

DES MOINES
"A Brave New World"
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DES MOINES

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TEASER

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Stalks as far as the eye can see. A street adjacent to the cornfield. Cars stopped at the traffic light.

The light turns green but one vehicle, a late-model luxury SUV, doesn't budge.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Behind the wheel is JULIAN PARKER (38), African American, sharply dressed business attire. In the backseat, a LACROSSE STICK and a FOOTBALL.

Julian fixated on this cornfield. A driver hits the HORN but Julian doesn't flinch. Then in the field, a monster of harvesting machinery: A CORN COMBINE. Four rows at a time, the teeth consume, cut, shuck, and shell.

Julian rolls down the window, aims his phone and snaps away. The truck slows to a stop and the ELDERLY FARMER, dressed in worn overalls and boots, climbs out and carefully steps down to inspect his machine. He turns to Julian who respectfully lowers the phone.

The farmer ignores it, hoists his aging body back up into the combine and resumes harvesting. Another horn. Julian snaps out of it, "thanks" the cars in his rearview, drives off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DES MOINES - DAY

The SUV drives through this mid-sized city where old downtown makes way for the modern and new.

A BILLBOARD displays a *smiling little girl being tossed by a smiling dad into the arms of a smiling mom.*

The slogan: Catch Des Moines!

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

The SUV pulls into the parking garage.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

Julian, his polished black lace-ups clomp against the marble floor. Just Julian walking through. This isn't Manhattan.

INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA

MARGE (70), behind the console. Julian enters through the wide oak double doors.

JULIAN

Gooooood morning, Marge.

MARGE

Halt.

Marge extends a handful of messages. He detours to the console and when he reaches for them, she pulls her hand back.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Yet again, Mr. Parker, your voice mail is full. I'm running out of ink.

JULIAN

I'll buy you pencils.

MARGE

Why don't you just delete your messages.

JULIAN

My kid's voices are on those messages.

(off her sympathetic look)

Exactly. Number 1's or number 2's?

She presses the messages into his palm and as he sifts through the messages, he yawns, widens his eyes.

MARGE

And why aren't you sleeping.

JULIAN

Corn.

(off her look)

I can't get enough of the subject.

MARGE

I feel sorry for your wife.

He stops reading his messages, looks at her pointedly.

JULIAN

You know a car can drive cross-country on a half an acre?

Suddenly their attention redirected as two glum-faced MALE EMPLOYEES, both carrying a cardboard storage box, exit through the doors. On this, Julian looks to Marge.

MARGE

Regular or unleaded?

He regards her curiously.

OFFICE

Julian weaves through cubicles as he sifts through his messages and when he finally looks up, he yields:

A COWORKER walking the cross aisle. A glum look on his face.

JULIAN

Somebody doesn't look ready for our nine o'clock, or any o'clock.

The coworker turns into Julian's isle: Carries cardboard box.

COWORKER

I have to reschedule.

On this, Julian turns to the office: Empty cubicles. And at the conference room, MAX CONROY, (60), wears suspenders, checks off names on a clipboard as tearful EMPLOYEES exit.

COWORKER (CONT'D)

...like indefinitely.

The coworker grips box, brushes past him. Julian's face tightens.

JULIAN'S OFFICE - MOMENT'S LATER

Spacious with lots of sunlight. Julian enters, proceeds to his desk, then after a moment, sits like his world is collapsing. He then regards a picture frame:

Wife TESS and their kids, JUNE(15), CONNOR(11), and MIA(9).

On this, WE,

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT BEDROOM - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

A shaft of sunlight cuts through the sparsely furnished room and lands on that same family photo.

At the window is Tess as she raises the shades.

JULIAN (O.S.)

Do not, move.

TESS

What. Why.

Because, she looks amazing in the shaft of sunlight. Even prettier and younger than the photo.

Julian, still in bed and tighty-whities, rolls over and grabs his cellphone. He aims...

TESS (CONT'D)

No. Stop. I'm getting dressed.

She steps out of the light on her way to morning routine.

Julian intercepts her.

TESS (CONT'D)

I have work.

JULIAN

Quit.

TESS

What?

JULIAN

I want you home. For the kids. Quit.

TESS

"Quit." I'm not going to quit, we can't afford it.

JULIAN

Yes, we can. And you will.

TESS

You know I love my job--

JULIAN

I got word. An opportunity at another division. Way more money.

TESS

What opportunity--

JULIAN
Waaay more money.

Tess searches his face for a beat.

TESS
I have to wake the kids--
She starts off...

JULIAN
Des Moines.

She halts. Turns around.

TESS
Iowa.

JULIAN
Come on. Get back in the light.

BACK TO PRESENT

AT THE DOOR

Max Conroy. Clipboard in hand. Won't look Julian in the eye.

JULIAN
My name on that clipboard?

MAX
Danville, Vicksburg, Toledo.

JULIAN
New York?

MAX
They're pink-slipping entire offices.

JULIAN
New York?

Max looks down at his shoes.

MAX
Spared.

Julian throws up his hands.

JULIAN
Man, this isn't happenin'.

MAX

Look, I got it wrong--

JULIAN

You got it wrong? Eight months ago
the ax was coming. Des Moines was the
move. The hell happened?

Max leans on a chair, nauseated.

MAX

Shanxi Province is what happened.

Julian gives pause, stands and goes to the window.

JULIAN

China.

MAX

Growing market. The company needs to
be there, Julian. Not here. There.

(then)

How's your Mandarin.

JULIAN

I don't speak goddamn Mandarin! And
neither do you.

MAX

So I guess my days are done here too.

Julian drops his head. The picture frame. He picks it up.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - MORNING (FLASHBACK)

The morning rush. Tess, buttoning up her blouse, exits the
bedroom in route to the bathroom, Julian on her heels.

JULIAN

...what do you mean talk later, lets
talk now.

TESS

Can't. I'll be late.

She steps into their small bathroom.

JULIAN

Hey. This will be a good move. For
both of us.

Tess turns around looks him in the eye.

TESS
Us, Julian? Really.

She shuts the door. Julian shakes his head, then turns to see down the hall -- daughter June, bookbag draped over shoulder. They share a look, then she turns and exits the apartment.

JULIAN'S OFFICE

MAX
...you're a smart guy, you'll figure
it out--

JULIAN
I'M UNEMPLOYED.
(beat)
IN IOWA. WHAT DO I TELL THEM NOW?

Julian presses the message button.

MIA (VOICE MAIL)
*Daddy? Connor won't give me back the
ipad.*

CONNOR (VOICE MAIL)
*Dad, she keeps clicking on stupid
Youtube. I want my own ipad because I
do school on it. K? Love you.*

MIA(VOICE MAIL)
Love you, daddy.

ON JULIAN

Holding the picture frame of his family. Ready to erupt...

RECEPTION AREA

Marge behind the console. Julian comes through the double doors and this time he's the one holding a box.

JULIAN
Goodbye, Marge.

MARGE
(concerned)
Mr. Parker?

JULIAN
It's okay. Just hold my calls.

MARGE

But what about your messages?

Julian looks at her with what passes for a smile.

JULIAN

Delete 'em.

He backs out and disappears through the oak double doors.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Modest homes and manicured lawns. The Parker's live here.

EXT. PARKER HOME - DAY

FRANK the handyman wearing a tool belt, climbs a ladder and hoists himself onto a rooftop. He stands then pans the Midwest horizon with an inhale/exhale like he's preparing for yoga. After a moment:

TESS (O.S.)

You lost up there?

Tess shields her eyes from the sun.

FRANK

Dormers look intact. Couple of missing shingles 'bout it. I can get those fixed this weekend.

TESS

That's all well and good, Frank but I asked you to give me an estimate on replacement windows. Last I looked, windows are on the side of the house.

FRANK

You're right, I'm busted. It's just, this part of West Des Moines, the elevation is like, WOW. Come up here and make me a liar.

Tess looks around not sure what to do. Frank's on her roof.

TESS

Nope, Frank, I believe you. I also believe the sun will rise in the east, and spring will become summer but that still won't get my windows done any faster will it?

FRANK

Man, you can see for miles up here.

She throws up her hands.

Frank oblivious, basks in the sunlight taking in the horizon as we...

EXT. CAMP DODGE - DAY

...pan another horizon. This one being viewed by Julian as he stands atop a TANK - a decommissioned tank - located on an overlook over Camp Dodge, a small National Guard encampment on the outskirts of the city. A tourist spot.

He sits on the tank's turret to eat his lunch...

On this, WE,

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Julian enters the apartment after a day's work, only to find Tess on the sofa, holding a glass of red wine, big smile.

TESS

I'm drinking a 2005 Vieux Château Certan. Full bodied, rich, ripe blackberry. All plum and floral, with chocolate and spicy aromas...

JULIAN

Okay...

TESS

It's how your wife celebrates.
(then, pointedly)
I got the raise. Which means, I got us.

EXT. CAMP DODGE - CAMP ENTRANCE - DAY

A muddy pickup truck drives in and parks next to Julian's SUV. A couple of TEENAGE BOYS hop out the bed. Teen DRIVER, a Macklemore wannabe, and his rail-thin GIRLFRIEND emerge. Loud, obnoxious horseplay... the peace is over.

But Julian is focused on the horizon eating his sandwich.

After some time at the overlook, the girlfriend notes the SUV and breaks from the group.

Cutoffs, boots, a lip pierced local girl. She looks up at Julian, then back to the SUV, admiring it. Then she sliiiides her delicate fingers along side the smooth paneling. Julian oblivious to all of this.

She flirts around the front of the SUV, twisting her hair around her fingers.

GIRLFRIEND

(to Julian)

This a twenty fifteen or twenty sixteen?

Julian stops chewing, looks over the edge to see this girl looking back at him.

JULIAN

Excuse me?

GIRLFRIEND

Your ride's like tope. Like cap T.

Julian stares at her curiously for a long beat. Then:

JULIAN

I'm going to finish my sandwich.

Julian swivels back around, takes a bite.

GIRLFRIEND (O.S.)

Didn't you go to Roosevelt?

He puts his sandwich back down.

JULIAN

High school?

GIRLFRIEND

Wait, maybe I'm thinking of somebody else.

JULIAN

Thinking's a good thing.

GIRLFRIEND

You know Jeremy Daniels? He got a brother named Daze. Played football--

JULIAN

Look. My daughter, goes to High School. She's about your age. Fifteen, sixteenish?

GIRLFRIEND

Like seri?

JULIAN

Like *totally*.

GIRLFRIEND

Wow. Like, where she go to school?

Julian raises a brow, wavers a response...

EXT. VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A horde of boisterous suburban teens spill out of the state-of-the-art complex located on 38 acres in West Des Moines.

EXT. VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - STUDENT PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

MEGAN, (16), head down because she's texting.

HONK

Megan looks up to find herself standing directly in front of her parked convertible. June Parker already in the passenger's seat ready to go. Megan's smile grows.

EXT. CONVERTIBLE (DRIVING) - DAY

Wind in their smiling faces. Young and free.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Open Iowa road. Farmland and silos in the distance. The convertible drives through.

EXT. CONVERTIBLE (DRIVING) - MOMENTS LATER

June is fiddling with an iphone.

JUNE

...you have like, no songs.

MEGAN

And you have like, no phone.

JUNE

And it SUUUUCKS! Me without a phone is like, missing a fucking arm.

MEGAN

That's way extreme.

JUNE

No. My mom's reaction when Bitch Ward took my phone away? That's extreme.

MEGAN

Wasn't it like the third time you got caught texting in her class?

JUNE

Stop. I was NOT texting.

(then)

I was Vine'ing.

MEGAN

I hate Mrs. Ward's class.

JUNE

I hate your fucking phone.

And June quits the phone and tosses it on the divider.

MEGAN

Hey...

JUNE

And how is it like, I teach you how to drive, yet I'm the one without a fucking license.

Megan turns to her not uttering a word, then grins, then puts eyes back on the road still grinning.

JUNE (CONT'D)

What.

MEGAN

It's just... the way you're talking right now. It makes me think, you're jealous of me. I love that feeling.

JUNE

You're so weird, dude.

MEGAN

No really. Guys look at you.

JUNE

It's high school. If it breathes, guys look at it.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

A SUBURBAN comes barreling through on the driver's side. In the wrong lane, horn HONKING. TEENAGE BOYS with their windows rolled down. Hormones raging.

BACK TO SCENE

Megan startled. She clenches the wheel nervously.

MEGAN

The hell are they doing?

JUNE

Megan, relax. Both hands on the wheel, eyes forward.

The Suburban parallel to them. Megan tries to keep calm. Trying to keep the wheel steady. June arches to see who's driving. Iowa farm boys. Dopey. High school.

JUNE (CONT'D)

DON'T BE JERKS!

The Suburban races ahead, horn blaring loud. It rumbles off.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Too late.
(to Megan)
You did good.

MEGAN

Did I?

JUNE

Yea. I'm still alive.

Megan returns a nervous smile. Both hands tight on the wheel.

CAMP DODGE - DAY

Looking down on Julian still up on the tank, flat on his back.

CLOSE JULIAN

Eyes closed, sun in face. If we didn't know better we would think this is someone without a worry in the world.

GIRLFRIEND (O.S.)

You drunk up there?

Fading up on groggy Julian's POV: Blue skies. Dreamlike.

Then Julian leans over the side and the girlfriend comes into focus. Her boyfriend, (DRIVER), approaches her.

DRIVER
 (to girlfriend)
 Yo lets get the fuck out.
 (looks up to Julian)
 Zup, playa.

Julian doesn't respond. The driver salutes him and moves off. The girlfriend dreamily fixed on Julian like she's high.

GIRLFRIEND
 See you around... "playa".

She joins her friends and they all hop back into the muddy truck hooting and hollering. The driver hits a hard reverse, pops it in 1st, then peels away jerking the boys in the back.

ON JULIAN

...as he watches the muddy truck drive out of the exit.

EXT. JORDAN CREEK ELEMENTARY - DAY

Elementary school kids exit and disperse to awaiting parents as others head towards the line of yellow school buses.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Noisy and crowded. Kids out of their seats, tossing things, horseplay... Mia enters, followed by Connor. Mia looks too small for her bookbag. Connor wears a reflective sash.

Mia tries to proceed down the aisle but rowdy kids are in her way. She turns to her brother Connor who remains standing at the front of the bus and when they communicate that sibling look, she shakes her head "No".

On this, Connor reaches down his shirt, and pulls out an aluminum whistle attached to a lanyard. Mia plugs her ears.

Connor blows. The **SHRILL** of the sound, **HIGH-PITCHED** and **PIERCING**, stops the kids in their tracks. Everyone sits quiet. Mia proceeds down the aisle, finds a seat.

Connor tucks the whistle back in his shirt, remains standing.

EXT. PARKER HOME - DAY

Megan pulls the convertible into the driveway which is on a slight incline. Tess in front of the house with Frank.

June and Megan get out of the convertible walking and giggling in conversation, in their own teenage girl world.

TESS
(calling out to June)
Did your counselor give you the list
of S.A.T. dates?

June oblivious with selective hearing. Tess steps in her way.

TESS (CONT'D)
Earth to June.

June halts.

JUNE
(excuse me)
What?

MEGAN
Hi Mrs. Parker.

TESS
Hello Megan.
(to June)
Can I talk to you?

JUNE
...uh...yeah... What--

TESS
Alone.

June communicates a look to Megan that only teen girls understand.

MEGAN
I'll... be inside.

Megan goes into the house. Tess turns back to her daughter.

TESS
You know what's frustrating me?

JUNE
School's out, mom. I'm done thinking.

TESS
That you and I had this wonderful
agreement. You remember it?

JUNE

Sure. If I kept my grades up, you'd keep your voice down. Thanks for breaking your end of the deal, mom.

June starts off but Tess puts her arm out to stop her.

TESS

That you and I would make it a point to talk. Mother and daughter. Even if it was just five minutes. What happened to our agreement?

JUNE

Mom, come on. Can I go inside please?

TESS

You haven't been the same since we left New York.

JUNE

No, I adjusted just fine.

TESS

No, you come home, you leave, we don't talk. I don't know if this is a teenage thing, or if it's something else but you're being distant and I want to get ahead of it. Okay?

JUNE

Mom, I'm pregnant.

Tess' face drops for a beat. June starts laughing.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Mom. I'm kidding.

But Tess has sunk into a quiver. And with tears. June reacts realizing her mistake.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Oh shit is she crying?

June wraps her arms around her. Tess doesn't wrap back.

TESS

I held it in. I did. I held it in. I promised myself I would never react to that news, the way my mother reacted towards me.

June parts, looks to Tess questioningly.

JUNE

Wait. When you got pregnant with me?
What did grandma do?

TESS

She didn't hold it in.

June considers this. Then:

JUNE

But you and dad were married.
(then)
Right?

Tess just looks at her as if thinking of a response. June's done. She turns away irritated, almost runs into:

FRANK

...been listening the whole time.

JUNE

The hell are you.

TESS

June!

FRANK

I'm Frank. The handyman.

JUNE

K great.

FRANK

I'm also a father. Raised five kids.
All of 'em girls. All of 'em set in
their ways. Independent. Hell some of
'em were down right pig headed. But
my wife, she never wavered being mom.
Even when she had every right too.
Even when they were too busy to
notice her, or didn't want to be seen
with her, or looked down on her, or
turned their backs on her, she was
still mom. But when they finally came
around, to understand the challenges,
to realize the difficulties, and
appreciate the sacrifices - of being
a mom - it was too late.

(pause)

And you can't turn back: "too late".

June not quite sure what to think of Frank. Swings to Tess.

JUNE

Mom I love you. Now I'm going.

And June leaves all weirded out.

FRANK

(to Tess)

Kids these days.

SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - BUS STOP - DAY

A school bus comes to a stop. The blinking stop sign extends.

BACK TO SCENE

TESS

Yea.

And Tess moves off.

BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

Other parents are here. A neighborhood SOCCER MOM, blonde, provocatively dressed in a SEVENTIES-STYLE HALTER TOP, sees Tess approaching and forces a smile. Tess forces a smile.

Kids exit along with Mia and Connor.

TESS

How was school, guys?

MIA

Connor thinks he's bus boss.

CONNOR

I am.

MIA

Shut up, you're just a safety.

TESS

(to Mia)

Hey!

(then)

What's "bus boss"?

MIA

He makes everybody sit down!

TESS

Oh. Thank you, Connor.

MIA

No one likes him, mommy! And he's NOT
bus boss!

Mia storms off. On this, Tess turns to Connor.

TESS

What happened on the bus.

CONNOR

I don't care.

He walks off leaving Tess standing there conflicted with a slight smile. Frank hoists the ladder up to a window, nods at her. On this, her smile fades completely.

...and she follows Connor and Mia into the house.

INT. SUV / EXT. SCHOOL BUS STOP - DAY

Julian slows to a stop because of the school bus in front of him. School kids exit the bus. Julian tries to be patient. There are a lot of kids.

ON JULIAN

Checking his phone. Then something out there intrigues him.

The adults who are there. All women in no-frills puritan style clothing. Feels ritualistic. Mothers protecting kin. Julian intrigued by this, as WE,

EXT. NEW YORK - 23RD STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tess, with Mia in tow, Julian with Connor. They carry bookbags. As they navigate the sidewalk, lots of noisy energy.

TESS

...I don't want to move to Iowa. I
have a great job. I'm happy in the
city.

JULIAN

Think of your kids.

TESS

They're happy here too. Do not do
that, Julian. I love my kids.

JULIAN

And lets give them a better life.

TESS

In Iowa, Julian? Really?

JULIAN

We don't own anything. All our money goes to rent.

TESS

And your suits. And your shoes. And dinners.

JULIAN

It's cheaper in Iowa. And it's a better life.

TESS

Says you.

They reach the crosswalk. Crosswalk signals "walk" and along with the PEDESTRIANS, begin to cross... A **TAXI!** -- Julian yanks Tess back. Taxi recklessly barrels through hitting **HORN.**

PEDESTRIAN

ASSHOLE!

The moment settles. Julian turns to a startled Tess.

JULIAN

You were saying?

INT. SUV / EXT. SCHOOL BUS STOP - DAY

Julian as we left him, watches the kids and moms finally disperse. The bus drives off unblocking Julian's view where he can now see:

A CORNFIELD

...vastly larger than the one from earlier. The road is a "T" so he can make a left or he can make a right.

He drives straight.

CORNFIELD

A space between the cornfield and the road. The SUV drives along this space and stops. Julian exits the car and proceeds to walk toward the cornfield. He reaches the edge.

WIDE to reveal the tall stalks compared to Julian. Real Iowa.

He squints a look in there. Deep inside the crop. Dense and consuming. He reaches out to a stalk. Intrigued by it. Respecting its essence. THE BUGS. Julian swats the air and steps away. He proceeds to the SUV, gets in, and SKIDS off.

EXT. PARKER HOME - DAY

The SUV pulls into the inclined driveway but must park behind Megan's convertible instead of driving into the garage.

Julian exits and walks toward the house just as Frank is coming down off the ladder.

FRANK

Hello there.

JULIAN

Hey. I'm Julian.

FRANK

Frank. At your service.

JULIAN

Really.

FRANK

Single windows to replace the old ones... Maybe a nice picture window in the front...

JULIAN

What's wrong with the ones we have now?

TESS (O.S.)

They're old.

Tess exiting the house.

TESS (CONT'D)

And drafty. That's what's wrong. And why are you home so early?

Julian looks at Frank, then he looks at Tess.

JULIAN

(to Tess)

How many windows are drafty?

TESS

All of them-- Julian, we discussed this. Energy-efficient...

(MORE)

TESS (CONT'D)
more natural lighting... don't go
senile on me now.

JULIAN
(to Frank)
We can do other things, right?

TESS
Other things? What other things?

JULIAN
In the winter we tape up the windows.

He looks to Frank for support.

FRANK
Weather stripping--

JULIAN
And in the summer we take the tape
off.

Tess beside herself. She looks at the two of them.

TESS
(to Julian)
You promised me. When you convinced
me to quit my job, pull the kids out
of school, and make the trip out
here, you promised me. That if you
were going to chase the money, the
kids and I were going to be real
comfortable. We're not in New York.
This is your thing. And I support
you. But you keep your promise.
(to Frank)
My windows are going in.

And that's that. She simmers and returns to the house.

FRANK
Tough woman.

JULIAN
It's only gonna get tougher.

Julian moves off and goes into the house.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - OFFICE CUBICLES - DAY

All cubicles empty. The place looks deserted. Max Conroy in the middle of the floor panning the room. He has puffy eyes like he's shed tears. Marge the receptionist appears at his side and she too pans the floor, with puffier eyes.

Both of them stand there. In stunned silence.

INT. JUNE'S ROOM - DAY

It's large and organized. Void of anything that says teenager.

Megan sprawled out on a chaise lounge. June on her pink bed doing her homework.

MEGAN

...well I think you're wrong. I think your mom would feel more comfortable if I was around here more often. She doesn't know me. I'd act the same way if I was her.

JUNE

Have you always been a glass is half full kind of person?

MEGAN

What does that mean?

JUNE

It means... you're naive.

Megan takes a beat to think about it.

MEGAN

Oh. Well they say in order to build trust with someone, you should break bread with them.

Megan sits up like she has a revelation.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

When are you going to invite me over for dinner?

JUNE

I think you got it backwards.

June reaches and tosses Megan a bag of corn chips.

JUNE (CONT'D)

There.

MEGAN

Gee, thanks June.

June shuts her textbook closed. On to something else. She reaches under her bed balancing herself so she doesn't slide off.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Like, what are you doing?

June leaned over her bed where we can only see her backside but not her face. After a moment, she finally emerges with something in her hand.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

What do you have there?

JUNE

My sanity.

June shows Megan a TABLET. She turns the tablet on.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I bought it online. With my own money.

MEGAN

So why are you hiding it.

JUNE

Hello? My mom like, grounded me from my phone AND the fucking computer?
(off Megan's look)
You know I blog, right?

MEGAN

Yea.

JUNE

People read me, Megan. And they respond to what I say. I can't be offline. It's not responsible.

Again Megan props up like she has a spark of creativity.

MEGAN

You know you can like, blog about being uprooted. And how you really hate your parents now.

JUNE

What? I don't hate my parents. And I like it here. I stand out because people think I'm different. I love that.

MEGAN

Then I don't get it. I mean if you don't hate your parents what is there to blog about?

June looks at her curiously.

INT. PARKER HOME - LAUNDRY ROOM

A nice little space with enough elbow room to be comfortable. Tess puts clothes into the wash. Routine. Julian appears in the entryway with a look like he has a lot on his mind.

JULIAN

You're like non stop.

TESS

You kidding me? This is downtime.

Julian acknowledges as Tess separates the whites and darks.

TESS (CONT'D)

So I checked the bank account. There was that five hundred dollar deposit, then minus, minus, minus--

JULIAN

Minus, minus. Yea. I get it.

TESS

Do you.

He can't shake her stare.

JULIAN

What.

TESS

We got into another argument. June and I.

JULIAN

Over what now.

Tess stops separating.

TESS

She's changing, Julian. Got something to say?

JULIAN

I read this article. About how men and women kinda see the world differently.

TESS

Go on.

JULIAN

Well this psychologist showed that women are real good at recognizing life. Plants, birds... people. And men better at recognizing... things. Cars, tools... you know. Things.

TESS

Where is all this coming from, Julian?

JULIAN

Just, I recognize you do a lot.

Julian leans in to kiss her but she turns her head and diverts by hitting the washing machine lid so it SLAMS down LOUD.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

What?

TESS

So you mean to tell me it took your office to be painted for you to come home and RECOGNIZE that your wife takes care of this family?

JULIAN

No it was the article--

TESS

Thank you, Julian. A stupid article.

JULIAN

I'm saying I appreciate you--

TESS

Then appreciate me when I'm NOT doing laundry. Appreciate me when I'm NOT shuffling your kids back and forth to practice, or grocery shopping, or cleaning the house!

JULIAN
What are you saying?

She grabs a handful of underwear: HIS underwear.

TESS
I'm saying I'm more than this,
Julian.
(pause)
Remember?

JULIAN
Of course--

TESS
Good.

She pecks him on the lips. Then puts a stack of folded clothes in his arms.

TESS (CONT'D)
Now take these up to your daughter.

JULIAN
Which one?

TESS
THE ONE THAT'S MORE LIKE YOU!

INT. PARKER HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Julian makes his way to June's room. He reaches the door, then hesitates, as WE,

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - KID'S ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Small with bunk beds. Connor and Mia play tug-of-war with one of Mia's dolls. June on her bed, reading a book trying to block it all out by listening to music with earbuds.

MIA
Let her go!

CONNOR
No you.

MIA
Get off!

CONNOR
No you.

Mia tugs hard causing the doll's head to pop off. Connor stumbles backwards onto June's bed, falling on her.

JUNE
Get off me you ass!

MIA
Oooh.

June yanks out the earbuds, gets out of bed and storms out.

NEW YORK APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Tess already storming toward the room. Sees June.

JUNE
Mommy? I'm done.

TESS
What happened.

JUNE
I turned fifteen, that's what happened.
(then)
I need my own room.

JULIAN (O.S.)
Agreed.

Tess shoots Julian a look as he approaches. June picks up on their communication and her eyes fill with curious optimism.

JUNE
Wait... what's... going on.

Tess throws up her hands, crosses into the kid's room. Julian smiles at June.

INT. JUNE'S ROOM - DAY

ON JUNE'S DOOR

A KNOCK and it inches open: CAMERA SWINGS TO:

MEGAN DARTING OFF JUNE'S BED AND BACK ONTO THE CHAISE LOUNGE

June scrambles, tosses the tablet back under the bed. Megan whips open a text book.

Julian peeks his head in.

JUNE
Dad! Privacy?

JULIAN
What. I knocked.

MEGAN
Hi Mr. Parker.

Julian looks to June for help.

JUNE
It's Megan, dad. You met Megan.

MEGAN
No worries. My dad can't remember
stuff either. My mom says it runs in
his family.
(staring off blankly)
She cries about it.

JULIAN
I'll never forget you again, Megan.

JUNE
Why are you home so early?

JULIAN
My office is being painted-- look
where do I put these?

On her nod to a chair, he sets the clothes down on it but the pile spills. He takes a moment to fix the pile.

On the awkward moment, June communicates that look to Megan and she takes the hint and checks her watch.

MEGAN
Goodness. We have to get to practice.
I'll just... wait in my car.

Megan rises, grabs her bookbag and then pats herself down like she lost something. She checks her bag then happily shows June she found: Her KEYS.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Bye Mr. Parker.

And she leaves. Julian gives his daughter a look.

JULIAN
She drive the way she thinks?

JUNE

And if I say yes do I get to drive myself?

JULIAN

Nice try.

June rolls her eyes and gathers her lacrosse equipment.

JUNE

Megan acts spacey but she's cool. Her parents are cool too.

JULIAN

I thought they were Republicans.

June rolls her eyes and continues to stuff her lacrosse gear in her duffle bag during the following:

JUNE

Megan's mom works for the state, and her dad is going to run the Iowa Caucus campaign for Hillary Clinton.

JULIAN

No way.

JUNE

She says her parents get really crazy like every four years but in 2016 it will be worth it because this time Hillary's getting in. Like she's really going to be the next President of the United States.

JULIAN

Cool.

Julian meandering about her dresser. Looking over her ceramic collectibles, girly trinkets, etc...

JULIAN (CONT'D)

We should go out for ice cream. This weekend. That one dairy farm? Where they make it on the spot.

JUNE

Okay...

JULIAN

I'm feelin' the family thing. Good opportunity for you and mom to be friends again. You know?

JUNE
That's like, what church is for.

JULIAN
(chuckles)
Prayer's not gonna get your phone
back.

June breaks into a smile for a beat then stifles it.

All geared up, she starts off but Julian steps in front of her, like he wants a heart to heart, father and daughter talk.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Do you like it here, June. You have
good friends?

JUNE
I'm okay, dad.

JULIAN
Good. Because I see kids. Your age.
The choices they make. And I think,
thank God MY daughter gets it.

He locks eyes with her for a beat. A moment here.

JUNE
I'm not mom. I adjust. So tell her
don't take it out on me because she's
not happy. I have practice.

She grabs her gear and moves off. Julian thinks on her words.
As she's just about to leave her room.

JULIAN (O.S.)
Aren't you forgetting something?

She stops and turns around to see Julian holding up car keys.
Her face beams.

JUNE
Like, NO WAY! Really?

Julian jingles the keys making June rush over and grab the
keys out of his hand.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Megan's gonna freak.

JULIAN
Really? Over a lacrosse stick?

June stops short. Now she's skeptical.

JUNE

Dad?

JULIAN

You left it in the backseat. When you get it out, you can give me back my keys.

June grunts and storms out of the room.

INT. PARKER HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

...as June storms down the hallway with her duffle bag of gear. Tess is coming from the opposite direction.

TESS

Where's your mouth guard?

June halts, grunts again and turns back toward her room only to find Julian in the doorway holding out her mouth guard.

June takes it, u-turns back down the hallway passing Tess not saying a word. Tess and Julian share a look: "our daughter".

DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Connor on his bike in conversation with Megan as she makes a feeble attempt to maneuver the convertible out from between the garage and the SUV: forward, backward, forward...

CONNOR

...then what are you going to do after the twelfth grade?

MEGAN

I'm going to college.

CONNOR

Then what are you going to do after college?

MEGAN

I'll probably go to grad school. No wait get married.

CONNOR

Then what are you going to do after you get married?

MEGAN

That's like, a trick question.

CONNOR

It is?

MEGAN

Yeah because after marriage can mean
kids, or it can mean divorce...

(the horror)

Or it could mean both!

June retrieves the lacrosse stick out of the SUV, slams the door, and approaches in a frazzled huff.

JUNE

Goodbye, Connor. Get away from the
damn car, Connor.

And June TOSSES the KEYS and Connor catches them. She gets into Megan's car with her stick and duffle bag. Megan waves to Connor. As she backs up...

MEGAN

(to Connor)

Trick question...

And the convertible drives off.

CONNOR

Remains there on the bike watching them go. After a moment he starts to pedal but stops after a few yards. Connor in front of the SUV. Staring at it. He gets off his bike, walks over to the SUV. He looks down at the keys in his hand. Back to the SUV: Cooler than his bike.

INT. PARKER HOME - KITCHEN

Julian in the fridge. Tess passes through, carrying clean clothes.

TESS

I'm making dinner.

JULIAN

We out of juice?

TESS

Talk to your kids.

Then Tess is gone. Julian turns to Mia, who we now see is sitting at the table busy with her homework.

JULIAN
We out of juice?

Mia glances up to grin at him. Then she goes back to her homework, her little feet rocking back and forth. During the following, Mia will never look up from her homework.

MIA
Daddy?

JULIAN
Yeah?

MIA
Why are you home so early?

Julian pauses. Shuts the refrigerator door. Tough question.

JULIAN
It's not that early.

MIA
But the sun is still out.

Julian nods to himself. She's a precocious one.

JULIAN
Mia?

MIA
Yeah?

JULIAN
You need help with your homework?

Mia finally looks at him.

MIA
Mommy helps me.

Julian just stares at her with a long, forgiving look.

EXT. SUV - DAY

Looking through the windshield, Connor now BEHIND THE WHEEL, pretending to drive but he can barely see over the steering column.

CONNOR
VRRRRROOOM... ERRRRRRRRRRRT!

Then he stops, bored with the pretending, he regards the keys in his hand. Why not?

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Close on the keys inserting into the ignition... the ENGINE STARTS. Connor looks ahead. His destination: The GARAGE. His hand grips the gear shift and forces it into NEUTRAL. Of course the SUV doesn't move.

Now Connor reaches up and adjusts the rearview where we see in the reflection, in the backseat, JULIAN'S BOX FROM THE OFFICE. Connor pauses on this, then he twists in the seat to REACH IN THE BACKSEAT. And now we see what he's reaching for:

THE FOOTBALL

And at this moment Connor is just an eleven year old, a kid trying to reach for his football. Fingers within inches, his foot touches the shift knocking it into REVERSE.

DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

...as the SUV slowly rolls backwards down the incline...

BACK TO SCENE

Connor finally retrieves the football and twists back into his seat only to realize he's moving...

CONNOR

...No!

...his first reaction is to brace the wheel, then whip to the left and then whip to the right. No clue what to do, he presses down, but instead of braking the SUV ACCELERATES...

DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

...and careens across the driveway to the opposite side where it hard swipes the stonewall forcing a stop while the engine revs... and revs... and revs... Connor in a panic...

PARKER HOME - CONNOR'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tess putting his clothes in a dresser. A room of posters, and sports gear, etc. Tess in mom routine until she perks up on a noise. It's coming from outside. She goes to the window and opens the blinds.

TESS' POV

...looking down at the driveway, the SUV jacked up against the wall... revving... then Julian sprinting across the lawn...

BACK TO SCENE

...Tess covers her mouth, dropping everything, she darts...

DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

...Julian races to the driver's side but he must step on the wall and onto the grass to get a better look at Connor who is behind the wheel utterly panicked. The engine noise deafening.

JULIAN

CONNOR!

CONNOR

DAD! IT WONT QUIT!

JULIAN

TURN THE KEY!

CONNOR

DAD!

Julian jumps down and rushes over to the passenger's side.

TESS (O.S.)

Oh my God. Julian?

Tess darting over in an equal panic. Julian tries the door. It's locked.

JULIAN

Son, turn the damn key!

CONNOR

It's stuck!

JULIAN

Unlock the door! Hit the button on your side. Hit it!

TESS

...my God. Connor!

Connor looks around on his side and hits a button, the doors click unlocked and Julian swings the door open, gets inside, and immediately reaches for the keys and turns off the ignition. Finally.

TESS (CONT'D)
Oh thank God.

CONNOR
(in tears)
I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

JULIAN
Get out.

Julian gets out and Connor crawls over the middle divider.
Julian pulls him out of the SUV.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
The hell happened?

CONNOR
I... I'm sorry.

JULIAN
You tried to drive didn't you?

CONNOR
No... I... tried to park.

Julian throws up his hands. Then puts his hands on his head.
Livid. Looking over the SUV. The damage.

TESS
(to Connor)
Park your ass in that house. NOW!

CONNOR
(to both)
Sorry.

She gives Connor that look and he shrinks, then backs away,
then runs to the house as fast as he could. Tess crosses her
arms and shoots a look to Julian.

TESS
He could've been killed. What if Mia
was out here?

Julian back on the wall, kneels down looking for the damage.

JULIAN
I get it.

TESS
What got into that boy? And why did
he have your keys?

On that Julian stands up with hands on hips, curses the horizon... And then, in his agitated state, he glances across the yard and sees staring back at him:

Soccer Mom, getting her mail, dressed in LEVIS SEVENTIES VINTAGE SHORT SHORTS. And before she heads back down her driveway, she twiddles a wave. Julian starts to wave but stops himself and balls his hand into a fist instead. His attention back on the damaged SUV, he KICKS the bumper.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FIELD - DAY

The woman's lacrosse team are out on the field practicing. Twelve sweaty girls, in skirts, on each side. Lots of running and roughness.

ON JUNE

On defense. Game face, mouth guard, holding her stick waiting for the ball to come her way. She reacts, starts moving to her right...

FIELD

...two opposing players, the attackers, charge up field in June's zone. She rushes towards them, some legal contact occurs, for a moment June has possession and becomes the attacker, but just as quick she loses the ball and is back on defense...

...the ball is passed to another opposing player... to another and... GOAL!

ON JUNE

She throws her stick down.

ON COACH LINDA STONE

... blows her whistle.

COACH STONE

Okay, girls lets go.
(to bench warmers)
Subs!
(then)
Parker! See me. Now.

June picks up her stick and drags her way across the field. SWEATY SENIOR, one of the opposing players, a few feet away.

SWEATY SENIOR

Hey, Parker. Good run.

JUNE

Thanks.

The player that made the goal, HEATHER, joins the senior. Heather, long blonde hair and shapely legs, has a privileged arrogance about her.

HEATHER

Keep those checks low, June. I'm serious.

JUNE

I play legal, Heather.

HEATHER

Your ass shouldn't be playing at all.

And Heather moves off.

SWEATY SENIOR

(to June)

Ignore it.

Sweaty Senior moves off. Coach Stone approaches June.

COACH STONE

What happened out there? They blasted right through you like you were air.

June daggers a look directly at Heather.

JUNE

Won't happen again.

HEATHER

Bite it.

JUNE

Next time the stick goes higher.

And Heather throws down her gear, jumps in June's face.

HEATHER

Back it up, bitch!

June not intimidated, noses into Heather.

JUNE

Go ahead. Give me an excuse.

OFF FIELD

A young man on the opposite side of the fence enjoys the female standoff. He's TAYLOR PRICE, (19), preppy. Obnoxious High Schoolers around him oblivious. Not Taylor.

BACK TO SCENE

COACH STONE

Ladies!

Coach Stone steps between them.

COACH STONE (CONT'D)

Give me an excuse to bench the both
of your asses.

June and Heather stand off for a beat, then Heather stands
down, moves off. June goes to sit on the bench next to Megan.

MEGAN

Not sure what's more dangerous. That
stick or the person holding it.

JUNE

Yea well someone might find out soon
enough.

MEGAN

Let her be. She was born a jerk.

JUNE

That won't save her.

They watch as Heather skips her way over to the fence with big
arms to get a big hug from Taylor. Heather and Taylor kiss.

MEGAN

Ugh. She's all like "notice me".

JUNE

Well she better try harder.

MEGAN

How do you mean?

JUNE

Her boytoy's been looking at us the
whole time.

And sure enough as Heather is leaning over the fence necking
him, Taylor is looking our way.

MEGAN

Ill, creepy. He's like, in his
twenties.

June and Taylor, eyeing each other. For now, obvious to only
them.

JUNE

Exactly.

AT FENCE WITH HEATHER AND TAYLOR

Heather kissing all over his neck.

HEATHER

I'm so ready to bed you right now.

TAYLOR

Babe, come on. Go practice.

But she continues, he doesn't reciprocate and continues to stare over at June. Heather continues laying pecks on him...

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

So who's that girl.

HEATHER

Girl, what girl...

TAYLOR

You got in her face. The black chic.

HEATHER

Nobody. Kiss me.

Taylor keeps moving so she can't kiss his neck. She finally stops in a spoiled pout.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

You're no fun right now.

And she catches him looking elsewhere. Heather turns around.

HEATHER'S POV:

...June and Megan on the bench chatting amongst themselves, then June looks our way, smiles, looks away...

BACK TO SCENE

Heather whips back around to Taylor, aghast.

HEATHER

Her? Really?

TAYLOR

Who's "her"?

HEATHER

No. Shut up.

On Coach Stone checking her clipboard, scanning the field, spots Heather.

COACH STONE

Unless he's here to fix your cradling, I'd suggest you get your fanny back on my field.

HEATHER

(to Taylor)

I told you!

They kiss and Heather leaves him. She runs past the coach.

TAYLOR

What's up, Coach.

Coach Stone gives him the evil eye and resumes her attention on the practice. Taylor then looks out over to the bench.

June's gone.

Taylor nods to himself.

HIGH SCHOOL FIELD - NIGHT

The sun has set, but the stadium lights are on.

ON JUNE

Just like before. Holding her stick waiting for the ball to come her way. She reacts, starts moving to her right...

FIELD

...ball gets passed to Sweaty Senior, June on defense, trying to check, then June is PUSHED and she stumbles: Heather now has the ball.

June recovers, charges up the field, Heather tries to pass: June is on her, stick raised, **HOOKED**: Heather **GOES DOWN HARD**. Coach blows the whistle. Heather grabbing a knee, wincing in pain. Teammates run to her aide.

June breathing heavy looking gratified, nods to someone off the field.

ON TAYLOR

Acknowledges the nod.

EXT. PARKER HOME - NIGHT

The sun has gone down. Dusk on the horizon. Tess on the porch, arms folded, gazes outward as the sound of distant BOOMS rumble the horizon. Julian appears behind her.

JULIAN

Can't believe school's almost out.
Memorial day's right around the
corner.

TESS

Remember when the only time we heard
fireworks was the Fourth of July?

More distant BOOMS go off.

JULIAN

The firework business. That's all
that is. Sound of smart business.

Tess shakes her head, brushes passed Julian to go back inside.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Something wrong.

She looks at him, then changes her mind and proceeds inside.

CONNOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Connor is lying face up on his bed staring at the ceiling. Julian and Tess enter the room. Connor sees them and puts the pillow over his face. Julian sits at the foot of his bed.

JULIAN

Pillow's not going to help you.

Connor doesn't budge. The pillow still over his face.

TESS

Connor, move the pillow.

He moves the pillow. Tears stream down his cheek.

JULIAN

So, what's going through your mind
right now?

CONNOR

I don't know.

JULIAN

You don't know?

Connor shrugs, pinches between his watery eyes.

CONNOR

Kids are mean.

Tess and Julian share a look.

JULIAN

Mean? How? Did they say something?

CONNOR

Yeah.

JULIAN

What'd they say?

CONNOR

Nothing. That's how they were mean. They don't talk to me. No one talks to me. They just think I'm bossy. I don't like Iowa.

Julian looks at Tess. She looks off.

JULIAN

Connor listen to me. Sit up.

Connor props himself up, dad wipes his tears.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

You have a responsibility.

CONNOR

Like you with your job.

JULIAN

Well, yes. And if those kids don't like your job that's not YOUR problem, that's THEIR problem. And if they don't like you, they lose. Who does the coolest jumps on his BMX?

CONNOR

Me.

JULIAN

Who runs the fastest?

CONNOR

Me.

JULIAN

Who clocked a seventy five mile per hour four-seam fastball over the batting cage fence?

CONNOR

Me.

JULIAN

Who struck out?

Connor finally chuckles.

CONNOR

You?

JULIAN

Shhhhhh!

TESS

Struck out? You told me you hit it out the park.

JULIAN

There's no park. It's a batting cage.

CONNOR

Strike!

JULIAN

Wait till next time. Watch me.

Connor nods. The moment settles for a beat. Then the mood shifts back to reality: The damaged SUV.

CONNOR

Am I grounded?

JULIAN

Yes.

CONNOR

Do I have to pay for the car?

JULIAN

You tell me.

Connor starts to heave, buries his face in the pillow. Julian takes this moment to reach down for something.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Connor. Hey.

Connor looks up to see his dad holding the football.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Next time, have someone pass it to you.

Connor loses it, sits up and hugs his dad. Julian hugs him back. Long and real. For both of them.

ON TESS

Tears. Real for her too.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Julian brushing his teeth. Tess knocks on the door.

TESS

Can we talk?

Julian stops brushing his teeth.

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

And there on the bed is Julian's box from work.

TESS (CONT'D)

You have something to tell me, Julian?

JULIAN

What's the problem 'cause all I see is a box.

TESS

With this in it.

From behind her back, she reveals the **family photo**.

Julian stares at the photo for a beat, then his eyes meet hers and with his look, she knows.

TESS (CONT'D)

Oh my God. Julian. What happened at work.

JULIAN

Shanxi Province China is what happened.

Tess looks at him perplexed.

TESS

Wait, what.

JULIAN

To chase the money over there,
company had to cut people here. I was
one of those people.

Tess' posture slumps, a stunned look crosses her face.

TESS

(sotto)

Laid off.

She looks off into space digesting it.

TESS (CONT'D)

But Max's number. It's all over the
caller ID. He's been calling.

JULIAN

'Cause he feels like shit. Probably
wants to apologize.

TESS

Apologize? What if he has something
lined up. Another office--

JULIAN

Another office is seven thousand
miles away, Tess! Seven thousand
miles away--

TESS

I don't care. Julian. You have to
find another job.

Tess paces, rubbing her hands together.

TESS (CONT'D)

I quit my job. Kids leave their
friends, their school. We follow you
here. Buy this house in this
neighborhood. I don't know anyone. I
don't have friends. The neighbors are
weird.

JULIAN

Weird? Who?

TESS

Next door! The divorced one. With her tight tops and shag hairstyle looking like she belongs on a seventies game show. I see the way she looks at you.

JULIAN

So this is about the neighbor.

TESS

Julian! I followed you. Again. I, followed, YOU. Your dreams.

Another thought hits her.

TESS (CONT'D)

I got to find a job.

JULIAN

Tess, I'll figure this out--

TESS

LIKE YOU HAVE A CHOICE!

BEAT

TESS (CONT'D)

I trusted you.

JULIAN

I said I'll fix this--

TESS

We ALL trusted your plan, Julian now look where we are. Since being out here. We're changing.

JULIAN

Actually the kids are adjusting--

TESS

YOU DON'T GET IT!

(then)

I'M NOT ADJUSTING!

Lights stream through the windows, followed by the SOUND of June getting out of Megan's car and coming into the house.

JULIAN

I need to talk to her about the car.

TESS

No. We need to talk about our future.

JULIAN

You're right! Because job or no job,
TESS IS GETTING HER NEW WINDOWS!

On this, Tess throws up her hands, storms into the bathroom
and SLAMS the door. Julian falls backwards on bed exasperated.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

The corn combine parked. Much of the field harvested.

EXT. FARM OFFICE - DAY

We are on the opposite side now.

Julian's SUV parked in front of a barn-like structure that resembles a general store.

INT. FARM OFFICE - DAY

Julian sits in what looks like a waiting area but is primarily used to showcase photos of the owner's previous year's crop yield accomplishments, little league sponsorships, plaques...

A well dressed man comes through the front entrance. He regards Julian waiting there. DALE CRAIG, (35).

DALE

Can I help you.

JULIAN

Uh, looking for the owner.

DALE

I'm Dale. What can I do for you.

Julian turns to the pictures on the walls: VARIOUS PHOTOS. A younger Dale. Football, little league... A RECENT PHOTO of Dale with another man: The farmer who was driving the combine. Julian turns back to Dale.

JULIAN

So this is a family business.

Dale gives Julian a skeptical once over, studying him.

DALE

Look, we got enough insurance.

Julian chuckles for an uncomfortable beat.

JULIAN

Not selling insurance. Julian Parker.

Julian extends his hand. As they shake, Dale eyes the SUV, sees his out-of-state front plate.

DALE
New York?

JULIAN
Des Moines now.

DALE
Mets or Yanks.

JULIAN
I only watch baseball in October.

DALE
Okay. Look, leave the pamphlets at the front desk. I got a farm to run.

Dale starts off.

JULIAN
Tell me, what did it take?

Dale halts, turns back around.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
To get a farm like this off the ground.

DALE
Sixty years of long hours and back cracking work that's what it takes.

JULIAN
Sixty years? Impressive.

DALE
Na it aint. Not 'round here. Got farms been in business hundred fifty years. Longer. And longer than that.

JULIAN
Guess they're the lucky ones.

DALE
Lucky. How you mean, lucky?

ROY (O.S.)
Agribusiness mergers, consolidations, and expansions is what he means.

The man from the corn combine. ROY CRAIG (65). An older more worn and rural version of his son Dale.

ROY (CONT'D)

The corporate greed destroyed more farms than any western corn rootworm ever could.

DALE

Bio seed took care of that problem years ago, Pop.

(to Julian)

He and I have, a difference of opinion in these matters.

ROY

There's only one opinion. The truth.

DALE

The truth is not an opinion, Pop. It's a statement.

JULIAN

Look, gentleman. I just had some questions. If now is not a good time.

DALE

Pop doesn't get many visitors-- what exactly are you selling anyway?

JULIAN

Not selling a thing. I'm looking for information. About this business.

ROY

He wants to learn to be a corn farmer.

DALE

(skeptical)

Information. About growing corn?

ROY

Lets show him what it means to be a corn farmer.

As Roy heads for the exit and passes by Julian...

ROY (CONT'D)

Got your camera?

Julian and Dale share a look.

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Julian, Roy, and Dale at the crop's edge.

ROY

Best we go off the beaten path.

Roy steps into the thick of the crop. Julian looks to Dale who gestures for him to go first. Julian steps in reluctantly.

CROP - CONTINUOUS

All surrounded by deep thick corn stalks. Julian doesn't look too comfortable. Bugs swarming. Julian swats the air.

ROY

Lot different than what you see from the road.

JULIAN

A road out of here is looking very good right now.

ROY

Get stuck in the crops, gotta turn to gut instincts. Sun's not always gonna be your friend. Come with me.

And Roy crouches down. Julian stands there momentarily confused, Dale nods. Julian crouches down.

Roy and Julian. Close to the earth. Roy the teacher.

ROY (CONT'D)

Plant early, you take a chance on the corn come up dying with the late frost. Plant too late, spring rain come wash it all away.

DALE

Get the seed buried in fall. Moisture and snow break down the soil.

Roy shoves Iowa dirt into Julian's hand. Looks him in the eye.

ROY

Gotta get into the soil. We call it the bottoms. Where the land is the most fertile. Then you fertilize. Sixty dollars an acre--

JULIAN

Look, Roy I'm just looking for info--

ROY

And I'm given it to ya!

ON Roy for a beat. Lots of hard farm years behind that weathered face.

ROY (CONT'D)

Gotta spray. Atrozine. Cost ya 'bout twenty an acre--

DALE

Twenty five.

Roy stands. Julian realizes it's time to stand too. Roy puts a fatherly hand on Julian's shoulder.

ROY

Seed, spray, lime, nitrogen, more spray... pre harvest machinery--

DALE

Post harvest machinery--

ROY

Labor, taxes... all said 'n done, you're in at two thousand an acre. Farm this size, that's forty five grand just to put the damn corn in. And that's if the fescue and the Japanese Beetle don't take the damn corn out.

DALE

Bio seed, pop.

ROY

Get a fair market price for your bushel, maybe ya come out ahead sixty grand. Maybe ya don't.

DALE

What Pop is saying is, you might want to invest in something a little less risky. Like gambling.

ROY

(to Julian)

You like to gamble, son? Take risks?

JULIAN

No.

ROY

Yea you do.

Roy with a look of wisdom. Like he knows.

JULIAN

Gentleman, thanks but I think you got the wrong idea. I'm not looking at growing corn for consumption.

Dale reads his father, then reads Julian.

DALE

Wait. Field corn?

JULIAN

Fuel corn.

DALE

You're talkin' E-85. Ethanol. Heard that song before. Not profitable.

JULIAN

Because the distillation process of mixing water and chemical enzymes to release those sugars and get to that valuable E-85 requires heat from natural gas or coal. Environmentally unfriendly and costly. Until now.

(off their looks)

The closed-loop system. Renewable biofuel as way to generate the heat.

(off their looks)

I've been doing a lot of reading.

DALE

(skeptical)

"Renewable".

JULIAN

Cattle. Produces methane gas. Plants. Produces biomass.

DALE

(skeptical)

"Plants".

JULIAN

Wheat straw, corn stalks, leaves, algae. Even fescue, Roy. No more expensive processing. The costs have gone down, the yields have gone up. The math has changed, gentleman.

ROY

Ethanol and agronomics.

JULIAN

Yes!

Julian takes a step and finds his foot in a MUD PUDDLE.

ROY

Either way, you might want to invest
in a good pair of boots.

EXT. FARM OFFICE - PARKING LOT

Julian walking to his car. Roy and his son walk with him.

DALE

Discouraged yet.

JULIAN

Not at all.

DALE SENIOR

Then we haven't done our jobs, pops.

JULIAN

I could do without the muddy shoes.
Damn this week sucks.

As Julian tries to pick the mud off his shoes with a stick,
Roy studies him hard. Dale regards the damaged SUV.

DALE

Iowa driver's are the worst.

Roy and Dale chuckle.

JULIAN

Well. Thanks again, gentleman.

Julian starts off.

ROY

That it?

Dale shoots his father a look, Julian turns around.

DALE

What? Is there more?

ROY

Ask the salesman.

DALE

He's ain't a salesman, Pop--

ROY

Sure he is.
 (to Julian)
 Aren't ya.

Julian reads Roy for a long beat. Then he looks off. To the crops. Realizing Roy's words. "Salesman". As, WE,

EXT. NEW YORK - LAGUARDIA AIRPORT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Planes arriving and departing.

INT. NEW YORK - LAGUARDIA AIRPORT GATE - CONTINUOUS

Julian sits watching Tess, June, Connor, and Mia looking out the window as they watch the planes come and go.

GATE AGENT

*Ladies and gentleman at this time
 we'd like to begin boarding our
 flight 3311 service to Des Moines
 please have your boarding passes
 ready...*

Tess turns around and gives him an apprehensive look. He nods to her reassuringly.

Tess takes a breath, smiles, gathers her kids.

EXT. FARM OFFICE - DAY

ROY

...he's selling hope. To farm owners whose livelihood is left to the mercy of a bunch of greedy unscrupulous land hoarders and their biohazard grain. He's investing in a future. His and his family's. But most importantly, he's selling the truth. Corn IS the future.
 (to Julian)
 You got a great future as a salesman, son. I'm sold.

Dale just stares at his father, shaking his head.

DALE

How are we even related.

Dale looks at Julian to chuckle the absurdity of his dad.

Julian looks out at the cornfield. Thinking. Like earlier.

EXT. PARKER HOME - DRIVEWAY

Julian drives the SUV up the incline and parks.

INT. PARKER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Julian enters the house. He's in good spirits.

JULIAN
Tess, Mia, Connor!

June emerges from the living room.

JUNE
What's going on?

JULIAN
And you too. Lets go.

Connor appears at the top of the stairs. Followed by Mia and then Tess all coming down the stairs.

TESS
Where.

He looks her straight in the eye.

JULIAN
I get it now.

EXT. DAIRY FARM - DAY

A dairy farm that has turned part of the operations into a petting farm that sells pies, cider, and fresh ice cream too.

Julian, Tess and the kids all eating their cups of ice cream. Connor has a cone. Tess gives Julian a forgiving look.

TESS
Good idea.

Julian kisses her. A small wind picks up. They note the sky.

INT. SUV (DRIVING) - DAY

Julian driving along when he sees something. He makes a turn.

TESS

Where are you taking us?

EXT. FARM ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The SUV climbs a road going up a hill surrounded by acres of rolling grassy hills. The grass sways. It's getting windier.

FARM ROAD FURTHER UP TOP

The SUV pulls over to the side of the road. Julian gets out.

TESS

Am I supposed to follow you?

Julian bends down to respond to Tess through the window.

JULIAN

You tell me.

Tess turns around to her kids. Connor and Mia with innocent looks. June is talking on her cell phone, oblivious.

MIA

He's waiting for you. Go.

She goes.

EXT. FARM ROAD - ROLLING HILLS

Out on the horizon. Cornfields. Sweeping, majestic Iowa as far as the eye can see... and then to their right on the horizon:

DES MOINES SKYLINE

Julian hugs Tess. Both looking at the city in the distance. The wind gusts are steady now. Raised voices.

JULIAN

YOU FOLLOWED ME.

TESS

YOU'RE MY HUSBAND.

JULIAN

I SOLD YOU.

(off her look)

I SOLD THE KIDS. ON THIS. ON WHAT I WANTED. YOU SACRIFICED A LOT AND I TOOK YOU FOR GRANTED. I'M SORRY.

Tess looks off, takes in the landscape. Grass swaying. Getting cloudier. She turns back to him.

TESS
I LOVE YOU.

JULIAN
I LOVE YOU.

TESS
JUST PROMISE ME ONE THING.

JULIAN
OF COURSE ANYTHING.

TESS
THAT YOU'LL BE HONEST WITH ME. THAT
YOU WONT LIE TO ME.

JULIAN
I'LL NEVER LET YOU DOWN AGAIN.

TESS
YOU'RE WRONG.
(then)
YOU'VE NEVER LET ME DOWN.

And they hug, long and tight, and loving. And then they part upon noticing it.

IOWA

Far, far, out into the distance: A supercell begins to swirl, then extending out, it forms a funnel.

June, Connor, and Mia join them. The Parker family watching nature at its most beautiful and sometimes dangerous.

JULIAN
WOW. WELCOME TO DES MOINES, IOWA.

TESS
YOU KNOW ON SECOND THOUGHT...

JULIAN
WHAT'S THAT?

The spinning whip becomes a tail as it touches down snaking a path across the distant horizon.

TESS
...FORGET THE NEW WINDOWS!

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW