGURE
Leave the radio on.

Mr. Pulaski turns the ignition a half rotation, allowing the radio to keep PLAYING.

FIGURE (CONT'D)
Turn on the brights.

Mr. Pulaski turns the brights on and a small patch of the forest is illuminated with white light.

FIGURE (CONT'D)
Now get out, put your hands where I can see them and stand in front of the car.

CHRISSY

Please stop.

MR. PULASKI

Just do what he says. It'll be over soon.

Mr. Pulaski and Chrissy follow the Figure's orders. The Figure exits the car with them. New Order comes on over the RADIO.

The Figure leans against the hood of the vehicle, his face is obscured by darkness.

FIGURE

Now take off each other's clothes.

Chrissy begins bawling.

MR. PULASKI

Chrissy, baby, look at me.

Chrissy looks into Mr. Pulaski's eyes. Her make-up, so perfectly applied just minutes prior, now runs all down her cheeks.

MR. PULASKI (CONT'D)

It's gonna be okay. I swear to God.
It's just some sicko. Let's just do what he says and get out of here.

Mr. Pulaski and Chrissy slowly begin to take off each other's clothes. New Order's eerie new wave synths serve as the soundtrack to the perverted strip tease.

Eventually Chrissy and Mr. Pulaski are in nothing but their underwear.

FIGURE

Now kiss each other.

Chrissy and Mr. Pulaski kiss. Given the circumstances, the kiss is genuine and filled with an odd sense of love.

FIGURE (CONT'D)

Now touch her.

Mr. Pulaski fingers Chrissy's breast. It is sexless and empty.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

The two bodies hit the ground with a THUD.

Mr. Pulaski is dead instantly. Chrissy writhes in pain in the dirt.

Her SCREAMS are muffled by the blood which is gathered in her lungs and being spit up all over her chin and neck.

The Figure walks up to Chrissy. He stands above her, cocks his gun and points it at her face. She thrashes about on the ground helplessly trying to escape the barrel.

BANG!

Again.

BANG!

Stillness. She is gone.

The Figure discharges the empty shells, puts them in his pocket and walks into the thick of the woods; disappearing among the branches.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

CRACK!

Charlie watches from the bleachers as two football players collide against one another like crashing semis.

They are BEN KIRCHHOFF (18) and SCOTT ANDERSON (17) -- the stars of the team. Ben helps Scott up from the ground; they low-five.

The COACH blows the WHISTLE and the PLAYERS all make for the sidelines.

Charlie concludes a string of notes he'd been taking in a small composition notebook. They are all related to the players and the drills.

He stands from his seat and walks down the bleachers.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

BECKY MONROE (16), sneaks out of her bedroom window and onto the roof. She is Chrissy's elusive younger sister. Beautiful but unknowable. A certain sadness surrounds her.

She lights a cigarette and watches the tree tops of Colfax recede towards the horizon.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Charlie peddles his bike through the humid twilight.

He listens to the SOUNDS of the suburbs. A practiced CLARINET struggles to hit a note from a nearby bedroom window. A lonely dog BARKS in the distance. A man WHISTLES a haunting melody to himself from some unseen place.

ZOOOOOOOOOOM!

A shirtless teenage motorcyclist speeds out of the woods and motors past Charlie on his Triumph. We will later meet him in depth but right now we barely catch a glimpse.

His name is CASPER TATUM. He looks scared; as though he's running from something.

Charlie considers Casper for a moment before riding onto a gravel path into the forest -- the shortcut home.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Charlie rides a few yards into the thick of the woods and then he sees it...

First the idling Saab, then the two naked, lifeless bodies laying in the headlights before it. He's the first at the scene.

Charlie stands in shock. He knows them both. His old baby-sitter and his English teacher. Only in matinees has he been this close to such sadism.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There were boys I knew who would have paid all the money in their piggy banks to catch a glimpse of Chrissy Monroe without her clothes on.

Charlie takes small steps toward the bodies.

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

But the spark of youth and vitality that Chrissy exhibited so loudly and proudly in life--

He looks deep into Chrissy's open, lifeless eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
--the indelible spark which made
horny sixteen year olds want to see
her naked in the first place, was
gone. She was dead.

Charlie's delayed instincts finally kick in and he sprints as fast as he can from the scene, abandoning his Schwinn.

SMASH CUT TO:

LATER

The crime scene is alive with POLICE OFFICERS taking photos, looking for evidence and piecing together clues. Charlie's bike still lays in the grass where he left it.

DETECTIVE HOFFMAN (65), the grizzled chief of police in Colfax, arrives at the scene in his personal vehicle, a 60's Mercedes. He exits in a hurry.

Hoffman is dressed as though he's a character in a 40's film noir. Tan trench coat over a suit and tie. Lit cigarette in mouth. He's an older man whose maintained his cool. Uncensored, unabashed American. A guy who could put a few back and wrestle a bear.

After twenty years of dealing with underage drinking and traffic citations, he's eager for some real police work.

He makes his way toward the deceased where a CSI OFFICER a few DEPUTIES are busy snapping photos of the body.

HOFFMAN
(pointing to Pulaski)
What's this guy's story?

DEPUTY
That's Steve Pulaski, he's an
English teacher at the high school.

HOFFMAN
Ok, ok, ok, enough with the
flashing. Cover her up with
something.

CSI OFFICER
Yes, sir.

HOFFMAN
Did you guys get ballistics on the
pollock yet?

DEPUTY
 (shoving papers down
 Hoffman's throat)
 Yes, they're right here.

Hoffman reluctantly grabs the ballistics results as he stares into Chrissy's lifeless eyes, transfixed.

HOFFMAN
 Jesus. Seventeen years old. What a waste.

A blanket is thrown over her body.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - WIDE - NIGHT

A squad car pulls up to the curb of the Monroe's proud home. Hoffman and two POLICE OFFICERS exit the vehicle and walk to the front door with their hats in their hands.

They KNOCK. Mrs. Monroe answers almost instantly. There is brief CHATTER before Mrs. Monroe lets out a blood curdling SCREAM and collapses to her knees.

MONTAGE - NEWS REPORTS - VARIOUS - NIGHT

News-reports of the murder are seen on television sets in various homes. Conflicting pieces of information about the victims and the circumstances flash across the tube.

INT. POLICE STATION - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie sulks in the waiting area; his hands deep in his pockets. CHARLIE'S FATHER, an old school, stern looking man with Ray-Ban Clubmaster's on and a pipe in his mouth, sits beside him reading a novel.

CHARLIE'S FATHER
 Where were you tonight anyway? I thought your mother and I set some sort of weekday curfew regulations.

CHARLIE
 I was taking notes on football practice for the newspaper.

Charlie's Father flips a page in his book.

CHARLIE'S FATHER

Shame you can't be on the field
like I was instead of reporting on
the drills.

CHARLIE

I know, Sir.

CHARLIE'S FATHER

Once you fill out a little. Next
year, maybe.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Maybe.

HOFFMAN (O.S.)

Charlie.

Hoffman appears behind the reception desk and waves Charlie over.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOFFMAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Other than a photo of his wife which sits on his desk, Hoffman's office of twenty-five years doesn't look much different than the day he moved into it.

Charlie sits before Hoffman making himself small. His Schwinn rests against the door behind him.

HOFFMAN

Alright Chambers, why'd you leave
your bicycle?

CHARLIE

I dunno, Sir. I forgot about it. I
just ran home.

HOFFMAN

Do you remember seeing anybody?

CHARLIE

No.

HOFFMAN

Think hard now. Did you happen to
hear anything? Or maybe sense
something wasn't right?

Charlie tries to consider the question. He is clearly over-tired and unable to concentrate.

CHARLIE
I don't think so.

Hoffman SNAPS, SNAPS, SNAPS his fingers

HOFFMAN
Hey kid, c'mon, wake up. I have a few more questions for you. Want a water or a coffee or something?

Charlie thinks for a moment.

CHARLIE
You got Mountain Dew?

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Charlie and his friends, MATTHEW, JAMIE and SCOOTER wait in line with the entire town at Chrissy's wake.

They are the kind of friends you only have at fifteen and never again. Blood brothers.

Tacked to cardboard displays are photos of Chrissy at various stages in her short life. Her at a pool; a dance; a first communion. The boys study them while grilling Charlie.

MATTHEW
Was there blood?

CHARLIE
Yeah, there was blood.

JAMIE
Was she wearing any clothes?

CHARLIE
Only her underwear.

SCOOTER
Did you see her titties?

CHARLIE
C'mon, dude.

MATTHEW
Charlie, look it's you!

Matthew points at a picture.

INSERT - PHOTO

Chrissy stands among dozens of PEOPLE in the middle of a block party. A slightly younger version of Charlie can be seen just over her shoulder, motion blurred.

BACK TO SCENE

MR. JABLONSKI (55), a stocky, mustached man, and his wife MRS. JABLONSKI (50) say their condolences to Mr. and Mrs. Monroe, who stand zombified next to the closed casket.

MR. JABLONSKI

I'm so sorry about your loss...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Monroe Family was a prominent fixture in the community, the Kennedy's of Colfax. They were perhaps best known for organizing the most famous block parties and cookouts the town had ever seen.

Mr. and Mrs. Monroe's eyes are distant and empty.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MONROE HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Dozens of FAMILIES, including Charlie and his Mother and Father, enjoy the Monroe's extravagant barbecue. KIDS swim in their pool and ADULTS make small talk over wine and cheese.

Mr. Monroe tells a group of MEN about a vicious criminal he recently put behind bars. Charlie watches from a distance.

MR. MONROE

So we just locked up this one guy; a real kook, a psychopath...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Mr. Monroe was a district attorney for the city. He had put scores of creeps, psychos and perverts behind bars in his short but successful reign as public defender. He was merciless in his convictions, leading the press to nickname him 'The Gavel'.

MONTAGE - MUG SHOTS

We cut to a quick montage of CRIMINALS Mr. Monroe had put behind bars and who could potentially be the murderer of his daughter.

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

A handful of the criminals Mr. Monroe helped convict had been released from prison within the last few years. In fact earlier that spring, one had paid the Monroe's a visit.

We stop on a mug shot of LEVI WAYNE, a scrawny hillbilly covered in tattoos.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MONROE HOUSE - DAY

The entire NEIGHBORHOOD watches from their porches as Levi Wayne stands shirtless in the Monroe's front lawn. He wears nothing but a pair of cutoff jean shorts and brandishes a pair of nunchucks which he is swinging high above his head.

Van Halen BLASTS from the radio of his parked van at the curb.

Mr. Monroe exits his home, stands on the porch and stares Levi down. Becky, Chrissy and Mrs. Monroe watch from inside the house.

MR. MONROE

Levi. Put the nunchucks down.

LEVI WAYNE

This is payback, boy!

Levi releases the nunchucks in Mr. Monroe's direction. They miss by a mile, hitting the front window and spider-webbing the glass.

LATER

The COPS arrive at the scene and arrest Levi.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT

Becky sulks in the lobby of the funeral parlor. She's been there for hours and is clearly exhausted.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Becky Monroe had always been the black sheep of the family; overshadowed by Chrissy's more traditional, American charm.

Charlie watches Becky from across the room.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Now free from comparisons to her sister, and imbued with a tragic mystique all her own, Becky was finally turning some heads.

Their eyes meet.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Many years prior, when we were both children, Becky and I shared each other's first kiss at one of her parents' legendary parties. We had never spoken of it but it had forever left an implicit bond between us. We were more than mere neighbors.

Becky looks away.

BEN (O.S.)
 Don't touch me!

Ben Kirchhoff, the football player from earlier, drunkenly makes a scene near the front of the funeral parlor. A SECURITY GUARD tries to calm him down.

Ben stumbles into a large bouquet of flowers which fall upon the casket with a loud THUD.

FLASHBACK - INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

In a square, cell-like room in the middle of the police station, Hoffman grills Ben about the murders.

HOFFMAN
 How do you feel about the fact that your girly was tap assing with that faggy English teacher.

Hoffman's bluntness disarms Ben.

BEN
 What does that even mean?

HOFFMAN
 Tap assing? It means the ole' in-n-out.

BEN
 She wasn't doing any of that. They were just close.

HOFFMAN

But if she was, would you have been
jealous? Angry? Vengeful?

BEN

If you think for one minute that I
had anything to do with Chrissy's
murder you're quacked. You should
retire right now, old man.

His eyes water.

BEN (CONT'D)

I loved her.

Crocodile tears start streaming down Ben's cheek. Hoffman
rolls his eyes.

EXT. FUNERAL PARLOR - NIGHT

Ben slouches on the curb taking pulls from his flask.

Becky exits the funeral parlor looking for some fresh air.
Ben turns around and nods to her. She waves back.

Ben extends her his flask. She declines.

BECKY

You okay?

BEN

I'm, uh, drunk.

BECKY

How about I walk you home?

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Becky moseys down the sidewalk with Ben stumbling close
behind her. She lights a cigarette as Ben howls to the
heavens.

BEN

God, take me now! I wanna see my
baby!

(to himself)

Just one more time.

Becky can't help but laugh to herself.

BEN (CONT'D)

Your sister had such a nice ass.

EXT. BEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben and Becky stop in front of Ben's house -- a giant, modern-looking new construction home.

Ben leans against the Mustang parked in his driveway. He looks as cool as a drunk high schooler can.

BEN

Thanks for the walk, little lady.

Ben catches Becky's eyes. He looks at them long and hard.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Looking into Becky's eyes, it occurred to Ben for the first time in his life, how much she looked like Chrissy.

Ben drunkenly waltzes over to Becky.

BEN

Seriously.

He goes in for a kiss. Becky dodges him, amazed at the gall. She slaps him on the face and storms away.

BEN (CONT'D)

What?!

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - SNACK BAR - DAY

Charlie, Matthew, Jamie and Scooter shoot the shit over soggy nachos and melting ice cream cones. Charlie's mind is somewhere else.

SCOOTER

Would you guys go down on yourself if you could?

JAMIE

I heard Boy George can do that.

MATTHEW

Wouldn't that make you gay?

SCOOTER

Is masturbating gay?

JAMIE

You're gay.

SCOOTER
I'd totally do it.

MATTHEW
I guess why not?

JAMIE
People would probably stop
reproducing. If you could just suck
your own cocker, who needs chicks?

Charlie snaps out of his funk.

CHARLIE
The end of the world would be,
like, three dudes blowing
themselves in a field.

They all erupt in LAUGHTER.

UNDERWATER

SPLASH!

Charlie and his FRIENDS cannonball off the high dive at the swimming pool.

Charlie swims at the deep end of the pool among dozens of legs.

He sees a vision of Chrissy's DEAD BODY laying at the bottom of the pool. He GASPS and comes up for air.

He wipes his goggles and looks back down but nothing is there.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Chrissy was on everyone's mind that
Labor Day weekend.

EXT. PARK - DAY

At the public park adjacent to the pool, the ADULTS in town gossip over beer and BBQ. Everyone has an opinion.

WOMAN #1 talks to a group of WASPS around a picnic table.

WOMAN 1
She was a S-L-U-T.

WOMAN 2
C'mon Joan, she was seventeen. Get
off it.

At the grill, MAN #1 looks into the lens of the camera and says:

MAN 1
If you ask me, the teacher killed
her and then he killed himself.
Sick son of a bitch.

He flips a burger paddy.

Woman #3 sunbathes next to her HUSBAND under a tree.

WOMAN 3
(whispers)
I think it was Troy Kilgore.

FLASHBACK - INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

We glide across the walls of a dingy dorm room. An Elvis Costello poster hangs next to various ticket stubs and a Northwestern Wildcat pennant flag.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Troy Kilgore was a Northwestern
business major whom Chrissy dated
briefly the previous fall. They had
a shared appreciation of Stevie
Nicks and cocaine.

Chrissy lays in bed with only a bra on. She has a line of cocaine laid out on a Fleetwood Mac album cover.

Troy Kilgore emerges from off screen in a pair of skintight briefs. He snorts the line of cocaine, lets out an excited YELP, and kisses Chrissy.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
After Chrissy broke up with him for
Ben, Troy had left a string of
suicidal ramblings on her answering
machine which were tape-recorded by
Chrissy for laughs and found in her
car's glove compartment.

FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - DAY

Chrissy and her FRIENDS cruise down the streets listening to one of the tape-recorded voicemails. They are laughing so hard they are crying.

TROY'S MESSAGE (V.O.)

Baby. When I look into your eyes I see eternity. I see a grain of sand suspended in a moon beam.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

These diatribes were more often than not followed by a particularly poignant portion of Supertramp's "Take The Long Way Home" played over his stereo.

FLASHBACK - INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Troy lays in his bed holding the telephone up to a speaker which blasts SUPERTRAMP.

He looks beyond moved by the lyrics. He puts the telephone up to his mouth and, crying, says:

TROY KILGORE

Take the long way back home to me, baby. I'll be waiting...

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Troy Kilgore sits in the interrogation room with Hoffman.

They both listen to the tape recorded voicemails which are playing on a small boom box on the table between them.

TROY'S MESSAGE (V.O.)

(through boom box)

...waiting for you to come back into my life. I'm nothing without you.

Hoffman hits STOP on the boom box.

TROY KILGORE

I was crazy about that girl, man. What can I say?

HOFFMAN

Well you can start off by telling me why you did it?

TROY KILGORE

Well, um, I dunno -- it's because Supertramp is like, probably the most underrated band...ever.

HOFFMAN

Not that, Troy, why'd you kill her?

TROY KILGORE

Woah. Woah. Woah. I need my lawyer.
I didn't kill anyone.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Like most of the suspects, the
police couldn't place the smoking
gun in Troy's hands.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOFFMAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Hoffman leans on his desk burning the midnight oil. He stares at a cork-board filled with suspect mug shots, documents and evidence. None of it connects. Hoffman takes a long, sobering sip of coffee.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Ben stands in front Chrissy's headstone. He sets a large bouquet of white roses on the fresh grave.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - ENTRY - DAY

Charlie makes his way through hordes of STUDENTS in the cramped hallways. The brief excitement of the new school year is palpable.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

One doesn't easily forget the smell
of their high school. A mixture of
industrial strength cleaning
products, chalk, deodorant,
chlorine, wet paint and hormones.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Charlie approaches his trusty locker and enters the combo: 43
- 9 - 14.

He packs the locker with the semester's text books and hangs a photo of Carlton Fisk on the inside of the door.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - DAY

Charlie sits at a typewriter in a classroom full of
JOURNALISTS.

MR. BOUQUE (35), a young Hemingway of sorts, sits at his desk at the head of the classroom and moderates the story generating session.

FRED STEIN raises his hand.

FRED STEIN
I'd like to write about the
choir/chemistry conflict!

ARI BERLIN quickly follows.

ARI BERLIN
And I think everyone should be
aware of the healthy food options
in the cafeteria.

MR. BOUQUE
If that's really what you want to
write about, Ari. Sure.

Charlie slowly raises his hand, unsure.

CHARLIE
I'd like to write about the Monroe
murder.

The room goes silent. Everyone anticipates Mr. Bouque's response.

MR. BOUQUE
Chambers...you can have the Monroe
murder if you turn in that pre-
season football practice piece I
asked you to write six years ago.

Charlie pumps his fist.

BERLICE BEAMAN (15), sits next to Charlie. She is the four eyed, red-headed arts and entertainment writer.

BERLICE
Congratulations, Charlie. I know
you were really gunning for that
one.

Charlie readies his typewriter to begin writing.

CHARLIE
Yeah, I guess.

Berlice smiles at him. It wasn't an accident she chose the seat beside him.

Charlie begins typing.

INSERT - TYPEWRITTEN WORDS

"I discovered the bodies on a humid, still night in August."

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Charlie tiptoes through the forest carrying a flashlight and a notebook. Wind chimes RATTLE in the distance.

Up ahead a tiny memorial of flowers, stuffed animals and framed photographs sit where Mr. Pulaski's sedan once idled in the moonlight.

Becky is sitting on the ground next to the memorial. Charlie waves to her. She waves back.

CHARLIE

Hi.

BECKY

Hey.

There is a long silence.

CHARLIE

So what classes are you taking this semester?

BECKY

I dunno, the ones everybody takes.

CHARLIE

Cool. Yeah, me too.

Charlie digs his Chuck Taylors into the dirt.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I didn't get a chance to tell you at the funeral but I'm really, really sorry about your sister.

BECKY

Yeah, thanks.

Becky pulls a pack of cigarettes out of her pocket and offers one to Charlie. He surprises himself by saying--

CHARLIE

Sure.

She puts both cigarettes in her mouth, lights them and hands one to Charlie. Charlie takes a puff and tries his best to hide the fact that it's his first hit ever.

BECKY

You know it's funny. I didn't even like my sister when she was alive.

Charlie coughs a bit. Silence follows. He racks his brain for a change of subject.

CHARLIE

Hey, you remember that one time when we were like nine and we stayed up all night drinking pop and watching Saturday Night Live? That was the best.

BECKY

No, not really.

More silence. Becky senses she's hurt Charlie's feelings.

BECKY (CONT'D)

But that sounds like fun.

Becky stands up, puts her cigarette out and walks away.

BECKY (CONT'D)

I gotta go, Charlie. Talk soon.

Charlie watches her disappear into the trees. When she is out of sight he throws his cigarette to the ground, stomps it out and coughs up a lung.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Becky drifts down the avenues, kicking an empty can. The night is still and quiet.

WHISTLING is heard from some faraway, unseen place. It's the same eerie melody Charlie heard just before discovering the bodies.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Becky opens her front door and enters her lifeless home.

Her parents are asleep on the sofa, basking in the blue glow of the television. She puts an afghan over her mother and turns the TV off before heading up the stairs.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - CHRISSY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Becky opens Chrissy's bedroom door with great hesitation. She tiptoes in, careful not to disturb any sleeping ghosts.

A photo of Chrissy and Ben is taped to the mirror. A crucifix hangs next to a dream catcher on the wall above her headboard.

Becky lays down in Chrissy's bed and falls asleep beneath a swaying mobile of the stars.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

The high school marching band BURSTS into a sloppy rendition of Chicago's "25 or 6 to 4."

AT BLEACHERS

Hundreds of Colfax's CITIZENS CHEER for the home team. Charlie sits beside Berlice, Scooter and Matthew.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The homecoming game was a nail-biter.

AT FIELD

Ben Kirchhoff huddles with other FOOTBALLERS before an important play.

BEN

Ok, Scotty, set up a block. Todd, do that thing you do and Chris, I'm gonna look for you in the end zone.

We watch as this play is executed exactly. Colfax wins.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ben threw the winning touchdown pass and dedicated the game to Chrissy's memory

INSERT - CABLE ACCESS NEWS CHANNEL

Ben is interviewed by a local NEWS REPORTER. He looks into the camera while holding the trophy.

BEN

It's with a heavy heart that I dedicate this game and this trophy to Chrissy Monroe. RIP, baby.

Just then the TEAM dumps a vat of Gatorade all over him.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

The STUDENT BODY jives to K.C. And The Sunshine Band at the homecoming dance.

Charlie and his FRIENDS break dance poorly in the middle of a dancing circle. Scooter busts out a bizarre sequence of robotics.

Hoffman stands near the DJ BOOTH with his arms crossed, observing the spectacle.

Becky stands in the corner of the gymnasium twiddling her thumbs. Ben approaches her. He is surprisingly handsome and sober; modest. One can finally see why Chrissy dated him in the first place.

BEN

Hey Becky.

BECKY

Hi.

BEN

Look, I just wanted to say that I'm really sorry for the way I behaved the other night. I know it was a hard day for you and I totally shouldn't have taken advantage of the situation. It was really uncool.

Although the apology definitely has the air of being practiced in the mirror a half dozen times, it is genuine. Regardless, it does nothing to bring down Becky's icy guard.

BEN (CONT'D)

(straight cheese)

I shouldn't drink so much. It's been a hard few weeks for me too.

A SLOW BURNER comes on over the PA.

BEN (CONT'D)

Can I make it up to you with a dance?

BECKY

I don't think so.

BEN

C'mon, I'm a really good dancer.

BECKY

I'm sure you are but I'm gonna go
to the washroom. See you later,
Ben.

Becky walks away, leaving Ben alone with his tail between his legs. He watches the STUDENT BODY awkwardly shuffle with one another as he pours himself some punch, downs it in one shot and crumples the plastic cup in his fist.

AT DANCEFLOOR

Berlice and Charlie slow dance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And as we slow danced to The Bee
Gees, across town the forest was on
fire.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Miles of woodland blaze in the night. The devastation is brutal and vast. Flames engulf the towering elm trees.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was the forest where I broke my
leg swinging from a tire swing when
I was seven. The forest that served
as the shortcut home on our
bicycles and divided the town into
rich and poor sections. The forest
where a month prior, Chrissy Monroe
and Mr. Pulaski were shot and
killed. And like that it was burnt
to the ground.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

We follow behind WES BIXLEY (19) and TYLER HALL (19) as they strut toward the Colfax police station. They each sport long black trench coats, long black hair and knee high combat boots. Shit-kicking burnouts.

INT. POLICE STATION - FOYER - DAY

Wes and Tyler shove open the front doors of the police station and march towards the RECEPTIONIST.

WES

We wanna see Detective Hoffman.

RECEPTIONIST

May I ask why?

WES

We know who killed the Monroe girl.

Tyler blows a bubble and it EXPLODES.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOFFMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Tyler and Wes sit slouched in the two beige chairs in front of Hoffman's desk.

Hoffman gives the boys a once over before speaking.

HOFFMAN

So, you think you know who killed
Chrissy Monroe?

WES

*We know we know who killed Chrissy
Monroe.*

HOFFMAN

Ok. Let's hear it.

Wes looks around the room cautiously before slowly leaning forward and whispering:

WES

His name is Casper Tatum.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

We follow behind an elusive FIGURE on a cool, black Triumph Scrambler as he rides into the sunset down a lost highway. His jean jacket flies in the wind behind him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Casper Tatum grew up on the wrong side of the tracks and was known by our mothers as 'plain white trash.' Somehow he and I were in the same grade although he easily had three years and sixty pounds on me.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

A pair of strong, greasy HANDS tighten bolts on the engine of a motorcycle.

We follow the hands down to the floor as they steal a match from a matchbook and strike it against the motorcycle's cooling fins.

FLICK.

The flame ignites and we follow the match up, watching as it lights the end of a Lucky Strike which rests effortlessly between the lips of--

Casper Tatum.

He is the James Dean-esque town rebel and the definition of teenage cool.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He was smoking cigarettes by the third grade and sleeping with women, I mean real, full grown women, by junior high.

Casper blows smoke out his nostrils as he continues to work on the engine.

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

On top of all this, Casper was rumored to have killed before.

FLASHBACK - INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Charlie, Jamie, Matt and Scooter sit around a table trading lunch items and listening as HENRY (16) recounts a titillating piece of gossip.

Henry stabs his pork chop with a plastic spork.

HENRY

I heard that one time he stabbed a waiter right in the throat, man.

SCOOTER

Why?

HENRY

Just cause he served him 2% milk.

MATT

So?

HENRY

(duh)

Casper only drinks skim.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Casper and SIX other HILLBILLY WOLVES swagger down the hallways of the high school with no particular place to go; certainly not class.

Their names are KURT, JIM, JAMES, JETHRO and CLARK.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Casper was the leader of a throwback street gang who looked like they just stepped out of an S.E. Hinton novel.

They all wear washed out blue jeans and matching denim jackets with the words "The Hillbilly Wolves" embroidered along the back in red stitching.

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

They were called The Hillbilly Wolves and they were known around town for drinking, cursing and all around lawlessness.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - DUSK

Charlie spies on Casper and The Hillbilly Wolves as they sit on a couple of deserted sofas in the middle of an old train yard. They drink beers and throw the empties at passing freights.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Apparently they were in a band of some sort but no one had ever seen them play a single note.

Charlie jots down notes on their behavior.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Casper sits in the interrogation room with his feet up on the table and a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. He is indifferent to Hoffman's line of questioning.

Hoffman recognizes a bit of his old self in Casper.

HOFFMAN

Is it true you drive a motorcycle?

CASPER

I guess.

HOFFMAN

Did you know we found tire tracks matching those of your Triumph's, at the scene of the crime?

CASPER

You don't say?

HOFFMAN

Yeah, hepcat. Take a look.

Hoffman lays down a stack of photos of the tire marks for Casper to gaze at. He does, barely, before flicking them to the other side of the table.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Those don't do anything for you? Maybe these will.

Hoffman slaps down two gruesome photos of Chrissy's dead, bloody body. It does nothing to dismantle Casper's impenetrable cool.

CASPER

(too cool for school)

Look chief, I got homework to do. We done here?

Hoffman knows very well that Casper hasn't done a single piece of homework in fifteen years.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was also well known that Casper hated Mr. Pulaski for supposedly refusing to pay him for a large quantity of marijuana that was transacted over the previous Christmas break.

FLASHBACK - INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Casper walks down a crowded hallway during passing period. He spies Mr. Pulaski down the way a bit, standing in front of his classroom and greeting STUDENTS as they enter.

CASPER

Hey, Pulaski!

Mr. Pulaski turns toward Casper.

CASPER (CONT'D)
I'm gonna have that essay to you by
the end of the week, cross my
heart.

MR. PULASKI
That's a deal.

They shake hands; slyly exchanging a small plastic baggie of marijuana.

CASPER
Sure is, teach.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Casper exits the police station and walks to his Triumph, parked at the curb.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Casper had been released from
custody based on a lack of
substantial evidence.

Casper gets on his bike and turns toward Hoffman, who stands watching him from within the police station.

Casper smiles and starts the engine.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
However, he was easily the town's
favorite suspect. Everyone wanted
him to be the killer.

Casper takes off down the street, clearly over the speed limit.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Ben stands alone on the football field under the harsh stadium lights. He is wearing his football gear and looking directly into the camera as it rapidly pushes in on him.

BEN
Casper Tatum killed my girlfriend
and he's going to pay.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But Casper had bigger problems.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HOME EC - DAY

From the back row Casper watches a GIRL at the front of the class brush a few strands of loose hair from the back of her supple neck.

He is transfixed.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

For the first time in his short life Casper Tatum was in love.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - DAY

Casper and The Hillbilly Wolves drink Pabst Blue Ribbons and loiter. They are already more than a case in and it isn't even dinner time yet.

Clark plays a few lazy chords on a shitty, old acoustic.

CASPER

There's this chick in my Home Ec class, man. Brunette. Killer cans. Smokin' body. She doesn't even look my way though. Acts like I'm not even there.

JETHRO

What's her name?

CASPER

Why do you think I'm asking you, cock knocker? I'm never there early enough to hear roll.

KURT

(all Fonzi)

Oh, this happened to me once too. There was this one real quiet girl with killer cans in my math class -- way into what she had going on. So I told her -- you know, one day -- and she looks at me, all kinda bug eyed and droopy and shit and opens her mouth...turns out she's retarded.

The Hillbilly Wolves all look at Kurt aghast.

KURT (CONT'D)

Hot fuckin' retard though.

They redirect their attention to Casper.

CLARK

Well how about you just go on time tomorrow, Tatum?

CASPER

Nah man, it's after lunch.

INT. CASPER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Casper, wearing only tighty-whiteys, sits on the floor of his bedroom amid t-ball trophies, race car bed sheets and a pin-up of Farrah Fawcett; the conflicting decorations of a boy who went through a quick growth spurt.

He thumbs through last year's yearbook looking for the mystery girl. He gives up, lays down and lights a joint.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Somehow Casper was completely ignorant to the fact that the woman of his desires was the sister of a girl everyone thought he murdered.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HOME EC - DAY

Back in Home Ec, the mystery girl finally turns toward Casper and reveals to us that she is Becky Monroe.

Casper's heart is in his throat.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - LUNCH LINE - DAY

Casper and Becky stand next to one another in the food line. Casper's eyes are glued to her as she grabs various lunch items and puts them on her tray.

He finally builds up the courage to say something.

CASPER

(clearing his throat)

Hey, you're that foxy chick in my Home Ec class aren't you?

BECKY

Yeah, and you're the boy who stares at me all period.

Casper is stunned by the bluntness of Becky's retort.

She advances to the CASHIER as he puts his chocolate milk back up on the counter and slyly dismisses himself from the line.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Casper, swallowing his pride, exits the lunch line and makes his way through the cafeteria.

Charlie spots Casper from his lunch table and bee-lines his way.

CHARLIE

Hey Casper, would you like to give
a quote for the newspaper
concerning the murder of Chrissy
Monroe?

Casper, not slowing stride, shoves Charlie into a PASSER-BY -- food flies everywhere.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The next day there was a mandatory
assembly to commemorate the loss of
Chrissy and Mr. Pulaski.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

The tightly packed STUDENT BODY sits in bleachers, facing each other across a basketball court. At half-court a miniature stage is erected with some STUDENTS and FACULTY sitting in folding chairs waiting for the ceremony to begin.

AT BLEACHERS

Casper and The Hillbilly Wolves sit bored with the rest of the school. One of them blows a spitball at Henry, a few rows down, sitting next to Charlie and Berlice.

AT STAGE

PRINCIPAL BOLDE (48), clears his throat at the podium and begins the assembly.

PRINCIPAL BOLDE

This has been a tough semester I
know....

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Principal Bolde gave a corny
speech. A pimple faced sophomore
played an acoustic version of
Kansas's "Dust In The Wind."

We see the PIMPLE FACED SOPHOMORE as he finger picks his
Yamaha acoustic.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The editor of the literary arts
magazine read a poem called "Summer
Passing."

We watch as the EDITOR fumbles through his clunky poem.

EDITOR
(whispered)
Death. Flower. Death. Hour. Death.
Kiss me. Death. Chrissy.

Beat.

EDITOR (CONT'D)
Thank you.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Through tears, Chrissy's friends
told over-the-top anecdotes about
the deceased.

We cut to a rotation of Chrissy's FRIENDS struggling through
their poorly written speeches. KATE (18) and SARAH (17),
Chrissy's best friends, start things off.

KATE
She really, really cared about
Pandas. I think if reincarnation is
real Chrissy is a baby Panda
somewhere far, far away.

LATER.

SARAH
One time I was sick with mono and
Chrissy came over every day with my
homework, some girly mags and my
favorite candy, Charleston Chew.

LATER - Ben takes the stage and begins gently crying almost
immediately. It's all a farce.

BEN

And then I said, "I like black licorice too." She just kinda smiled, you know that ole Chrissy smile. And then we kissed. It was over in an instant but it felt like...it felt like eternity.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ben Kirchhoff's over-the-top retelling of his first kiss with Chrissy Monroe was a sad attempt to reclaim his place as her main squeeze. After her murder exposed a year long affair with Mr. Pulaski, Ben Kirchhoff was dealing with more than just heartbreak; he was wrestling with jealousy and rage.

BEN

(phony, phony, phony)
We should also remember that Mr. Pulaski, a much loved teacher here at Colfax High, lost his life that night as well.

Kurt HECKLES Ben from the bleachers.

KURT

They were fucking!

The AUDIENCE explodes.

Ben takes the mic from the stand and begins prowling the stage, searching the bleachers for the wise-guy.

BEN

Who said that?! That's hearsay!

Principal Bolde races toward the podium and attempts to retrieve the microphone, Ben pushes him away.

LATER

Ben, calmed down, stands silently at the podium. He exhales through his closed lips like a motorboat into the microphone.

BEN (CONT'D)

Anyway. You know. In conclusion I'd like to ask Chrissy's beautiful sister, Becky Monroe to stand up. Everybody, lets show Becky our support.

AT BLEACHES

Becky sits in shock; the eyes of the entire STUDENT BODY scrutinize her.

BEN

C'mon, Beck. Don't be shy, girl.

Becky shoots up from her seat and books it out of the gymnasium. The entire school watches her in silence.

Casper too looks upon Becky with shock and confusion, though not for the same reasons as everyone else. He slowly realizes her family ties.

Becky opens up the gym doors and they slam behind her with a BANG.

The school bell RINGS.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

In a secluded corner of the library, Casper whips through the pages of last year's yearbook -- this time with a specific destination.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Casper hadn't found Becky's headshot in the yearbook the previous night because over the course of the last year Becky had developed greatly. Evolving from a brace-faced tomboy into the kind of girl who silenced rooms with her beauty.

Casper stops his rapid flipping.

INSERT - YEARBOOK PHOTO OF BECKY

Becky has awkward baby fat, a bad haircut and braces. Her growth is self-evident and humorous.

BACK TO SCENE

Casper loudly COUGHS into his inner-elbow as he tears out the page and pockets it.

EXT. CONVENIENT STORE - DAY

Casper and the Hillbilly Wolves loiter outside a small corner store. Casper's mind is clearly somewhere else. He sucks down cigarette after cigarette and remains quiet.

KURT

Hey homos, when's the next band practice?

JAMES

Tuesday.

JIM

Nah, I got an orthodontist appointment that day.

KURT

C'mon we never fuckin' practice. I'm sick of this. Your teeth look fine, Jim. Pearly white.

A CUSTOMER walks past them.

JETHRO

(to passing customer)

Hey boss, can you score us some brews?

The Customer disregards their presence.

Casper withdraws the yearbook page from his coat pocket. He unfolds it and stares at Becky's awkward photo.

CLARK

Guys, I told you, the White Hen on McArthur is way better for scoring booze. This place is the worst.

KURT

But the White Hen don't got Schlitz.

CASPER

Will you ass holes zip the lip?! I'm gettin' a migraine.

JAMES

What the fuck's the matter with you Tatum?

CASPER
 (sighing)
 I think I'm in love with the dead
 bitch's sister.

The Hillbilly Wolves start CRACKING UP.

CLARK
 You've got to be kiddin' me.

JETHRO
 Of all the girls at school, you
 have the hots for her?

CASPER
 Yeah, yeah, yeah.

CLARK
 Her parents ain't ever gonna
 approve.

CASPER
 I've never dated a girl whose
 parents approved.

KURT
 Good luck with that, Romeo.

CASPER
 Don't worry. I got a plan.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie sits alone, typing at his Olympia typewriter a million miles an hour. The rest of the staff has gone home long ago.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Charlie turns to see Casper standing in the door frame.

CASPER
 Hey Chambers, I'm ready for my
 interview now, alright.

Charlie is startled by Casper's sudden presence.

CHARLIE
 Oh cool, man.

Charlie quickly clears the desk beside him and motions for Casper to take a seat.

Casper takes small, loud steps toward Charlie and plops down next to him. He takes his time, slouches back in his chair and measures the room a bit.

He opens a fresh piece of gum from his pocket, unwraps it and puts it in his mouth. He's really drawing out beginning the tale to build Charlie's anticipation.

It's definitely working.

CASPER

So it all started after band practice one night when I was tripping on Ayahuasca...

Charlie hits REC on his tape recorder and listens with anticipation.

FLASHBACK - INT. KURT'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Casper sits slouched on an ugly green sofa in Kurt's wood-paneled basement. Instruments and wires are strewn across the floor. His eyes are rolled back and his left leg occasionally thumps against the ground uncontrollably.

The place is spinning.

CASPER (V.O.)

I don't really remember too much from the high except that I was hotter than hell and needed to take my shirt off bad.

FLASHBACK - EXT. KURT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Casper emerges from Kurt's house, shirtless and drinking straight from a bottle of bourbon. Kurt stays in the doorway and watches as Casper stumbles toward his motorcycle.

KURT

Casper, man, you okay to drive?

Casper mounts his motorcycle, revs the engine and wheelies out of his parking spot faster than hell.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Casper speeds through the neighborhoods at 75 miles per hour. He pulls onto a dirt road leading into the forest.

CASPER (V.O.)

I took the short cut through the forest because it hit me -- I was high on DMT and driving an unregistered motorcycle, shirtless. And on top of that I was going 50 miles over the speed limit, so...

FLASHBACK - EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Casper's motorcycle slows down as he comes upon Mr. Pulaski's parked car and the two bodies which lay before it in the headlights.

Casper's eyes are like two round moons. His mouth on the floor. He almost looks like he could smile.

CASPER (V.O.)

I didn't know wether I was seeing shit from the junk running through my blood or if I had crashed and was in some sort of, like, purgatory.

He cranes his neck and looks deep into the eyes of Chrissy.

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

I didn't even remember if I did it or not, to be honest with you. Not at first anyway.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - NIGHT

Casper stops his story for a moment and lights a cigarette. Charlie bites his nails in suspense.

CASPER

Plus I knew that with my rap, just admitting I was there would have been enough to book me.

Casper leans back in his chair.

CHARLIE

So what did you do?

CASPER

I just Goddamn drove off.

CHARLIE

Did you see anyone?!

Casper looks around to see if anyone is listening in on the tale. He leans forward and whispers:

CASPER

It might have been my imagination,
but I swear to God I saw some perv
peek behind a tree, dude.

FLASHBACK - EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

A shadowy FIGURE peaks out from behind a giant elm tree. He looks directly at Casper. The sound of the BUZZING cicadas crescendo behind him.

Casper looks at the Figure, speechless.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Casper hops on his motorcycle and speeds off through the woods.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - NIGHT

Casper lights another cigarette with the end of his current one.

CASPER

But I saw a lot things that night
if you know what I mean, Chuck.

Casper chuckles to himself.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - DAY

Mr. Bouque unlocks the classroom door and enters the newsroom. He sees Charlie sleeping on the small loveseat tucked away in the corner of the room. He clenches a stack of paper in his left hand.

Mr. Bouque smiles. He puts down his briefcase and coffee and takes a seat at the desk beside the loveseat. He types on the typewriter key-by-key as loudly as possible.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

The typewriter's carriage reaches the end and it RINGS. Charlie shoots up and out of sleep.

CHARLIE

(mumbling)
It's done.

He extends the typed article to Mr. Bouque and collapses back down into the loveseat and back to sleep.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

It's like the best thing I've ever written.

MONTAGE

I. A printing press discharges newspaper after newspaper. The headline reads, "*Casper Tatum: Notes From The Bad Side of The Tracks*"

II. Dozens of bound newspapers are dropped off in front of the newspaper room.

III. Charlie and the other newspaper staffers cut open the twine binding all the papers.

IV. Charlie and the other staffers walk the hallways before school, distributing the papers at the doors of classrooms.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HOME EC - DAY

Casper watches as Becky reads the article along with the rest of the class (and presumably the school). Casper smiles to himself. It was all part of the plan.

Becky finishes the article and folds the paper onto her desk.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - GEOMETRY CLASS - DAY

Ben reads Charlie's article along with the other STUDENTS in his math class. He is not happy with Casper's vindication.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I won the Illinois student achievement in journalism award for that article. As a matter of fact it's still framed in my childhood bedroom.

FLASHFORWARD - INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Charlie's childhood bedroom lays dormant and very little changed. It's that odd hour in the middle of the afternoon where things are particularly quiet. One can see the particles of dust in the atmosphere.

Hanging on his wall next to his father's old athletic trophies is the framed Casper Tatum article and his framed award certificate.

We push in on the article and end on a CLOSE UP of Casper's black and white face.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

Charlie and a hundred or so PARENTS are gathered in the gymnasium for a special PTA meeting. Hoffman fields questions at the podium in front of the congregation.

PTA WOMAN #1

Why have no arrests been made?

HOFFMAN

Because there is no one to arrest.

PTA WOMAN #2

And what is the likelihood of the killer striking again?

HOFFMAN

Low. Murderers very seldom strike the same place twice. We also have cops patrolling the town up the ass.

A shocked MURMUR moves through the crowd.

PTA MAN #1

What do you make of today's article on Caper Tatum in the Colfax Tribune? Do you believe he is innocent?

HOFFMAN

I'm not here to discuss my opinions with you. I'm here to calm your concerns and answer questions about our progress--

PTA MAN #2

Pack it in, old timer!

The entire PTA erupts in MURMUR. Hoffman clears his throat and regains control of the crowd.

HOFFMAN

Listen, I don't have to be here. All you need to know is that the Colfax police department is keeping a close eye on a number of leads, and yes, that includes Casper Tatum. That being said, as of right now, he is innocent and he should be treated as so.

Hoffman struts off the stage and out of the gymnasium.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Autumn is in full effect and the air is brisk. The leaves on the trees are gold and brown.

Becky walks toward her Volvo parked in the far corner of the expansive parking lot. As she reaches her car she sees that the tires have been slashed.

She GROANS. Just her luck.

Just then Casper pulls up behind her on his motorcycle and assesses the situation. She looks to him.

CASPER

Sucks. Wanna lift?

Becky looks to Casper and can't help but smile. She senses he had something to do with this. She has no other choice but to accept his ride.

BECKY

Fine.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Casper drives Becky through the old fashioned suburb on his motorcycle. The breeze dances in Becky's hair. She grabs his torso tight.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - DAY

Casper pulls up to Becky's home. Her father rakes the hundreds of dead leaves which cover the yard.

The entire street watches from their windows and porches. "Why is Casper Tatum at the Monroe house?!"

Mr. Jablonski observes the scene like a stoic scarecrow from his garden and Charlie ogle's from across the street.

Becky hops off the bike and stands before Casper in the grass for a moment.

BECKY

Thanks.

CASPER

No thing, chicken wing.

Becky slowly begins to walk backward down her lawn.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Hey, wait a minute.

Becky stops.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Look. I'm sorry about your dead sister but I didn't do it. And I'd like to see you again. I think you're one lush piece of ass.

BECKY

(fighting a smile)

I don't think so.

Casper looks at her as though to say "C'mon."

BECKY (CONT'D)

Sorry.

She skips through her long lawn, passing her father on the way.

MR. MONROE

Who's that?

BECKY

No one. Some guy.

She gently falls into a pile of leaves.

MR. MONROE

Well motorcycle's are dangerous. I don't like you on them.

INT. CAR - DAY

Ben and Scott watch the scene unfold from inside Ben's Mustang, parked across the street from the Monroe's. Casper starts his engine and rockets past them.

SCOTT

No way, dude. She's dating Tatum.

Ben is livid. He spits onto the pavement before driving off.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is now empty. We rapidly push in on Ben who is in the distance chucking a tennis ball at a locker bay.

BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

As we get closer, he turns to the camera and throws the tennis ball straight at the lens.

The glass SHATTERS.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - TRACK - DAY

Becky, Ben, Charlie and the rest of their GYM CLASS race across the track during 100 meter sprints. Between gasps of air, Ben questions Becky.

BEN

You dating that scum of the earth faggot, Casper Tatum?

BECKY

Please.

BEN

That's what a little bird told me.

BECKY

Well I'm sorry to disappoint you.

BEN

It's not me you're disappointing, Rebecca, it's your sister. You know he's the one who did it.

Becky sprints ahead of Ben.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

Later in gym class, everyone runs around the gymnasium playing dodgeball. They whip red rubber balls at one another.

Ben has his eyes dead set on Becky.

Charlie watches from the sidelines as Ben grabs a ball from the floor, take two steps, winds up and chucks the ball as fast as he can straight at Becky's face.

BOOM.

Her nose gushes blood.

The entire class stops playing. Becky looks up, sees Ben and runs out of the gym in embarrassment.

Everyone gapes at Ben.

BEN

What? It was an accident. She shouldn't have been standing there!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

After hearing of the assault, Casper lost it.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Casper struts down the hallway, stoned to the bone. Kurt emerges from an adjacent classroom and high fives Casper.

KURT

Hey you hear that chick you wanna jog got her face all fucked up?

CASPER

What?!

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - STAIRWELL - DAY

Ben careens down a flight of stairs after school. It is one of the secluded stairwells with bad lighting and very few STUDENTS.

Ben reaches the first floor landing and walks toward the exit.

CASPER (O.S.)

Yo, Kirchhoff.

Ben turns around to see Casper hidden underneath the stairs. He is clutching a red rubber dodgeball with his right hand.

CASPER (CONT'D)
You think hittin' a girl is cool,
tough guy?

Casper whips the ball straight at Ben's nose. Ben is stunned for a moment.

They tumble on the tile floor, throwing punch after punch.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

Ben sits on a doctor's bed in the cramped nurse's office. He has cotton balls stuffed up his nose and he holds an ice bag to his forehead.

Hoffman questions him about the incident.

HOFFMAN
So he whipped the ball at your face
for no reason?

BEN
No reason at all! I'm just minding
my own business and I get smacked
in the fucking stairwell!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It took exactly thirty-six minutes
for word of Casper and Ben's
fisticuff to reach Becky at home.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Becky, donning a fresh black eye, sits at a desk in her bedroom doing homework. Her room is like a smaller, hipper version of Chrissy's. A Go-Gos poster hangs over her bed next to an overcrowded bookshelf.

The telephone RINGS. She picks up.

BECKY
(into phone)
Hello?

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Hoffman and Casper meet again in the interrogation room. There is a long silence; each man measures the other.

HOFFMAN

So, from my perspective -- the lead suspect in a murder just assaulted the boyfriend of the victim.

CASPER

Who himself, is also a suspect.

HOFFMAN

Leave the law enforcement to us, Tatum.

Casper scoffs.

HOFFMAN (CONT'D)

Listen, you don't wanna answer questions -- fine by me. We can hang out all night.

CASPER

Ok. He chucked a dodgeball at a chick who I may or may not have the hots for; embarrassed her; gave her a bloody nose. So I gave him a taste of his own medicine. Nothing to do with anything other than that. Dig?

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HOME EC - DAY

Casper is escorted to his seat by a POLICE OFFICER. He and Becky have matching black eyes.

She watches him make his way to the back of the classroom. Their eyes meet as he takes a seat. She smiles at him.

He smiles back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The unlikely teenage love affair between Casper Tatum and Becky Monroe began in a Home Ec classroom and was officiated with an hour long session of frenching under the bleachers.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - BLEACHERS - DAY

Casper and Becky make out under the bleachers of the football field.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The sister of a dead girl and the prime suspect in the murder were suddenly lovers. The gossip spread through the town by supper that evening.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Charlie, Charlie's Father and CHARLIE'S MOTHER gossip over dinner. The atmosphere is humorless and quiet.

CHARLIE'S MOTHER

Can you believe that little river rat is dating Becky Monroe?

CHARLIE'S FATHER

(totally doesn't care)
Just terrible. The horror.

Charlie eats his mashed potatoes in silence.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A group of TEENAGERS sit in a large movie theatre before a film begins. They share a bag of popcorn and discuss the scandal.

TEEN 1

Look, if someone killed my sister -- not only would I not be dating them, but you'd have to remove my fingers from his cold, dead body.

TEEN 2

Yeah. But he is kinda dreamy.

TEEN 1

His dreamy, cold dead body then.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Two ALTER BOYS whisper to one another as a PRIEST conducts a mid-week mass.

ALTER BOY 1

I bet he's gonna kill her too.

ALTER BOY 2

Yeah, but I bet he'll rape and sodomize her first.

PRIEST (O.S.)
(to congregation)
And thou said do not judge what
thou do not understand.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Casper and Becky walk hand-in-hand down the school hallways. Everyone stares in dumbfounded shock, especially Ben.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
None of the noise mattered to
Becky, though. The girl who had
once lived under a shadow was now
coming out. And on top of that she
really dug Casper.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Casper and Becky drive down a highway in her Volvo. "Space Age Love Song" by Flock of Seagulls BLASTS from the radio.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
She dug the way he smelled -- Brut
deodorant and nicotine. She dug
that she had to stand on her
tiptoes to kiss him and that when
you got to know him, he was really
just a softy. For instance his
favorite band was Flock of Seagulls
and he never missed an episode of
Dallas.

EXT. PLANITARIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Casper and Becky lean against her car's trunk, smoking a joint. Casper inhales deeply before shotgunning the smoke into Becky's mouth.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He got her high for the first time
at the Jacobson Planetarium.

Becky holds the smoke in for a moment, then lets it escape her lungs in one giant cloud. She breaks into a coughing fit.

INT. PLANETARIUM - THEATER - NIGHT

Casper and Becky sit in reclined chairs in a giant circular auditorium and watch the projected galaxy spin on the domed ceiling.

The GUIDE narrating the show stands at a podium at the rear of the theater.

GUIDE

(into microphone)

There are 500 billion galaxies. 300 billion solar systems per galaxy on average. We live on Earth. In one solar system. In one galaxy. We live and lose all on this little rotating blue, green planet.

Casper puts his hand on Becky's. They're both high as kites. Their minds are blown.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

(into microphone)

Somehow we find joy and hope and even love in spite of the crushing insignificance of the universe.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie watches from his window as Casper and Becky pull into her driveway. They exit the car and kiss goodbye before Casper walks toward his motorcycle, parked down the street.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Becky lays wide awake in her bedroom and stares at the ceiling longingly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They weren't that different, Casper and Becky. They both had parents who didn't acknowledge their existence. They were both Libras. And they both preferred sweet to savory. In spite of the crushing insignificance of the universe they had found each other.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Casper and Becky stroll down the sidewalk and take in the fall atmosphere. The trees are almost completely bare. Jack-o'-lanterns and cobwebs cover the lawns of Colfax.

CASPER

You know, when me and the wolves finally cut a record and go on tour we're really gonna show this two cent town who's boss.

BECKY

How many songs you guys have?

CASPER

Well a buncha old ones but we don't like those anymore, you know? The new ones, those are gonna be killer.

BECKY

Can you play me one?

CASPER

Well I haven't put them down on paper yet. They're in my head, though.

BECKY

Oh. Cool.

Casper senses Becky smells bull shit.

CASPER

In your head songs are perfect. Fuckin' perfect. Then they come out on paper and Kurt's fuckin' up the bass line and Clark's pickin' at his ass and they're ruined, you know? The songs are ruined.

BECKY

Well sure. In your head things are sacred.

CASPER

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Sacred.

Casper really thinks about the meaning of that word for a moment.

CASPER (CONT'D)

What's sacred to you, sweets?

BECKY
Um, I don't know...

CASPER
C'mon, gotta be something.

BECKY
(off the cuff)
Alright, the month of May, sherbert
ice cream, and, I dunno, The Beach
Boys.

CASPER
Don't goof with me.

BECKY
What? I'm a simple girl with simple
pleasures.

CASPER
Nah, you're dark. And smart. And
you ain't simple.

Becky stops walking. Casper follows suit. They are standing
in front of the Monroe's house.

CASPER (CONT'D)
So don't be sneaky with me,
sherbert.

They kiss.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Fresh from her walk with Casper, Becky skips into her home.
The front door isn't even closed before she hears:

MR. MONROE
Rebecca, can you come in here?

Becky looks in the direction of her father. He is sitting in
the adjoining front room, talking with Mrs. Monroe and Ben.
The mood is somber.

Becky's heart sinks.

MR. MONROE (CONT'D)
Well it was very kind of you to
stop by, young man.

BEN
Absolutely, Sir. Just doing what I
think's right.

Ben shakes Mr. Monroe's hand, nods to Becky and exits the house. Becky rolls her eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At this point Ben had been plotting his revenge for quite some time.

Becky slogs over to her parents and sits before them on a chair beside the sofa. Mr. Monroe towers over her, SCREAMING.

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

Through their crushing grief, the Monroe's hadn't paid much attention to Becky's social life. Nor to the outside world for that matter.

MR. MONROE

How could you disgrace the memory of your sister like that?!

Becky sits staring into the middle distance of the room. Her eyes water as her Father continues to berate her.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She was prohibited from seeing Casper and grounded indefinitely.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HOME EC - DAY

Casper walks into Home Ec class, predictably late. He is surprised when he finds that Becky's chair is empty.

He takes a seat and stares confused at the empty desk in the front row.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Becky was pulled from her normally scheduled Home Ec period with Casper and placed in one earlier in the day.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COLFAX - DAY

Large semi-trucks roll into the quaint downtown Colfax. CARNIES and sideshow FREAKS begin to prepare for the festivities taking place that weekend.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The week Becky Monroe was grounded was the week the Halloween carnival rolled into town.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Casper appears at Becky's house late that night.

He throws pebbles up at her darkened window. After making contact a few times, her light turns on and Becky appears as a silhouette.

She waves. He waves back.

Casper motions for her to open the window. She does.

CASPER

Where were you today? You sick?

BECKY

Shhh. My Mom and Dad will hear you.

He pulls a bottle of Tums out of the pocket of his motorcycle jacket.

They whisper.

CASPER

I brought you some Tums. I heard the stomach flu is going around and I thought you might have it.

BECKY

(smiling)

No. I haven't had the stomach flu since I was nine. I wasn't in class today because my parent's hate you and pulled me out of that period.

CASPER

What?! Why?!

BECKY

They think you killed my sister.

He rolls his eyes. There is a long silence.

CASPER

Fuck this. Meet me at the carnival this weekend.

BECKY

What?!

CASPER

In front of the ferris wheel.

BECKY

I think we should just let things
cool off.

Casper tip toes backward.

CASPER

Eight o'clock. Ferris wheel. Be
there.

BECKY

Casper, wait.

CASPER

I love you.

He runs off down the yard.

MONTAGE

Days drip by one-by-one. Both Casper and Becky sulk through
their routines without each other.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In their moments of solitude each
yearned for the other. They counted
down the days till they could
reunite on a slate black chalkboard
in the back of their minds.

I. Casper day dreams in class about Becky.

II. Becky sulks in her bedroom, spinning records and reading
books.

III. Casper and the Hillbilly Wolves drink beers at the train
tracks.

IV. In gym class, Ben watches Becky walk across the pool deck
in her bathing suit. She sees his eyes on her and covers
herself with a towel.

V. The carnival rides are erected by the Carnies.

VI. Hoffman patrols the carnival ground, sucking down a
cigarette.

INT. CAR - DAY

Charlie drives his father's Buick through the carnival's
midway. Berlice sits shotgun beside him and Jamie and Scooter
sit in the back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The week before the carnival I finally turned sixteen. And that Friday, my dad let me take out his Buick.

The Zipper and the Tilt-a-Whirl test-run with no one in them. The game tents are opened and circus FREAKS stroll the avenues. Charlie and Berlice look at the sights with naive wonder.

Berlice excitedly grabs Charlie's hand. It is a rare instance of spontaneous action. A subconscious urge. Jamie and Scooter watch from the back seat in awkward anticipation.

Charlie looks at their adjoined hands. He needs to make sure it isn't an accident. Their young fingers slowly begin to intertwine and then unfurl with each other.

Intertwine and unfurl.

Intertwine and unfurl.

Although it is chilly outside, their hands are clammy and charged.

CHARLIE

Nice night.

BERLICE

Yeah.

He's talking about the weather. She isn't.

INT. CAR - DAY

Like Charlie and his buddies, Casper and The Hillbilly Wolves drive through the town in one of their cars.

In between sips of Budweiser, they watch the crowds of PEOPLE make their way towards the carnival.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Ben and the Footballers ram into one another at practice.

BANG! BOOM! CRUNCH!

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Ben and Scott change out of their sweaty uniforms and into cheese-ball button up shirts and slacks. They look into the mirror. They like what they see.

EXT. CARNIVAL - TILT-A-WHIRL - DAY

Charlie and Berlice share a carriage on the CREAKY, old Tilt-a-Whirl. Berlice SCREAMS and LAUGHS in excitement. She clutches Charlie's arm.

They spin away from us for a moment and when they return again their lips are locked.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - DUSK

The Monroe's doorbell rings.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Becky, still trapped in her ivory tower, broods in her pajamas in a sea of comforters.

The doorbell sparks her attention.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - DUSK

Mr. Monroe answers the door to reveal Ben standing on the stoop; a shit-eating grin on his face.

MR. MONROE

Hello, Benajamin.

BEN

Hello, Sir. My friends and I are going to the Halloween fair and we were wondering if perhaps we could bring Becky with.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - DUSK

There is a quiet KNOCK on Becky's door.

BECKY

Yes.

MR. MONROE
(through door)
Get dressed. Ben's here to see you.
He's taking you to that carnival
thing. I've given him permission.

Becky springs from the bed in an excited flurry.

She retrieves some dirty clothes from the hamper in her closet and changes into them quickly.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - FOYER - DUSK

Becky glides down the staircase into the foyer of her home. Ben stands next to her parents in his freshly dry cleaned letterman jacket.

BEN
You look beautiful, Becky.

She hugs her mother and kisses her father on the cheek.

MRS. MONROE
Becky, take a jacket. It's chilly
outside.

Mrs. Monroe hands Becky a beat-up denim jacket from the closet by the front door.

MR. MONROE
(to Ben)
You have her back at a descent
time, Ben. She is still grounded.

BEN
Absolutely, Sir. She's in good
hands.

INT. CAR - DUSK

Ben, Becky, Scott and his date, Kate -- Chrissy's friend from the assembly -- cruise through the wan dusklight in Ben's sleek Mustang.

Scott and Kate suck each other's faces off in the backseat. Ben and Becky sit in the front. Ben puts his arm around Becky's shoulder and gives her a once over.

BEN
So -- you finally got a taste for
the ole Kirchhoff, huh?

BECKY

Umm, yeah.

BEN

Nice.

There is a brief lull. The sound of the SLOBBERING in the backseat forces Ben to turn up the radio a bit.

BEN (CONT'D)

So I'm sorry about the way I may have behaved the last few weeks. I think I'm finally at the last stage of grief though -- acceptance.

BECKY

That's great, Ben. I'm really happy for you.

BEN

You know, you and your sister aren't that different from one another.

They reach the fringes of Colfax's downtown. The excitement of the carnival can be felt. Electricity is in the air.

Ben pulls his car into a parking spot at the curb. Kate and Scott are still lip-locked and his hands are down her pants.

Ben shuffles closer to Becky; his thumb gently grazing her breast.

BEN (CONT'D)

In fact you and your sister have similar lips.

Beat.

BEN (CONT'D)

Had similar lips I mean.

Ben goes in for a kiss.

She maneuvers away from him and whispers:

BECKY

Later. I promise.

Ben smiles. He slaps Scott on the shoulder and breaks up his and Kate's make-out session.

BEN
C'mon time for the carnival, fuck
face.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Casper waits alone in front of the spinning, circular lights of the ferris wheel. His hands are deep in the pockets of his leather jacket.

He looks at his watch -- it's 8:13 PM.

Casper watches as scores of BRUNETTES who vaguely resemble Becky march past him arm-in-arm with their LOVED ONES.

EXT. CARNIVAL - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Becky, Ben, Scott and Kate stroll through the entrance to the carnival. The lights are ablaze and nearly everyone is wearing a Halloween costume.

Ben and Scott stop to chat with a GRADUATE.

GRADUATE
KIRCCCCCCHHHHHHOOFFFFFFF!
ANDERSON! No fuckin' way!

BEN
Goober! How's college, man?!

GRADUATE
Can I be honest?

BEN
Yeah!

FRIEND
Dude.

SCOTT
That good?

GRADUATE
Dude.

Kate and Becky stand awkwardly near their dates, though neither are included in the conversation.

Becky taps Ben on the shoulder.

BECKY

Hey, I gotta use the ladies room.
I'll be back.

BEN

Ok, I'll miss you.

Ben pinches Becky ass before she starts off down the midway. It is swarming with PEOPLE, noise and excitement.

As she maneuvers through the traffic we get a better view of the carnival's geography. It blankets a quarter mile stretch of downtown Colfax and its adjacent avenues. The ferris wheel stands at the opposite end of the fairgrounds.

Becky ducks into the entrance of a nearby, crowded convenience store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Becky hurries through the hectic aisles of the convenience store. CHILDREN buy candy and TEENAGERS score booze as Becky searches for something.

EXT. CARNIVAL - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Ben, Scott and Kate continue to chat with the Graduate at the carnival's entrance. It is now completely dark outside and the festivities are in full swing.

GRADUATE

Had this one chick, man. She was
like a contortionist. Legs shootin'
left and right.

Ben checks his digital wrist watch. It is 8:29 PM.

He looks around briefly for Becky before resuming his conversation with the Graduate.

INT. CARNIVAL - PORTA-POTTY - NIGHT

Becky opens the porta-potty door and it closes behind her with a BANG. She pulls a generic, two-buck skeleton costume out of her purse and quickly changes, careful not to touch the grimy toilet.

EXT. CARNIVAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The Hillbilly Wolves, minus Casper, loiter on folding chairs around Kurt's shitty 1975 Chevy Nova. The Replacements BLAST from the car radio.

They shotgun cans of Coors Light and harass two overweight PASSERS-BY; imitating the sound of their footsteps.

HILLBILLY WOLVES
(collectively)
Boom-bada-boom-bada-boom!

The overweight PASSERS-BY scurry away.

The Hillbilly Wolves CRACK UP as a pretty BLONDE struts past them. Kurt WHISTLES suggestively at her before drunkenly falling from his nest atop the Nova.

EXT. CARNIVAL - PORTA-POTTY - NIGHT

Becky exits the porta-potty in her disguise. She quickly scurries away in pursuit of the ferris wheel.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Casper looks at his watch once more; it is 8:35 PM. He shrugs. He is moments away from giving up.

EXT. CARNIVAL - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Becky creeps past Ben, Scott and Kate as she proceeds through the fairgrounds. Although she is in disguise she is careful not to be spotted by them.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FOOD TRUCK - NIGHT

Charlie and Berlice wait in line at a busy food vendor. The CASHIER calls them up.

CASHIER
Next!

Charlie advances forward.

CHARLIE
I'd like two elephant ears please.

Detective Hoffman patrols the grounds. He passes Charlie and Berlice on his route.

He nods to them; they nod back.

EXT. CARNIVAL - PORTA-POTTY - NIGHT

Ben, Scott, Kate and five other FOOTBALLERS rifle through the various porta-potties which stand in a line near the carnival's entrance.

BEN

Kate, where did she go?

KATE

I dunno, Ben. She told you she was going to the bathroom.

BEN

I was talking to Goober Gorsky, ok. Shut your mouth. I was busy.

KATE

(to Scott)

Are you gonna let him talk to me like that?

SCOTT

(to Kate)

Babe, c'mon. Shut up.

(to Ben)

Ben, you too, man. Gimme a break. I got nag-nag-nagin' from both ends, here.

BEN

Control the female and then talk to me.

KATE

You know what, Ben -- I think you killed Chrissy.

Ben raises his fist in anger.

BEN

(through clenched teeth;

to Scott)

Get her out of here, man.

SCOTT

(to Kate)

Babe! God.

KATE

Oh, I'm gone.

Kate storms down the avenue in her cheap high-heels.

One of the Footballers finds something in the trash can beside the porta-potties.

FOOTBALLER
Hey Ben, look.

Ben directs his attention to the jean jacket clenched in the Footballer's hand.

BEN
(to himself)
Tatum.

Ben lifts his fingers and SNAPS.

EXT. CARNIVAL - MIDWAY - NIGHT

Ben, Scott and the Footballers march through the midway with reckless abandon. Ben carries Becky's jean jacket clutched in his left fist.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Casper stands dejected in front of the ferris wheel. He has given up.

Just then someone taps on his shoulder. He turns around to see a small, little skeleton (Becky) looking up him.

CASPER
Bug off.

She taps him again.

CASPER (CONT'D)
What did I just say?

Becky kicks his shin.

CASPER (CONT'D)
I'm going to punch you, kid.

Becky removes the skeleton mask to reveal her face to Casper. He is overcome with joy.

He picks her up, spins her around and they kiss.

Time stands still.

EXT. CARNIVAL - MIDWAY - NIGHT

Ben, Scott and the Footballers continue to march down the midway. Ben's eyes are beady and far away. He is bloodthirsty.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ben Kirchhoff was feeling a number of emotions as he marched through the brisk October night toward a showdown. Casper Tatum had probably killed his girlfriend, made him look like a pussy in front of his classmates and now was making a mockery of him by stealing Becky Monroe. Casper Tatum was the scum of the earth and he had finally met his match.

EXT. CARNIVAL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Becky and Casper arrive at Kurt's car.

The Hillbilly Wolves are lighting off M-80s inside jack-o'-lanterns. Them and the cars around them are covered in orange goo.

JIM

Oh, hey guys.

CASPER

Be scarce. Kurt I'm using your backseat.

Becky and Casper enter the cramped backseat of the two-door shit box.

Kurt lingers for a moment, hoping to catch a glimpse of some skin before reluctantly joining the rest of The Hillbilly Wolves on their way towards the carnival.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Casper and Becky start stripping off each other's clothes and exploring one another's biology. Their sweaty skin sticks to the smoke stained black leather.

BECKY

I've never done this before.

Casper stops dead in his tracks. He wasn't expecting that. He laughs to himself and kisses her neck with much more sensitivity than before.

CASPER

It's no thing, sugar plum. Watch.

He unstraps her bra and removes it from her slender shoulder; kissing a path down to her underwear.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Charlie and Berlice are next in line for the ferris wheel. A CARNIE opens the gate, lets them in and they take a seat next to one another on a blue carriage to the top of Colfax.

She kisses his cheek.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NEAR FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

The Hillbilly Wolves, minus Casper, stroll through the midway, bird-doggin' CHICKS and drinking beers.

James and Kurt up-skirt BROADS left and right.

Meanwhile, bustling down the midway in the opposite direction, toward the Hillbilly Wolves, is Ben, Scott and the Footballers.

BEN

Look at these fuckin' jokers.

The Hillbilly Wolves snap out of their debauchery and stand still for their enemy's approach.

They are way too drunk for this.

BEN (CONT'D)

Where's your jerk-off leader?

KURT

He's uh, bangin' your dead squeeze's lil hottie of a sister.

Clark sticks his right pointer finger through the "OK" sign he holds up with his left hand. In and out. In and out. His tongue wagging.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Charlie and Berlice approach the top of the ferris wheel.

BERLICE

...And it was then that I realized what Iggy Pop was really trying to say.

The ride comes to a complete stop. Their carriage gently sways.

Charlie spots the commotion occurring below between The Hillbilly Wolves and Ben and the Footballers.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Becky and Casper lay in the backseat of the car following their romp. Becky slips her skeleton costume back on. Casper watches her with affection.

EXT. CARNIVAL - MIDWAY - NIGHT

Becky and Casper walk hand-in-hand through the carnival. It is almost slow-motion. They are drunk on love and lights. It's one of those rare instances where you're aware of the present.

After a moment, they see the commotion ahead between the Footballers and the Hillbilly Wolves.

They sprint to the scene.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NEAR FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Casper breaks into the circle of bodies and tries to cool the situation.

CASPER

Hey, hey, hey -- what's going on here?!

BEN

"What's going on here?"

Ben sees Becky behind Casper's shoulder.

BEN (CONT'D)

(sarcastic)

Oh, there's my date. Hey Becky.

The auxiliary players on both sides quiet down and watch as Ben and Casper verbally duke it out.

BEN (CONT'D)

Well we were, uh, just about to kick the shit out of your hick friends but since you're here, I think -- maybe -- we'll kick the shit out of you instead.

CASPER

I thought we already dealt with this.

Becky tugs at Casper's arm.

BECKY

C'mon babe, he isn't worth it.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Charlie cranes his neck as much as he can without tipping the carriage. He tries to get a clear view of the confrontation.

BERLICE

What's going on?

Charlie doesn't respond; he is completely immersed in the action below.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NEAR FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Ben advances upon Casper, basically standing toe to toe. A small CROWD has gathered around them

BEN

You call a sneak attack under the staircase a fight, pus pus?

Casper turns around and follows Becky's advice. They begin to walk away, hand-in-hand, when Ben says--

BEN (CONT'D)

(yelling)

You better sleep with one eye open, Becky. You're dating a cold blooded killer.

Casper stops dead in his tracks. He closes his eyes tight and tries to control his impulses.

BEN (CONT'D)

We all know you're the one, Tatum. You got blood on your hands.

Casper lets go of Becky's hand and charges toward Ben, knocking him off his feet and sending him soaring towards the pavement.

BOOM.

Fists start flying almost immediately. It's an all out brawl. Man on man. Footballer on Hillbilly Wolf.

Becky watches from the sidelines along with the growing sea of ONLOOKERS. She is terrified by the manic violence she is witnessing.

Blood SPLATTERS.

Bones BREAK.

Fists SMASH.

It isn't an easy fight but after a while, Ben has the best of Casper.

He lands punch after punch after punch.

At this point the Hillbilly Wolves have been subdued by the Footballers and are being held back; forced to witness their leader's demise.

BECKY

STOP!

The entire carnival seems to be silenced by Becky's guttural wail.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Charlie and Berlice watch in suspense. They've witnessed a bird's eye view of the savagery.

They look to one another for a brief beat before redirecting their attention to the drama below.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NEAR FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Ben lets go of the bloody and defeated Casper and plods up to Becky.

He grabs her cheeks with his right hand and looks deep into her eyes, pulling her in close. She can smell his mixture of body odor and Old Spice.

BEN

You're a slut just like your
sister, you know that?

BOOM!

Ben hits the pavement like a ton of bricks, revealing Casper standing behind him -- rock in hand.

Casper's eyes are crazed and far away. This isn't the same boy we saw making love to Becky not too long ago.

He falls to his knees beside Ben's trembling body and smashes Ben's head repeatedly into the curb.

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

FREEZE FRAME

Casper's face is contorted in hatred as he bashes Ben's skull against the pavement.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There were no longer any doubts
that Casper Tatum was capable of
cold blooded murder.

BACK TO SCENE

The crowd gathered around the showdown is silent and in awe of the graphic warfare they just witnessed.

Sirens BLARE in the distance.

The gravity of the situation dawns on Casper and he snaps out of his violent spell. He looks up to Becky for rescue.

Becky herself is in a state of astonishment. There's nothing she can do for Casper.

There's nothing she can do for herself.

Casper hops to his feet, runs to Becky and kisses her once more. The kiss is short and sweet but filled with tragic longing. Filled with lightning.

CASPER

I'll come back for you. I promise.

He runs off into the night. The Hillbilly Wolves follow after him.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Charlie and Berlice are finally lowered from the top of the ferris wheel.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NEAR FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Hoffman and a half dozen POLICE OFFICERS make their way through the throngs of people and break into the center of the scene.

There is blood covering the street like rain water. Ben's still, warm body twitches slightly on the ground.

SCOTT

(to Ben)

Bud. Man. Kirch. Can you hear me?!

Ben definitely can't hear him.

Becky stands frozen, unable to process what just happened. She makes eye contact with Hoffman and begins to bawl.

INT. SQUAD CAR - NIGHT

Becky is driven home in the back of Hoffman's squad car. Her makeup runs down her soft, feminine face.

It's been a long couple of months.

INT. HOSPITAL - ER - NIGHT

Ben lays on a hospital bed on life support. Tubes run in and out of his body. Machines surround him, monitoring his fragile condition.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ben lived for a few days on life support. Best case scenario was that he would have been a vegetable for life.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Charlie and the rest of the TOWN stand in line at yet another funeral. This time for Ben.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They unplugged the machine on November 3 and he took fourteen breaths on his own before joining Chrissy and Mr. Pulaski in the apple pie in the Sky.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

Casper cruises down the desolate American highways in the new light of dawn.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Casper never came back to Colfax for Becky. But everyone had moved on from the murders. It was all pinned on him. His failure to materialize was yet another piece of evidence in support of his guilt.

INT. BERLICE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Charlie and Berlice lay semi-nude under a blanket on a crusty, old futon. They both look horrified.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I lost my virginity on Christmas Eve to Berlice in her basement. She bought me a Casio watch and I bought her a new Smith Corona.

Berlice turns to Charlie.

BERLICE

Umm, so, Merry Christmas.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Becky lays on her bed in the middle of a sunny afternoon. She watches an old movie on a tiny tube television propped up on the end of her night table.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Becky dropped out of school almost immediately following Halloween weekend and I didn't see much of her for a very long time.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

We move down a desolate school corridor in the still minutes before students arrive.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Seasons passed. Fall turned to
winter.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Becky, wearing pajamas she's probably worn for three days straight, flips through a stack of records at the foot of her bed.

She stops on an old, sun stained copy of The Beach Boy's Endless Summer LP. She takes it out of its jacket, blows the dust off and lays it down on her turntable.

She places the needle down on the groove. It CRACKLES for a moment before a lush, dreamy Beach Boys melody brings warmth and life to her empty room.

She smiles.

MONTAGE - EXT. TOWN OF COLFAX - DAY

It is now winter. The streets and yards of Colfax are covered in a thick blanket of powdery white snow.

In fact it's snowing now.

THE BEACH BOYS provide an ironic sense of lost summer to the following images lifted from "A Charlie Brown Christmas":

I. Mr. Jablonski struggles to shovel the heavy, wet snow from his driveway.

II. Scores of KIDS sled on a giant hillside.

III. Dozens of CHILDREN ice skate on a frozen pond.

IV. FAMILIES in town remove the Christmas decorations from their houses.

INT. CAR - DAY

Charlie cautiously drives his father's Buick down the icy suburban streets with Berlice. He isn't used to the driving conditions and is having trouble adapting.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Charlie and Berlice pull into Charlie's driveway and exit the vehicle.

As Charlie gets out, he looks up to Becky's bedroom window across the street -- its amber glow beckons him.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The first Beach Boys song concludes and another takes its place on Becky's turntable.

She is in the liminal state between sleep and wakefulness; collapsed on a pile of bedding which is bundled up in the corner of her room.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In the last month, Becky had rediscovered her home. The forgotten corners; the imperfections in the drywall.

She lights a cigarette and paints her toe nails.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

A load of laundry rumbles in the antique washer and dryer.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The safe smell of the laundry room and--

INT. MONROE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The still kitchen waits in the mid-afternoon for life to open its drawers and cabinets.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

--that weird spot by the pantry where for some reason it was always cold.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - CLOSET - DAY

Becky rips a magazine picture of pop star, Leif Garret, off the wall of her closet. It reveals a giant, gaping hole.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She uncovered a hole in the wall in her closet from the time when Chrissy got so mad she kicked it. It was a secret they never told their parents; they covered it with a picture of Leif Garret from an issue of Tiger Beat.

Becky covers the hole back up with the magazine photo.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Becky sashays across her teenage tomb. The Beach Boys continue to play.

At the window, she opens the blinds with her fingers to peer outside into the winter wonderland. Across the street she spies Charlie and Berlice building a snow man.

It's so cute she almost gags.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Becky counts the tiles in the bathroom while sitting in the lukewarm tub. Her fingers are pruned and one gets the impression she's been in there for hours.

LATER

Becky stands in front of the mirror and looks at herself. She grabs her thick brown hair and pulls it in front of her face, disgusted.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie and Berlice sit on two big bean bags playing his new Atari system. There is much excitement over the back and forth bouncing digital ball.

The doorbell RINGS.

Charlie pauses the game and makes his way to the door. Berlice grabs Charlie's controller and un-pauses it.

CHARLIE

Berlice, pause it.

She giggles.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I'm serious, pause it. That's
cheating.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Charlie opens his front door to reveal Becky Monroe, the last girl on Earth he'd expect, standing on his porch.

Although thin and sporting a short, self-cut hairstyle which is dyed blonde, she is more beautiful than ever. She almost looks like a heroin chic model. Smokey eyes and ennui.

He is shocked by her presence; as if Chrissy Monroe was standing there instead. In fact, Becky looks a lot like Chrissy. She smiles at him -- a smile that communicates an invisible trust and familiarity only old friends have.

CHARLIE
Oh, hi.

BECKY
Hey.

He notices she's barefoot. She ran across the street and the snow, without shoes on.

BECKY (CONT'D)
I was just wondering if I could borrow some books. I've read all the ones at my house like three times over. Even my Dad's boring stock market books.

Charlie struggles to wrap his head around the last twenty seconds.

CHARLIE
Uhh, yeah, of course. Um, I'm kinda busy right now--

BECKY
Yeah, I totally get it.

CHARLIE
No, but, uh, I'll run a few over later?! Cool?

BECKY
Cool.

Becky scurries back home; careful to retrace her exact footprints in the snow.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Charlie sits back down next to Berlice and un-pauses the game.

BERLICE
Who was that?

CHARLIE
No one. I'm not counting that last game. You cheated.

Berlice kisses Charlie on the cheek.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie tears apart his bookshelves trying to find the right books to give Becky. Books that he thinks say a lot about himself.

He puts them in a small cardboard box.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie exits his home and runs through the freezing air, crossing the street to the Monroe's. The box of books fumbles in his scrawny arms.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie rings the doorbell. He is somehow out of breath from the brief trek over.

After a moment, Mr. Monroe answers the door. He is smoking a pipe and sporting an unbuttoned dress shirt which exposes an abundance of old school chest hair.

MR. MONROE
Hello, Charles.

CHARLIE
(nervous)
Hi, Sir. Um, Becky came over and asked for these books. So, here.

Charlie extends the box to Mr. Monroe. He takes them, curiously.

MR. MONROE
Becky left the house today?

CHARLIE

Yes.

MR. MONROE

Okay. Well I'll make sure she gets them. Good night.

Mr. Monroe closes the door. Charlie sprints back home.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S ROOM - DAY

Becky sits at her desk with her legs propped up on a chair, reading Charlie's copy of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

She underlines a portion.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Becky underlined sentences in my paperbacks as though she owned them.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell RINGS.

Charlie answers the door to see Becky standing on the porch with a stack of his books.

BECKY

I have a few left to read. These were great, though. Thanks.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Charlie flips through his copy of Huck Finn, inspecting Becky's annotations. He is puzzled by them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She seemed to understand them in a way it took me years to and in some cases, still don't.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Charlie and Becky go on a walk through the snowy streets. Charlie is overly enthusiastic. We can't make out exactly what Charlie is saying though he definitely has a lot say.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We talked about the texts after she read them.

BECKY

I don't think that's what the author is trying to say at all, Charlie. I think that he's saying there's no such thing as love. That it's a fleeting, meaningless invention of mankind. And that ultimately we are alone. We came into this world alone and we will die alone.

Becky says that last bit with almost zero sentimentality. She speaks as though they're debating a math problem and not a fundamental human quandary.

BECKY (CONT'D)

You hungry?

CHARLIE

That's not the way I read it at all.

BECKY

Is Burger Heaven still open?

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - DAY

Charlie and Berlice sit in the newsroom during an editorial meeting. Berlice stares at Charlie the entire time. He doesn't look her way once.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Charlie exits the school and makes way for his car through the tundra.

BERLICE (O.S.)

Charlie!

Charlie turns around to see Berlice jogging toward him.

CHARLIE

(oh, shit)
Oh hey, Berlice.

She stops beside him and they continue to walk.

BERLICE

Where have you been lately? I've been brushing up on my Pong skills. I'll bet I can beat you now.

She playfully kicks him on the butt.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I haven't really played in a while. Been *really* busy.

BERLICE

Well my friends and I were going to go see "Broadway Danny Rose" tomorrow night at The Americana. Do you wanna come?

They reach Charlie's car and stand at it for a moment.

CHARLIE

Sheesh, I'd love to go but I might have this thing.

BERLICE

Oh. Ok. I thought you loved Woody Allen, though.

CHARLIE

I mean I do. I'm just kinda, like, getting sick of him.

Berlice looks devastated.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Anyway -- we'll catch a flick soon. Promise.

Charlie ducks into his car, starts the engine and drives off. Berlice watches him disappear out of the parking lot.

Once he is gone Berlice marches toward her own car, fumbles with the keys and drops them in a puddle of melted snow.

She retrieves the wet keys and gets inside the cold car. She puts her head in her hands and begins to bawl.

Teenage heartbreak at its purest.

INT. CAR - DAY

Charlie and Becky cruise down the snowy streets of Colfax listening to the radio and singing along to, you guessed it, The Beach Boys.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Becky and I became friends again during that Midwestern winter. We cruised around in my car beneath newspaper skies and smoke stained snow, listening to the Beach Boys.

MONTAGE

Charlie and Becky explore the sugar-coated suburb. It's an almost post-apocalyptic wasteland and they are the only humans crazy enough to brave the cold.

NARRATOR

It was like we were nine again; except we could drive and we didn't have curfews and Chrissy was dead.

I. They make snow angels in a hillside.

II. They do donuts with Charlie's car in an empty, icy parking lot.

III. They pour soda pop into cups of snow and make homemade Slurpees.

IV. They shop for records in a hole-in-the-wall record store.

V. They go see "Broadway Danny Rose."

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Becky and Charlie sit and scarf down cheeseburgers in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant. They both discuss "Broadway Danny Rose."

CHARLIE

Yeah, I mean it wasn't "Annie Hall" or "Manhattan" but the Gordon Willis cinematography was great and it had some really funny moments.

BECKY

I thought it was stupid. I mean a black and white comedy in 1984 about some talent manager's misadventures. So pretentious.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

Charlie watches as Becky takes a big bite of her cheeseburger. The bite is more than she can handle and she takes a moment to compose herself.

BECKY
Sorry. So hungry.

It is a split second of imperfection but Charlie seems to be more attracted to her than ever.

CHARLIE
When we were nine, I had the biggest crush on you. You kissed me at your parents' party and then you kissed Mark Monaghan the next weekend and I was devastated.

BECKY
(chewing)
What?! Mark Monaghan?! That's fucking disgusting. I don't remember that at all.

CHARLIE
Yeah. It was pretty brutal.

Becky frowns an exaggerated frown. Somehow though, it is sincere and not mocking.

BECKY
I'm sorry, Chuck. If it's any condolence, I at least remember kissing you; not Mark.

CHARLIE
Please.

Becky gets a bright idea. She rummages through Charlie's glove compartment.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

BECKY
I'm looking for gum.

Becky finds an old, wrapped up Ring-Pop underneath the car's owner's manual.

CHARLIE
That's really old.

Becky unwraps it and starts sucking on it.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing? You're not even done with your french fries.

Becky plops the Ring-Pop out of her mouth momentarily.

BECKY

I'm gonna kiss you.

She puts the Ring-Pop back in. Charlie didn't see that one coming.

CHARLIE

You are?!

BECKY

(still sucking)

Yes.

CHARLIE

Why?!

BECKY

(still sucking)

To make up for Mark Monaghan.

CHARLIE

Are you sure?

BECKY

Shut up.

Becky drops the Ring-Pop to the floor and grabs the back of Charlie's head, pulling his face toward hers.

Their lips meet. The kiss is somewhere between a peck and a french kiss. There's tongue but barely. Just enough to be ambiguous.

It is over almost as soon as it begins but it staggers Charlie.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Her mouth tasted like cherry ring-pops and cigarettes.

Once the kiss is over Charlie almost immediately picks up the Ring-Pop from the car's carpeting.

CHARLIE

My dad would kill me if I ruined the interior.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Charlie drives Becky home. They are both silent but comfortable.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie pulls into Becky's driveway and puts the car in park.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Becky and Charlie sit still for a moment in her driveway. Neither want the night to be over.

There is a long silence.

They both LAUGH.

BECKY

I had a fun night with you.

CHARLIE

Me too.

BECKY

Thanks.

CHARLIE

Anytime.

Becky grabs Charlie's hand for just a second.

BECKY

See you tomorrow?

CHARLIE

See you tomorrow.

She lets go of his hand and exits the car. Charlie watches her as she lights a cigarette and begins smoking it on the porch.

She waves to him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I wouldn't see Becky Monroe the next day. Or ever again.

Charlie backs the car out of Becky's driveway and pulls it into his own driveway across the street.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie exits the car and enters his home.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie lays in bed with a smirk glued to his face. He is unable to sleep. He stares at the ceiling fan and thinks about Becky.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But that night I planned our lives
together in my head.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

Becky stands on her porch in the freezing cold sucking down a cigarette.

Across the street and a couple houses down, Mr. Jablonski shovels snow from his driveway. He sees her on the porch and waves her over.

Becky looks around, confused. She points at herself as if to say "me?"

Mr. Jablonski shakes his head, "yes."

Becky rolls her eyes and reluctantly makes her way toward Mr. Jablonski, "what a creep-o."

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We'd both go to the same college
and have dorm rooms on the same
floor.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY (SUPER 8MM HOME MOVIE)

Becky and Charlie carry cardboard boxes full of their belongings through a sunny, crowded college campus.

INT. DORMATORY - DAY (SUPER 8MM HOME MOVIE)

Becky helps Charlie hang a poster on his cramped dorm room wall. She puts books upon his shelf. They wave to the camera. She shows the camera the book she's holding, Huck Finn.

EXT. SEASIDE BLUFF - DAY (SUPER 8MM HOME MOVIE)

Charlie and Becky, both in their mid-twenties, stand in wedding garments before a PRIEST at an outdoor alter.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Then once we graduated we'd get married on a bluff overlooking the sea in California. Some place nice. Some place where we could get away from the idiot Midwest cold.

A small CONGREGATION of family and friends watch as Becky and Charlie kiss one another and finalize their wedding vows.

EXT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Becky approaches Mr. Jablonski in front of his house. He is huffing and puffing from shoveling the snow.

BECKY

Hi. Do you need help, Sir?

MR. JABLONSKI

Help? No. I have a question. You like records?

BECKY

Uhh, yeah.

MR. JABLONSKI

K, good. I have my daughter's old ones in the attic.

BECKY

Uh-huh.

MR. JABLONSKI

Sorry. I can be thick sometimes. I'm asking, do you want them? They're collecting dust and I'm gonna throw them out otherwise. I saw you over there and thought I'd ask.

BECKY

(not sure)

Sure.

MR. JABLONSKI

You shouldn't smoke by the way. Killed my brother.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (SUPER 8MM HOME MOVIE)

Charlie and Becky, both as adults, play with two small CHILDREN in the living room of a large, warm house.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

We'd have two kids -- a boy and a girl -- and we'd name them after characters in our favorite books. We'd raise them in a nice house where food was always cooking and music was always playing. I'd become a famous writer and Becky, a painter. We'd serve as each other's muses.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (SUPER 8MM HOME MOVIE)

Becky stirs spaghetti sauce and playfully flicks some on whoever's holding the camera, presumably Charlie.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie's eyes begin to close; he's drifting off to sleep.

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Mr. Jablonski and Becky stomp snow off their shoes as they enter Mr. Jablonski's dark, musky home. She's not sure why she agreed to come in. The place gives her the creeps.

She looks around the house, suspiciously.

BECKY

Where's Mrs. Jablonski?

MR. JABLONSKI

Away on business. The records are just upstairs.

He leads her up the low lit stairway.

Each step CREAKS as they ascend past family photos and memories hung on the wall.

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Mr. Jablonski waits for Becky at the second floor landing. It's even darker than the first floor.

MR. JABLONSKI

I'm gonna go grab a flashlight,
it's kinda dark up there. I'll meet
you. Just follow those stairs up.

Mr. Jablonski points to a spiral staircase in the corner of
the hallway.

BECKY

You know what, I'll come back
tomorrow.

MR. JABLONSKI

Don't be crazy, their right up
there.

He points to the staircase once more. She decides to go
onward. Mr. Jablonski disappears into the shadows and Becky
tip-toes down the hallway toward the spiral stairs.

She reaches them and slowly climbs. Each tin step CLINKS and
CLANKS as she rises.

At the top she sees a shut door, with light escaping at the
crack beneath.

BECKY

(yelling)

Mr. Jablonski I don't think you
need a flashlight -- the light is
on here.

MR. JABLONSKI

(right behind her)

Oh, good.

Becky SCREAMS. Mr. Jablonski somehow is directly behind her.
She didn't notice him approach.

MR. JABLONSKI (CONT'D)

Go on in.

She takes the three more steps up to the top.

CLICK.

CLACK.

CLICK.

She hesitates as she put her hand on the doorknob.

MR. JABLONSKI (CONT'D)

Go on. The boxes are right there.

She twists the door handle and opens into--

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT

--a completely empty attic.

No boxes. No anything. Insulation and two-by-fours.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie's eyes close completely. He is fast asleep.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And then we'd grow old and die
together.

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT

The circumstances dawn on Becky instantaneously. Her face is flush.

Just then, Mr. Jablonski pulls a leather belt over her neck and tightens.

We only see a split second of her struggle but we get the picture.

EXT. BEACH - DAY (SUPER 8MM HOME MOVIE)

Becky and Charlie, as senior citizens, sit next to one another on the beach and watch the sun set over a sorbet sky.

The film burns out.

EXT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The garage door opens and Mr. Jablonski's wood-paneled station wagon pulls out into the gothic black air.

EXT. RESERVOIR - NIGHT

Mr. Jablonski opens the back door of his station wagon and pulls out a heavy black garbage bag. He has a separate duffle bag slung across his shoulder.

He drags the garbage bag through the snowy field, tracing a line from his car to the reservoir ahead. The same reservoir where Olivia Cooper drowned over the Fourth of July.

As Mr. Jablonski approaches the body of water he puts the garbage bag down and opens his duffle bag -- removing two 25lbs dumbbell's and a roll of duct tape.

He tapes the dumbbells to either end of the garbage bag and pushes it into the murky water.

The garbage bag sinks immediately between two chunks of ice.

Mr. Jablonski watches as it disappears. He looks up to the horizon and takes in the sight of the prairie decay.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - DAY

Charlie carries over a new box of books. He knocks on the door. No one answers.

After some time, he leaves the box on the porch and walks back home -- periodically looking back at Chrissy's bedroom window, confused.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - NEWSPAPER ROOM - DAY

Charlie battles a case of writer's block at his desk in the newsroom. He hears GIGGLING and turns around to see-

-Berlice and GLEN (17), coauthoring an article at a desk behind him. There is clearly some flirtation going on between them.

He turns back around to the blank piece of paper sitting atop his typewriter.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - PAYPHONE - DAY

Charlie dials on the school's payphone. He listens as it rings a few times and then goes to voicemail.

CHARLIE

(into phone)

Hi Mr. and Mrs. Monroe. This is Charlie Chambers. I was wondering if you could have Becky call me when she can. I'll be home after school today.

EXT. RESERVOIR - DAY

A JOGGER and her BLACK LAB run through the empty park.

As the path weaves near the lake, the jogger spots something in the water.

She jogs in place and squints her eyes to make out what exactly it is that she sees.

CLOSE ON

Blonde locks of tangled hair float at the surface of the lake covered in seaweed and ice.

BACK TO SCENE

The jogger lets out a blood curdling SCREAM.

INT. CAR - DAY

Charlie drives down his block, in the distance he can see dozens of police cars surrounding the Monroe's house.

He stops the car as he approaches the barricade.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - DAY

In a spell, Charlie exits the car and runs toward the house.

Through the crowd of POLICEMEN, he spots Hoffman consoling a delirious Mrs. Monroe sitting on the snowy lawn, crying. Mr. Monroe sits with his head in his hands on the porch.

Charlie taps a SPECTATOR on the shoulder.

CHARLIE

Do you know what happened?

SPECTATOR

The girl who lived here died.

CHARLIE

What?!

SPECTATOR

Did you know her?

Hoffman makes eye contact with Charlie and nods to him. A comforting nod that communicates the answer to any question Charlie might have. He's seen all he needs to see.

He begins to walk back to his house, staggered.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's amazing where your mind will wander in moments of profound grief. I can remember walking home and thinking about hot dogs and the ending of Rocky and the way my favorite pair of Levi's no longer fit quite right. I remembered everything but her.

As Charlie walks back to his house, he spots his Father standing stoically with his arms crossed in the front yard. The sight of him is the straw that break's the camel's back. Charlie begins to cry as he trudges into his Father's open arms, desperate for comfort.

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - ATTIC - DAY

Mr. Jablonski washes his attic with a bucket of soap and water. There is a paranoid, obsessive quality to his rigorous scrubbing.

MONTAGE - NEWS REPORTS - VARIOUS - NIGHT

You know the drill.

News-reports of the murder are seen on television sets in various homes.

INT. POLICE STATION - HOFFMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Again, Charlie sits before Hoffman's desk. He is a much different person than the naive boy we first met.

He tells Hoffman of his last moments with Becky.

CHARLIE

And then, we, uh, kissed. And she said we'd see each other tomorrow.

There is a KNOCK at the door and Hoffman's SECRETARY enters the room half-way.

SECRETARY

Can I get you guys anything from the Rec room?

HOFFMAN

I'm fine. Chambers?

CHARLIE
Coffee. Black. Please.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Charlie, once again, waits with his buddies and the rest of the TOWN in line at Becky's wake.

He lays a flower atop the closed casket before he kneels and says a silent prayer.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The funeral parlor couldn't make
her look like herself and so again
it was a closed casket.

FLASHBACK - INT. MORGUE - DAY

Becky's body lays on a steel bed under a harsh white light. Her face is bloated and her skin is green but she retains an odd beauty and a certain peacefulness.

INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - CHARLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie sits on the edge of his bed and bawls his eyes out. It's the kind of cry you only have once or twice in your life past the age of twelve.

LATER

With his suit and tie still on, Charlie crawls beneath his comforter and welcomes some much needed shut eye.

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Mr. Jablonski awakes the next day to another overcast winter morning. Mrs. Jablonski lies next to him, still sleeping.

He gets out of bed and yawns.

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Mr. Jablonski brushes his teeth and gargles mouth wash.

INT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mr. Jablonski, wearing a blue robe, pours himself a bowl of Frosted Flakes and a cup of coffee.

He takes a seat at the kitchen table, eats his breakfast and skims the morning newspaper.

It is a particularly still morning. The clock on the wall--

TICK.

TOCK.

TICK.

BOOM!

Glass SHATTERS.

Doors are KICKED open.

Suddenly there are ten POLICE OFFICERS surrounding Mr. Jablonski in mid-bite. Their guns are drawn and they're ready to fire.

Hoffman emerges in the middle of all this and presents his badge to Mr. Jablonski.

Mr. Jablonski finishes chewing and smiles.

EXT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Charlie watches from his yard as Mr. Jablonski is escorted from his house and into the back of a police car.

Mr. Jablonski makes long eye-contact with Charlie. Time stops temporarily.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Mr. Jablonski, my neighbor growing up -- and the man who was known throughout town for his ability to grow the tallest sunflowers -- also happened to be a murderer.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Mr. Jablonski and his ATTORNEYS stand at the front of a packed courtroom as the JURY reads their sentencing.

JUROR

George Melvin Jablonski, the court finds you guilty on all three counts of murder.

There are wild CHEERS from the CONGREGATION.

The JUDGE bangs his gavel.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

FLASHBACK - INT. BANK - DAY

Mr. Jablonski waltzes into your average, everyday bank and approaches a female TELLER (22).

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He was caught by Miranda
Frankenstein, an employee at the
City Center Bank.

MR. JABLONSKI

(to Teller)

I'd like to see my safe deposit
box.

FLASHBACK - INT. BANK - SAFE DEPOSIT ROOM - DAY

Mr. Jablonski is showed to his safe deposit box by the
TELLER.

MR. JABLONSKI

I'd like some privacy.

TELLER

Sir, it's actually mandatory-

MR. JABLONSKI

I said I would like some privacy.
Please.

The Teller politely smiles and exits the room.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She had witnessed him putting a
bloody piece of fabric into his
safe deposit box and called the
police.

Once the coast is clear, Mr. Jablonski, pulls a blood stained
piece of fabric out of his back pocket, opens his safe
deposit box and drops it inside.

CLOSE ON

The Teller peers through a crack in the door leading to the safe deposit room. Her eyes are wide in terror.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Along with the bloody fabric the police found one of Chrissy's teeth and a handwritten, sealed confession which talked of his sinister plan--

INSERT - CONTENTS OF SAFE DEPOSIT BOX

A sealed envelope rests beside Chrissy's molar.

FLASHBACK - EXT. MR. JABLONSKI'S HOUSE - DAY

It is summer again. Mr. Jablonski waters his famous sunflowers and studies Chrissy and Becky sunbathing in their front lawn, minding their own business and ignorant to the fate which awaits them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 --to kill the two beautiful bundles of life that he saw alive in that home every day. Two girls whose sheer youthful audacity he could not help but correct.

FLASH FORWARD - INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. MATSAS (55), a stocky, Greek, mustached psychologist, looks into the lens of the camera and speaks.

It is a super campy, pop-psy explanation of psychopathology.

DR. MATSAS
 In the case of George Jablonski, the desire to kill came seemingly out of nowhere. In fact this isn't uncommon among serial killers.

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

We follow behind Mr. Jablonski as he's walked through a prison by three SECURITY GUARDS. He wears a freshly pressed orange jumpsuit and brandishes an array of handcuffs.

DR. MATSAS (V.O.)
 It can come in one's old age for instance;
 (MORE)

DR. MATSAS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
after having raised a family and
been a moral, upright, law abiding
individual for five score. A latent
impulse can just drop in your lap
and you feel as though you
must...kill.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
A year and a half after Jablonski's
arrest, Detective Hoffman retired.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

A hundred INDIVIDUALS gather in a tacky banquet hall in honor
of Detective Hoffman's retiring.

His FRIEND speaks at a podium at the front of the room.

HOFFMAN'S FRIEND
What can you say about, Gil that
the previous speakers haven't said
already? He's a man of courage. Of
kindness. He's the kind of man they
just don't make anymore. A real
American.

INSERT - PHOTO OF HOFFMAN

Hoffman as a young man sits on the wing of a Bomber Jet.

BACK TO SCENE

Hoffman looks around the room from his table and wonders how
it is that he got so old.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Hoffman wanders the burnt forest where Mr. Pulaski and
Chrissy were killed. What little remains from the memorial is
covered in snow, dirt and ash.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The arsonists were finally
apprehended. It turned out to be
Tyler and Wes, the delinquents who
tried to pin the murders on Casper.
They were caught dosing a school
bus with lighter fluid late one
night.

EXT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Wes and Tyler, wearing their trenchcoat uniforms, spray a school bus with lighter fluid from a squirt gun.

Police SIRENS sound. They try to run but they're surrounded by squad cars.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

They had no motive other than it being fun.

LATER

Wes and Tyler are shoved into the back of the squad cars. They are smiling.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Casper, a bit older than when we last saw him, cruises down yet another long, hard stretch of American pavement on his Triumph.

He has a handlebar mustache and his hair hangs down to his shoulders.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Casper Tatum evaded the law for six years. His body was brought back home in 1989 after he was found dead from an overdose.

EXT. RAMADA INN - DAY

The most depressing motel to ever be erected sits on a small stretch of highway in some shit hole Texas town.

INT. RAMADA INN - NIGHT

Casper, completely naked, fills a large, deflated green balloon with enough cocaine to kill an elephant.

NARRATOR

Apparently, he had filled a balloon with cocaine, wrapped--

INT. RAMADA INN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Casper sits down in the bathtub, turns on the faucet and pulls the balloon over his head.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 --it around his head in the
 bathroom of a Ramada Inn in Dallas,
 Texas, and snorted until he saw
 God.

We push in on him rapidly as he sniffs and sniffs and sniffs.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT (2006)

Charlie, as a middle-aged man, sits at a banquet table in the gym of his old high school. He is surrounded by former CLASSMATES who appear to have grown into their parents. Unlike them, Charlie has retained a certain amount of vitality and youth.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 The Monroe sisters didn't show up
 to the twenty year high school
 reunion.

INSERT - SIGN

A sign in the foyer of the high school directs ALUMNI to the gymnasium. It says "Colfax High -- Class of '86 -- 20 Years...ALREADY?!"

BACK TO SCENE

The camera pushes in on a large display of photographs hanging on a wall in the gym.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Their photos hung next to others
 who had passed away in the two
 decades since high school let out.

The camera stops on a close-up of a photograph of the Monroe sisters.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Mr. and Mrs. Monroe left town
 shortly after Becky's death and a
 new family moved in.

EXT. MONROE HOUSE - NIGHT

A moving truck pulls up to the Monroe's house followed by a station wagon full of a new FAMILY. They all excitedly exit the vehicle and jump up and down into their new home.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
I fell in love with the girl who
took Becky's old bedroom.

INT. MONROE HOUSE - BECKY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie and PRUDENCE (17) lay semi-nude underneath the covers of her bed. Charlie is much more at ease with the situation since the last time we saw him in these circumstances.

He inspects the details of the room as she falls asleep on his chest. It doesn't resemble Becky's version of the space at all. All signs of her have been erased.

PRUDENCE
What was the girl like who used to
live here?

CHARLIE
I didn't really know her.

PRUDENCE
Was she pretty?

CHARLIE
Not as pretty as you.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In fact, I wound up marrying her.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT (2006)

Charlie and Prudence, as adults, sit at a banquet table and watch as a SPEAKER gives an overly sentimental speech about "getting older."

Charlie excuses himself.

CHARLIE
(whispered; to Prudence)
I'm gonna use the bathroom. I can't
take another minute of this shit.

Charlie stands from the table, throws his napkin on his chair and heads for the exit.

He spots Berlice, who hasn't changed much since she was sixteen. In fact she's wearing the same exact pair of eye glasses.

They smile and nod to one another.

INT. COLFAX HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT (2006)

Charlie meanders through the empty hallways of his high school. His polished wingtips reverberate through the corridor.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I never forgot the events of that year though. No one did.

Charlie stops before a locker. His locker. One that used to belong to him anyway.

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

But life goes on. We come of age in spite of and because of adversity and every night when the street lights go on in Colfax, ghosts roam the avenues looking for salvation

Charlie tries to unlock the locker with his old combo: 43 - 9 - 14. It doesn't open.

He smiles to himself and struts away.

PAINT IT BLACK: