

FROM NEW YORK  
TO FLORIDA

by

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PARADIGM / MADHOUSE

FADE IN:

**INT. CLASSROOM - DAY**

A FEMALE TEACHER stands in front of the class of anxious prep school FRESHMEN. The boys in their plaid ties, the girls in their black polyester skirts.

Each student has a SHEET OF PAPER on their desk. A GIRL in the front row grips her pencil so tightly it nearly snaps.

TEACHER

Are there any questions?

Blank stares.

TEACHER

Begin.

The students flip over their pages. Each writes with the fury of God pouring through their hands.

Except for ONE BOY in the last row, back-right corner, who hasn't even flipped over his page.

This is...

TEACHER

Max. Do you have a problem?

MAX ANDERS (15) takes his sweet time before looking at the essay. The Teacher rolls her eyes and pulls out a magazine.

CLOSE ON - ESSAY QUESTION: "After reading LORD OF THE FLIES, please explain in your own words the cause of Piggy's death."

Max looks around, scanning the crowd.

The Girl in the front row writes...

FRONT ROW GIRL (V.O.)

"We are, in our essence, animals.  
William Golding is stating that..."

An ATHLETIC BOY in the third row, center...

THIRD ROW BOY (V.O.)

"... Piggy was not given the proper  
nurturing to survive. His parents  
should have encouraged him to..."

The Teacher reads from her magazine...

TEACHER (V.O.)

"... Try Botox Cosmetics! It's a safe, and affordable, prescription medicine that helps treat moderate to severe frown lines..."

Max picks up his pencil and WRITES.

Shortly after starting, he heads for the door.

TEACHER

Where are you going?

MAX

Bathroom.

TEACHER

You have to ask.

MAX

Can I go to the bathroom?

Students snicker.

TEACHER

Take the pass. And hurry back.

Max grabs a LARGE RULER from the wall and exits.

CLOSE ON - MAX'S ESSAY ANSWER - "Piggy was a fat fuck."

**EXT. SECOND FLOOR WALKWAY - DAY**

Max heads down the walkway. A BANNER reads: "BUFFALO HIGH SCHOOL." It's a gloomy winter day in upstate New York.

Max glances over the balcony to the below parking lot as a car parks in a space marked "PRINCIPAL."

The PRINCIPAL exits his car, noticing a smudge on the windshield and cleans it. Then looks up at Max.

PRINCIPAL

Mr. Anders. Do you have a bathroom pass?

Max lifts the ruler into view.

PRINCIPAL

Well, tuck in your shirt. Be presentable.

The Principal turns to a passing teacher.

PRINCIPAL

Ms. Tyler. May I have a word?

The Principal walks out of Max's view.

**EXT. FIRST FLOOR WALKWAY - DAY**

The Principal speaks with the teacher when...

CRASH! A TRASH CAN CRACKS through the Principal's windshield.

**EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY**

Max is seated in the back of a police car as he scans the crowd of students, most of whom point and stare. He smiles at the Girl from the front row. She shakes her head and re-enters the classroom.

For a moment, his smile fades. But just for a moment.

The Policeman enters the driver's seat while the Principal sits in the back next to Max.

Max grins at the students as the car drives off.

**INT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Max waits on a bench outside of an office.

THROUGH THE OFFICE WINDOW -

Max's mother, LAURA ANDERS (38), in nurse's scrubs, sits next to the Principal, nodding along to his yelling. A POLICEMAN mediates the conversation.

Laura pulls out her wallet and begins to sign a check. She looks over at...

Max, who turns away. Somewhat pleased, somewhat nervous.

**INT. LAURA'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Laura drives. Max looks out the passenger window.

LAURA SIDE

What the hell were you thinking?

Max shrugs.

LAURA

It's like you wanted to be expelled. You're lucky I talked him into only a suspension.

MAX

Hoffman's a dick.

LAURA

Max!

MAX

Laura!

LAURA

You're 15 and you have a goddamn court date! Why can't you just control yourself? What do you think you're going to do for the next week? This won't be a vacation...  
(considers)  
Why did you call your dad first?

Max ignores her.

LAURA

You know you can't expect him to --

MAX

I'm hungry.

CUT TO:

**INT. LAURA'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Max works on a McFlurry. Laura picks at his french fries.

**INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Max lays on the pull-out couch, watching TV. Based by the layout, it's clear this is a one-bedroom apartment and the living room is Max's space.

Laura enters in a new pair of scrubs, blocking the screen.

LAURA

I have to go back in to cover Susan's rotation. There's a frozen pizza in the oven. Just turn it to 350, okay? For twenty minutes.

Max gives her a thumbs up.

LAURA

I may have to stay at the hospital in the morning. If I'm not here when you wake up, I left you a list of chores.

Max nods to get her to shut up. Laura clicks off the television and tosses him a NOTEPAD.

LAURA

And no TV until you write your apology letter.

He has no idea what she's talking about.

LAURA

(frustrated)

You have to explain yourself and read it to the judge. It's important... This isn't a science fair project. I can't write this for you.

She kisses him on the forehead.

LAURA

I'm really trying here, Max... What else can I do?

Their eyes connect. He doesn't seem to know either. Or he doesn't give a shit. She exits. He turns back on the TV.

**INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY**

The next morning. Max, wearing the same clothes from the day before, picks up the LIST OF CHORES. He eyes the blank notepad.

**INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - INDOOR POOL - DAY**

Max rests on a float like a young Ferris Bueller. He clicks his phone and a nearby STEREO switches to the next track. An ELDERLY WOMAN walks by. She shakes her head at him.

A SMALL FLOATIE with a BEER makes its way over to him.

This is the life.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

Max eyes the microwave. A Hot-Pocket has his name on it.

**INT. MAX'S ROOM - DAY**

Max plays a video game. He dies. CRACKS open another beer.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Max watches some action movie. Blood and guts. It's awesome.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Laura enters from a long day's work. She finds Max asleep on the couch. The notepad rests on his chest.

She picks up the notepad and pulls a blanket over him. She smiles, until she opens the notepad: he hasn't written a page. But in the corner he's drawn a FLIPBOOK of a helicopter dropping a bomb on a stick-figure.

She walks away and CRUNCH! She steps on an empty beer can. There's a half-dozen spread across the floor.

Laura pulls out her PHONE.

LAURA

(to PHONE)

Hi, Carol. Yeah, it's been a while... Do you have a second?

Max rolls over on the couch, likely dreaming about another beautiful and relaxing day.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Max opens his eyes. He sees his mother speaking to a MAN on the side of the room, but Max only sees the man's back.

MAN

Well, what about Robert? I know my son's a shithead but shouldn't he have some weekends where he --

LAURA

You're joking, right? He's out there still "finding himself."

MAN

Doesn't mean he can't watch his boy for a few days.

LAURA

You tell him that then! But I'm working doubles just to keep up with everything...

MAN

If you need some money we can talk... Carol and I only get to do this trip twice a year.

Suddenly, Max's view is filled with the smile of an elderly WOMAN.

This is CAROL ANDERS (68), his GRANDMOTHER.

CAROL

Someone's awake!

Max screams.

CAROL

Well, look who woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning! Or, should I say, the couch?

Max sits up, startled. The Man talking to his mother turns.

This is THOMAS ANDERS (68), his GRANDFATHER.

THOMAS

(to Max)

Uh. Hi.

(back to Laura)

Now let's talk about this. There has to be someone else who --

CAROL

(to Laura)

Of course we'll take him. We'd love to. We never get to spend time with him anymore.

Thomas appears as hesitant as Max is confused. Laura places a small SUITCASE next to the front door.

MAX

What's going on?

LAURA

You remember Thomas -- I mean, Grandpa and Grams. You used to love their house on the water. Remember?

CAROL

Are there any books you want to bring? Any stuffed animals?

THOMAS

He's not a child anymore, Carol. Look at him, he's almost a man.  
(to Max, concerned)  
You don't have any, right?

Max jumps up from the couch.

MAX

(what the fuck)  
Laura?!

THOMAS

Laura? She's your mother.

CAROL

That's just disrespectful, Max.

LAURA

(moving on)  
You're going on a road trip with your grandparents.

THOMAS

You didn't tell him?

LAURA

When was I supposed to? I called you last night.

THOMAS

Christ. Now we're the bad guys.

CAROL

That's enough, Thomas.  
(to Laura)  
I think you're doing fine... It's just... Nevermind.

LAURA

What is it, Carol?

CAROL

It's just... It's not my place.

LAURA

Go on. Please. Because clearly there's something you want to say.

THOMAS

She's trying to say you *and Robert* never looked ahead. You just went one day at a time.

(looks at Max)

He's a shining example of that.

CAROL

That isn't what --

MAX

I'm not going anywhere.

The adults exchange glances. Thomas turns on CNN. He's not dealing with this. Laura takes a seat on the couch.

LAURA

I can't have you just sitting at home for two weeks... Grams and Grandpa are driving to Florida to their house in Cocoa Beach. You're going to ride with them and then they'll fly you back in time for your...

CAROL

... Birthday? Well, that's not for a few more months. What is it? Do you have a recital or something?

Laura looks at Max, embarrassed. He holds his ground.

LAURA

... Court date.

THOMAS

(cracks a smile)

What the hell did you do?

Everyone turns to Max. He won't answer.

LAURA

(exhales)

He threw a trash can through the Principal's windshield and now he has a court date late next week.

Carol shakes her head.

THOMAS

Sticking it to the man, huh?

Max ignores him and turns to Laura.

MAX  
I'm not going.

LAURA  
This isn't a negotiation.

CAROL  
A few days out of town will do you  
some good, and I've missed you. We  
both have. Right, Thomas?

Thomas stares at the TV. An infomercial plays showing women stretching.

THOMAS  
Yep.

Carol sits next to Max. Then,

CAROL  
We'll have fun, darling. I promise.

Off Max's anger, we...

CUT TO:

**EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY**

Max and Thomas load his suitcase into the trunk. Behind them, Carol and Laura head down the stairs, leaving some space between the two groups.

THOMAS  
Can we talk for a second? Like men.

Max stares at him. Thomas turns his back from Carol and Laura's view.

THOMAS  
I know we're related... I get that.  
But if you've turned out any way  
like my fuck-up son, then you're  
going to do everything you can to  
ruin this trip...

Thomas hawks a loogie on the pavement.

THOMAS  
So you're gonna keep your mouth  
shut, do as your told, or I'll  
leave you at a rest stop with a  
pair of junkies that will make you  
their --

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
 (Carol and Laura walk over)  
 Best time ever! You ready, pal?!

Laura hugs her son goodbye. Max is taken aback, watching Thomas' staredown.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas drives with Carol in the passenger seat. TALK RADIO plays over the speakers. Max sits in the back seat. For him, this is a life-or-death scenario.

CAROL  
 Turn it down, Thomas. It's too loud.

THOMAS  
 It's fine where it is.

CAROL  
 I can't hear myself think. There's some button that'll make it play only on your side.

She fidgets with the radio dials. The volume increases. Carol covers her ears.

THOMAS  
 You shouldn't have played with it. It was fine.

CAROL  
 I can't hear myself think!

THOMAS  
 Ah, what do you have to think about?

This is going to be a long trip...

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Snow lightly falls as the Lincoln passes a ROAD SIGN: "Thanks for visiting Buffalo, NY!"

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Carol mouths something to Max but he's wearing his headphones. He removes them.

CAROL  
Did you hear anything I said?

Max stares at her.

CAROL  
I said, are you hungry?

MAX  
No.

CAROL  
You're skin and bones. Robbie was  
skinny at your age, too.

Thomas interjects.

THOMAS  
I could eat.

Max looks at the clock.

MAX  
It's been less than an hour...

CAROL  
What do you want?

THOMAS  
I don't care.

CAROL  
Max, you wanna help me look for  
food signs?

THOMAS  
There's a Taco Bell.

CAROL  
That gives you indigestion.

THOMAS  
Well, I gotta eat something, don't  
I?

**LATER**

Thomas BURPS and tosses a taco wrapper out the window. Carol waves her hand in front of her face.

CAROL  
You're disgusting.

THOMAS

Like you don't do it, too.

Thomas looks at Max through the rear-view mirror.

THOMAS

You'll hear her tonight. She does  
it in her sleep.

CAROL

Thomas! Don't tell him such a lie.

Thomas reaches under his seat, searching. The Lincoln swerves slightly.

CAROL

Watch the road.

He pulls up a large PEPTOBISMOL bottle. He takes a swig.

THOMAS

You watch whatever you wanna watch.  
I'm doing just fine.

CAROL

You could have gotten us killed.

Thomas takes another swig.

THOMAS

(to Max)

You're out of school. You should be  
learning something. They don't tell  
you anything useful these days,  
anyway. Nothing that'll help you  
through life. Math and science.  
Complete waste of your brain space.

CAROL

What are you talking about?

THOMAS

Let this be your first lesson.

Thomas lifts the bottle of Peptobismal.

THOMAS

Disengages any pains from tacos or  
whatever food you eat. It could  
probably fix anything. If I broke  
my arm, I'd pour it on the wound...

Max puts on his headphones, blocking out the sound of their argument with something full of angst and false emotions.

Max looks out the window as...

A STATION WAGON drives beside them. The FATHER and MOTHER in the front seat seem to be arguing while a TEENAGE GIRL (17) sits in the back with her sleeping younger BROTHER.

Max notices the notepad sticking out of his BACKPACK.

**EXT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

CLOSE ON - SIGN - "HELP! I'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED!"

Max waves the sign, trying to get the attention of the girl. She notices and laughs. Max mouths a sincere "Help me." He should win an Oscar for this performance.

She writes and holds up her own PAPER SIGN: "BULLSHIT."

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Max grins, impressed by her. She smiles and holds up a new sign: "GOOD LUCK."

The Station Wagon passes them. Max watches the girl in the Station Wagon until she's out of sight. Still holding up his sign, he turns to see...

A POLICE CAR. The Officer notices Max's note, flips on his SIREN, and pulls behind the Lincoln.

THOMAS

What the hell? I'm not speeding.

Max quickly rips up his sign and begins to stuff the pieces into his mouth, trying to destroy the evidence.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

Thomas is pushed against the police car in handcuffs. Carol stands nearby with her hands behind her head.

Thomas tries to fight the policeman's grip.

THOMAS

He's our grandson, goddammit. We're going to Florida.

Max watches from the Lincoln.

CAROL

I have proof! Look at this.

Carol reaches into her PURSE. The Officer DRAWS HIS GUN.

OFFICER

Remove your hand from the bag!

Carol removes a LONG PHOTOBOOK from her wallet. The Police Officer holsters his weapon and looks at the pictures. Every one is Max - from birth to recent.

The Police Officer walks over to Max's window and knocks on the glass. Max's smile fades.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas drives, steaming with anger. Carol sits shotgun. Max is in the back. A long silence between them. Until...

CAROL

You're lucky they didn't take you to jail.

THOMAS

Me? It was that little shit's fault!

CAROL

Not you. You just watch the road.

Carol turns in her seat.

CAROL

(to Max)

What were you thinking?

THOMAS

He was thinking he could use a good lashing.

CAROL

What is wrong with you today?

THOMAS

If he tries anything like that again, I'll use my belt.

CAROL

You've never used your belt for anything but your pants.

THOMAS

He doesn't know that!

Max grins. Thomas looks at him in the rear-view.

THOMAS  
Did you hear me, boy?

CAROL  
Calm down.

THOMAS  
Calm down? He thinks his shit don't  
stink.

CAROL  
Max. Are you sorry?

Max stares at her. Carol turns away and stares at the road.  
Until she clicks off the radio.

CAROL  
No one in this car is going to say  
another word until you write your  
essay.

THOMAS  
Well, leave on the radio at least.

CAROL  
No music, no nothing. Starting...  
now.

THOMAS  
This is bull --

CAROL  
Not. Another. Word.

And the sound of the road fills the car. Max sits back,  
grinning. He's going to enjoy this.

#### **LATER**

Hours have passed. Thomas' lips move slightly, talking to  
himself. Carol sits in the same position, holding her own.

Max sits in the back, beyond bored. He pulls up the UNLOCK  
LATCH. Considers... CLICK! The lock jumps down. Thomas stares  
at Max through the rear-view. *You're not going anywhere, bud.*

Max glances at his notebook. After a moment, he gives up and  
begins to write.

Thomas nudges Carol, pointing out that Max is working. Carol  
is pleased with herself.

**LATER**

CLOSE ON - LAST LINE - "Fuck you very much, Max."

Max has a full page written. It's a mixture of prose and drawings that only a disturbed inmate would doodle.

Max closes the binder.

MAX

How far are we from Florida?

Thomas clicks on the radio.

THOMAS

Thank Christ.

CAROL

(to Max)

Is it finished? Do you want me to look it over?

MAX

How far are we?

Carol stares at him for a moment. Then smiles.

CAROL

Well, that depends on the route we take. How long would you say until we're home, Thomas?

THOMAS

I don't know. Fourteen, maybe fifteen hundred miles.

Oh, God.

CAROL

(to Max)

Let's say we go 60 miles an hour the entire way and the trip is 1,400 miles. How many hours would it take to get there?

Max stares at her.

THOMAS

He's Robbie's kid, not a genius.

CAROL

When I worked for the school board this would have been answered by a child his age.

THOMAS

Let's just say the gene pool in this family can barely swim, let alone count.

CAROL

(ignores him)

Come on, Max. How long would it --

MAX

(doesn't care)

23 hours.

CAROL

That's right!

THOMAS

It is?

CAROL

Very good, Max.

THOMAS

Jesus Christ. We've got Rain Man in the back seat. Hey Max, do you know how to play craps?

CAROL

If you can do that so easily, why are your grades so low?

Thomas eyes Max in the mirror.

THOMAS

I know why. He doesn't give a shit. He's just like his dad. Thinking that he doesn't have to get his hands dirty to get ahead.

Max glares at Thomas for the comparison. Carol shakes her head.

THOMAS

(to Carol)

What are you looking at me for? Look at him. He's probably taking pills or something. The news is always talking about kids stealing their parents pills and selling them... Swapping with each other on the playground... I just don't understand it...

He trails off. He tends to do that.

Carol stares at Max, waiting for an answer. Max stares right back.

She reaches into the glove box and removes a TRAVEL GUIDE. She tosses it in the back next to Max.

CAROL

You're going to be our navigator. We're going to make stops so you can learn something on this trip.

THOMAS

We have a schedule to keep.

CAROL

Oh, come on, Thomas. When's the next time we can do a drive like this with our grandson?

THOMAS

Depends if I drive us off a cliff.

CAROL

(ignores Thomas, to Max)  
You look through that and if there's any place you want to go, you let us know.

Carol turns back toward the road. After a moment, Max begins to skim the travel guide.

DING! Gas light.

CAROL

Why didn't you fill up when you stopped?

THOMAS

We stopped for a taco!

#### **EXT. GAS STATION - DAY**

Thomas stands at the pump, filling the car with gas. Carol and Max wait inside the car.

A YOUNG WOMAN (20s) stands on the other side, also pumping gas. She smiles at Thomas. Despite being an older man, he does have a certain charm about him. They casually flirt.

THOMAS

Where do you buy jeans like that?

YOUNG WOMAN

Excuse me?

THOMAS

Those are good, strong jeans. Where do you find a pair like that?

YOUNG WOMAN

(plays along)

Are you flirting with me?

THOMAS

(grins)

No, no... I'm just a fan of jeans.

### **INSIDE THE CAR**

Carol and Max notice Thomas flirting with the Young Woman, but Carol tries her best to ignore his actions. She pulls a ten dollar bill out of her purse.

CAROL

Go get us some water bottles, okay?

After a moment, Max takes the money and exits the car. Carol goes back to watching her husband flirt with a stranger.

### **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY**

Max holds onto three bottles of water under his arm as he attempts to peer through the plastic-wrapping of a porno mag at a magazine rack. It's difficult to do without ripping the bag so he reaches for another option.

Until he turns to see he's being watched by the GIRL from the Station Wagon. This is MEGAN (17). Though just two years older, in Max's eyes, she's a woman.

Embarrassed, Max drops the bottles of water as he tries to return the adult magazine. He quickly picks up the bottles. She waves, recognizing him.

Max rushes over to the line to pay. Of course, Megan arrives at the same moment with a Pepsi.

MEGAN

Go ahead.

MAX

Okay.

Max steps in front of her. She rolls her eyes, surprised. Max immediately regrets not letting her go first. He counts to himself, working up the courage to talk to her.

MAX  
Pepsi, huh?

MEGAN  
Yeah... Pepsi.

He remembers Thomas' line from outside.

MAX  
Where did you get your jeans?

She's wearing khaki shorts. Fail.

MEGAN  
What?

STORE CLERK  
Next.

Max steps forward, embarrassed.

STORE CLERK  
You two together?

MAX  
(blurts out)  
Fuck that!

Even Max is surprised by his response. He quickly pays the Clerk and exits.

**EXT. REST STOP - DAY**

Thomas watches the Young Woman drive off as Max rushes toward the Lincoln.

THOMAS  
Why are you running? Do you need the Pepto?

MAX  
Let's just go.

Megan exits the store. She glares at Max. Thomas notices her, and smiles.

THOMAS  
Struck out, huh? Well, that can be the next lesson.

Thomas and Max enter the car.

The Lincoln starts up and they head south. Max sits in the backseat, banging his head softly against his seat.

**EXT. SOME CHEAP MOTEL - NIGHT**

The Lincoln pulls into a parking lot as the sun sets.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Max lays awake on a COT in the small room. It's only 9:30pm. The Grandparents are fast asleep.

Carol breaks wind. She rolls over. It's true.

Max grabs his backpack and stands, still wearing his clothes from the day. He tiptoes across the room and picks up Thomas's WALLET off the side table.

**EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT**

Max comes to a stop at the end of the motel's driveway. He looks down the quiet stretch of highway in the darkness, unsure where to go.

**EXT. REST AREA - NIGHT**

He passes a closed restaurant, a bar, and approaches an open...

**INT. WENDY'S - NIGHT**

Max sits in the corner of the Wendy's eating a chocolate Frosty milkshake. Thomas's WALLET (full of cash) sits on the table.

Max looks over his shoulder to see TWO LARGE THUGS enter. They walk past Max's table. One of the guys eyes the wallet. Max notices.

**EXT. WENDY'S - NIGHT**

Max hurriedly crosses the parking lot. One of the Thugs exits.

THUG

Hey.

He continues forward, trying to not look over his shoulder.

THUG

Kid. Stop.

Max stops. He turns. The Thug approaches. Max is nearly shaking.

THUG

You left this.

The Thug hands him Thomas's wallet.

MAX

Thanks...

The Thug sizes Max up, smiles, then heads back to Wendy's.

Max exhales, feeling safe. He looks through the wallet: it's empty. No cash, no credit cards.

MAX

Hey!

The Thug turns, staring him down.

THUG

(harsh)

What? What are you going to do?

Max runs like his life depends on it. The Thug laughs as Max sprints down the street.

#### **EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Max, out of breath, stops at a corner next to a TRASH CAN. He tosses Thomas's empty wallet away.

Across the street is a BUS STATION. He takes a step to cross just as a SEMI-TRUCK speeds past honking! Max jumps back, nearly getting hit. That was close. Max adjusts his backpack and runs across the street.

#### **INT. BUS STATION - NIGHT**

Max enters the small waiting area. A HOMELESS MAN sleeps on the bench by the door. Max holds his backpack a little closer to his chest.

Max reads through the ROUTE LISTINGS BOARD. It lists cities across the U.S., including "BUFFALO." So many choices. The Homeless Man COUGHS, scaring Max. He's overwhelmed.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Max sneaks back into his Grandparent's motel room. He does his best to quietly close the door when...

THOMAS (O.S.)  
(startling Max)  
Welcome home.

Max turns to see Thomas sitting up in bed. The two men stare at each other. Thomas moseys his way over to him.

THOMAS  
I don't know how to make this any more clear. If I had it my way, you wouldn't be here, either. But it's important to her.  
(points to Carol)  
Do we agree on that?

Max nods. Thomas bends down, leveling their eyes.

THOMAS  
I'm not going to give you this speech again. So if you do as you're told and stop acting like a shit until I fly your ass back to New York, I'll give you... \$50.

MAX  
300.

THOMAS  
... 150.

Max takes off his backpack and places it on the floor.

Thomas nods and heads to the bathroom. Leaving the door open, he begins the world's longest piss.

Max lays down on his cot, puts on his headphones and presses his face into his pillow.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas drives, as always, with Carol in the front seat and Max in the back.

THOMAS  
I bet it was that goddamn maid. If she spoke English, I would have gotten a confession.

CAROL

I left the hotel our Florida address if it turns up... Should you be driving? Do you want me to drive?

Thomas laughs like the idea of Carol driving is ridiculous.

MAX

(anyways)

When are we stopping for breakfast?

THOMAS

I could use some coffee.

CAROL

There's probably a Starbucks up ahead. Max, you wanna look for signs with me?

THOMAS

I'm not drinking that eco-bullshit. We'll stop up here.

Thomas pulls off the highway.

**EXT. MARRIOTT HOTEL - DAY**

The Lincoln comes to a stop in the back of the Marriott parking lot.

Everyone exits the car.

CAROL

What are we doing here?

Thomas looks down at Max.

THOMAS

Just act naturally.

They enter the Marriott. Carol looks concerned.

**INT. MARRIOTT LOBBY - DAY**

The trio walks past the front desk following Thomas's lead. They head to the CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST AREA. A sign reads "Free Breakfast for Guests - 5am - 10am!"

Thomas hands Max and Carol each a plate.

CAROL  
We shouldn't be doing this.

THOMAS  
(smiling)  
Just get your food, dear.

CAROL  
You think this is giving him a good  
impression?

Max pours mix into the waffle maker.

Carol, Thomas and Max sit and begin to eat their stolen  
breakfast.

CAROL  
Can't we find a nice restaurant and  
have a nice meal together?

THOMAS  
I have no money, dear. They've got  
plenty of fruit for you.

Thomas leans over to Max.

THOMAS  
(whispering)  
Tastes better when it's free, huh?

Max grins. AN ASIAN DESK CLERK, who is built more like a club  
bouncer than a hotel employee, approaches their table. He  
looks down at Thomas with a stare that suggests, "I know what  
you're doing, shithead."

DESK CLERK  
Hello, there. Good morning to you.

THOMAS  
(overly-chipper)  
And a good morning to you!

DESK CLERK  
How has your stay been?

THOMAS  
Fine. Just fine.

Max nods, playing along.

DESK CLERK  
Are you enjoying your complimentary  
breakfast?

THOMAS  
Delicious. Better than home.

The Desk Clerk studies Carol's face. Then, leans down and places his hands on the table. He's very close to Thomas.

DESK CLERK  
Is there any way I could make your stay better for you, sir?

THOMAS  
Nah. We're just enjoying our wonderful continental breakfast!

Other GUESTS watch the commotion. Carol can't handle the pressure.

CAROL  
I'll be in the car.

MAX  
You mean, 'room?'

CAROL  
I... uh --

She rushes out of the hotel. Everyone watches her leave.

THOMAS  
She's a light-eater. She likes to burn the calories immediately.

DESK CLERK  
Fantastic... Tell me. Which room were you in again?

Thomas looks concerned. He's caught.

THOMAS  
I'm not sure. Uhm, Max? What room are we in?

The Desk Clerk turns his back to Thomas, facing Max. Thomas appears lost. He doesn't know what to do.

Max considers. He's got an idea.

MAX  
Grandpa... You know what room we're in. Think about it.

Thomas has no clue what Max is doing.

MAX  
Who's the president?

THOMAS  
What?

The Desk Clerk looks between the pair.

MAX  
Shit... What day is it?  
(to Desk Clerk)  
I think he's having a moment again.

Thomas figures out the scheme. He jumps up from his seat.

THOMAS  
(to the Desk Clerk)  
Who the fuck are you?! Why are you  
in my house?!

Thomas yells at the now-growing crowd of on-lookers.

THOMAS  
Get out of my house!

MAX  
Grandpa, calm down. We're not in  
your house. We're at a hotel.

DESK CLERK  
Oh my God. Sir, please quiet your --

THOMAS  
I have to go. They need me in the  
war!

Thomas walks over and pours himself another coffee.

MAX  
Okay, Grandpa. We can get you back  
to the war...

Max leans over to the Desk Clerk.

MAX  
He forgets himself. You know?

THOMAS  
There's not enough supply out there  
for my men!

Thomas grabs some fruit from the buffet stand.

DESK CLERK

I am so sorry. I didn't mean to cause any --

THOMAS

Cause? You caused quite a bit!

DESK CLERK

Sir, please lower your --

THOMAS

I'm over here fighting to save you gooks!

Everyone in the room gasps. The Desk Clerk is stunned.

MAX

Jesus...

Even Thomas realizes that was too far, but he can't turn back now.

THOMAS

(to Max)

Uh. Come on, Rangers. Let's get a move out.

With an armful of assorted breakfast items, Thomas hustles out of the hotel.

MAX

He's not racist... He's old. Sorry.

Max grabs a banana before rushing out of the hotel.

The Desk Clerk receives scornful looks from the guests. Through the window, we see Max and Thomas high-five as they rush toward the Lincoln.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas laughs, drinking his coffee. He tosses an apple back to Max. Carol shakes her head.

THOMAS

Lesson: "Always take what you can."

CAROL

That's an awful lesson! Don't listen to him. He's a bitter and cheap old man.

Max bites into the apple.

CAROL

(snapping)

That's enough. We're not going to go through this entire trip with the two of you teaming up against me. It's not fair!

THOMAS

Alright, Carol. Just calm down.

Carol takes a breath. Thomas winks at Max in the rear-view.

CAROL

(sweet)

Did you look through that travel guide, Max?

Max hands her the travel guide. She looks through his earmarked pages. She wrinkles her nose.

CAROL

Six Flags... Cedar Point... Busch Gardens...

THOMAS

I could go to that last one. They give out beer samples. I saw it on History a few weeks ago.

CAROL

These are amusements parks. They're not "learning" places.

Carol looks out the window. Something catches her eye.

CAROL

I have an idea.

Thomas and Max look out their windows.

GRANDPA

(under his breath)

Shit.

MAX

(under his breath)

Shit.

CUT TO:

**EXT. AMISH FARM - DAY**

PLOP! Horseshit hits the ground.

An AMISH TOUR GUIDE stands next to a horse in front of a CROWD OF TOURISTS. All of the men in the tour group wear large black Amish hats; the women wear Amish bonnets.

## AMISH TOUR GUIDE

We here at Lancaster Farms have been raising horses, cows, and sheep since the late 1800s. We hope your wide brim hats and bonnets help bring you a little into our world.

Max and Thomas stand in the back of the crowd, about as unhappy as an old man and early teen can be.

Carol smiles, taking a picture of them in their hats.

## AMISH TOUR GUIDE

We live the true Amish life. No electricity, no cars, no television. Yeah, it's not a life for everyone but it's the life for us. Any questions?

No one in the crowd raises their hand. But Carol can't help herself.

## AMISH TOUR GUIDE

Yes, Ma'am?

## CAROL

Hello. Carol Anders from Buffalo, New York. What kind of products do you make on the farm?

## AMISH TOUR GUIDE

There will be a small shop at the end of the tour where you can purchase anything from homemade baskets to soap. Now, who would you like to see how the butter is made?

The Amish Tour Guide walks over to a WOODEN CRANK BUTTER CHURNER. He lifts the handle and pushes the bar up and down. It's quite phallic.

Thomas laughs. Max follows suit.

## THOMAS

(aside to Max)

If you get me out of here, I'll give you an extra \$20.

## CAROL

Shush. I'm trying to listen.

Thomas rolls his eyes.

The Amish Tour Guide begins spouting off information about making butter. But Max's attention drifts to a small BOY who steps to the front of the crowd.

This is CODY (8). He watches the Tour Guide's hand with unwavering attention.

Max smiles to himself, when...

MEGAN steps forward and takes Cody by the hand. She looks over and sees Max. She shakes her head and leads Cody over to their parents - RON and JENNIFER CARTER (40s).

AMISH TOUR GUIDE

Now, if you'll follow me to the  
stable we'll show you the process  
of removing the milk!

**EXT. AMISH STORE - DAY**

Max, frustrated, removes his Amish hat and drops it into a basket with other hats. To the side of the store is Megan with Cody.

MEGAN

Well, if it isn't Porno Mag.

Max blushes.

MEGAN

I'm Megan.

MAX

Max.

CODY

Are those your parents?

MAX

Grandparents. I'm riding with them  
down to Florida.

MEGAN

(considers)

I guess that's sweet.

Before Max can respond,

CODY

We're going to NASA!

MAX

Cool?

MEGAN

Our Dad got a new job with Lockheed Martin making missiles and stuff in Orlando. He's basically a war lord.

(grabs Cody)

But Cody here loves space so they promised to take him to Cape Canaveral.

MAX

Sounds fun.

MEGAN

A week in the car with your parents fighting and your little brother singing showtunes? It's... awesome.

CODY

(to Max)

Did you know at LEAST six people died trying to go to space?

MAX

No, I didn't.

CODY

My Dad says there's probably more we don't even know about! Isn't that AWESOME?

MAX

You're not weird at all.

Max and Megan grin at each other. Cody feels left out.

CODY

I'm gonna go find Mom.

MEGAN

She's inside. Stay where I can see you.

Cody runs off. An awkward beat between the two adolescents.

Thomas notices Max talking to Megan. He can tell Max doesn't know how to handle himself.

THOMAS

(calls out)

Max. Come over here.

Max steps away from Megan and walks over to his grandfather. Megan stands by herself a few feet away.

THOMAS

You look like a dying fish out there.

MAX

What?

THOMAS

Have you never spoken to a girl before? Tell her you like her hair. Or that she makes your heart burn. Bullshit like that.

Max looks over his shoulder. Megan smiles at him. She can hear everything. Max turns red.

MAX

... Thanks.

Thomas's CELL PHONE rings. He walks away, answering.

THOMAS

Go on. It'll work. Or it won't. I don't know.

(to phone)

Hello?

Max heads back to Megan.

MEGAN

(playful)

So what do you think about my hair?

Megan's parents EXIT the store, bickering. Megan's father, Ron, waves her over.

MEGAN

I gotta go.

She starts to walk away. But turns back.

MEGAN

Maybe I'll see you again on the road somewhere.

MAX

Yeah. Maybe.

Max approaches Thomas, who is still on his phone.

THOMAS

(to phone, quietly)

... Yeah. Thursday should be fine... Of course...

He notices Max eavesdropping.

THOMAS

(to phone)

Yes, Laura. We're taking good care of him. Don't you worry about a thing. Okay now. Bye-bye.

(Max)

That was your mother. She says hello.

Megan waves at Max as she enters her family's car.

THOMAS

Well, look at you.

Thomas slyly smiles. Max doesn't understand.

THOMAS

Did you get her number?

MAX

(covering)

I don't want her number.

THOMAS

... Are you gay?

MAX

What? No.

THOMAS

Then why don't you want her number? Hell, if I was your age I would be "texting" her pictures of my --

CAROL

Surprise!

Carol appears with newly purchased AMISH HATS.

CAROL

To remember the stop!

Both men exhale as she places them on their heads.

THOMAS

Let's get moving. I only want to go another hour or two today.

Carol hesitates, watching the pair in their new hats walk toward the Lincoln. She smiles to herself, then follows.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas drives listening to TALK RADIO. Something about stocks. Carol sleeps in the front seat.

Max listens to music on his iPod. He looks out his window to see Megan's Station Wagon pull alongside again. Inside Ron and Jennifer talk in the front seat. In the back is Cody, singing, and Megan, bored.

Max waves at her. She motions "one second" and begins to write something.

She presses a new paper SIGN against her window. It reads:  
"302-415-7921 TEXT ME."

Max quickly dials her number into his phone. The Station Wagon speeds up and passes the Lincoln.

Max adds Megan's number to his phone. He types into his phone. [NOTE: Text Messages are in italics.]

MAX (TEXT)  
*Hi, it's Max.*

He waits. He's never felt so impatient. Hearing a BUZZ, Max checks his phone.

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*Duh.*

Max thinks, what to say next. Before he can reply:

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*Are you going anywhere tomorrow?  
 Another boring farm?*

MAX (TEXT)  
*I don't know. Probably.*

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*There's a Renaissance Fair in  
 Maryland this weekend.*

Before Max responds:

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*We could hangout.*

Max yells out, startling his Grandparents.

MAX  
*Canwego to arenaissancefair?!*

Thomas swerves the car. Carol jumps awake.

CAROL  
What happened? What's going on?

MAX  
Can we go to a Renaissance Fair  
tomorrow in Maryland. Are we close?

Carol sits up, surprised by his interest.

CAROL  
Uhm. Yes. Of course we can.

THOMAS  
(pushing)  
I was hoping to keep moving  
tomorrow. Maybe we can do something  
the next day.

CAROL  
What does it matter? We have all  
the time we need. Why the rush?

THOMAS  
Uh. Yeah, alright. Fine. At least  
they do war re-enactments there.  
Good for him to see some men  
defending their country.

CAROL  
You're thinking of Williamsburg.

THOMAS  
I know exactly what I mean. They do  
war things at these fairs.

CAROL  
You don't understand what he wants  
to see!

THOMAS  
Maybe you don't want to understand  
what I'm trying to say for him to  
learn about!

CAROL  
You're not making any sense!

THOMAS  
Jesus H. Christ, Carol!

Carol glares at him. Until finally she crosses her arms and  
turns away from Thomas.

CAROL  
 (matter-of-fact)  
 There is no 'H' in my Savior's  
 name.

That ends their fight. Silence.

MAX (TEXT)  
*We'll be there.*

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*Next time you'll buy the pepsi? :)*

Max sits back in his seat. Anxious.

**EXT. RENAISSANCE FAIR - ENTRANCE - DAY**

A LARGE MAN is dressed like an EXECUTIONER, covered head-to-toe in LEATHER, eating a TURKEY LEG.

Thomas stares at the leather outfit while tying his shoe. He's somewhat fixated on the Executioner's belly, like he's in a trance. A piece of turkey lands on Thomas' foot.

THOMAS  
 You gotta be shitting me.

Carol taps him on the head.

Thomas stands, REVEALING our trio in a long line. They stand out like a sore thumb - they're the only ones not in costume.

CAROL  
 Shush. We just got here. And look  
 how excited he is!

Max looks down the line for Megan and her family. She's not here yet.

THOMAS  
 (to Max)  
 Why did you want to go to this?

The line begins to move forward. They approach the TICKET BOOTH. Thomas reads the sign: "MARYLAND RENAISSANCE PLEASURE FAIR."

THOMAS  
 What the hell...

A TICKET OPERATOR stands behind a table in a COURT JESTER outfit. He clearly just received his Acting M.F.A. and the world is his stage. He would be too much even for Disneyland.

TICKET OPERATOR

Welcome to the Maryland Renaissance  
Pleasure Fair. Would you like to be  
Royal or Street?

THOMAS

(blank)  
What?

TICKET OPERATOR

Royalty tickets include meals and  
rides, while Street tickets just  
include entry.

THOMAS

Just give me the goddamn tickets.

Carol curtsies - getting into character.

CAROL

Why, we are Royal, of course.

TICKET OPERATOR

My! A Queen is with us today!

THOMAS

(under his breath)  
She's not the only one...

The Ticket Operator breaks character and stares at Thomas.

TICKET OPERATOR

That will be \$35.75 each.

THOMAS

Retired discount?

TICKET OPERATOR

(back into character)  
Sorry, sir. During the Renaissance  
era there were no discounts for  
anyone. Especially for Royalty.

Thomas rolls his eyes while Carol pulls out a Visa card.

TICKET OPERATOR

I'm sorry, ma'am. We did not have  
cards during the Renaissance.  
Everything is true to the period.

THOMAS

I'm sure you accept American  
dollars.

TICKET OPERATOR

Yes, sir.

THOMAS

That makes a lot of sense.

Carol pays the Ticket Operator and they head into the Fair. Max looks back at the crowd, hoping to spot Megan.

**EXT. RENAISSANCE FAIR - GLASS BLOWER TENT - DAY**

Max, Carol and Thomas, each with a turkey leg, watch a GLASS BLOWER at an exhibit booth.

Max types into his phone.

MAX (TEXT)

*Where r u?*

They peruse the various glass items at the booth. In fact, they're all shaped like dildos. Thomas stares at one. It's the length of his face.

THOMAS

I feel threatened.

Carol pulls out a MAP.

CAROL

Hmm. The next show is at 11:25. Oh, and it includes lunch!

Thomas eyes his nearly finished turkey leg.

THOMAS

Great.

CAROL

You two run along to the show. He's doing a tutorial on glass blowing that I want to stay for.

THOMAS

But --

CAROL

I'll meet you after. Don't worry.

**EXT. RENAISSANCE FAIR - MUD SHOW - DAY**

Max and Thomas stand in front of the show entrance. There's a line to enter full of the kind of people that give you a reason to carry hand sanitizer.

MAX

We don't actually have to go to this, do we?

Thomas notices a BEER TENT with BUSTY WAITRESSES that reads "21+." Thomas points to a bench.

THOMAS

Sit, boy.

MAX

But --

THOMAS

Stay. I'll be watching.

Thomas ignores Max and heads toward the beer. Thomas approaches a Waitress dressed in an overly-exposed corset.

WAITRESS

(hands him a beer)  
Hello, sir. I'll be your wench.

THOMAS

Hello, wench.

Max scans the crowd.

Suddenly, a little ways ahead of him, MEGAN runs past. Max jumps up from the bench. He looks over to Thomas, who's not paying attention to him but flirting again.

Max sprints after Megan.

**EXT. RENAISSANCE FAIR - EXHIBIT AREA - DAY**

Max searches through the crowd for Megan. Until CAROL walks over to him.

CAROL

Where's Grandpa?

Max is a deer in headlights.

MAX

Uh, he went to the restroom and I lost him.

Max looks around for Megan.

CAROL  
(liar)  
Mhmm.

Carol turns and faces the crowd with Max, enjoying herself.

CAROL  
Well, if you're going to find her,  
you need help.

MAX  
... Thanks.

CAROL  
Oh! Is that her?

MAX  
No.

CAROL  
... You know, your grandfather is  
trying. He might not say it, but it  
means a lot to him, to both of us,  
that you're --

He sees her!

MAX  
I gotta go. I'll see you later.

Max darts off after her.

CAROL  
Okay.

Around a corner, Max steps up behind Megan.

MAX  
(attempting to be suave)  
How about that Pepsi?

She turns to REVEAL it's not Megan, but just some RANDOM GIRL  
that looks like her.

RANDOM GIRL  
What?

Max looks flustered. He doesn't respond but simply walks  
away.

RANDOM GIRL  
Loser.

Defeated, Max heads back toward the bench. His phone buzzes.

MEGAN (TEXT)

Boo.

Max doesn't understand. A HAND TAPS him on the shoulder, startling him.

REVEAL Megan standing behind him, laughing. Max lights up.

MEGAN

Hey.

MAX

Hi.

A TOPLESS WOMAN walks past.

MAX

Whoa... what kinda fair is this?

MEGAN

Yeah, my Dad saw some billboards for it on the way down and thought it would be fun.

Megan points to Ron and Jennifer, fighting as they argue over a park map. Cody wears a CHILD'S LEASH that is connected from his chest to a bracelet around Jennifer's wrist.

MEGAN

She's pissed. Clearly. I don't care. Come on. Let's go. They won't notice I'm gone for at least an hour.

She walks ahead of him. Max smiles and follows.

**EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - CARNIVAL RIDES - DAY**

Max and Megan approach a sketchy-looking RIDE OPERATOR.

MEGAN

Drugs, please.

**EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - CARNIVAL RIDES - DAY**

Max and Megan sit on a bench behind a children's ride, sharing a JOINT. Max takes a hit and coughs, hard.

MEGAN  
(laughing)  
Is this your first time?

MAX  
No. I smoke all the time.

MEGAN  
Uh-huh.

Megan takes a hit and moves a little closer.

MEGAN  
How old are you?

MAX  
18.

MEGAN  
*I'm* 17.

MAX  
... 15.

She looks him over.

MEGAN  
Few more years, you could be cute.

Max sits up a little. Confidence coming back. She notices and starts laughing at him.

MEGAN  
You remind me of this boy from school. Will Gordon. He always tries to act cool, too. The "cool, quiet" type. But everyone knows it's just an act.

Max looks down at the ground.

MEGAN  
Truth or Dare?

MAX  
... Truth.

MEGAN  
Only pussies pick truth.

MAX  
Fine. Dare.

MEGAN

You already said truth! Hmm...

She enjoys toying with him.

MEGAN

(leans forward)

Have you ever been kissed?

Here comes the flop-sweat. Now Max is really nervous. But he tries to cover.

MAX

Yeah.

MEGAN

More than once?

Max, a little high, can't hide the truth. He turns red. She laughs. Then, moves a little closer.

MEGAN

We've all had first ones. But have you had a good one?

Max reaches for the joint, not wanting to answer. She pulls it away and takes a hit herself.

Megan holds the smoke in her mouth and leans toward Max. She puffs her lips. He leans forward and before their lips touch...

She blows the smoke into his mouth. Max pulls back, coughing.

MEGAN

It's easier to take it that way.

Max can't hide his disappointment. Megan puts out the joint and pockets it for later.

MEGAN

Come on.

Off Max's glazed smile...

**SERIES OF SHOTS:**

Max and Megan ride a ferris wheel, go-karts, and various other rides that do not make any sense being at a Renaissance Fair. They're high and enjoying themselves. Everything is a little slower than it should be. A little more colorful.

More importantly, we catch glimpses of Max looking at Megan. Her laugh, her smile, her eyes.

He's falling for her.

END SERIES OF SHOTS AS...

Max and Megan walk toward a new ride when a HAND grabs Max's shoulder.

THOMAS

That's three strikes. THREE.

Thomas notices that Max's eyes are incredibly red.

THOMAS

Are you fucking kidding me?

Max laughs. Megan giggles.

THOMAS

Say goodbye to your girlfriend,  
Max.

Thomas grabs Max by the shoulder and leads him toward the Fairground's exit. Max walks backwards, watching Megan go the opposite direction.

**EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Carol waits by the car. She has a large and heavy BAG full of glass objects by her feet. Thomas drags Max directly to Carol.

THOMAS

This isn't working out. I thought this was going to be a trip just for the two of us. I can't spend all of my time playing baby-sitter. I look forward to these trips.

CAROL

Well, you're just going to have to adjust. He's our grandson!

Max receives a text.

MEGAN (TEXT)

*See you soon?*

Max pouts his lips and speaks to Carol like a small child.

MAX

I just want you both to know that I'm having a lot of fun and I'll be better...

(to Carol)

I love you.

CAROL

(heart melting)

I love you, too. And we'll have a lot more fun!

She tousles his hair.

CAROL

Can you put this in the car for me?

She hands the bag of glass objects to Max. He seems a little disoriented by the task. He can't open the door and hold the bag at the same time. He's too high.

Thomas pulls Carol a few feet away from the car while Max, in the background, tries to get the bag inside.

THOMAS

Twice a year we do this drive together. It's the highlight of the year for me. You know that.

CAROL

I do not understand why this is such a problem for you. He's been fine... aside from the kidnapping thing.

Max lifts the heavy bag and heaves it onto roof of the car. But the large bag CRASHES through the SUNROOF.

Thomas and Carol watch, shocked.

MAX

(just as surprised)

Ooooooooooooooooooooo balls.

#### **INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - DAY**

Our trio sit in their normal spots. The sound of the wind howls through the broken and open sunroof.

Suddenly, bird shit PLOPS onto Thomas's head. Max and Carol cover their mouths, trying to not laugh.

**EXT. PONDEROSA STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT**

The Lincoln is parked in front of the world's grossest steakhouse.

**INT. PONDEROSA STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT**

Our trio sit at a table in the buffet-style restaurant. A WAITRESS approaches and drops a 26 oz steak on each plate. She hands them out like breadsticks.

THOMAS

Since we stopped today I figured we could keep moving tomorrow. Got a way to go still.

CAROL

But we're so close to the capital. Have you ever been to the Lincoln Memorial, Max?

Before Max can answer...

THOMAS

We always go to Virginia Beach. Why not go with the kid? He'll probably go to D.C. on a field trip.

Carol studies Thomas' face for a moment. Max notices.

THOMAS

What? What is it?

CAROL

I don't see what your rush is.

THOMAS

We've been going to The Cottages for 15 years. It's our place... Why stop now?

There's an awkward silence in the air. The Waitress returns with a TRAY FULL OF STEAKS.

WAITRESS

Would anyone care for another?

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

The Lincoln heads down the highway at the start of a new day.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas drives, sipping a coffee next to Carol. A makeshift TRASH BAG COVER plugs the hole of the sunroof. Max texts with Megan in the back. Smiling.

MAX (TEXT)

*We're going to a hotel in VA beach.  
The Cottages.*

**INT. MEGAN'S CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Megan texts with Max. Her parents argue in the front. Cody watches a children's DVD on a laptop.

MEGAN (TEXT)

*We'll be there.*

Megan looks up from her phone.

MEGAN

Hey, Dad.

Ron and Jennifer stop arguing, surprised to hear Megan speak.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

The Lincoln passes a road sign: "VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS."

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - NIGHT**

The Lincoln pulls to a stop in front of "The Cottages," a small family-owned and old-fashioned hotel on Virginia Beach.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - LOBBY - NIGHT**

Our trio, bags in hand, approach the front desk. Max wears his earbuds. The HOTEL MANAGER (40s) recognizes Thomas.

HOTEL MANAGER

Hello, Mr. Anders! Always a pleasure to see you.

The pair shake hands like old friends.

HOTEL MANAGER

And, of course, Mrs. Anders. How are you?

CAROL  
We're just fine, Alan. It's great  
to see you.

HOTEL MANAGER  
And who is this young man?

CAROL  
This is our grandson, Max. Say  
hello to Alan.

Max removes one earbud.

MAX  
Hi.

Then returns it.

HOTEL MANAGER  
Talkative boy.

THOMAS  
He's a hemorrhoid.

HOTEL MANAGER  
We boys never change. Now, would  
you like your regular room?

THOMAS  
We would.

Max's phone vibrates.

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*We're here.*

Max looks out the front door. Megan's family parks their car  
next to the Lincoln.

CAROL  
My, is that your little friend from  
the other day?

Max plays it cool, removing his headphones.

MAX  
I don't know.

CAROL  
Would you like to invite her to  
dinner with us?

MAX  
(embarrassed)  
No. That's okay.

CAROL  
Don't be shy. It's alright.

MAX  
I'm not being shy.

Carol exits and walks toward Megan's parents. Max watches from the window, mortified.

THOMAS  
Oh, look. Your girlfriend is here.

MAX  
Shut up.

THOMAS  
Jesus, you're so sensitive. I'm trying to help you here. Are you listening to me?

Max stares.

THOMAS  
Just take my advice. If she leans in, you go for it. That's the sign. Oh, and wrap it up. ALWAYS wrap it.

Megan and her family enter with Carol. Megan smiles at Max. Max turns red, afraid for what Carol has said.

HOTEL MANAGER  
I'll have your bags taken to your room.

THOMAS  
Thanks, Alan.

Thomas slips Alan a tip. In return, Alan slips Thomas an extra KEYCARD. Max notices.

CAROL  
(to Thomas)  
Thomas. This is Ron and Jennifer Carter.

They shake hands.

CAROL  
They're...

MEGAN

Megan.

CAROL

Megan's parents.

THOMAS

(to Megan, winks at Max)

Oh. Hello, dear.

Cody looks up at Thomas.

CODY

You're going to die soon.

Max and Megan can't help but laugh.

JENNIFER

Cody!

RON

Why would you say that? What's wrong with you?

CODY

He's really old. Old people die.

JENNIFER

He's been obsessed with death recently. One of his phases.

An awkward moment between the two groups. No one knows what to say next. Except for...

CAROL

Why don't we have dinner together?

THOMAS

Oh, I don't think that's necessary.

RON

I'm sure you've had a long day.

CAROL

It would be our pleasure.

JENNIFER

We would love to.

Neither Thomas or Ron look happy about this. They just want to find a bar or a bed. Or both.

### **INT. THE COTTAGES - ANDERS ROOM - NIGHT**

The hotel room is your basic layout (one large bed with a restroom). A cot is set up for Max.

Carol helps Max with his tie.

THOMAS

I'm going to go sit in on a game.  
I'll meet you all at dinner in a  
little while.

CAROL

Oh, stop it. You're coming with us.  
You can talk to Ron about poker or  
football. He seems like a sports  
man.

Thomas checks his watch.

THOMAS

I'll make it a quick game. I  
promise I won't be too late.

Thomas kisses Carol on the cheek. He rubs Max's hair and  
rushes out of their hotel room.

Carol seems distracted. She finishes Max's tie while watching  
the door close. She pulls a little too hard, choking Max.

CAROL

Oh! I'm sorry! Are you alright?

Max undoes his tie and places it on the bed.

CAROL

No tie tonight. That's fine.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Max, Megan, Carol, Jennifer, Ron, and Cody sit around the  
table. Thomas's seat is empty. Everyone quietly studies their  
menus. You could hear a pin drop.

From the look of things, Ron and Jennifer are both already a  
few drinks in. Max and Megan are too uncomfortable to talk to  
one another. Cody draws with a crayon on the white  
tablecloth. Carol checks her watch.

Suddenly, Thomas rushes over to the table. He looks a little  
winded.

CAROL

(leans over)  
You're a little late.

THOMAS

Sorry about that. Hello, everyone.

Ron lifts his glass.

RON  
(to Waiter)  
Another scotch and soda, please.

JENNIFER  
I think that's enough for you.

RON  
(eyes Jennifer's wine)  
Look who's talking.

CAROL  
... Thomas plays poker here every  
year.

RON  
I didn't know they had tables. If  
you're going tomorrow, let me know.  
I'd love to play.

THOMAS  
Yeah. Sure.

Thomas checks his watch, impatiently. Carol notices.

CAROL  
Are you alright?

THOMAS  
Yes, of course. Just fine, dear.

Max watches as his Grandfather holds Carol's hand. The Waiter  
returns with Ron's drink.

THOMAS  
(to Waiter)  
I'll have one of those.

CAROL  
So. How has your trip been so far?  
We've been doing the drive for --

JENNIFER  
Oh, it's brutal. It's hot, then  
it's cold. The weather just won't  
make up its mind. And all of the  
hotels are disgusting... I guess  
this is a nicer one. Megan found it  
online.

Thomas eyes Max. Max rolls his eyes.

THOMAS  
You made a good choice here, Megan.

MEGAN

Thanks?

JENNIFER

(to Carol)

I don't know how you do this more than once. I wanted to fly but with the kids and the car, Ron thought it would be too expensive.

RON

Because it was.

CAROL

Well, we love being on the road. The open air, the changing of the leaves. It really is a beautiful countr--

JENNIFER

Where the hell is the waiter? The service here is horrible.

Thomas sips his scotch. Ron finishes off his glass, Jen finishes her wine. Carol is the only sober adult at the table.

CAROL

... How long will you be in Florida?

RON

Indefinitely.

JENNIFER

Ron got a promotion!

RON

It's not a promotion if they say, "you're moving to Florida or you're fired."

BUZZ. Max checks his phone.

MEGAN (TEXT)

*Bored.*

JENNIFER

(trying to be quiet)

Why do you always have to demean yourself?

RON  
I'm being honest. Isn't that what  
you always say? "Don't lie."

BUZZ. Megan checks her phone.

MAX (TEXT)  
*Meet tonight by the pool?*

Megan nods at him.

Carol tries her best to keep things smooth at the table.

CAROL  
We're going to go to the beach in  
the morning. You're all welcome to  
join.

JENNIFER  
Yeah. Maybe we will.

CAROL  
That would be great. Right, Thomas?

Thomas nods, finishing his drink and checking his watch. Max  
watches Thomas's distant look, curious.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ANDERS ROOM - NIGHT**

Max lays on a cot in the dark hotel room. He checks the time  
on his phone and slowly crawls off his cot. He's still  
dressed from dinner.

From his view, his Grandparents both appear to be asleep. Max  
places his backpack on the cot with some clothes, attempting  
to make his outline under the covers.

Max slowly opens the door and successfully sneaks out.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - POOL - NIGHT**

Megan stands by the side of the pool, waiting. Max checks her  
out as he walks over.

MAX  
(voice cracks)  
Hey.

Megan laughs. Max is embarrassed. She reveals the saved joint  
from the fair. Max pulls two VODKA MINI-BAR BOTTLES from his  
pocket. They're a match made in heaven.

**EXT. BEACH - NIGHT**

The young couple walk down the quiet Virginia Beach, sipping their little bottles and taking turns with the joint.

MAX

There's something weird about him since we got here. He's acting... different. He kept checking his watch.

MEGAN

Your grandfather?

MAX

Yeah.

MEGAN

Whatever. Grandparents are the same as parents...

MAX

What do you mean?

MEGAN

That adults are fucking stupid?

She takes a hit.

MEGAN

Jen thinks moving to Florida will 'fix them.' But he'll just get bored like last time.

MAX

Oh.

MEGAN

I go back and forth between my Mom and Dad. Cody's always with Jennifer though. He's only my half-brother.

Megan finishes her little bottle and tosses it into the ocean. She steals Max's.

MEGAN

So what's wrong with your parents?

MAX

What do you mean?

MEGAN

Everyone has problems with their life-givers. So what's their deal?

MAX

My dad moved out a few months ago. He said he quit his job and that he wanted to 'backpack for a year.' That he never did it after high school and regretted it.

MEGAN

So he's homeless?

MAX

No. *Well*, I don't think so.

MEGAN

Do you talk to him?

Max shakes his head.

MEGAN

At least you don't have to see him anymore.

Max doesn't know what to say to comfort her. Maybe it's the small amount of alcohol but...

MAX

I threw a trash can onto the principal's car.

Megan bursts out laughing.

MEGAN

Why did you do that?

MAX

(truthful)  
I don't know.

MEGAN

You really want to be a bad guy, don't ya?

Max is taken aback. Caught.

MEGAN

(laughs)  
Stop trying so hard.

Megan takes another hit and hands it to Max.

MAX

(after a beat)

Anyways, now I gotta write some letter before this court thing.

MEGAN

Whoa. That's some serious shit. My ex had to do that once. He used to sell his adderall, but some kid at school got sick on 'em and that kid's dad was a judge, so... That letter's real shit. He ended up going to juvie for --

MAX

I wrote it. Don't worry about it.

MEGAN

Do you want me to look at it? I'm pretty good with that kinda stuff.

MAX

Words?

MEGAN

(smiles)

Shut up.

She stumbles a little. Max helps her from falling and she rests on his shoulder. He couldn't be happier.

MEGAN

I didn't know I would be walking down a dark, quiet beach with a 'criminal'... Maybe you are cool.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - WALKWAY - NIGHT**

The pair stop in front of Megan's room. She's tipsy, much more than Max.

MEGAN

(seductively)

Truth or Dare?

MAX

Dare.

She takes a step toward Max. Max bumps against the railing.

MEGAN

(slurring)

I've never had a good kiss, either.

Megan leans in. She closes her eyes. Max doesn't know what to do. She leans in closer.

Suddenly, a DOOR OPENS DOWN THE HALL. Max looks over.

THOMAS EXITS A HOTEL ROOM. A WOMAN stands in a BATHROBE at the door. We don't see her face but just from her figure one thing is clear: this isn't Carol.

Max DUCKS down on the walkway behind a PLANT.

Megan opens her eyes. He disappeared. She looks down at crouching Max, confused.

MEGAN

What are you doing?

He pulls her hand down and she crouches next to him. He turns her head so she can see.

Thomas and the woman KISS. He takes a step away to leave, but she grabs him by the shoulder and pulls him BACK into the hotel room. The door closes.

Max and Megan look at each other.

They quickly tip-toe down the walkway, stopping in front of the door: ROOM 204.

MEGAN

(sobering)

I should go to bed.

The light in Room 204 turns off.

MEGAN

Uhm... I'll see you in the morning?

Megan considers trying to kiss Max again. But walks away. She heads down the hall and quietly re-enters her room.

Max sits on the floor outside of Room 204.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - DINING ROOM - MORNING**

SLOP!

Thomas scoops some scrambled eggs onto his plate at the breakfast buffet. Carol and Max stand in line behind him. Everyone is dressed for a day at the beach.

THOMAS  
(to Max)  
Want some?

Max glares.

CAROL  
Yes, please.

Thomas scoops some onto her plate. They exchange smiles. Our trio fix their plates and head to a small table.

THOMAS  
So I was thinking we could extend our stay maybe an extra day or two. It's been so long since we've been here. How'd you like to stay at the beach a few days, Max?

Carol looks up from her plate at Thomas.

THOMAS  
What can I say? I like it here.

Thomas reaches across the table and holds her hand.

Max looks like he's going to explode. He shoots daggers at Thomas. Thomas catches his glare.

THOMAS  
What?

Suddenly, Jennifer enters, upset. She scans the room and finds Max. She rushes over to the table.

JENNIFER  
(to Max)  
Would you mind explaining yourself?

CAROL  
Excuse me?

JENNIFER  
Who do you think you are? Stealing alcohol and sharing it with another child.

THOMAS  
Wait. What happened?

JENNIFER

Megan snuck out last night and she had vodka bottles with her that weren't from our room. Are you missing any?

Jennifer stares Max down.

THOMAS

Max. Did you sneak out last night?

Max glares.

THOMAS

Answer me.

MAX

I'm not the one sneaking around.

Thomas studies Max's face. Is he caught?

JENNIFER

He's lying! Megan would never do something like this... on her own.

CAROL

I'm sorry, Jennifer. But if Max says he didn't do it, then he didn't do it.

Thomas stands and grabs Max by the arm.

THOMAS

That's it. You're grounded. You're going back to the room and you're going to stay there the rest of the day.

CAROL

Thomas!

THOMAS

This is the last straw. He's been trying to ruin this entire trip so he can sit at home, smoke dope or whatever else he wants to do rather than spend time with his family!

Max squirms out of Thomas's grip. He doesn't run away though. He stands firm.

THOMAS

Let's go.

No response.

THOMAS  
(loud and harsh)  
NOW!

Everyone in the dining room watches the scene.

JENNIFER  
(embarrassed)  
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to --

THOMAS  
Thank you for making us aware.  
(to Max)  
I should have sent you home the  
first night.

CAROL  
(softly)  
Everyone is watching. Let's go.

Max leads the way. Carol follows with Jennifer.

Thomas looks back at the crowd.

THOMAS  
Show's over. Enjoy your breakfast.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ANDERS ROOM - DAY**

Carol grabs her beach towel. Max sits on the edge of the bed.  
Thomas stands by the door.

CAROL  
Are you sure he can't come?

THOMAS  
He stole alcohol and snuck out in  
the middle of the night.

CAROL  
... Well, let's go then.

THOMAS  
I'll be right behind you.

Hesitant, Carol walks over to Max and kisses him on the  
cheek. She whispers to him.

CAROL  
I'll come back for you in an hour.

She exits, leaving the two boys alone. It's a stand off.

THOMAS  
How late were you out?

MAX  
I don't know.

THOMAS  
Where did you go?

Silence.

THOMAS  
Well, what time did you come back  
in?

MAX  
Late.

Thomas waits, looking for the words. For the first time, he opens himself up to Max. Wanting an honest answer.

THOMAS  
What do you think you know, Max?

MAX  
I know you're not going to tell me  
what to do ever again.

THOMAS  
Excuse me?

MAX  
(mimicking Thomas)  
"You're going to keep your mouth  
shut, do as your told, and we're  
going to have fun on this trip. Do  
you understand?"

THOMAS  
Are you threatening me, you little  
shit?

MAX  
Hey Grams, I think I saw something  
in Room 204. Do you wanna --

THOMAS  
Jesus Christ.

Thomas sits on the side of the bed. Overwhelmed. He rubs his temples.

THOMAS

You're a prick just like your dad.

Max's eyes burn with anger. Thomas looks away, regretful for that statement.

After a moment, Thomas grabs his keycard and heads for the door. He stops at the handle, his back to Max.

THOMAS

One day... It's complicated... Life isn't as easy...

Thomas gives up. And exits.

Max listens to Thomas's footsteps head down the hall. Then lays back on the bed.

Max doesn't reach for his headphones or turn on the TV. He lets the silence of the room surround him.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

Max goes to the door and opens: it's Megan.

She rushes past and sits on the side of the bed. She looks like she's seen a ghost.

MEGAN

I didn't tell them about last night. I promise.

Max closes the door and watches her lay down on the bed. This is the only time he's been alone with a girl. He's nervous.

MEGAN

They were... awake.

MAX

So they caught you sneaking in.

MEGAN

I opened the door... and it was quiet. So I thought, hey. I'm awesome. But then I went to the bathroom to find...

She falls back on the bed.

MAX

Find what?

She pops up.

MEGAN

She was on top of the sink, *riding*  
my Dad! Backwards!

MAX

Your mom is flexible.

MEGAN

Step-mom! And shut up!

She lays back on the bed, covering her eyes with her arms.

MEGAN

I opened the door and they just  
stared at me. What the fuck...

MAX

Wait. What about --

MEGAN

Cody? I'll get to him. Jen screamed  
at me, "Close the door! Close the  
door!" Well, that woke Cody up. He  
saw them and screamed. He's been  
drawing pictures of them all  
morning...

Max sits on the side of the bed, just a few feet away from  
her.

MEGAN

Did you talk to your Cheat-Machine?

Max shakes his head. She sits up.

MEGAN

What is this place? Some kind of  
sex center?

MAX

(trying to play it cool)  
Ha, yeah...

She rests her head on his shoulder.

MEGAN

I never want to be an 'adult.' It  
doesn't make any sense.

MAX

... Maybe it's good that they were,  
uh, *you know*. Maybe they're happy  
again.

MEGAN

But they don't love each other.  
It's just all they have... sex  
doesn't mean anything. It's just  
something two people do when  
they're alone.

Silence fills the room. *They're all alone.*

Megan lifts her head and their eyes connect. She looks confident, he's probably sweating. If he spoke now, his voice would...

CA-CRACK!

A KEYCARD is inserted in the front door. They jump to their feet as the door opens to REVEAL a...

MAID

Oh, I'm sorry. I thought the room  
was empty. I'll come back later.

Max watches the Maid and her pushcart's shadow pass the window toward the next room. He goes to the door and sees...

Max looks down the hall and notices a "Do Not Enter" hangtag on Room 204's doorhandle.

Megan adjusts her hair and sits back down on the bed. Acting like an adult, crossing her leg and leaning back. She's not sure what's she's doing but does it anyway.

MAX

I need to get into that room.

Megan sits up.

MEGAN

What?

**INT. THE COTTAGES - BAR - DAY**

Max and Megan lean in from the side of the room. They huddle against the wall watching as...

Thomas takes a seat at the bar. Ron is a few seats down. The BARTENDER approaches.

THOMAS

Seagrams and Soda.

Thomas sees Ron, but turns away. Not wanting to make conversation. But, to his dismay, Ron notices him.

RON  
I'll cover that.

Ron slides down the bar, closer to him. He's already a few drinks in.

RON  
Getting away from the old lady,  
huh?

THOMAS  
Something like that.

Thomas's drink arrives.

RON  
... How do you do it?

THOMAS  
What?

RON  
What was it you said, forty years?  
Jesus. My longest is six. Here's to  
you.

Ron raises his glass.

RON  
I don't know how you do it.

THOMAS  
You agree to commit with someone,  
so you commit.

They sip their drinks.

THOMAS  
(almost to himself)  
Forty-three... They were good  
years.

RON  
I'm sure they were.

Ron downs his drink and orders a round for both of them. Then moves a seat closer.

RON  
(with a wink)  
Ever anything on the side?

Without hesitation, Thomas shakes his head.

RON

Never? Shit. Jennifer's my second.  
You can probably guess how that got  
started.

(he leans forward)

But doesn't mean I can't look for  
the 2013 model. Never know when  
you'll sign for a new lease.

Thomas finishes his glass.

THOMAS

Thanks for the drink.

Thomas exits the bar and heads outside. Ron calls back to  
him.

RON

Come on. I was only joking. Come  
back.

Max and Megan watch Thomas head out of the bar. They've heard  
everything.

RON

(to Bartender - Re: TV)

Hey, can you turn that game up?

Max looks over at Megan. He can't decide if she's about to  
scream or cry. She catches his stare.

MEGAN

(sharp)

What?

MAX

I --

MEGAN

Well, come on. Let's go.

Megan rushes around the corner, following Thomas out. Max  
follows.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - HALLWAY - DAY**

The pair watch Thomas head down the hallway. He stops in  
front of Room 204. He pauses. Then enters our trio's room.

Max and Megan rush down the hall. But stop behind a plant as  
Thomas bursts out of the room, looking around.

THOMAS

Max?! Max!... Goddammit.

Thomas re-enters.

Max and Megan stop in front of his door. Megan peeks through the window.

MEGAN

He's going into the bathroom.

MAX

Okay. I'll get the key, then we'll bring Grams, I mean Carol, up here and show her the truth.

Max heads toward the door.

MEGAN

Wait.

Max pauses. She doesn't know how to ask.

MEGAN

Maybe you shouldn't.

MAX

I have to do this.

MEGAN

(considers)  
Why?

MAX

Because!

Neither can make eye contact, understanding that this is their first disagreement.

MAX

(convincing himself)  
I have to.

MEGAN

... Then you have to.

Megan turns her back and looks over the balcony toward the pool area. Max hesitates. Then enters his hotel room.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ANDERS ROOM - DAY**

Steam comes out of the bathroom while Thomas showers. Max tiptoes across the room and removes the KEYCARD from Thomas's pants pocket.

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

A little bit in the distance, Carol sits in a beach chair reading some grocery store novel next to Jennifer. Cody builds a sandcastle nearby.

Max and Megan walk toward them.

MEGAN

What are you going to say?

MAX

I don't know.

MEGAN

"Hey, so I have a key and I think a whore-lady that's screwing your husband is inside. Wanna see?"

They look over as Carol turns a page in her book, enjoying the sun.

MAX

She needs to know. I mean, who knows how long it's been going on? How long he's been lying to her?

MEGAN

Maybe that's how it's meant to be.

MAX

What?

MEGAN

Look at Dad and Jen. They know everything about each other and they hate themselves for it.

Max brushes her off.

MAX

That's different.

MEGAN

Because they're not related to you?

They continue walking toward Carol. Not talking.

Max approaches Carol. Megan stays a few feet behind.

CAROL

Hey, Kiddo. I said I'd come get you. Your grandfather's going to be upset if he catches you running around by yourself.

JENNIFER

(awkward)

Hi, Megan.

Megan doesn't respond.

MAX

(to Carol)

I... I need to show you something.

CAROL

(re: Cody)

Did you make a sand castle, too?

Max stares back at her. He appears nervous. She closes her book and stands.

CAROL

Alright. What do you have to show me?

Max suddenly changes his mind. The reality of what could happen next hits him.

MAX

Wait! Nevermind!

CAROL

What?

MAX

I can show you later. Enjoy your book.

CAROL

Well, what is it? You got me up already.

MAX

I can just show you later. That's all. Don't worry about it.

Max turns and heads toward the hotel. Carol watches him walk past Megan.

CAROL  
Is everything alright?

MEGAN  
Sure.

Megan turns and runs after Max. Carol watches them closely, concerned.

Cody stands and stomps down on his next castle.

CODY  
I AM THE DESTROYER OF ALL!

He watches Megan run after Max.

CODY  
(sotto - playful)  
I will destroy you next.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - HALLWAY - DAY**

They stand in front of Room 204. Max removes the stolen key from his pocket. Megan reaches over and holds Max's hand. Comforting him.

Max places the keycard in the slot.

MEGAN  
Should we knock?

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ROOM 204 - DAY**

The door is KICKED open! The pair enter, leaving the door slightly ajar as they inspect the area.

The lights are off. The room is quiet. A SUITCASE rests on a fold-out tray. An empty BOTTLE OF WINE and TWO GLASSES sit on the small two-seater TABLE by the door. Cheap lipstick stains one of the glasses.

MEGAN  
(whisper)  
She's not here.

MAX  
Her shit's everywhere.

Max takes a few steps forward. He notices some CLOTHES across the floor. He looks over to the bed.

A WOMAN lies under the covers. Megan also notices.

MEGAN  
She's asleep.

Max walks to the side of the bed. He stares at the Someone under the covers. Max yells.

MAX  
(to the woman)  
Hey!

Megan didn't expect him to speak so loudly.

MAX  
(getting angry)  
Hey! Wake up.

The Woman doesn't move. Max kicks the side of the bed.

No movement. Megan takes a step forward.

MAX  
It's time for you to leave. Just  
pack your bags and go!

No response.

Max shakes the bed with all of his might. Still nothing.

MEGAN  
(realized)  
Max...

Max PULLS off the covers. The Woman lays motionless.

Dead.

Before either of them can react... CODY bursts into the room.

Megan screams (at Cody's surprise entrance and the body). Max slowly steps away from the bed.

CODY  
Caught you! Caught you! I'm going  
to tell Mom you were doing it!

Megan moves close to Max, practically putting her arms around him. Cody hasn't noticed the body yet. He's too excited about catching his sister in a room with a boy.

CODY  
(to Megan)  
Did he pee in you?

MAX  
 (re: the body)  
 Holy shit.

MEGAN  
 Oh my god.

Cody notices the body on the bed. He walks toward her. Pokes her with a finger. Then...

SCREAMS that annoying high-pitch only a child can reach. Max covers his ears. Megan covers Cody's mouth.

KNOCK! KNOCK! The door begins to push open. Max rushes over and slams the door. He looks through the peephole.

**PEEPHOLE POV** - Thomas stands outside the door.

THOMAS  
 Louise? I heard a scream... I can't find my key. Are you okay?

**BACK TO SCENE**

The kids whisper-yell to each other.

MAX  
 It's him!

MEGAN  
 WHAT DO WE DO?

MAX  
 I DON'T KNOW!

BANG! BANG!

THOMAS (O.S.)  
 Louise? Let me in. Are you okay?

Max flips on a RADIO. "Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You" by Frankie Vallie. It's loud. The dial is turned to eleven.

MEGAN  
 What are you doing?

MAX  
 Maybe he'll just go away.

MEGAN  
 Because he's afraid of music?

BANG! BANG!

THOMAS (O.S.)  
Is everything okay? Please open up.  
We have to talk.

MEGAN  
... Do you think he killed her?

MAX  
(defensive)  
No. Of course not.

MEGAN  
I don't know him. He's not MY  
Grandpa! Maybe he's a fucking  
murderer!

THOMAS (O.S.)  
I don't think I can do this  
anymore...

Max and Megan turn toward the door.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - HALLWAY - DAY**

Thomas continues to bang on the door. The music sneaks under the door.

THOMAS  
(to the door)  
Please... Let's talk.

Carol approaches.

CAROL  
Thomas... what are you doing?

THOMAS  
Oh. I, uh, I heard a scream from  
this room. I was just making sure  
whoever is inside is okay.

CAROL  
(runs to her room)  
We should call the front desk!

THOMAS  
(nervous)  
I'm sure everything's okay. Maybe I  
was just hearing things.

Thomas stands outside Room 204, sweating.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ROOM 204 - DAY**

Max and Megan are freaking out. Cody stares at the body.

MAX

We can get out of this. I don't want her to find out anymore. You're right.

MEGAN

Well, it's too late for that!

Max paces over to the bathroom. The SMALL WINDOW is open. Max looks through the window toward a DUMPSTER below.

Megan enters the bathroom. She see him standing on the toilet, looking down and out the window.

MEGAN

I need a drink.

Megan goes to the mini-fridge and pulls out a few mini-bottles. She pours them (rum, vodka, whatever mixture) into one cup and starts drinking.

Max rushes into the bedroom and GRABS THE DEAD WOMAN'S FEET. He pulls but she doesn't move.

Megan chugs her Long Island iced tea concoction.

MAX

Put that down! I need your help.

MEGAN

What is wrong with you?

MAX

What's wrong with you?

They stare off at each other. Megan goes back to her drink.

MAX

Cody, do you want to play a game?

Cody smiles. It's all he's ever wanted since they met.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - HALLWAY**

Carol returns to the hallway and goes to now-sweating Thomas.

CAROL

Alan is on his way with the keys.

THOMAS  
You didn't need to do that!

CAROL  
Just in case... is something wrong?

THOMAS  
(losing it)  
I'm sure everything is fine. We should really mind our own business. Hey, how about we go get an early dinner? Just the two of us?

Jennifer approaches, carrying her beach chair.

JENNIFER  
What's going on?

CAROL  
Thomas heard someone scream inside this room.

Alan and TWO PARAMEDICS run down the hall. Alan pulls out his keys. Everyone moves out of the way.

Thomas grabs Alan's arm, stopping him.

THOMAS  
I'm sure it's fine.

They make eye contact. It's clear Alan knows who is in this room.

ALAN  
I have to go in to make sure everything is alright. It's procedure.

PARAMEDIC  
Alan, let's go.

Down the hall, a drunk RON stops at his hotel room. He squints, trying to see what the commotion is about.

JENNIFER  
(frustrated)  
Ron. It's alright. Just go lie down.

Ron stumbles his way over to the group.

Thomas takes a step back as Alan inserts the KEY. And they OPEN THE DOOR TO FIND...

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ROOM 204**

Max and Cody pulling the body off the bed. Megan sits in a chair, finishing off her drink.

The adults are speechless. Max stares at the door, caught.

PARAMEDIC

What's going on in here?!

JENNIFER

Cody? What are you doing!

CODY

I'm helping Max get rid of a body!

The Paramedics rush into the room. Max and Cody step out of the way. Alan turns off the radio.

JENNIFER

(to Cody)

Come over here, now.

Thomas enters, taking in the sight. He slowly walks over to the side of the bed and takes a seat. It's overwhelming.

A Paramedic pulls a PEN CAP out of the dead woman's mouth.

Thomas picks up a "SUDOKU" book that rests on the bed. He rolls the paperback in his hands. Tears quickly form in his eyes.

Carol enters the room. She walks toward the body. She looks over at Thomas. The pieces quickly come together.

Their eyes connect, but he looks away. Ashamed. Tears form in his eyes. Carol looks at the dead woman's face.

Carol sits on the other side of the bed, away from Thomas.

CAROL

(to Max)

Is that what you wanted to show me?

Max can't respond. He looks over to Megan, who stands nearby Cody and Jennifer. Megan can't meet Max's eyes.

Thomas snuffles, wiping his nose on his wrist. Carol appears almost like it is not a surprise, taking everything far too well, and Max doesn't understand how to answer her.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - WALKWAY - NIGHT**

The sun has recently set.

Max sits outside the room while his Grandparents YELL inside. He can't make out what they're saying but it isn't good.

He looks over the balcony to see Megan sitting by the side of the pool.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - POOL - NIGHT**

SPLASH! Cody cannonballs into the pool. Megan rests on the edge with her feet dangling in the water.

Max sits a few feet away from her. There's a silence between them. It's been a big day.

Max looks up at the walkway. The door to Room 204 is covered in "Caution" tape.

MEGAN

Are they still up there?

MAX

Yeah.

MEGAN

Who was she?

MAX

Apparently she's from around here.  
Near the hotel... I couldn't really  
hear through the door.

Max's attentions drifts up to see...

The Grandparent's room opens and Carol exits. She doesn't slam the door. In fact, she appears emotionless. She simply heads toward the lobby.

A moment later, Thomas exits the room. He doesn't call out to her. He just watches as she walks away.

Thomas looks down to Max at the pool. He doesn't wave, he doesn't nod. It's just a passive glance. Max looks down at the pool.

Thomas goes back into the room.

Megan puts her hand on his hand. Trying to be comforting. A friend.

MAX QUICKLY LEANS IN AND KISSES HER.

Shocked, she pushes him INTO THE POOL. Max jumps up from under the water.

MEGAN

What the fuck is your problem?

MAX

I just thought --

MEGAN

You thought after everything that happened today that right now would be the moment to kiss me?

Max is confused. Hurt. Until...

MAX

What's the point?! You haven't cared about me at all, have you? You've just been using me to get away from your own problems! You're probably the reason your parents hate each other.

A beat.

MEGAN

Are you done?  
(silence)  
Come on, Cody. Let's go.

Cody swims over to Max and PUNCHES him in the back.

MAX

Hey!

Cody climbs out of the pool. He looks down at Max with an overprotective-brother glare.

MEGAN

It's okay. I'll meet you upstairs.

Cody walks off, never taking his eyes away from Max.

MEGAN

Don't text me anymore.

MAX

(quick)  
I won't.

Megan looks up at the hotel rooms. The caution-taped Room 204. At the day they've all had.

MEGAN

I thought you were better. But  
you're just like everyone else.  
Good luck in juvie, asshole.

She walks away. Max stands in the pool. And like his grandfather, he doesn't go after her.

He's alone.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ANDERS ROOM - NIGHT**

Max lays on his cot, listening to music. Thomas is in the bathroom. Carol enters. Max sits up, removes his headphones.

CAROL

Hi, Max!

MAX

Hi?

She walks over and sits at the end of the cot.

CAROL

Today has been a... well, a big  
day. I'm sure it's been a lot for  
you.

Max nods, unsure why she's acting so calm.

CAROL

So here's the plan: we're going to  
stay two more days then head for  
Florida. I've called your mother  
and she knows you'll be back on  
Sunday. I also told her you  
finished your letter. That's done,  
right?

Thomas exits the bathroom. He sees Carol, surprised to see her.

CAROL

I was just telling Max the plans we  
discussed...

Thomas looks confused.

CAROL

(to Max)

That tomorrow we're going to spend the day together. Then on Thursday we're going to the wake at the church down the street... For her. Do you understand?

He doesn't.

CAROL

We're going to do the right thing and show our respects.

Max looks over to his grandfather, who watches Carol, just as confused as he is. Carol goes to the SIDE DESK and pulls out a FOLDER.

CAROL

(sweetly)

Alrighty. Well, is anyone else hungry?

Off their blank stares, we...

CUT TO:

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ANDERS ROOM - NIGHT**

Our trio sit on the edge of the bed, each with a TV TRAY in front of them. They all have a CHEESEBURGER, FRENCH FRIES, and a MILKSHAKE. Max and Thomas haven't touched their food.

JEOPARDY plays in the background as they stare at the TV.

CAROL

Who is Sacagawea?

TV CONTESTANT (O.S.)

Who is Sacagawea?

ALEX TREBEK (O.S.)

That is correct!

Carol takes another bite of her burger.

DISSOLVE TO:

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Megan and her family load into their car. Jennifer buckles Cody into the back. Ron enters the driver's seat with his coffee.

Megan stands with her door open, looking back at the lobby. Waiting. Hoping.

JENNIFER

Come on, Megan.

Megan enters the car. And they drive off toward Florida.

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

Our trio sit in beach chairs. Thomas and Max look out at the water. Carol drinks a strawberry daiquiri.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Our trio sit at a table for three. They hand the Waiter their menus, having just placed their orders.

Most in the restaurant look over in their direction. Carol picks up the dessert menu.

CAROL

Oh, they have lava cake.

**EXT. THE COTTAGES - ROOM 204 - NIGHT**

Max stands in front of Room 204. Police tape covers the door. He removes the keycard from his pocket and enters.

**INT. THE COTTAGES - ROOM 204 - NIGHT**

Max sits on the side of the bed where the woman was found. He pulls his phone from his pocket and scrolls through the names. He stops at "Megan." Considers.

Then scrolls up to "Dad." Max waits while the phone rings.

His father answers but it's difficult to hear. It's loud on the other end, as if his father is at a bar or standing under an airplane.

DAD (O.S.)

This is Rob. Who's this?

MAX

Hey, Dad. It's me.

DAD (O.S.)

Hello? You're going to have to speak up. I have some people over.

(to someone nearby)

Hey Janice! It's great to see you!

MAX

Dad? Can you hear me?

DAD (O.S.)

Max? Oh hey, buddy. Sorry I didn't know it was you. I just got a new phone.

MAX

How are --

DAD (O.S.)

Yeah, you can put those in the cooler out back. Everyone's there now... Hey, Max. The signal's shit out here. How about you give me a call next month, champ? Got a lot going on right now. I miss you! We'll talk soon, pal.

Click.

Max calmly places his cell phone in his pocket, processing.

Suddenly, a surge of anger explodes out of him. Max rips the RADIO off the night stand and tosses it into the MIRROR, shattering glass across the floor. He rips a drawer out and throws it on the ground. It's a blur of destruction.

And, just as soon as he began, he stops to catch his breath.

Max turns to see...

THOMAS standing in the doorway. Thomas looks around the room, at the angry teenager and broken glass.

MAX

... I called Dad.

Thomas nods, surveying the room.

THOMAS

I see that.

After a moment, Thomas begins to pick up the pieces of glass.

Max picks up the phone and puts it back on the night stand. And, together, they begin to silently clean up the room.

**EXT. VIRGINIA BEACH MALL - DAY**

The next morning. The Lincoln pulls into the empty parking lot.

**EXT. MACY'S - DAY**

Carol, Max, and Thomas stand outside, waiting for the mall to open. Thomas wears a black suit, Carol wears a church dress, and Max is in a T-shirt and basketball shorts. His pajamas.

A MALL SECURITY GUARD unlocks the door from the inside for the waiting trio. Carol and Max enter. Thomas waits outside for a moment, then follows.

**INT. MACY'S - DAY**

Max steps in front of a THREE-SIDED MIRROR wearing a BLACK SUIT.

Carol steps behind him and adjusts his tie.

CAROL

You look just like Robbie...  
Doesn't he, Thomas?

Thomas stands a few feet away. He wipes his nose with a handkerchief. Thomas and Max make eye contact, the previous night's events shared between only them.

A MACY'S EMPLOYEE approaches.

CAROL

We're running late. We'll take it.

Carol rips off the TAG as we...

CUT TO:

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas drives. Carol rides shotgun. Max in the back.

Max types into his phone. He stares at the message. But deletes it. He looks out the window as they approach a CHURCH.

**EXT. CHURCH - DAY**

Max, Carol, and Thomas walk toward the entrance. No one talks, no one looks at each another.

Carol STEPS in a PUDDLE, drenching her left dress shoe in MUD. She exhales and closes her eyes, swallowing her anger.

THOMAS

Carol...

She smiles, stepping out of the puddle.

CAROL

Just a little mud, Thomas. Nothing to worry about.

Carol steps ahead of them, one foot covered in mud. At the base of the stairs, Max and Thomas watch her enter the church. They look up at the large CROSS over the door.

Thomas takes a seat on the steps.

THOMAS

You go ahead. I'll be there in a few minutes.

Max reads a SIGN by the door: "10AM WAKE - Louise Miller."

THOMAS

Max?

Max looks down at his grandfather.

THOMAS

Nevermind...

**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

It is a small church with a few pews but the room is fairly full. A MINISTER (50s) stands at the ALTAR. The service has already started.

Next to the altar is a PICTURE of a younger twenty something year-old Louise Miller.

MINISTER

Let us pray silently for Louise, shall we?

Max walks down the aisle, scanning the crowd as they silently pray...

MINISTER (V.O.)

Dear Lord, please protect and shelter Louise in her transition to her new life. May she have all of her wishes come true and that she...

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN in the third row, center...

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (V.O.)

Know that I'll miss our weekend walks, Louise. I'll always think of you when someone orders a Tall No-Foam Latte and...

A COLLEGE KID in the second row, right...

COLLEGE KID (V.O.)

I wish I could have told you that I was the one that broke the front window. I'm sorry, Aunt Louise. I just want you to know that...

Carol sits in the front row, but she whispers silently to herself with her eyes closed. Max moves down the pew and sits next to her just as...

CAROL

(whispers to herself)

I hope you burn in hell.

She opens her eyes. And exhales. Max studies her face, trying to understand. She places her hand on his and lightly smiles.

THE CHURCH DOOR OPENS. Thomas enters. Max turns to look as Thomas takes a seat in the last row.

Max looks around the crowd, noticing the nods and tears.

MINISTER

(to crowd)

There are refreshments in the back. And at noon is the Will and Testimony meeting in our conference area for those invited guests. God bless.

The crowd stands and the service ends. Everyone heads toward the back to the fruit punch and cookies by the door.

Thomas stays in his seat as the crowd passes him.

The Minister approaches Carol and Max.

MINISTER

Excuse me, are you Mrs. Anders? I spoke with you on the phone about the service.

CAROL

Yes. It's nice to meet you.

MINISTER

I've been asked to let you know that you and your husband are invited to the meeting this afternoon. Louise left something for --

CAROL

We actually need to get on the road.

MINISTER

I see...

Carol exhales.

**INT. CHURCH - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Around a dozen friends and family are seated around the conference table as a LAWYER (40s) sits at the center, speaking to the crowd. A SMALL BOX rests on the table in front of him.

And then, at the end of the table is Carol and Thomas. She's composed, he looks like hell. Several people in the room stare at them during the meeting, unsure who they are.

Max sits a few feet behind his Grandparents, in a chair by the door. He types into his phone...

MAX (TEXT)

*I miss you.*

Deciding whether to send... But Carol startles Max and his thumb hits SEND.

CAROL

(whispers to Max)

Put your phone away, dear. Don't be rude.

He does so as the Middle-Aged Woman leans over to Carol.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

How did you know Louise?

CAROL  
We, we were acquaintances.

The Middle-Aged Woman nods, unsure who they are.

LAWYER  
And, lastly, is there a Mr. and  
Mrs. Thomas and Carol Anders in  
attendance?

CAROL  
Yes.

LAWYER  
Alright then.

He uses his pen to open a sealed ENVELOPE. Carol and Thomas ready themselves for the worst. The crowd watches with curiosity.

The Lawyer READS from a letter with a dry, monotone voice.

LAWYER  
"Carol..."

Carol and Thomas sit up in their seats, shocked. They did not expect for the letter to be addressed to her.

LAWYER  
"I cannot express the guilt that I  
have felt over the years. A real  
woman would have spoken to you.  
Told you the truth. I do not think  
there is any way I can make up for  
what I have done to you."

Everyone in the room's mouth drops.

Carol looks at her husband. He can't meet her eyes.

LAWYER  
"Thomas was the love of my life but  
he would never come home to me, or  
build me a house, or have children  
with me."

Max's phone BUZZES. He ignores it.

LAWYER  
"I know that there is nothing I can  
give to make up for what I may have  
done to your marriage, but I hope  
you find this as a token of my good  
will."

The Lawyer leans forward and hands Carol a sealed envelope. Everyone watches as Carol considers opening it, but instead, places it in her purse.

LAWYER  
 (to Thomas)  
 Ms. Miller did not leave a letter  
 for you, Mr. Anders.

The Lawyer opens the cardboard BOX and removes a LARGE BINDER.

LAWYER  
 But she left you this.

The Lawyer hands Thomas your average black three-ring binder.

The crowd watches as Thomas opens the binder.

Inside are DOZENS of PLASTIC SLEEVE PAGES that one would normally use to collect baseball cards. However, in this binder are ROOM KEYS. Every room key from every evening they spent together.

The opening of the binder shows actual metal keys. As Thomas flips through the pages, the metal keys transition into electronic keycards. Each representing a different hotel room and, conversely, a different drive down the coast with Carol.

Max watches as Thomas closes the binder and wipes tears from his eyes. Carol looks away from him.

**EXT. CHURCH - DAY**

The crowd files out of the church. Max, carrying the BINDER, follows his Grandparents toward the car. The envelope pokes out of Carol's purse.

The College Kid approaches Thomas with a few OTHERS.

COLLEGE KID  
 Hey, old man?

Thomas turns. The College Kid PUNCHES Thomas in the face! Thomas puts a hand to his eye.

COLLEGE KID  
 That's for fucking Aunt Louise!

The Others pull the College Kid away. Max and Carol watch with disbelief. Unsure what to do.

THOMAS

Let's just go.

His eye is already swelling and turning black.

They approach the car and Thomas removes the keys from his pocket. He heads for the driver's door.

CAROL

I'll drive.

Thomas and Max both look up to her, concerned for their safety.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

For the first time on this journey, Carol drives. Thomas sits in the front seat, looking at his black eye in the mirror. Max sits in the back. Every few moments the car brakes and speeds up, brakes and speeds up. Max notices Carol's driving: she's using both feet.

**INT. HOTEL - NIGHT**

Carol reads a book in one of the two beds. Max lays on the second, watching TV.

Thomas enters from the restroom in his pajamas. He walks toward Carol's bed. She puts her book down on the open side of the bed, turns off the light and rolls over.

**LATER**

Thomas lays in bed next to his grandson. All three are wide-awake, silently staring into the darkness.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Our trio drive down the coast. Despite his black eye, Thomas drives, Carol is in the front seat, Max in the back.

Suddenly, it begins to rain. A total downpour that only the South can provide.

The trash bag covering the sunroof begins to slope down into the car. But not for long - the trash bag rips and rain pours inside the Lincoln.

Our trio stare forward, as their trip that couldn't get any worse, just did as it literally rains inside the Lincoln.

**EXT. BRIDGE - DAY**

The Lincoln is parked under an overpass/bridge, waiting for the rain to stop. Carol and Max sit nearby while Thomas attempts to dry the soaked interior. Everyone is drenched.

Carol appears focused, watching Thomas's every movement. Almost in a trance by him. Max moves next to his grandmother.

MAX

Are you... okay?

She smiles, and goes back to watching Thomas.

MAX

Uhm. I know we haven't spent much time together. On this trip. Just us. But I want you to know that --

Carol puts a hand on Max's knee, patting it gently. Max knows to let her be. She returns her gaze to her husband's work as they wait for the rain to stop.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

The storm has passed and the afternoon sun shines through the clouds. Carol, Thomas and Max each have a towel over their shoulders.

They pass a SIGN that reads, "BEACH - NEXT EXIT."

CAROL

Pull over.

**EXT. BEACH - DAY**

Our trio stand at the beach. Thomas holds onto the binder near Carol. Max watches from a few feet behind. It could not be a more beautiful day to go to the beach.

CAROL

(to Thomas)

Go ahead.

They watch from the sand as Thomas, in his shoes and pants, walks KNEE HIGH into the ocean.

They can't make out what he says, but Thomas speaks to the binder. He holds it close to his chest.

Thomas drops the binder into the ocean and it quickly sinks.

Max watches Carol closely. Without taking her eyes off Thomas, Carol pulls the ENVELOPE from her purse, TEARS IT, and lets the pieces fall into the sand.

Thomas walks back toward his wife. Carol steps ahead of Max, toward her husband.

Carol SLAPS him hard across the face (opposite side of his black eye). Thomas takes it. They stare at each other for a moment. Max is unsure what will happen next. He watches as...

They kiss.

His Grandparents wrap their arms around each other and truly kiss. Max's jaw drops. He can't take it anymore.

MAX

Are you fucking kidding me?!

They look over at him.

MAX

You have got to be fucking kidding me? That's it?! He CHEATED on you for years. Did you see how many keys were in that book?

Carol and Thomas share a look.

THOMAS

Max.

MAX

No. Don't "Max" me. This isn't one of those you're adults and I'm a 'child' moments. I'm 15!

(to Thomas)

You're a piece of shit.

(to Carol)

And why are you giving in to him? He's an asshole! That fucked someone else!

Carol and Thomas look at each other.

CAROL

He is an asshole. You're right, Max.

Thomas looks down at the sand. There's a silence between them. The BINDER washes up onto the beach. They all notice.

Carol heads toward the car. Max and Thomas watch her leave.

THOMAS

(softly)

Look... This is my one chance, kid.  
I don't get it either but... Help  
me out. We're family.

Max looks at him blankly. Thomas appears sincere. Max can't decide what to do. Thomas catches up to Carol and holds her hand.

MAX

What the fuck is going on...

Max watches as the couple quietly walk together toward the car holding hands. He places his hands in his pocket and is surprised to find the Room 204 keycard. Considers.

He walks over to the washed-ashore binder and begins to dig a hole in the sand to bury the binder.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Max stares out the window in the back. Thomas drives with Carol in the front seat. Music lightly plays over the radio. Max notices the couple smile at each other. He shakes his head. Frustrated.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING**

The Lincoln turns off an exit toward a gas station/diner.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - EVENING**

Thomas taps on Carol's window and waves at her. She smiles at him. They connect hands through the glass. Thomas points at a DINER. Carol nods and begins to collect her things.

Carol opens her door slightly. She turns to Max, who could not appear more distant and upset.

CAROL

(to Thomas)

We'll be there in a minute, honey.

Thomas looks back at Max. He understands to walk away. Carol closes her door and turns toward Max. After a moment...

MAX

Why don't you leave him?

CAROL  
Are you crazy? I'm not going to do that.

MAX  
... You could get a divorce.

CAROL  
Do you know how much work that is? Finding a place to live, lawyers. Sounds awful.

Carol looks toward the diner and sees Thomas sitting alone at a table, waiting for them.

CAROL  
I don't know, Max... When you get to my age sometimes you just want someone to walk with.

Max looks confused.

CAROL  
Why did you throw a trash can through a windshield?

MAX  
Huh?

She turns toward Max.

CAROL  
You can't run away from every problem in your life. Even if your family is the problem. Even if you are the problem...  
(beat)  
Who do you want to walk with, Max?

Max looks at the back of her head, surprised by the question.

CAROL  
Cause everything else is bullshit.

Max is speechless. She begins to exit the car.

CAROL  
Come inside, if you like. Or stay here. Whatever you want to do.

Max watches her walk away. After a moment, he picks up his phone. Considers.

He looks through his window to see Carol sit down on the same side of the table with Thomas. Max notices the TEXT MESSAGE icon blinking on his phone.

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*Itz Cody. Sorry I hit u.*

Then...

MEGAN (TEXT)  
She won't tell u but Meg wants ur babies.

Max smiles. He continues reading.

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*Hey it's me. Cody took my phone.  
I'm going to kill him.*

And another.

MEGAN (TEXT)  
*I miss you, too.*

#### **INT. DINER - EVENING**

Carol and Thomas read their menus as Max rushes over. Carol looks at him, hoping for what he'll say.

MAX  
I want to find Megan.

CAROL  
Then let's go.

#### **EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

Headlights fill the sea of cars moving on the interstate. Families, truckers, and the like making their way home. It's almost a beautiful sight. Very orderly and serene.

Except for one car SWERVING between lanes. The Lincoln.

#### **INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT**

Thomas speeds them down the highway. Carol is in the front. Max leans in between them, practically sitting between the couple.

CAROL  
How far are we from Florida?

THOMAS

Ten, maybe twelve hours.

Max POPS open a RED BULL and gives it to Thomas. He chugs, nearly spitting it up.

THOMAS

What is this? Horse piss?

Thomas takes a SWIG from his Peptobismol to chase the Red Bull.

CAROL

(covering her nose)

It smells like melted Skittles. I hate it.

THOMAS

And it's going to give me a goddamn heart attack.

He hands it back to Max.

THOMAS

You're sure they'll be at Cape Canaveral?

MAX

Megan said they were going there tomorrow. But she won't reply to any of my texts...

Carol and Thomas exchange concerned looks.

CAROL

Will we make it?

THOMAS

We'll drive all night if we have to. Right, Max?

They focus on the journey in front of them.

#### **INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

The sun is just beginning to rise. CLOCK - 6:15.

Thomas drives. For the first time, MAX sits in the front. Carol sleeps in the backseat. Max's eyes are wide open due to the THREE emptied Red Bull cans on the floor. Thomas YAWNS.

MAX

Are you alright?

THOMAS

Tired.

Thomas looks over at Max. Studying him.

THOMAS

Sit up straight?

Max does so. Thomas looks over his shoulder at sleeping Carol. Considers.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Max DRIVES. He sits on his grandfather's jacket to boost him up. Thomas sits in the passenger seat with a coffee. Carol SNORES in the back.

Thomas reaches over and clicks on Cruise Control.

THOMAS

Don't touch the gas. All you have to do is lightly press on the brake if you need to stop or slow down. Otherwise, just keep her straight.

Max keeps his eyes on the road, more focused than he's ever been in his life. Thomas grins.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas and Carol sleep in the backseat, holding each other like young lovers at a drive-in, while Max steers. Max POPS open another Red Bull.

A CAR passes on his left. The DRIVER looks over at him, doing a double-take ("is that kid driving!"). Max lifts his can with a nod. The driver looks puzzled and slows, giving Max room on the road.

Carol yawns, stretching her arms. She sits up in the backseat, rubs her eyes. Then notices her grandson driving.

CAROL

Max!

Startled, Max SWERVES the wheel! The Lincoln begins a 360 SPIN ON THE HIGHWAY. MAX SCREAMS.

Thomas wakes up from the yelling. He looks out the window to see they're spinning down the highway! EVERYONE YELLS!

The car comes to a SCREECHING STOP in front of a TRUCK STOP.

Luckily, no one else was nearby on the highway. They had the road to themselves.

Carol looks over at Thomas, shocked and pissed.

THOMAS  
Good morning?

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Thomas drives. Carol is in the front seat. Max in the back. Sinatra sings over the RADIO as they move down the...

**EXT. FLORIDA COAST - DAY**

The Lincoln drives down the Sunshine state's coastal highway.

**EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - DAY**

The Lincoln turns into the Kennedy Space Center Visitors Center.

They come to a STOP in front of a SECURITY GUARD POST. Thomas speaks through the driver's window to a GUARD.

SECURITY GUARD  
Hello, Sir. How can I help you?

THOMAS  
We're looking to visit the --

The Security Guard responds with a rehearsed and impassioned speech. During which the trio look at one another, concerned.

SECURITY GUARD  
We here at the Kennedy Space Center regret to inform you that the NASA Space Program no longer performs shuttle launches. The Visitor Center is currently closed for remodeling until we open the Atlantis Program Complex. For more information, please visit [www](http://www.nasa.gov).--

THOMAS  
Look, I'm trying to find a girl. A young girl. Like 16 or 17.

SECURITY GUARD  
Excuse me?

THOMAS

No, not like that. For him. His friend. Goddammit.

(to Carol/Max)

Can someone help me here?

CAROL

Has a family been here recently? Family of four, with a teenage girl and a young boy?

MAX

The boy's name is Cody and --

The Security Guard leans into the car.

SECURITY GUARD

Was he around 7 or 8 years old? Brown hair with a bowl cut?

MAX / CAROL / THOMAS

Yes!

The Security Guard pulls up his sleeve REVEALING BITE MARKS.

SECURITY GUARD

Damn kid bit me. I signed up for a lot with this job. I mean, I carry a gun, but I never thought I'd get bit!

CAROL

Did they say where they were going?

SECURITY GUARD

We got the kid back in their car and sent them on their way. They're lucky we didn't arrest him.

Max looks at his phone: no responses from Megan.

SECURITY GUARD

You can do a U-turn to head back to the highway.

He salutes. Thomas half-salutes back and U-turns the Lincoln off the property.

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - DAY**

Max looks out the back window as the Kennedy Space Center becomes just a spec in the distance.

CAROL  
(to Thomas)  
Do we have time to find her house?

Thomas eyes the clock.

THOMAS  
We have to get him to the airport.

Max sits forward in his seat, giving up on his chance to ever see Megan again.

**EXT. AIRPORT - DAY**

Thomas pulls Max's suitcase out of the trunk. Max stands on the curb wearing his backpack next to Carol.

Thomas extends his hand. After a moment of hesitation, Max accepts the handshake.

Max looks down at his palm: \$300. Thomas smiles, rubs Max's hair and enters the Lincoln. There's nothing more for them to say to each other.

Carol looks around at the crowd of families entering the airport. Couples, singles, kids.

CAROL  
Are you going to tell your mother  
about all of this?

Max shakes his head. He won't.

He glances over at Thomas, who plays with the radio dial inside the Lincoln. Carol kisses Max on the cheek.

CAROL  
You're different from your father.  
And your grandfather... You know  
that, right?

Max holds her hand for a moment. He nods. He doesn't want to cry so he heads toward the entrance.

CAROL  
(yells, entering Lincoln)  
Maybe we'll do this again in six  
months?

Max waves goodbye and as he enters the airport...

HONK!

Max turns to see the Lincoln screech to a halt, nearly hitting a MAN crossing the street. The Man bangs on the hood and flicks Thomas off. Thomas honks again at him. The Lincoln drives off.

The Man passes Max.

MAN

What a fucking asshole.

Max smiles to himself as he watches the Lincoln drive into the night.

**INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT**

The plane sits at the gate, preparing for takeoff. Max stares at the court letter he wrote early into their journey as it rests on his seat's pull-down tray.

He pulls out his cell phone. Deciding.

**INT. MEGAN'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Megan lays on her new bed in her new home surrounded by unopened boxes.

Her phone rings. She checks the screen and, after a slight delay, answers.

MEGAN

(to Phone)

Well, well, well. If it isn't Max the criminal.

We INTERCUT between the pair on the phone.

MAX

... They're staying together.

Megan sits up in her bed.

MEGAN

What? That's fucking retarded.

MAX

That's what I said. But... I don't know. Maybe that's how it's supposed to be.

MEGAN

But she's just laying over. She's giving up.

MAX  
She's an adult.

They sit silently. Pondering this.

MAX  
... I'm sorry I didn't give you a  
good kiss.

MEGAN  
You're a good guy, Max. One day  
you'll find the right girl who can  
prove that to you.

Max wants her to be that girl.

MEGAN  
And even though you have the  
world's worst timing...  
(knowing it's true)  
You were my first 'good' kiss.

Max smiles.

MEGAN  
Call me the next time you're in  
Florida. Well, if you're ever  
allowed to leave your state.

MAX  
(laughing)  
Shut up.

MEGAN  
I'll have my license soon. We could  
hang out.

MAX  
Goodnight, Megan.

**INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT**

Max holds onto his phone and tucks it into his pocket. Then  
stares at the letter. He rips it up and tosses the pieces  
onto the floor.

He opens his notebook and begins to write.

MAX (V.O.)  
Dear State of New York...

**EXT. BUFFALO AIRPORT - NIGHT**

The plane lands on the snowy New York runway.

MAX (V.O.)

I know I've done wrong and I accept  
the consequences for my actions...  
But did you never make any mistakes  
when you were my age?

**INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT**

Laura calls Max from the Nurse's desk. The Emergency Room is crowded and busy. She looks regretful, unable to pick him up.

MAX (V.O.)

You probably see me as another  
child in the system. Another  
shithead heading down the wrong  
road, in with the wrong crowd...

**EXT. BUFFALO AIRPORT - NIGHT**

Max hangs up his phone. He sits at a bus stop, waiting for his ride.

MAX (V.O.)

And sure, you could blame my  
parents, my family...

**INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - SUNRISE**

Thomas drives with a hand on his stomach. Carol hands him the Peptobismol. Thomas smiles and swigs from the bottle.

MAX (V.O.)

But they're just like me: they  
don't know what they're doing. And  
now I understand that no one does.

Carol looks out the window and exhales. It's unclear what the future holds for them, but she grins, likely thinking about her grandson.

MAX (V.O.)

And that's okay...

**INT. MEGAN'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Megan picks up a dirty pair of jeans off the floor. She reaches into a pocket and pulls out their leftover joint. She places their memento in her new desk drawer, saving it for when they meet again.

MAX (V.O.)

I accept it because I know there are people that care about me...

**INT. BUS - MOVING - NIGHT**

The sun begins to rise as Max looks out the window (similar to Carol earlier).

MAX

And sure, you could call me a shithead, too, and send me away or do whatever you think I should do now... But let me be honest, for once, when I say that...

**INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Laura enters, exhausted but excited to see her son. She rounds the corner to see Max standing in front of the refrigerator as he CRACKS open a can. She expects the worse.

Max pulls out the fresh beer and hands it to his mother.

MAX (V.O.)

I'm trying.

Laura watches Max return to the kitchen table to work on his letter. She holds onto her new beer, confused. But proud.

She passes the refrigerator, not noticing the ROOM 204 KEYCARD clipped to the door next to various family photos.

And as Max and Laura edit his letter...

FADE TO BLACK.

**THE END.**