

My Father's Son

John Ho

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FADE IN

EXT HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Within a line of BMWs, MERCEDES and other luxury cars is a rusted 1985 TOYOTA COROLLA.

Inside the Corolla is JOHN CHANG (17) a thin Asian boy dressed in a hoodie and blue jeans both two sizes too large.

Next to John is his father MR. CHANG (40), a pot-bellied man with a shaggy beard, wearing a PURPLE NURSE UNIFORM.

JOHN

Dad, you can stop here.

But Mr. Chang pulls the Corolla into the parking lot.

JOHN (cont'd)

Dad, please it's OK, you can stop here, I can walk the rest of the way.

John puts on DARK SUNGLASSES.

Students come closer and closer to him so he SINKS into the car seat.

A pretty girl makes eye contact with John, he JERKS his head away from her and..

JOHN (cont'd)

Dad!

Mr. Chang SLAMS the car breaks and GLARES at John.

Cars HONK, people GAWK but John BOLTS UPRIGHT in his seat and dares not break eye contact with Mr. Chang.

JOHN (cont'd)

I, I, I'm sorry.

MR. CHANG

(Mandarin for Mr. Chang  
unless otherwise  
specified)

Use your native language!

JOHN

(Mandarin)

Yes dad!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A JAGUAR pulls up besides the Corolla, Ms. Rodriguez (35), a lean faced, hard edged woman rolls down the SHADED PASSENGER SIDE WINDOW revealing ..

CLAUDIA PFEIFFER (17) a medium built half Caucasian, half Hispanic beauty with BLEACHED BLONDE HAIR, OVERSIZED GUCCI SUNGLASSES, WHITE FOUNDATION CAKE CHEEKS, and FLAMING RED LIPSTICK.

John's mouth DROPS OPEN.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
Excuse me! You're blocking me and everyone else behind me.

Mr. Chang KOWTOWS to her and drives away, John SNEERS at him.

Mr. Chang STOPS the car.

MR. CHANG  
John, forget about the past and start over at this new school. Now listen.

John NODS but then STARES into the rear view mirror at Claudia's EXPOSED RIGHT LEG thrusting out of the Jaguar.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
We've held up OK after the hospital closure ..

John's POV: Claudia's EXPOSED LEFT LEG thrusts out.

JOHN  
Yes.

MR. CHANG  
But I had to take a pay cut for this new position and if it doesn't work out, we're maxed out on unemployment benefits.

Claudia exposes her KNEES and then her UPPER LEG.

JOHN  
Please keep going.

MR. CHANG  
Even with cutting back we can't get the new computer.

Claudia STANDS UP.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Thank you.

John SNAPS his head back to Mr. Chang.

JOHN (cont'd)

Wait! What? Why?

Mr. Chang remains SILENT.

JOHN (cont'd)

Dad, the thing in my room is so slow that it interferes with homework and the living room one is.

MR. CHANG

(cuts off John)

Don't you dare use that as an excuse.

JOHN

Yes sir, I won't.

John OPENS the car door.

MR. CHANG

Did I give you permission to leave?  
Shut it.

John CLOSES the car door.

SILENCE. Mr. Chang GLARES at his son.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)

Now, you may leave.

JOHN steps out of the car.

As Mr. Chang drives away, John gives him the MIDDLE FINGER.

John hides his face underneath his HOODIE, heaves his OVERSIZED BOOK BAG over his shoulders and trudges to school.

INT EXAM ROOM - LATER

John TAPS his PENCIL between choices A, C and E of the EXAM.

He looks at the BLACKBOARD: AP Biology Placement Exam, TEN minutes left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALAG CHAPROKAPATEL (17) hands his test booklet to the EXAM PROCTOR.

The Exam Proctor erases the number TEN and writes the number FIVE.

John's POV: TWENTY UNFILLED CIRCLES remain on his answer sheet.

The Exam Proctor erases the number FIVE and writes the number TWO.

John WIPES sweat off his brow.

Suddenly, the CEILING LIGHTS turn ON.

JOHN

Ahh!

Students CHUCKLE at John's response to the ceiling lights.

EXAM PROCTOR

Times up, pencils down.

John fills out another circle.

EXAM PROCTOR (cont'd)

That includes you.

John puts down his pencil, stares at FIFTEEN UNFILLED CIRCLES on his answer sheet and FROWNS.

INT CASH REGISTER LINE - DAY

John stands in front of a CASH REGISTER displaying four dollars and sixty five cents on the screen.

John slides PENNIES to the CASHIER (60).

JOHN

Sixty two, sixty three.

John turns his pockets inside out and then takes off his right shoe and shakes it, a PENNY falls out.

JOHN (cont'd)

Sixty four.

A QUARTER hits John's head and falls underneath the register.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John KNEELS on the ground, pick up the quarter and then faces the LINE of students behind him.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Sorry, Thank you.

INT CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

John sits down at the empty table near the MEN'S BATHROOM.

Then he PUSHES all the meat off his plate and raises a fork full of vegetables to his mouth when ..

SOUND OF TOILET FLUSHING, BATHROOM DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

John puts down his fork and COVERS his nostrils.

A fly LANDS on his food, he FLICKS it away.

John SCANS the cafeteria, sees Balag sitting by himself and walks over to him until ..

Jocks sit down around Balag.

John SIMPERS back to the table by the bathroom.

INT JOHN'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

John and Mr. Chang sit across the table from each other eating dinner.

JOHN  
So the new school is very ..

MR. CHANG  
(cuts off John)  
Tell me about the AP Bio exam.

JOHN  
It was challenging actually.

MR. CHANG  
But you're confident you passed right?

SILENCE.

JOHN  
I don't know actually.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG

Well, why don't you know? What are you unconfident about?

JOHN

Just that, well everyone finished before me and I didn't get to last few questions.

MR. CHANG

Because you're too anxious. And you have no confidence, that's the only reason you've struggled so far. What do I always tell you?

JOHN

You always tell me to have more confidence and just relax when I feel anxious, that it's all in my head. And now that I think about it you're right, I probably passed.

Mr. Chang NODS, CHOMPS on a chicken leg and BELCHES.

John pushes aside his fried chicken and NIBBLES on COLE SLAW.

MR. CHANG

You don't like your chicken?

JOHN

No, of course I love chicken, but I had too much meat during lunch today. Now would you like me to clean the dishes for you?

INT SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

John scans the bulletin board announcement 'The following students qualify for AP Biology with Mrs. Savita ChapokraPatel.'

And sees: Chan, Esther; Chapokrapatel, Balag; Durheim, Andrew

SILENCE. John STANDS there and hears his breathe getting faster and more shallow.

Bell RINGS. John startles, JERKS his body and screams ..

JOHN

Ahh!

INT CAFETERIA - LATER

SOUND OF TOILET FLUSHING.

John's POV: Balag sits with his friends on the other side of the cafeteria.

John FLICKS a fly off his food and goes to Balag's table.

INT CAFETERIA BY BALAG'S TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

John STANDS in front of an EMPTY SEAT by Balag's table, holding the food tray with TREMBLING hands.

JOHN

Hi!, you're Balag Chap, Chapokra, err, anyway congrats on passing the AP Bio exam, so anyway, I couldn't help but notice that the teacher's name is also Chap, Chapoka something, is that your mom? and if so can I sit with you if this seat is not taken. Please, I need to talk to you about something very very important. My name is John by the way.

BALAG

Dude, relax and sit before you spill your food tray over everyone.

John SITS.

Balag EXTENDS his hand, John takes it.

Balag SQUEEZES his hand, John WINCES.

BALAG (cont'd)

Yeah, I'm Balag and that's my mom, why?

JOHN

Umm, so, I was really sick during the exam, could barely see the page you know what I mean. My point is, my only point is: Could you put in a word with your mom to let me take her class.

BALAG

That's not really my realm. She has to be fair to everyone, you know

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

BALAG (cont'd)  
 what I mean? It's just one class,  
 not the end of the world.

SILENCE, no response from John.

BALAG (cont'd)  
 So what else do you do? Sports?

JOHN  
 Nahh, nothing like that. There's  
 nothing really interesting about me  
 at all.

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE  
 Wait you're in my homeroom, you're  
 the transfer from South Val.

BALAG  
 South Valley? I know people up  
 there, friends, you know a Rich  
 Hegel, Josh Cohen.

JOHN  
 Uggh, No, they never heard of me  
 either, I'm nobody no need to ask.

BALAG  
 What about Nisarg Patel?

SILENCE. John and Balag lock eyes.

JOHN  
 Never heard of him either, anyway I  
 gotta go.

BALAG  
 Same here, c'mon ladies we got  
 practice.

Balag stands and picks up a FOOTBALL HELMET.

JOHN  
 You play football!?

BALAG  
 Yeah, I do.

Balag's Football Teammate pretends to TACKLE John who  
 STARTLES and then SULKS AWAY.

BALAG (O.S.)  
 You're such a dick dude, you're why  
 everyone thinks we're meat heads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE (O.S.)  
 You see his attitude man? excuse me  
 for having our backs.

BALAG (O.S.)  
 Gotta let some things slide when it  
 comes from the weak.

And John just keeps sulking away.

I/E SCHOOL WEIGHT ROOM - LATER

John WATCHES the football team lifting weights.

JOHN  
 Football my ass, probably a kicker.

But then he sees shirtless EIGHT PACKED Balag CURL sixty  
 pounds.

John enters the weight room and GRIPS a seventy pound  
 dumbbell.

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER  
 Kid, you sure you want to do that.

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE  
 Shh, I wanna see this.

John HEAVES the dumbbell off the rack, it BOUNCES on the  
 floor and lands on his BIG TOE.

He SCREAMS, FALLS and sees football players SNEER at him.

John's POV: Mr. Chang's face FLASHES over the Bearded Asian  
 Teenager's face.

John SCREAMS, TACKLES the Bearded Asian Teen and SUCKER  
 PUNCHES his face.

The Bearded Asian Teen FLINGS John off of him.

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER  
 Yo, what the fuck is your problem!  
 I wasn't even laughing at you.

Balag comes between John and the Bearded Asian Teen.

BALAG  
 Cool it alright, both of you.  
 (to the Bearded Asian Teen)  
 You cool?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER  
Yeah, I'm cool.

John LIMPS out of the weight room.

INT SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

John LIMPS down the hall.

BALAG  
Yo!

John keeps going.

BALAG (cont'd)  
Yo, you should acknowledge someone  
when they try to get your  
attention.

JOHN  
Alright fine, yo back, what the  
hell do you want from me.

BALAG  
Those guys can be a bit boneheaded,  
I know but if you want to hit the  
weights again, they won't bother  
you, I talked to them, they'll be  
cool with you being there, got it.

JOHN  
Yeah, got it.

John LIMPS away again until ..

BALAG  
You sure you're OK on that foot, I  
could look at it if you want.

SILENCE. John sizes up Balag.

JOHN  
You're gay.

BALAG  
I'm not going to respect that with  
a response.

JOHN  
Dude, I'm not putting down gays,  
I'm just saying, why else would you  
wanna ..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALAG

Nisarg Patel is my cousin and yeah,  
I've heard of you too.

JOHN

Apologies.

BALAG

So now you know, nothing to do with  
gay, not gay. You want some help in  
the weight room, it's yours.

John NODS, Balag EXITS into the library and then ..

John sees Claudia amongst a line of students enter the  
library and follows her into the library.

INT SCHOOL LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

John faces Balag.

JOHN

You tutor?

BALAG

Yep, volunteer academic tutoring,  
you interested?

John's POV: Claudia goes to the seat closest to the window.

JOHN

Yeah, that's a great cause, it'll  
look good for college next year.  
Hey, why don't I just make myself  
useful and work the students, I  
mean, work WITH them over there.

John CUTS in front of another tutor to sit next to Claudia.

JOHN (cont'd)

Hi! I'm your tutor. AP Chem, AP  
Bio, English, I'm your man.

CLAUDIA

Do you do math?

JOHN

Calc, preCalc, series, imaginary  
numbers ..

CLAUDIA

Decimals and fractions?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN  
Yeah, that too.

Claudia takes out her twenty question MATH ASSIGNMENT.

Clock reads: Three fifteen PM.

INT SCHOOL LIBRARY - LATER

CLOCK reads: Three Fifty Five PM.

John TAPS his pencil, Claudia pours over QUESTION NUMBER FIVE.

John SIGHS and PUTS down his pencil.

CLAUDIA  
I'm sorry, I just can't.

JOHN  
No one's judging you.

Claudia FLASHES her eyes at John.

JOHN (cont'd)  
You're getting there, remember what I said before about carrying over digits greater than nine to the left.

Claudia writes down the wrong answer.

JOHN (cont'd)  
No, not like that, try it again, I know you can get it.

SILENCE. Clock RINGS Four pm.

Claudia CARESSES JOHN's hand, he BLUSHES.

CLAUDIA  
Hey, you don't think you could, speed things up on the remaining problems do you?

JOHN  
But it's your homework though, you'll regret it in the long run.

Claudia BATS her artificially elongated EYELASHES at him and then he TAKES her homework.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But then John sees Balag LOOKING at him and puts down his pencil.

JOHN (cont'd)  
I'm really sorry, but I can't.

CLAUDIA  
It's OK, it's OK. Thanks for offering, I don't need your help to fail, I can do it on my own.

Claudia's chair SCREECHES as she slides it back in place.

She covers herself with DARK SUNGLASSES and RUSHES to the exit in her TEN INCH HEELS.

CLANK, CLANK, CLANK. Claudia takes off her heels and walks BAREFOOT.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
(whispering)  
Sorry

John tries to follow her until Balag PUTS HIS HAND on John's shoulder.

JOHN  
What, I'm just going home.

BALAG  
Sure you are. Listen, do what you wanna do, but even for me she's a reach. The girl's famous, look her up online if you don't believe me.

John NODS to Balag, STOPS following Claudia and SIMPERS away the opposite direction.

EXT SCHOOL - LATER

John stands in front of a bus and glances at Claudia down the road.

BUS DRIVER  
Hey, are you getting in or what? I haven't got all day.

John FOLLOWS Claudia.

Claudia sees him walk towards her in the reflection of her sunglasses and then sees him DUCKS his head behind a tree.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Hey, I can see you, your book bag is sticking out from behind the tree.

John comes out of hiding.

JOHN

I, umm, this is my way home, I didn't want to seem like I was following you.

CLAUDIA

Uh huh. Your name is John right?

John NODS.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

So John, just so you know, I'm used to people following me around, so cool. Now next time you want to follow a pretty girl home say: Hi pretty girl, my name is John, my house is this direction, or so I claim, let's walk together.

JOHN

Hi Claudia my name is John, my house is this direction, it really is. Let's walk together so you don't have to pretend to walk slow and wait for me to catch up to you.

Claudia stands there STUNNED as John walks ahead.

JOHN (cont'd)

You know I may be certain things, but a witless fool is not one of them. So come on, are you going to take my offer or not?

Claudia follows John who turns his face away from her and lets out a DEEP SIGH OF RELIEF.

JOHN (cont'd)

So other people really follow you around? I mean I can see why.

CLAUDIA

No, no it's not that, I'm an actress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Oh yeah, Balag said you were famous.

CLAUDIA

Wait, you actually don't know who I am?

JOHN

No!, I do, it's just that I can't recall right now.

CLAUDIA

John, I'm Vanessa.

SILENCE.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Vanessa Browning of Newport Beauties, I died in the season finale!

JOHN

Oh yeah, I heard of it before.

CLAUDIA

So was Balag really asking about me?

Claudia BLUSHES and SMILES expectantly.

JOHN

No, he was not.

(pause)

So wow, I mean congrats on being a famous actress.

CLAUDIA

It's nothing, I mean really it's nothing now that Vanessa's dead. Now I'm just another unemployed pendejo.

JOHN

Pendago?

CLAUDIA

Pendejo, it's a Spanish bad word for dumb people.

John STARES at her PALE skin.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

It's the makeup. Pfeiffer is only my professional name, my mom's actually a Rodriguez. Anyway, so you're new at the school?

JOHN

Oh you just never noticed me before.

CLAUDIA

No, I'm pretty good with faces and our grade only has like a hundred people, so where were you before?

JOHN

Ugh, just somewhere around, anyway Claudia, you're not dumb. I mean, I'm not going to lie, math is not your strong suit but there are different types of intelligence.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, yeah, whatever. Ms. Rodriguez, Claudia, you're a good actress but just close your mouth and don't open it again. Or better yet: Yeah, I love your work, you're great, let's hang out sometime. Oh you're seventeen!?, I'm sorry, I didn't know.

JOHN

No, I mean you're emotionally intelligent. You're good with people.

CLAUDIA

Psst, not a witless fool indeed, but I heard that one too.

JOHN

No I mean it, it probably comes from you dealing with all your fans and hiding it well if you're annoyed at them but it shows.

Claudia STOPS and STARES at John.

CLAUDIA

Oh my God you're serious.

John NODS, Claudia SMILES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
You know I'm not just an actress,  
I'm also a classically trained  
dancer, see.

Claudia SPINS three hundred and sixty degrees on her high heels and FALLS, the contents of her purse SPILL OUT across the ground.

John TURNS AROUND and COVERS his eyes with both hands.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
Ugh, what are you doing?

JOHN  
I don't want to embarrass you, you  
know, in case you're not decent.

Claudia CROSSES her legs.

CLAUDIA  
You know the 'decent' thing to do  
when someone falls is to ask if  
they're OK, help them get back up?

JOHN  
Oh, sorry, it's my fault, let me.

Claudia's POV: A single BLUE PILL lays on the ground.

CLAUDIA  
No!, No please, not yet I'm not  
decent, please just look the other  
direction.

Claudia packs the blue pill into her purse.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
OK, You can turn around now.

John turns around.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
You sure you weren't peeking?

JOHN  
No, but I wish I kind of was.

CLAUDIA  
OK, not the right line to use on a  
girl. But you are sweet, now can  
you help me pick up all this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John BLUSHES and picks up Claudia's items for her.

EXT CLAUDIA'S HOUSE - LATER

John's mouth DROPS OPEN, his eyes BULGE with awe at the MARBLE FOUNTAIN in front of a FOUR STORY MANSION.

CLAUDIA

Eh, can someone say gaudy?

JOHN

Eh, not compared to the statue in front of my apartment, house, ma, mansion. But I mean we're same level, definitely same level.

CLAUDIA

Personally I don't give a shit what the house looks like, it's how the people are inside that counts.

John LAUGHS.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Thank you really for your discretion earlier. Now get going before my mom comes along, she'll like shoot you if she sees you out here, I'm serious.

John watches Claudia walk into her house.

CUT TO:

John SIGHS at the DUMPSTER parked front of a DILAPIDATED BROWNSTONE and walks into the building.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

John SCOFFS at an AIRBRUSHED PHOTO of his father on a dating website.

John brings up a FILMOGRAPHY LIST for 'Claudia Pfeiffer' and see multiple movies entries for every year dating back over ten years.

JOHN

Damn, no wonder she's rich.

John TYPES the words 'blue pill medicine' into the Search Engine when he hears the DOOR SHUT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John MINIMIZES the web browser.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Hi dad!

MR. CHANG  
What were you scared about me  
seeing just now?

JOHN  
Nothing, school project on  
medicine, see.

John CLOSES the web browser tab results on Claudia Pfeiffer  
and MAXIMIZES the tab for 'blue pill medicine'.

John and Mr. Chang's POV: John's cell phone BUZZES with a  
message from 'Love :) Claudia :) Love'

JOHN (cont'd)  
I have a ton of AP Bio homework  
today.

MR. CHANG  
Sit down.

John sit down, back BOLTED upright.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
Relax, OK! I just want to have a  
conversation with you. Now listen,  
you're young still and naive about  
women. I don't want you to get  
hurt. Listen have you studied apes  
yet in biology?

JOHN  
No, not yet sir.

MR. CHANG  
I have and do you know what they've  
observed in the wild: alpha male  
apes, fight for the favor of a  
quote helpless female unquote. And  
you know what they uncovered, that  
so-called helpless females  
manipulated these men to fight over  
her while she slinked into the  
woods and had it with some third  
male thing. Listen, you're not  
alpha and you're not the type women  
want to get with, but they'll still  
use you. Understand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John NODS in agreement.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
Now who is Claudia?

JOHN  
Just some ugly lab partner girl, I  
don't know why she put her name  
into my phone like that.

MR. CHANG  
Just be careful OK, there will be  
women enough after you finish med  
school.

Mr. Chang PATS John's back and LAUGHS, a moment later John  
LAUGHS.

INT JOHN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John READS this text message on his cell phone: John, can  
you help me out on my homework?

John types 'NO!' and THROWS his cell phone onto his bed.

John hears Mr. Chang LAUGHING and sees him slouched in front  
of the television PICKING his nose and DRIPPING potato chips  
onto his beard and BEER BELLY.

John PICKS UP the phone.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)  
It's OK, I got it.

JOHN  
(cuts off Claudia)  
I'm going to help you.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)  
No, really it's OK, I'm sorry.

JOHN  
Listen to me! I'm going to help  
you, OK!

Claudia HANGS UP, John STARES at his reflection in the  
mirror.

JOHN (cont'd)  
God damn you! Good for nothing  
piece of shit.

I/E SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MORNING

John catches up to Claudia by a SIGN which reads: 'Auditions for Spring Drama: A Doll's House'

CLAUDIA  
Stop following me.

Claudia goes into the Auditorium, John follows her inside.

Then a PLAY DIRECTOR (46) POINTS to John.

PLAY DIRECTOR  
You, on stage, go, go go.

JOHN  
On stage for what sir?

PLAY DIRECTOR  
Don't waste my time, there are people behind you.

John goes on stage, he WINCES as a SPOTLIGHT shines into his eyes.

PLAY DIRECTOR (cont'd)  
What will you be reading?

SILENCE. John begins to SWEAT.

JOHN  
I, I, I didn't prepare anything sir.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Stop stalk, stalk, stalking the lead actress, jizzy.

SOUND OF CHUCKLING.

John just stands there for a long moment, then he RETREATS off stage until ..

CLAUDIA  
Wait!

Claudia hands John a SCRIPT.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
I think this suits you, channel the energy you used during our call last night into this.

CONTINUED:

JOHN

(monotone)

This is the most selfish, self-absorbed thing THAT MAN has ever done. I mean he even gave her mom's hoses. And how does he defend himself? I was lonely.

(escalating tension)

I'm getting out of here as soon as I can. I refuse to ever be connected to that man, so he can just forget about me being a doctor, errh salesman now. I do not care what I do, but as long as I am not near him, I may be able to find happiness, but if I have to stay near him, there will be a fight. He isn't a great man, he is a nothing. I will never, ever forgive him, ever!

SPORADIC CLAPPING.

John BOWS to the director.

JOHN (cont'd)

(to director)

Thank you.

(to Claudia)

Thank you, I won't follow you around anymore.

John RUNS off stage.

INT SCHOOL WEIGHT ROOM - AFTERNOON

ZOOM IN ON JOHN PUSHING THE BENCH PRESS BAR UP OFF HIS CHEST

BALAG

C'mon man, all you, all you.

JOHN

I can't.

BALAG

Yes you can, now shut your mouth and focus.

John pushes the bar up an inch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALAG (cont'd)  
You want respect, earn it, don't  
make me have to help you.

John pushes the bar all the way up and ..

JOHN  
Yeah! Yo damn right.

ZOOM OUT TO REVEAL THAT JOHN HAS PRESSED FIFTY POUNDS.

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE  
Whoo yah!, Next thing you know,  
slap another two and half on each  
side then a five, sky's the limit  
right baby?

John does not respond, Balag SIGNALS his teammate to stop.

BALAG  
You're getting there, you're  
getting there, how old are you  
John, fourteen? Fifteen.

JOHN  
Justd turned seventeen.

BALAG  
Either way, I've seen a lot of guys  
get big real quick before they hit  
senior year, testosterone jolt. And  
the work you're doing now, it's  
prepping your glands to support  
even more when that spurt comes. So  
just keep it up, compare yourself  
only to yourself, you earn your own  
respect, everyone else's will come.

JOHN  
Compare yourself to yourself, I  
wish I had that this morning on  
stage man, wouldn't have, well  
whatever.

BALAG  
On stage, for what?

JOHN  
Some kind of audition, it was an  
accident, actually. It felt fun up  
there though.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

BALAG

Oh the Spring theatre audition,  
that's tough man, but as long as  
you tried.

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER

Haha, Balag remember when you tried  
out freshmen year, man you looked  
like a robot up there.

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE

You're a fighter, not a lover.

BALAG

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Claudia ENTERS and walks up to John.

CLAUDIA

John, guess what?

(pause)

You got the lead role!

Balag DROPS his dumbbell.

JOHN

Really?

CLAUDIA

Of course really, listen just let  
it sink in, we'll talk later OK.  
And if you raise your voice at me  
over the phone again, just remember  
you don't want to deal with my  
bitch side five days a week for  
three straight months, got it!

John NODS, Claudia exits.

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE

Congrats John, not much muscle, but  
you got something in you.

BALAG

Yeah well, don't get a big head  
over it alright. You have a long  
ways to go, if you ever get there.

John and Balag GLARE at each other.

INT JOHN'S KITCHEN - EVENING

John, who is wearing a KITCHEN APRON, sets a MINT LEAF on top of a BUCKET of Fried Chicken.

Mr. Chang ENTERS.

MR. CHANG  
What's the occasion?

JOHN  
Ohh nothing, just felt like it.

Mr. Chang BRUSHES ASIDE the mint leaf and grabs a chicken leg.

John POINTS at the TV playing OTHELLO.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Wow, William Shakespeare, just today, the AP Bio prof was telling us about Shakespeare's biology, his mind was probably super adapted for language and that it was what he was meant to do despite family pressure to go into medicine.

Mr. Chang STOPS chomping his chicken and EYES John.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Law, I meant law. But all those creative types, musicians, playwrites and  
(with heavy emphasis)  
actors. They all have something special about them.

Mr. Chang keeps CHOMPING away so John STANDS in front of the TV.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Dad, please just hear me out. A teacher, a mentor, taught me that you have to have self respect to gain others' respect. And I wanted to tell you that I got an opportunity today to do something I never thought I could do and that thing is, that thing is.

John PAUSES.

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG

Calm down will you? Eat then talk.

John SULKS back to his seat and glances at OTHELLO, Act Three Scene Two, Desdemona dies.

OTHELLO

She's, like a liar, gone to burning hell, 'Twas I that killed her.

Mr. Chang HITS the remote control's off button, but the TV remains ON.

OTHELLO (cont'd)

She turned to folly, and she was a whore.

Mr. Chang HITS the remote control again HARDER this time, but the TV remains ON.

JOHN

Dad.

EMILIA

Thou art rash as fire, to say That she was false: O, she was heavenly true!

Mr. Chang HITS the remote again once, twice, three times until finally, he YANKS out the electric plug.

SILENCE. John TREMBLES.

MR. CHANG

Garbage!

JOHN

Dad, it's just a ..

MR. CHANG

(cuts John off)

I know what it is!

SILENCE. John dares not speak.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)

And it's trash. Not that I have to explain myself to my own son, but it has nothing to do with reality, I refuse to believe it has anything to do with reality.

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Yes dad, you're right as always.  
Writers, actors, all professional  
liars yes?

MR. CHANG

Honesty, forth rightness even if it  
hurts in the short run, better in  
the long run.

JOHN

Even to protect yourself?

MR. CHANG

Most of all.

JOHN

Thank you dad, I'll think about it.  
I mean your advice about women was  
right even though I didn't want to  
hear it at the time, this one  
probably is too. Oh my announcement  
was that I'll be doing academic  
tutoring every day after school for  
the next three months, I'll have  
the forms to you tomorrow.

INT SCHOOL WEIGHT ROOM - AFTERNOON

John faces Balag.

BALAG

So you're going to say no, and  
you're not even going to try to  
explain it to your old man. Dude,  
you're such a ..

JOHN

You don't know him.

BALAG

I know you.

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER

Balag man, calm down, my dad is,  
well I know where John's coming  
from. But seriously though John,  
you're passing up a good  
opportunity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE

What he is trying to say is:  
leading man is pussy magnet.

JOHN

Well either way, three to five pm  
every day, how am I supposed to  
explain that?

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER

Just make up something bro.

JOHN

Tried already, all I could come up  
with is

John SHRUGS his shoulders.

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER

Balag, don't you run a volunteer  
tutoring thing after school.

JOHN

Guys, I know where this is headed,  
But I can't ask him to.

SILENCE. All eyes on Balag who hands John a CONSENT FORM.

BALAG

You're a backup tutor, which means,  
if you're not in a scene you're  
working for me in the library, got  
it?

John NODS.

The Play Director PASSES by.

PLAY DIRECTOR

John, thanks for confirming early  
today, saved me a lot of hassle.  
You boys, learn a thing or two from  
him about making adult lives  
easier.

SILENCE.

John tries to HANDS Balag back the forms, Balag REFUSES.

BALAG

No, I gave you that honestly, and I  
will make sure you live up honestly  
to your end of the bargain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John packs his bag and goes to the exit until ..

BALAG (cont'd)  
So now I know who I'm dealing with.

JOHN  
Oh you mean I'm more than some  
little snot you're training to kiss  
your ass for being such a great big  
brother?

SILENCE. No response from Balag, John exits.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

John WATCHES a video entitled: '2012 Spring Drama'

In the video, the lead male, DYLAN BORNE (16), a white  
hipster with dreadlocks takes center stage.

John CHUCKLES at Dylan's punchlines then he MAXIMIZES the  
video size during Dylan's monologue and PULLS the monitor  
closer.

INT JOHN'S BEDROOM - LATER

John STANDS in front of a body length mirror and POINTS at  
his reflection.

JOHN  
Yo talkin to me? Hey, I ask ya a  
question: Are. You. Talking. To.  
Me?

John LOWERS his gaze from the mirror, slowly raises it up  
again and ..

JOHN (cont'd)  
Call me Ishmael. Some years ago,  
never mind how long, I thought I  
would sail along a little and see  
the watery part of the world.  
Whenever it's a damp November in my  
soul.

Mr. Chang BURSTS thru the closed door, John FREEZES.

MR. CHANG  
I called you, twice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John holds up his AP Biology text book with the cover facing his dad and a PAGE OF SCRIPT DIALOGUE taped onto the text book page facing him.

JOHN

I, I didn't hear you, I'm sorry, it will never happen again, this was a one time accident that occurred because I was too immersed in my studies.

Mr. Chang SCANS the room as the tape holding down the script page loses its grip, John's breath QUICKENS.

MR. CHANG

C'mon let's go, time for dinner.

John looks at himself in the mirror and PUFFS OUT his belly.

JOHN

(impersonates Mr. Chang)  
Grr, by the girth of my belly and the shagginess of my beard, I am the emperor of this roach infested kingdom, how dare you make me wait, not once but twice. Now, c'mon my gut demands more fried chicken.

INT JOHN'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

John sits next to his dad.

JOHN

So dad I really was immersed before, in a way I never experienced.

MR. CHANG

You're a junior, it's about time.

JOHN

Hey dad, can I ask you a question? How did you know when you found the right calling for your life, that medicine was what you wanted to do?

MR. CHANG

I just always did, I was very good at it, always the top of my class.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Really? Or you just felt that way because you ..

MR. CHANG

(cuts John off)

Really. The top five percent every year.

JOHN

Yes dad.

MR. CHANG

So anyway, I also enjoyed it and so I pursued it.

JOHN

So as soon as you were exposed to biology, it just hit you right away, that this was for you?

Mr. Chang NODS.

JOHN (cont'd)

Thank you dad, you actually helped me out lot this time.

INT SCHOOL WEIGHT ROOM - AFTERNOON

John GLANCES at a SCRIPT PAGE when a Jock ELBOWS him out of the way.

JOCK 1

This isn't study hall.

JOHN

Sorry, you're right.

John gets out of the Jock's way.

JOHN (cont'd)

But you know what, this isn't a UFC ring either, alright?

JOCK 1

Alright.

Balag's teammate NUDGES Balag.

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE

Your boy's growing some balls.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

John and Balag LOOK at each other but say nothing.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

John RUNS inside, PANTING. Everyone else is already there.

JOHN

Sorry, I was caught on the other side of the school.

DYLAN BORNE

It's cool, just catch your breathe first.

(whispering)

Now get on stage and don't be late again or I'll re-assign your role.

John gets on stage and faces Claudia.

PLAY DIRECTOR

Do you need a copy of the script?

JOHN

No, it's OK, I memorized it already, it's all about being prepared, you know what I mean?

John GLANCES at a POKER FACED Dylan Borne.

PLAY DIRECTOR

Ok, so page one.

CLAUDIA

Wait, I umm. Sorry!

Student hands Claudia a script, she FUMBLES and DROPS it.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Sorry.

Claudia GIGGLES, John responds with a FEINT SMILE.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - LATER

End of practice, people head to the EXIT.

A group of middle school girls stay behind and STARE at Claudia.

Claudia DONS her sunglasses and turns away from them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John rehearses lines in front of a mirror.

CLAUDIA

John.

No response from John who continues to rehearse his lines.

Claudia BRUSHES back her hair, re-applies LIP STICK and takes off her JACKET to reveal her bare shoulders.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

John, I'm waiting, wanna walk me home?

JOHN

In a bit.

Claudia sees Dylan recite a line for John, then John recite the same line.

DYLAN BORNE

You got it.

As John HIGH FIVES Dylan, Claudia SLAMS the exit behind her.

EXT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - LATER

Middle school girls rush towards Claudia, John follows behinds them.

CLAUDIA

Uggh, kids.

Claudia UNLOCKS her cigarette case, takes out a cigarette, removes the top layer of tobacco, SNORTS the cocaine underneath and casually drops the remains in the sewer.

JOHN

Sorry, I tried to keep them at bay but ..

CLAUDIA

Don't apologize, I can handle this.

Claudia flashes a GRIN at PRETEEN GIRL.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Hiii! Yes, that is me on Newport Beauties and thanks in advance for your support.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRETEEN GIRL

Who said I support you or even like you? Your character was killed because she sucks.

CLAUDIA

Well, I'm sorry you feel that way, shouldn't you be getting back to your mom before I call her and tell her what you've been saying.

The preteen girl SCOFFS at Claudia and leads her friends back to the school.

PRETEEN GIRL

Have fun walking home with your boyfriend.

CLAUDIA

He's NOT my boyfriend!

John HESITATES but then goes to Claudia.

EXT STREET - LATER

A DISTANCE between John and Claudia.

JOHN

Yeah so I'm really psyched about this play, just being the center of attention, expressing parts of who I am really instead of repressing it all the time. I mean acting is fake of course but it's emotionally so real, so cathartic, heh, SAT word. Did I tell you that that Dylan guy changed his mind about me.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, twice already.

John and Claudia continue in SILENCE until.

JOHN

So I mean why are you in this play? I don't mean that offensively but I mean you're big time and ..

(pause)

You don't even like doing this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

It's more complicated than like or not like, it's legit, agents will take me more seriously if they think I'm real and grounded.

JOHN

I didn't mean just the play, I mean: do you like acting in general?

CLAUDIA

I got into it early and I can't, I mean I don't want to ya know be a burden on my mom.

JOHN

So she wants you to do it.

CLAUDIA

Listen, can we talk about something else.

JOHN

Actually I was just going to head the other direction.

John walks away from Claudia, opens his phone and removes the EMOTICONS surrounding her name.

INT JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John READS a text message from Claudia: I'm sorry about earlier today, I mean with the girl.

He DISMISSES the message.

Phone VIBRATES with another text message from Claudia: Do you want to go to a party with me today?

John TYPES: Yes.

EXT HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

John wears BAGGY JEANS, a WIFE BEATER and a BANDANA.

A JEEP full of high school students HONKS its horn at John.

JOCK 1

You look hot dude!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John RAISES HIS FIST to them.

JOHN

Yo yo!

CLAUDIA

John?! What are you?!

JOHN

It's a party, I mean I've been  
invited to a lot of them before.  
It's whats ..

Claudia COVERS John's mouth with her hand, takes off his  
ridiculous bandana and RAISES his baggy jeans until ..

Claudia sees girls GAWKING at them and sees John BLUSH, GRIN  
and lower his gaze away from them.

Claudia PULLS her hands away from his jeans.

CLAUDIA

Raise those will you and don't just  
grin like a twelve year old when  
girls looks at you, look them in  
the eyes, and nod, like this.

Claudia looks into John's eyes and NODS. John SQUINTS his  
eyes at Claudia eyes, NODS and then RAISES ONE EYEBROW.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Dumb-butt, you look like a juvenile  
seventies porn star.

John nods to freshmen girls who giggle and smile back.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Alright Casanova, you just keep on  
nodding while I go inside.

Claudia walks towards her house, John RUSHES to her side.

INT HOUSE PARTY LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Door CLOSES, Claudia SLINKS through the crowd without  
drawing attention.

Instead, everyone STARES and some people SNEER at John until  
Balag goes up to him and SHAKES his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BALAG

What's up dude, good to have you here.

Balag's friends follow his lead.

BEARDED EAST ASIAN TEENAGER

Look at you, time in the gym is paying off.

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE

Hang out with us, we'll show you around.

JOHN

Hey Claudia.

Claudia is nowhere in sight.

JOHN (cont'd)

OK, I guess I'll find you later.

EXT HOUSE PARTY SWIMMING POOL - LATER

Claudia SHUTS her cigarette case, WIPES her nostrils, THROWS down the towel covering her waist and MARCHES to the pool until ..

OTHER GIRLS step into the pool.

Claudia RETREATS and stares at their WASHBOARD WAISTS.

Then she GRABS a SLIVER of fat off her stomach and COVERS herself up.

INT BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Claudia HEARS people diving into the pool and SHUTS the window.

BANGING on bathroom door.

JOCK 1

Yo! How long do you need to take a dump.

CLAUDIA

Back off! There's a girl in here alright!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia SITS on the toilet, covers her face with her hands and stays in that position.

LONG SILENCE and then BANGING on bathroom door again.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
 Alright, alright, one minute.

Claudia takes out a LOCKED MINI-WALLET from her purse, a KEY from tucked in the inner lining of her dress, UNLOCKS the wallet and takes out a single BLUE PILL.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
 Whatever.

Claudia SWALLOWS the blue pill and OPENS the door.

INT HOUSE PARTY KITCHEN - LATER

John hides in the corner, holding a HUGE CUP of beer in front of him, nodding and smiling to people who do not respond to his gestures.

A six foot tall, broad shouldered MEGA JOCK throws a ping pong ball at John, who CATCHES it and tosses it back.

MEGA JOCK  
 Dude, that was an invitation to  
 join us.

Mega Jock's friends CHUCKLE.

MEGA JOCK (cont'd)  
 You guys think I'm kidding? I've  
 seen this guy in the weight room,  
 you wanna get big bad bad don't  
 ya?, Got a chip on his shoulder,  
 something to prove.

Mega Jock THROWS the ping pong ball at a LINE OF CUPS on the other side of the table and misses, then he CHUGS down a PINT of beer in one gulp.

He tosses the ping pong ball to John.

MEGA JOCK (cont'd)  
 Prove it.

John CHUGS beer until it SQUIRTS out of his nose.

Mega Jock PICKS up his beer again until

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Wait. I'm not done yet.

Again, John CHUGS beer until it SQUIRTS out of his nose and he KEELS OVER.

Balag STEPS IN FRONT of John.

BALAG

You wanna prove yourself, you should choose a bigger opponent.

John steps to Balag's side but Balag HOLDS HIM BACK.

MEGA JOCK

Dude, you're like six inches shorter than me.

BALAG

Not where it counts.

Audience APPLAUDS Balag's wit.

John tries to go to Balag's side again but Balag's football friend PULLS him back

JOHN

Let me do this!

BALAG'S FOOTBALL TEAMMATE

Dude, Balag isn't trying to humiliate you man, not this time really, but you kept drinking like that you'd end up in the hospital.

John PUSHES Balag's friend away and STOMPS OFF.

INT HOUSE PARTY LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John LOOKS AROUND, the room is EMPTY.

Then he CLENCHES his knuckles into a FIST and POUNDS the SOFA PILLOW again and again and again until.

Two GIRLS enter.

JOHN

It's not what it looks like

GIRL 1

Uhhh, okay..

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JOHN

I'm sorry, really. Let me umm, umm  
just get out of your way.

John KOWTOWS to the two girls and CLOSES the BATHROOM door  
behind him until ..

CLAUDIA (O.S.)

Beer Pong, booyahhh!

Bathroom door FLINGS OPEN.

John's POV: Claudia and the MegaJock down beer until he puts  
his down and SHAKES his head. She finishes her beer and then  
Balag gives her a BEAR HUG, she GIGGLES with delight.

John approaches the two girls.

JOHN

Hi ladies, apologies for before, I  
was just practicing something for  
my leading man role in this year's  
spring drama.

GIRL 1

Wait, you're the lead?

JOHN

I wanted to let an underclassman  
have that chance given that I'm an  
upperclassman, but they insisted.

GIRL 2

Oh that's so sweet, we're freshmen  
actually.

JOHN

Really? But you guys look so  
mature.

Girls LAUGH.

JOHN (cont'd)

C'mon sit down.

The two girls SIT in a sofa whose BACK faces Claudia.

JOHN (cont'd)

Not there, here.

John SITS down between the two girls where Claudia can see  
him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Balag TOUCHES Claudia's shoulder so John PULLS the girls closer to him.

JOHN (cont'd)  
That's it. Get a good view of  
what's going on.

INT HOUSE PARTY KITCHEN - LATER

Claudia sees the following TEXT MESSAGE on her cellphone from Ms. Rodriguez, 8:30 pm: 'Where the hell are you!?'

Claudia looks at the clock: 9:30 pm

CLAUDIA  
Shit.

She SPITS OUT her last mouthful of beer and PUSHES her way thru the crowd.

BALAG  
Yo Clauds, where are you going?

Claudia ignores Balag.

INT HOUSE PARTY LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Claudia enters, John is still sitting with the two girls.

CLAUDIA  
Let's go.

JOHN  
Isn't Balag waiting for you back there?

CLAUDIA  
Now!  
(pause)  
I mean, I really, really need your help right now, please.

John GETS UP and follows Claudia out the door.

EXT CLAUDIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Claudia keels over and VOMITS, John tries to stand her up straight.

Claudia PUSHES him away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

No, it's OK. I know what I'm doing.

Claudia PUTS TWO FINGERS DOWN HER THROAT and induces more vomiting.

Then She EXHALES onto JOHN's face, he WINCES.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Still smells huh?

JOHN

Not too much, you don't have to ..

Claudia takes out a MINI BOTTLE OF MOUTHWASH from her purse, GARGLES and then SWALLOWS IT.

She EXHALES into JOHN's face again, this time he does not wince, so then she applies FOUNDATION to her cheeks.

JOHN (cont'd)

Is that to cover the blood speckles from vomiting?

Claudia GLARES at JOHN.

JOHN (cont'd)

Sorry.

CLAUDIA

It's alright, listen, can I ask you just one more favor? Just stand right there beneath the street light.

John STANDS beneath the street light.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Good, now just whatever you do, don't move OK?

JOHN

Would you please let me know what's going on?

Claudia HUGS John, he STOPS complaining.

CLAUDIA

Thank you. Trust me, you'll know.

Claudia RUNS towards her house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
Remember, just stand the there OK  
and don't worry about anything, I  
got your back.

Claudia goes into her house, moments later, she appears by  
the SECOND STORY WINDOW above the street light.

MS. RODRIGUEZ (O.S.)  
Where were you?

CLAUDIA  
Mom, just look.

Ms. Rodriguez GLANCES at John.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
Dangerous partying and him?

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
Just look at you, your hair's a  
mess and your lipstick makes you  
look like a two cent ..

Ms. Rodriguez GLARES at John and SHUTS THE WINDOW.

EXT JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

TAXI STOPS in front of John's house, John REACHES for his  
wallet.

TAXI DRIVER  
She covered the tip too.

John gets out of the taxi and sees his dad standing at the  
window.

JOHN  
Dad, please, I can explain.

MR. CHANG  
Get up here first before you catch  
cold, and next time call me rather  
than let the other academic  
decathlon parents do it. Ms.  
Pfeiffer has other things to do  
besides babysit you.

John NODS and then his cellphone BUZZES with a text message:  
See, I told you I had your back :)

INT JOHN'S KITCHEN - EVENING

John has dinner with Mr. Chang.

JOHN

Hey dad, I have a friend in AP Bio who is concerned about someone she, I mean he knows, his cousin.

MR. CHANG

And?

JOHN

He has this wild idea that his cousin has a drug problem. What I'm trying to say is: you're an emergency room nurse, how much of this stuff have you seen? Overdoses and whatnot.

MR. CHANG

All the time.

JOHN

But they're all like homeless off the street right? Guys who you look at you say "whoaaa", he must be on something.

MR. CHANG

Not necessarily. Just the other day, young man, mid twenties, Wall Street hotshot, cocaine induced heart attack.

JOHN

I better tell my friend to talk to his cousin about it, confront her or something.

MR. CHANG

No, tell your friend that if he's really concerned to stage an intervention. Never, ever trust an addict.

SILENCE. No response from John.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)

I thought it was a he?

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Oh, I forget now too, but I'll relay your message, thanks.

INT SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

John STANDS by the table next to the Men's Bathroom, Claudia approaches him.

A fly BUZZES around Claudia's face, students STARE at her, but she ignores them and shows John her cell phone.

John sees the following text message on her cellphone: 'I know about your blue pills.'

CLAUDIA

I don't understand this message, what blue pill, is that a code word for something? John, if you mean to tell me, or any girl for that matter, have the balls to be direct about it.

JOHN

Fine, I saw a blue pill drop out of your purse the day we met, when you fell.

SILENCE, Claudia's eyes BULGE with momentary surprise.

CLAUDIA

Well that's a shocker, since you've been stalking me since day one. And, and how dare you jump to conclusions and accuse me of  
(pause)  
Do you even know what they're for?

SILENCE.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

No huh? I get it now, I get it completely. You're in your own little head inventing fantasies of how you're going to save me and how grateful I'm going to be. Not that it's any of your business, but it's medicine, that's all you need to know. Now back off!

Claudia WALKS AWAY, John TOUCHES her hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
You want me to make a scene?

JOHN  
You think I care what these people  
think?

CLAUDIA  
Of course not because let me guess:  
you care so much more for my well  
being than them. You know what  
John, that might mean something, if  
anyone here cared what you think.

The two freshmen girls from the party WAVE HI to John as  
they pass by.

John SMILES at them and then looks at Claudia.

Bell RINGS.

JOHN  
I just wanted to know what was  
going on with you, and now I do, at  
least a little bit.

John walks away until Claudia BLOCKS his path.

CLAUDIA  
You won't tell anyone will you?

JOHN  
What would you do in my shoes,  
Claudia?

John FROWNS and goes around Claudia.

CLAUDIA  
Please, I can handle myself.

John keeps walking.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
What can I do to make you  
understand?

SILENCE, then Claudia runs to John and KISSES his lips.

John DROPS his books.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
Have faith in me, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

OK.

Claudia walks away.

CLAUDIA

That was just a thank you gesture  
for caring by the way, don't read  
anything more into it than that.

John just stands there, books strewn across the floor.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

John and Claudia GRIN for the camera.

CAMERA MAN

That's it, look good, look happy,  
because this photo is your  
celebrity moment, it's gonna be on  
the front page of the Ledger.

John's face goes livid.

CAMERA MAN (cont'd)

One, two, three.

John SNAPS his face away from the FLASH.

CAMERA MAN (cont'd)

Again, John keep your face still  
time.

JOHN

I'm not feeling very well, just  
take it without me.

John RUNS into the bathroom.

I/E MEN'S BATHROOM - LATER

Claudia walks in on John.

CLAUDIA

Pretend to be sick as soon as you  
hear your picture will be made  
public? Who is it that you don't  
want seeing this?

SILENCE.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
John, if I can trust you, you can trust me.

SILENCE. John looks at Claudia.

JOHN  
My dad. He doesn't exactly know I'm in this play, look I can hide in the back or put on sunglasses if need be.

CLAUDIA  
No, he might still recognize you.

PLAY DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
Claudia, John.

CLAUDIA  
I'm coming!  
(to John)  
Take as much time as you need, I have you covered.

Claudia EXITS.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

John WATCHES:

PLAY DIRECTOR  
Too sick to stand in place for a minute?

CLAUDIA  
It happens.

MALE ACTOR  
Weak

CLAUDIA  
And what part do you play again?

JOHN (O.S.)  
Excuse me.

John enters, ELBOWS the Male Actor aside and GRINS for the camera.

INT JOHN'S BEDROOM ROOM - EVENING

John stands in front his mirror and HOLDS UP the LEDGER newspaper.

JOHN

Hi dad, that's me on the front page of the ledger today for being in the school play.

(mimics Mr. Chang)

I thought you were an academic tutor John, I don't understand.

(in his own voice)

I mislead, no I'm going to be a man about this and be forthright, I lied to you, but now I'm coming clean, this is what I want to do and I respectfully ask for your permission.

(mimics his dad)

I'm surprised, that you lied and that you had it in you to confess. No more lies, now tell me about your play.

(in his own voice)

Thank you sir, I mean really, I appreciate this.

Sound of Corolla SPUTTERING into the driveway.

John TREMBLES.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Chang OPENS the door.

JOHN

Hi dad, how was your day?

Mr. Chang TOSSES the LEDGER in front of John.

MR. CHANG

Liar.

JOHN

No, please just let me explain.

MR. CHANG

You told me you were an academic tutor as a cover for this, I understand perfectly and it doesn't  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
 surprise me at all. You'd still lie  
 now if I let you open your mouth.  
 (pause)  
 Just like your mother, lies.  
 (pounds table with FIST)  
 LIES!!

JOHN  
 Yes dad, I'm a liar. I'm sorry.

MR. CHANG  
 Don't say you're sorry when you're  
 not. Now, you will quit the play  
 tomorrow.

JOHN  
 Yes dad, no more lies, I'll quit  
 the play tomorrow.

MR. CHANG  
 You're my son and I want you to  
 understand that I'm doing this for  
 your own good OK? You're still  
 young and naive. I mean c'mon why  
 would anyone want you on stage?  
 Leading men are these handsome,  
 strapping types. And those actor  
 guys, I feel sorry for them, I'd  
 rather have a stable job that I can  
 depend on every day than get one  
 big project, go nowhere after wards  
 and have everyone look at me like a  
 has been for the rest of my life.  
 And by big project I mean movies,  
 not some school play no one cares  
 about. I mean you do see the the  
 reason in that, don't you?

SILENCE. John looks at his reflection.

JOHN  
 Thank you sir, I mean really, I  
 appreciate this.

EXT SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Claudia approaches John and sees him hide a SIGNED LETTER in  
 his back pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Hey there mister big shot leading man, you trying to slip by me without saying hello.

JOHN

Hi.

CLAUDIA

Are you alright.

John SMILES.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

How did things with your dad go?

JOHN

Don't worry about it.

John EXITS.

INT SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

John walks down the hall when

BALAG

John.

John ignores Balag and keeps walking.

BALAG (cont'd)

John!, I know you heard me that time.

JOHN

Wow! Hi Balag, it's been such a long time since we talked, how are you?

BALAG

Comments like that and you wonder why you're so popular.

JOHN

More popular with some than you.

BALAG

Alright, just hear me out. Something's changed, I can't have you pretend to be a tutor any more without doing anything, I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN  
OK, got it.

John walks away when ..

BALAG  
Wait John, you do know what this means right? Your cover for the play is blown.

JOHN  
I'll handle it.

BALAG  
How?

JOHN  
Not your business.

BALAG  
Wait, you're not thinking of quitting the play are you?

JOHN  
Not your business!

BALAG  
Fine, you're right, not my business, but all I know is, I'd rather see you do what you want than go out like my cousin.

John STOPS.

JOHN  
That's quite something to say.

BALAG  
Well you remind me of him, no offense and I don't want you to give up like he did. I know it sounds weird, maybe it's just me and my crazy conscience. Anyway, my point is, I can give you back your cover, a better one, full proof.

Balag hands John a SHEET OF PAPER.

BALAG (cont'd)  
That's the plan, read it.

Balag and John walk away from each other but then John STOPS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Wait, Why wouldn't your old plan work anymore?

BALAG

Oh, well, just stuff and..

JOHN

(cuts Balag off)

And what made you think I would quit the play? Not even Claudia could have guessed that from ..

John STOPS.

JOHN (cont'd)

You spent what one, two hours typing this up for me? For your 'crazy conscience', for Nisarg? Is that who you did this for?

SILENCE. Balag avoids John's eye contact.

JOHN (cont'd)

So this is the face of my enemy. I wonder what she would think of you if I tell her that you invoked your dead cousin to try to manipulate me.

(pause)

Full proof huh? You better make damn well sure that it is.

John exits.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Claudia enters, John is already in costume, onstage.

JOHN

Act two, scene two, let's go.

CLOSE-UP ON A RIPPED APART LETTER IN A WASTE BASKET BEHIND JOHN.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - LATER

People file out of practice when Claudia approaches John.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Hey, guess what? Remember that big time producer I was telling you about who got me my first break? He's throwing a get together tonight in his like huge penthouse loft and I can introduce you to him.

JOHN

Ok.

CLAUDIA

Don't sound too excited, we'll be back before your dad even knows you're gone.

JOHN

It's not that. I mean, nothing is really going to come out of me meeting that producer, except him telling me how hard it is to break into acting and how he can't help me.

CLAUDIA

You sound like an old man, I'll take care of you, c'mon.

JOHN

Nahh, I'm just not.

John sees Claudia's cell phone RING with a call from Balag.

JOHN (cont'd)

Forget that, when do we leave?

INT PENTHOUSE APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EVENING

John looks at the crowd of middle aged business men and early twenties women in evening gowns and then looks at his torn sneakers and oversized t-shirt.

BUTLER

Excuse me, who are you with?

John POINTS to Claudia who is talking to one of the middle aged men.

The Butler gives John a SKEPTICAL LOOK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Claudia.

No response.

JOHN (cont'd)

Claudia!

The crowd STARES at John, Claudia goes to him.

CLAUDIA

He's with me, so why don't you do  
your job and fetch him some food  
instead of standing around.

(to John)

Are you OK?

JOHN

Yeah, I'm fine, really.

John notices Claudia's eyes darting around the room.

JOHN (cont'd)

Listen, if you need to talk the  
producers. I can handle myself.  
Just let's get out of here by eight  
thirty OK? So we can get the last  
bus at nine.

CLAUDIA

Thank you, I promise, eight thirty.

Claudia goes away.

John sees a group of early twenties men and women in a  
corner of the room sipping martinis and other liquor.

Then he takes a RED MARTINI from the butler and walks over  
to the group.

ACTOR

Red martini? Are you practicing for  
a drag queen role?

Everyone LAUGHS, so John laughs with them.

JOHN

Actually no, but I am practicing  
for a revival of 'A Doll's House',  
I'm the lead actually.

ACTRESS

Really? Which theatre?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JOHN  
Northern Valley, it's way, way, way  
off Broadway.

ACTRESS  
No, it's OK, I mean you're still a  
student right?

John NODS.

ACTRESS (cont'd)  
Oh, which college?

JOHN  
Northern Valley  
(pause)  
It's a High school.

AWKWARD SILENCE.

INT PENTHOUSE APARTMENT BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Claudia faces the Film Producer MR. DERWIN.

CLAUDIA  
You saw something in me before and  
whatever that is..

FILM PRODUCER MR. DERWIN  
(cuts Claudia off)  
You said this wasn't going to be  
about business?

CLAUDIA  
Just hear me out, it's extremely  
important to me and my mom that I  
get another role soon.

FILM PRODUCER MR. DERWIN  
I'm afraid I can't help you, now if  
you'll excuse me.

Claudia SHUTS the door.

CLAUDIA  
Is there anything at all I can do  
to persuade you?

Claudia SAUNTERS into Mr. Derwin's personal space and puts  
her arm on his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FILM PRODUCER MR. DERWIN  
Miss Pfeiffer, this is highly  
inappropriate. You are a minor, it  
was a mistake for me to invite you,  
don't make me have to un-invite  
you.

Mr. Derwin exits.

A TEAR falls from Claudia's eye, she re-applies her makeup  
but the tears keep on falling.

Claudia FUMBLES thru her purse, TOSSES out her makeup kit,  
tweezers and her cellphone.

CELLPHONE FLASHES THIS TEXT MESSAGE: YO, IT'S 8:15, WHERE  
ARE YOU?

Claudia pulls out her cigarette case and opens it, it is  
EMPTY.

Claudia HYPERVENTILATES and PULLS her hair

CLAUDIA  
You can do this, I know you can,  
C'mon Clauds, pull yourself  
together.

SOUND of people approaching.

Claudia HIDES in the closet.

People enter and LOCK the door behind them.

COCAINE HIPSTER OZ (O.S.)  
Let's get this party started yo!

COCAINE HIPSTER HARRIET (O.S.)  
Shh!, This isn't our apartment.

Claudia's POV: Six people gather around Oz as he dumps  
COCAINE on a BEDSIDE TABLE.

Claudia STEPS OUT of the closet.

CLAUDIA  
I'm twenty five, I didn't see  
anything, may I join you?

INT PENTHOUSE APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John presses SEND on this text message: 'Hey Claudia, come out, come out where-ever you are..'

John LOOKS at the clock: eight twenty pm and TAPS his cell phone against the wall.

INT PENTHOUSE APARTMENT BEDROOM - LATER

Everyone, including Claudia SNORTS cocaine off the table.

One by one people LIFT their head off the table and WIPE their nostrils until Claudia is the one left still snorting.

Claudia LIFTS her head, Everyone STARES at her.

CLAUDIA  
What? Lightweights.

INT PENTHOUSE APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - LATER

John looks at the clock: eight thirty pm.

Claudia and the others BURSTS out of the bedroom, DANCING to the CLASSICAL background music.

JOHN  
Finally!, we can still make it if we hurry.

CLAUDIA  
Chill babe, c'mon and dance.

Claudia GRABS John and TWIRLS him around until he FALLS over a sofa, then she GIGGLES as she helps him stand.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
One more round with your leading lady.

Claudia GRABS John's hands again, but this time he BACKS AWAY.

Cocaine Hipster Oz SHOVES John aside and dances with Claudia.

Cocaine Hipster Harriett GLARES at Claudia and then WHISPERS into Mr. Derwin's ear.

John SLAMS the door behind him on the way out the apartment.

EXT PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Two Massive BodyGuards PUSH Claudia out the door.

She sees John one block away, walking away from her.

CLAUDIA

John!

No response from John, Claudia HAILS a taxi.

EXT STREET - MOMENTS LATER

TAXI pulls up alongside John, Claudia sticks her head out the window.

CLAUDIA

John, c'mon, get in the car.

SILENCE.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

I'm sorry about that guy, he just shoved himself in front of me, I didn't know what to do.

Still no response from John.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

John, you're not going to make it to the bus, how are you going to get home and explain to your dad without my help?

John STOPS.

INT TAXICAB - LATER

Claudia and John sit on opposite sides of the cab, Claudia STARES at him, but he looks the other way.

She TOUCHES his hand.

JOHN

What were you doing with those people in that room?

CLAUDIA

I was upset because the older man you saw me walk into the room with, the producer wouldn't help me find

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
work. And then those people came in  
and I had coke with them.

JOHN  
How much?

CLAUDIA  
A little.

John PULLS his hand away.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
It's normal at these parties you  
know. John, you're a junior now,  
live a little.

JOHN  
That's messed up that the first  
thing you think of to do when  
you're upset is to snort coke.

CLAUDIA  
Yes, I was upset and alone, not  
like now.

Claudia CARESSES John's shoulders, he finally faces her.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
I know it's messed up, but I've  
been under a lot of stress lately.  
Audition, fail, audition, fail, my  
mom's like: you're a has been at  
seventeen and don't you let me  
catch you do drugs again.

JOHN  
Your mom knows you do drugs?

CLAUDIA  
She caught me like once, but it's  
kind of tacit between us that she  
knows but pretends she doesn't, I  
mean as long as I keep it  
recreational, if it ever really got  
out of hand.

John EYES at Claudia.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
Why, you weren't thinking of tell  
her were you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

I don't know.

CLAUDIA

Oh my God, if you told my mom,  
she'd be like 'Get out of our  
family business' And I would like  
rat you out to your dad.

SILENCE. John STARES at Claudia, Claudia STARES back.

Claudia playfully SLAPS John.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

You actually thought I was serious,  
didn't you?

JOHN

Nahh..

CLAUDIA

BS, your face was like.

Claudia mimes TERROR.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

The day I get desperate enough to  
do that to you.

Claudia LAYS her head on John's shoulders and together they  
GAZE at the city skyline.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Thank you for forgiving me.

JOHN

Let me ask you something, what do  
you see in me? I'm serious, you're  
Vanessa of Newport beauties, huge  
strapping studs at your beckon  
call, why did you invite me today  
and not someone else?

CLAUDIA

Because you're there all the time.  
Every day three to five pm ,can't  
get away from your mug. And you  
just accept me for who I am without  
trying to get anywhere and you're  
considerate. Alright your turn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

OK, let's see: for the way you helped me during that rehearsal. Like you said, for accepting me for who I am, not looking down at me for not being cool and all. I mean had it not been for you, I don't know if I would be at this school today. I needed someone like you to make me feel better about me and also you fascinate me, not just in obvious ways, but you have all these very different facets to you, more so than most people.

CLAUDIA

Alright, my turn for a cheesy question. If you would pretend that those lights were stars and you could make a wish on it, do anything you want to do, be anyone you want to be, what would it be?

JOHN

Oh that's an easy one, especially for you.

CLAUDIA

I don't know, three, four, five some?

JOHN

Well yes, but besides that I'd be what I am now, an actor.

CLAUDIA

Serious?

JOHN

Yah, you don't think I risk my dad chomping my ass to see you did you? Alright, now your turn.

CLAUDIA

I don't know, see the world, win the prize at a circus or something. But honestly, I have no idea.

LONG SILENCE.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

Disappear and not be me for a while, just disappear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John closes his eyes, then so does Claudia.

INT TAXICAB - LATER

John is asleep, Claudia opens her eyes and sees BLOOD dripping from her nostril onto a THREE INCH DIAMETER BLOOD STAIN on her blouse.

She covers the blood stain with her jacket and pretends to vomit out the window.

CLAUDIA  
Ohh, my stomach.

JOHN  
Hold on, we're almost at my house.

EXT JOHN'S HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Claudia runs out of the taxi, KEELS over behind the dumpster and mimics vomiting as she wipes her nostrils clean.

But BLOOD keeps dripping out.

CLAUDIA  
I need to use your bathroom.

JOHN  
Just let it all out here.

CLAUDIA  
No, I spilled all over my blouse.

John HESITATES.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
John!

JOHN  
Shhh! Alright, just follow me and be quiet.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

John and Claudia TIPTOE thru the dark when Mr. Chang's bedroom door opens.

John and Claudia DUCK behind the sofa until Mr. Chang, who is wearing a PURPLE NURSE UNIFORM, exits.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JOHN  
That's my dad, he's a  
(pause)  
He works in the emergency room.

CLAUDIA  
A doctor, I could tell.

Claudia GOES to the bathroom.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Claudia OPENS the bathroom door.

JOHN  
Hey, I'll walk you out.

CLAUDIA  
Wait, wait, not so fast. So is this  
the Chang home, rustic.

Claudia picks up a PHOTO ALBUM off the bookshelf, flips thru it and STOPS at the WEDDING PHOTO of a young, clean shaven and thin Mr. Chang next to a WOMAN.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
Is that your mom? She's so pretty.

JOHN  
Very tactful that you made no  
mention of how 'well' my dad has  
aged over the years. But yeah,  
that's my mom, so I've been told.

CLAUDIA  
Oh sorry.

JOHN  
Don't be, I have no recollection  
her, apparently some asshole blew a  
red light and slammed into her  
after I was born, or so the story  
goes.

CLAUDIA  
Your dad must have taken it pretty  
hard.

JOHN  
I don't know, maybe? The man's like  
an adamantium vault when it comes  
to anything about her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (cont'd)  
 (mimics Mr. Chang)  
 You're too young to hear about her,  
 you're not ready yet.  
 (normal voice)  
 Hell, I'm one year from legal  
 adulthood.

CLAUDIA  
 Well, he told you about her death.

JOHN  
 The only reason he even revealed  
 that, was to teach me a lesson on  
 how to drive.

Claudia holds up a picture of John's mom next to John's  
 face, mother and son look strikingly similar.

JOHN (cont'd)  
 What are you doing?

CLAUDIA  
 You think that you remind your dad  
 of your mom? That maybe it's not  
 random that he chose to reveal that  
 one fact about her life to you?

JOHN  
 Well it got the job done, when I'm  
 behind the wheel I'm like a  
 tortoise.

CLAUDIA  
 No, I didn't mean it that way, I  
 mean maybe he's the one that's not  
 ready yet.

SILENCE. The taxi HONKS.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
 Anyway, I should get going.

JOHN  
 Hold up, hold up, you don't just  
 come into a man's house and see all  
 his dirty laundry without  
 reciprocating a little.

CLAUDIA  
 You wanna know about me, go to  
 Wikipedia.

Sound of taxi driving away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Now you have no excuses, sit down,  
Sigmund John Chang at your service.

CLAUDIA

I gotta call another taxi.

JOHN

You know, it'll help your  
performance if you get in touch  
with all the stuff in your head,  
maybe win a role finally.

Claudia SHUTS her cell phone.

CLAUDIA

Excuse me, the only reason I  
haven't gotten something is because  
nothing I've been offered is up to  
standard. But alright, go ahead,  
what you think you know about me.

JOHN

OK, let's see you don't know what  
you want.

CLAUDIA

(cuts John off)  
I'm seventeen.

JOHN

And you're defensive.

CLAUDIA

How am I defensive? I let you into  
my life, I put myself out there on  
that stage every day.

JOHN

You're not even letting me finish  
my sentence and you do not put  
yourself out there everyday.

CLAUDIA

What are you talking about?

JOHN

(cuts Claudia off)  
Let me finish. So every day I see  
you out there on stage and there is  
a wall you keep between you and  
Nora. It's like you get into it a  
little and pull back out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia OPENS her mouth.

JOHN (cont'd)  
No, no, no, close your mouth,  
better yet, I have an exercise for  
you to do, close your eyes too,  
just trust me and do it.

Claudia CLOSES her eyes.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Now imagine, Claudia as Nora is a  
woman who has been dominated,  
utterly dominated and told what to  
do her entire existence, by an  
authority and a society that nudged  
her in a direction and a life she  
didn't choose for herself and is  
only now realizing she does not  
want. She's scared, she doesn't  
show it, but she is.

Claudia NODS in agreement.

JOHN (cont'd)  
She'll have to give up all she  
knows, her children, reputation,  
approval of everyone you've ever  
cared to get approval from, to  
forge a new direction, alone.

Claudia TREMBLES.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Now feel that fear and pain running  
so bone deep, that it morphs into  
anger and an ice cold commitment to  
do what is right for you even if  
you don't know what it is.

CLAUDIA  
I'm no where near as strong as  
Nora.

JOHN  
You can be if you try, now try.

Claudia grows more and more somber.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Open your eyes.

INT STUDIO - DAY

On the door is a SIGN which reads: Final Round Auditions.

Claudia performs for a panel of judges and Ms. Rodriguez.

CLAUDIA

I understand now. You never loved me, you liked to believe that you did, but it was always about you. When I was at home with papa, he told me his opinion about everything and so I had the same opinions and if I differed from him, I concealed the fact, because he would not like it. He called me his doll-child and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you. But you would have it so. It is your fault that I have not lived any of a real life I wanted.

Claudia BOWS, SMILES broadly and looks into the eye of each judge.

The judges TURN to Ms. Rodriguez.

JUDGE 1

Thank you Ms. Rodriguez, it was a strong audition, you will be notified before noon tomorrow if your daughter wins the role.

CLAUDIA

Thank you for your attention.

EXT STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Claudia and Ms. Rodriguez walk side by side.

CLAUDIA

I thought I nailed it this time! It really worked what he said! connecting to

Mr. Derwin enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
(cuts off Claudia)  
Shh, stand there, look the part and  
let me do the talking.

Claudia looks away as Ms. Rodriguez rushes up to Mr. Derwin.

MS. RODRIGUEZ (cont'd)  
Hi!, Mr. Derwin, thank you so much  
for giving my daughter the  
opportunity to audition with your  
company.

FILM PRODUCER MR. DERWIN  
My staff made the decision, I  
honestly had no idea.

Mr. Derwin walks away from Ms. Rodriguez.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
Perhaps we can catch up another  
time?

FILM PRODUCER MR. DERWIN  
I really do have to go. Oh and Ms.  
Rodriguez, whatever happens, you  
and your daughter still have plenty  
of opportunities.

Mr. Derwin EXITS.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
What is wrong with you that you  
can't even face the head producer  
and smile!?

CLAUDIA  
I'm sorry.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
I guess you'll get it next time.

Claudia follows behind Ms. Rodriguez and exits.

INT CLAUDIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Grandfather Clock strikes noon.

LONG SILENCE.

Ms. Rodriguez TURNS AWAY from Claudia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

I'm sorry. I'll adjust my audition,  
I think I overstated the  
intensity..

MS. RODRIGUEZ

(cuts Claudia off)

Your audition was perfect.  
Something else happened.

CLAUDIA

Sometimes girls get chosen.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

(cuts Claudia off)

I put in a word for you.

(pause)

What happened yesterday with Mr.  
Derwin?

CLAUDIA

What do you mean? What are you  
talking about? Nothing happened.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

Bullshit, I wasn't born yesterday  
little lady.

(pause)

He came on to you didn't he? I  
thought I taught you how to handle  
situations like that.

(pause)

If he thinks he can get away with  
this.

Ms. Rodriguez REACHES for the telephone, Claudia STOPS her.

CLAUDIA

Don't call him please. That's not  
what happened. You have to believe  
me that's not what happened.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

Then what did happen?

SILENCE.

CLAUDIA

On Friday, when I said I was out  
with my cast members, I lied, I  
went to a party hosted by Mr.  
Derwin to network with him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
I'm waiting for the punchline.

CLAUDIA  
I talked to him in private in the  
bedroom and I'm not sure how he got  
this idea that I was making  
inappropriate ..

Ms. Rodriguez RAISES the back of her hand to strike Claudia  
but then STOPS.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
Mother please, I'm sorry, that's  
all that happened, things just got  
blown out of proportion, I'm

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
(cuts off Claudia)  
Slut.

CLAUDIA  
Mom, don't call me that please.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
I'm not surprised.

Claudia begins to CRY.

MS. RODRIGUEZ (cont'd)  
Take the rest of the day off and  
get yourself together, tomorrow's  
another day.

CLAUDIA  
I don't know if I can do this  
anymore. I don't know if I can ..

Ms. Rodriguez exits and shuts the door behind her.

LONG SILENCE.

Claudia dries her tears and sends a text message to Balag.

Text Received: Busy.

Claudia forwards the same text message to John.

Text Received. Claudia SMILES.



INT DINER - LATER

John and Claudia sit across from each other. One salad bowl in front of John, three plates triple decker hamburger, cheese and chili fries, milk shake in front of Claudia.

Claudia BURPS then John and Claudia LAUGH together.

JOHN

Wow, I guess you meant it when you said you wanted to celebrate.

CLAUDIA

Like it's the end of the world. Speaking of which, check this out.

Claudia pulls out two FAKE IDS and gives one to John.

JOHN

John Ho, November tenth nineteen seventy eight. Do I look thirty five to you? And this dude's got a mustache.

CLAUDIA

It'll get us into the bar, I wanna go drinking.

John FROWNS.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

What?

JOHN

I'm not a big bar person.

CLAUDIA

You've never even been to one. Don't worry, I'll get you home in one piece.

JOHN

I had beer before if you remember, my skin broke into hives the next day. But if you want, hey, it's your big day.

Claudia STANDS up and grabs his arm.

CLAUDIA

Cool, let's go.

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Wait, wait, wait, hold on, you know  
the carnival is still open now  
right?

CLAUDIA

The carnival?

JOHN

Yes, the carnival, Claudia I'm  
telling I think you want to go to  
the carnival first.

EXT CARNIVAL - LATER

Claudia and John are at the RIFLE SHOOTING BOOTH.

Claudia SHOOTS and MISSES the paper squirrel.

CLAUDIA

I'm terrible! You sure you don't  
want to take the last shot.

JOHN

Trust me, it's all you.

Claudia AIMS at the paper squirrel, SNEEZES and SHOOTS.

Lights FLASH, Bells WHISTLE, the Carnival Booth Man hands  
Claudia a TEDDY BEAR.

CARNIVAL BOOTH MAN

Congratulations.

Claudia LOOKS at the rifle pointed miles away from the paper  
squirrel, LOOKS at the teddy bear and finally LOOKS at John.

JOHN

You said once that you wanted to  
win something at the circus.

Claudia steps closer to John when ..

PRETEEN GIRL

Oh my God! Vanessa!

A MOB of girls SWARM Claudia.

CLAUDIA

Hey, I love you guys so much, just  
let me go get a pen so I can sign  
autographs for you guys, alright?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Claudia RUNS into the bathroom.

I/E BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Claudia HOLDS a cocaine laced cigarette beneath her nostril when ..

JOHN (O.S.)  
Guys, I mean gals, give her some  
space.

Claudia PEEKS out the door at John BLOCKING the preteen girls from the women's bathroom.

She SMILES at his teddy bear, looks at her cigarette and tosses it in the trash.

Then she grabs the teddy bear, OPENS the door, takes John's hand and leads him thru the preteen girl mob.

CLAUDIA  
Vanessa's busy, don't try to follow  
her unless you want your mamma's to  
get a nasty call about your  
behavior.

EXT LAKE - NIGHT

John and Claudia sit by the lake shore.

JOHN  
You're sure you don't want to go to  
the bar?

CLAUDIA  
John, when a girl offers to be  
alone with you, take it. You don't  
want to go, I won't pressure you  
to.

JOHN  
So what happens now? I mean you'll  
be around for the play but then  
you'll be away for shooting. Not  
that I'm not cool with it, but.

CLAUDIA  
(interrupting)  
John. Stop. I didn't get the gig.

SILENCE. No response from John.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

I just didn't want to be alone  
today and you were there.

(pause)

In fact, I don't think I want to  
act anymore, I mean I'll finish up  
my responsibilities at school but  
then, I'm out, no matter what she  
says. What do you think?

JOHN

I think it's good, I mean you're  
making a stand for what you want  
and it will probably make you  
happier in the long run.

John WRAPS his arm around her waist.

JOHN (cont'd)

Just relax.

LONG SILENCE.

CLAUDIA

John, just keep today between us,  
alright.

JOHN

Yeah of course, why you think I was  
going to brag about this to all the  
guys in the weight room or  
something?

CLAUDIA

No! Not Balag.

(pause)

Or any of the other guys.

SILENCE. John STARES at Claudia.

JOHN

Funny how the first name you  
mention is his.

CLAUDIA

Misspoke, don't over analyze it, I  
just meant him as a stand in for  
those guys. Just forget about that  
comment.

JOHN

It's alright, already forgotten

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But John UNWRAPS his hand from Claudia's waist.

CLAUDIA

John.

JOHN

No, it's alright, really. I just need to get home, besides there are flies buzzing in my ear here and whatever.

John walks away from Claudia.

SILENCE. Claudia TEARS up and HYPERVENTILATES.

She takes out a cigarette, looks at John and runs after him.

CLAUDIA

Wait please, just listen to me, I'm really, really sorry.

JOHN

Whoa, Claudia, are you alright?

CLAUDIA

You helped me today, just by being here, in more ways than you know. Please, please stay with me.

JOHN

OK. Claudia, what's going on?

Claudia TURNS AWAY from John.

CLAUDIA

(whispering to herself)  
That's the scariest part, I don't even know.

JOHN

Claudia, you can talk to me.

Claudia KISSES John.

CLAUDIA

You've never been with a girl have you?

JOHN

I, umm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA

Shut up and stay and tonight you will.

Claudia KISSES John again.

EXT LAKE - LATER

Post-Coital. John moves away from Claudia, but she GRIPS onto him.

CLAUDIA

Just a moment longer, I need to feel held.

LONG SILENCE.

Claudia covers her nose, gets off John and RUNS away.

JOHN

What's wrong?

John WIPES his back and looks at his hand, it is soaked in blood.

Then he sees BLOOD dripping out of Claudia's nose.

CLAUDIA

I'm fine, it's stopped already, please keep this between us.

JOHN

You need help.

CLAUDIA

You don't know what you're doing, this happens, it's no big deal.

John ignores Claudia and gathers their belongings.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

If this comes out, I'll lose everything, I'll have nothing left, do you understand that!?

SILENCE. No response from John.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)

I swear it, you say anything and I will tell on you. You, you owe everything to me, how dare you betray me like that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN  
Let me walk you home.

Claudia SHAKES her head NO and RUNS into the darkness.

I/E JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

John TIPTOES thru the living room when ..

MR. CHANG (O.S.)  
How was tonight?

Mr. Chang sits on the sofa, GLARING at him.

JOHN  
It was, it was good, hanging out  
with my tutoring friends

MR. CHANG  
(interrupting)  
..And Claudia?

SILENCE.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
The young woman called here an hour  
ago making all these wild  
accusations about you. At first I  
thought, this is just another one  
of your bullies but then she sent  
me a link to your picture at the  
school play from last week. Didn't  
I tell you to quit two weeks ago?  
And then she claimed that you gave  
her drugs.

JOHN  
That's not true.

MR. CHANG  
(interrupting)  
What is true John? Your A grade in  
an AP Biology class that you're not  
even enrolled in?

(pause)  
I think I understand what's going  
on in your head though son, you're  
young, naive, socially awkward and  
suddenly Claudia chooses you and  
this is the result? True?

SILENCE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
(screaming)  
True!

JOHN  
Yes dad it is true.

MR. CHANG  
She's using you.

JOHN  
She has issues.

MR. CHANG  
Everyone has issues son. But not  
everyone betrays their friends or  
makes false accusations of drug  
sale.

JOHN  
She's desperate, she's not thinking  
clearly.

MR. CHANG  
No John you're the one thinking not  
clearly. Just take an outsider's  
perspective for one second. She's  
attractive, yes?

SILENCE. John NODS.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
Rich?

John NODS again.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
So what the hell would she want to  
do with you?

JOHN  
I don't, I don't know.

MR. CHANG  
Because you are easy prey. Just  
acknowledge that fact and you can  
begin to see the light. Do you  
acknowledge that fact?

LONG SILENCE.

JOHN  
No.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG

Excuse me? What did you say!?

JOHN

N, n, nothing.

MR. CHANG

I didn't hear 'nothing' I heard ..

JOHN

(cuts Mr. Chang off)

No! Because I know her and you don't, things are more complicated than you think. And just because you fucked up your own life doesn't mean I have to turn out like you. My life is my own.

(escalating tension)

My life is my own!, My life is my own!! Do you hear me!, fucking fat fuck self hating male nurse.

Mr. Chang BOLTS out of his chair and CHOKES John.

MR. CHANG

You think you're better than me, you're nothing!, you're my son, do you hear me, mine!

Mr. Chang LETS GO of John's neck and BACKS AWAY.

John RUNS outside.

JOHN

Fucking nutso!, I am nothing like you! do you hear me, nothing!

John RUNS away.

I/E BALAG'S HOUSE - LATER

RAINSTORM. John is SOAKED and SHIVERING.

BALAG'S MOM (48) opens the door.

JOHN

Mrs. ChaprokaPatel, I'm sorry to bother you.

BALAG'S MOM

John, you're soaked, come inside quickly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Thank you, I'll be gone soon.

BALAG'S MOM

Bathroom is here, take a warm shower before you catch cold. I need to leave but stay until the storm passes, Balag and his new girlfriend, what's her name will be here.

(to Balag)

Balag, what's her name again?

John goes into the bathroom and sees Claudia CARESSING Balag's hand in the kitchen.

Claudia and Balag FREEZE when they see John.

JOHN

Her name is Claudia, I already know who she is.

John SHUTS the bathroom door.

INT BALAG'S HOUSE - LATER

John OPENS the bathroom door.

Balag and Claudia are waiting for him.

CLAUDIA

John I'm sorry, it's not what it looks like.

JOHN

Do you hear what she's saying Balag? It's not what it looks like between you and her. If it's not what it looks like, why apologize? C'mon Clauds, you're a better liar than that, but then again, maybe not.

BALAG

Get out.

JOHN

I will, but please, just one more question I think you'll want to hear the answer to: Claudia, when you fucked me what, two, three hours ago, was I your first choice?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA  
Please, don't do this.

JOHN  
And while you're at it, I just want to know, did you get high before or after you betrayed me to my dad?

CLAUDIA  
I wasn't thinking clearly.

JOHN  
No, I think you were, remember I've seen how brilliant you are.  
(pause)  
Good for nothing whore.

CLAUDIA  
Shut up!

Balag SHOVES John onto the lawn.

JOHN  
You know what Claudia, I thought I was a loser, but when have I ever seen you talk to anyone besides us huh? Ms. Vanessa is so fucking high and mighty that she has absolutely no friends, none. But you know how to use people: You IDed me, got what you wanted and now you're thru with me. So go ahead Balag take her, with my blessing.

CLAUDIA  
Balag please, don't listen to him.

Claudia tries to HUG Balag but he BACKS AWAY.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
No, not you too.

Balag tries to HUG Claudia, but this time she BACKS AWAY and SHAKES her head no.

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
I'm going to fade away.

Claudia runs away and then turns back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAUDIA (cont'd)  
 You knew what you were getting  
 yourself into with me John. You  
 knew all along.

Claudia EXITS.

BALAG  
 Did you?

JOHN  
 Don't you stand there and judge me,  
 you are in no position to judge me!

Balag PUNCHES John in the GUT, John COLLAPSES onto his  
 knees.

John YANKS Balag's feet out from under him and Balag falls  
 onto the ground.

John and Balag WRESTLE, Balag PINS John beneath him, HOLDS  
 DOWN JOHN'S FACE with one hand and makes a DOWNWARD FACING  
 FIST with the other.

Balag UNCLENCHES his FIST and gets up.

BALAG  
 Get off my lawn.

EXT STREET - LATER

RAIN, John soaks it in rather than hide beneath the  
 storefront roofs.

TOYOTA COROLLA pulls up alongside John, PASSENGER SIDE DOOR  
 opens.

MR. CHANG  
 You don't have to come in if you  
 don't want to.

John gets in the car.

JOHN  
 You were right, about everything.

INT JOHN'S HOME - NIGHT

John and Mr. Chang enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG  
Son, sit down, please.

JOHN  
Please!?

Mr. Chang nods, John sits.

MR. CHANG  
I'm sorry for hurting you.

JOHN  
Is everything OK sir? You're acting  
a bit  
(pause)  
Unusual.

Mr. Chang TEARS UP.

JOHN (cont'd)  
What the? Oh my God!?

John SLIDES a tissue box across the table to his father.

JOHN (cont'd)  
There, there?

MR. CHANG  
I don't want you to repeat my  
mistakes.

John SCOFFS.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
Your mother and I met when we were  
very young. She was my first love.  
My family was poor, hers was rich,  
it mattered more then, than it does  
today.

John ROLLS his eyes, Mr. Chang LOOKS into John's eyes, John  
looks into his dad's eyes and nods.

JOHN  
Yes sir, I understand sir.

MR. CHANG  
She had quite a few suitors but I  
won her over with what I fancied  
was my charm, brilliance and  
ambition to become the top surgeon  
in the region. We got married on a  
rainy Wednesday morning and then  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
 you were born, and then one day  
 after that  
 (pause)  
 I saw her with another man.

JOHN  
 Am I even yours?

MR. CHANG  
 You are. Sorry to disappoint you,  
 now let me finish my story. I  
 didn't believe what I saw at first.  
 I thought my eyes playing were  
 tricks on me, so I kept my mouth  
 shut and my eyes and ears open  
 until.

JOHN  
 (interrupts Mr. Chang)  
 What did you do?

MR. CHANG  
 I was enraged, I waited for her to  
 come home and then I yelled, no it  
 was worse, I verbally destroyed her  
 until she was on the ground,  
 sobbing. I told her to get out of  
 the house, take her fancy cars and  
 fancy belongings and leave. She  
 did. I told you that she died  
 because someone else blew thru a  
 red light and hit her. I lied, she  
 was the one who blew thru the  
 light. 'Distracted' so the police  
 told me, 'Did she have anything to  
 drink?', No I answered. 'Did she get  
 enough sleep?', Yes I answered.

(pause)  
 'Was she upset?'

(pause)  
 'Did you guys fight? Was she  
 emotionally distraught?'

(pause)  
 All my life since then, I punished  
 myself for what I did and despite  
 all that, I made the same mistake  
 tonight and I am sorry.

John looks at the mirror and sees himself super-imposed onto  
 his father.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)  
 I'm going to fade away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John HYPERVENTILATES.

MR. CHANG  
What's wrong?

EXT STREET - NIGHT

Toyota Corolla stops at a FORK in the road.

JOHN  
His house is towards the right.

MR. CHANG  
If she's there, she may have been  
seen other people. Call.

John HESITATES.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
Get over yourself and do it.

John DIALS Balag.

JOHN  
Balag, has anyone seen Claudia?

John LISTENS to Balag's response, then Mr. Chang TURNS LEFT.

EXT LAKE - LATER

John and Balag watch Mr. Chang direct the MEDICAL TEAM to  
load an UNCONSCIOUS Claudia into the AMBULANCE.

JOHN  
How is she?

No response.

BALAG  
Page my dad! He's head of surgery.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN  
Already done. You boys step back  
and let Nurse Chang do his job.

INT JOHN'S HOME - MORNING

John is ASLEEP on the sofa when Mr. Chang enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG

She didn't die this time.

Mr. Chang opens the EMPTY refrigerator, shuts it and then STUFFS his mouth with a handful of GUMMI BEARS.

JOHN

Dad, you shouldn't eat that in the morning, especially as you have another shift in two hours, you'll crash.

MR. CHANG

Do you see any other food around John? And I don't have a shift today, I cut Claudia to the front of the patient queue, it was a violation of policy, my position is under review and I am on leave until further notice. Now, I am tired, please don't disturb me for the next few hours. Thank you.

Mr. Chang SHUTS his bedroom door behind him.

John just sits there in silence.

INT SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

John enters and is SURROUNDED by BULLIES who back him against a WALL OF LOCKERS.

BULLY 1

Yo, I heard you drove Balag's girl to almost kill herself.

SILENCE.

BULLY 2

Answer his question.

John tries to pass them but a bully PUSHES him into the locker and he FALLS to the ground.

Bullies exit and then Balag enters.

Balag EXTENDS HIS HAND to John, he takes it.

JOHN

Listen, I don't know if you heard about what happened to my dad, if  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JOHN (cont'd)  
you can put in a word with your dad  
at the hospital.

BALAG  
You really think you have to ask me  
that? It's already done and your  
dad knows.

Balag walks away from John.

INT VICE PRINCIPLE'S OFFICE - LATER

John sits across from the VICE PRINCIPLE (45).

VICE PRINCIPLE  
Three witnesses say they saw you  
get pushed into the locker, and  
you're still not willing to  
testify.

John SHAKES his head no.

VICE PRINCIPLE (cont'd)  
Mr. Chang you of all people should  
understand the dangers of bullying.  
They will come at you again and  
again just like they did at your  
last school until you raised the  
issue. I'm giving you a chance to  
stop whatever is going on right now  
before it gets any worse.

SILENCE. No response from John.

VICE PRINCIPLE (cont'd)  
Did he threaten repercussions if  
you talked to me?

JOHN  
No.

VICE PRINCIPLE  
If not you than another kid. You  
have a responsibility beyond  
yourself to do what's right for the  
school community.

JOHN  
If I see it happen to someone else,  
I'll do something, but I can handle  
myself and I'm not going rat any  
people out today.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

John enters the auditorium and sees Claudia wearing BLACK SUNGLASSES standing backstage.

JOHN  
Claudia, is that you?

CLAUDIA'S REPLACEMENT ACTRESS  
Hi, John right? I'm Sue.

SILENCE. John STARES at the actress's face again.

JOHN  
Oh Sue hi, yes I'm John, that's me.  
Sorry, I thought I saw something.

CLAUDIA'S REPLACEMENT ACTRESS  
I understand you guys were close,  
it must be hard for you.

JOHN  
Either way, as the saying goes: the  
show must go on.

John's cellphone BUZZES with this text message: I want to talk too you after your practice.

John looks backstage and sees Ms. Rodriguez take off her BLACK SUNGLASSES.

I/E MS. RODRIGUEZ'S JAGUAR - LATER

Ms. Rodriguez steps out of her Jaguar, John steps back.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
Mr. Chang, John, I mean no ill  
will, I just want to talk about  
Claudia. There's some coffee in the  
car if you want it.

John and Ms. Rodriguez enter the Jaguar.

MS. RODRIGUEZ (cont'd)  
The counselors suggested I talk to  
Claudia's friends to get an idea of  
how you guys saw her, so here I am,  
talk to me.

JOHN  
Well, I think Claudia is a good  
person, I mean, given how, how  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (cont'd)  
sophisticated she looks in a high school environment that she is so unpretentious to let someone from a different social strata get so close, it's very redeeming. Also

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
(cuts off John)  
Did you know about her drug use?

SILENCE.

JOHN  
The first time I met her, I saw some kind of blue pill fall out of her purse. Later, we came home from a party.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
The time I saw you.

JOHN  
Yes and I saw that she

SILENCE.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
(finishes John's sentence)  
knows how to cover up her drug use.

John NODS.

JOHN  
I asked her about it and took her word that she had things under control.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
You were with her at Mister Derwin's party weren't you? Did you coke up with her then?

JOHN  
No, I did not and that's the truth.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
Then you must have seen how high she was acting, all the guests knew? All of them, and you ..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

(cuts of Ms. Rodriguez)  
Ms. Rodriguez, I didn't know, I saw she was acting strange but I didn't know why.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

But you suspected.

JOHN

Ms. Rodriguez.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

(cuts off John)  
Did you ever give her drugs?

JOHN

No I did not give her any drugs and I did everything I could to dissuade her, though looking back, I should have done more. Now Ms. Rodriguez, before you interrupt me again, I have something to say, which I'm only saying because I'm not comfortable with this line of conversation.

(pause)

Claudia claimed that you knew about her drug use.

Ms. Rodriguez GLARES at John, but he holds her gaze until she dons her sunglasses.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

I caught her once and threatened consequences if she ever did it again, I thought after that, that it wouldn't escalate. I was dumb, I shouldn't have assumed.

Ms. Rodriguez STOPS and turns away from John.

JOHN

Ms. Rodriguez, you're not Superwoman but I think that Claudia thinks you are. Perhaps if you revealed something about yourself to her, it would help humanize you in her eyes.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

Parenting advice from a seventeen year old, thank you, I'll think  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MS. RODRIGUEZ (cont'd)  
about it. Anyway, do you need a  
ride home?

JOHN  
Oh thanks, but ..  
(pause)  
Actually, yes, I'd appreciate it  
and if you can drop me off in front  
of the grocery store near my house.

Ms. Rodriguez sees John send this TEXT MESSAGE: Dad, don't  
worry about picking me up today, plus I got dinner.

Then she starts up the Jaguar and drives away.

INT MS. RODRIGUEZ'S JAGUAR - MOMENTS LATER

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
Take care of your dad, he's a good  
man, tell him thank you again for  
me.

JOHN  
Ms. Rodriguez can I ask you a  
question? You talked to my dad and  
you're the same generation as him,  
what do you think he wants, what do  
you think would make someone like  
him happy?

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
I think your mom is in a better  
position to answer that question.

JOHN  
My dad's a widower, my mom died  
many years ago, he's been alone  
ever since.

Ms. Rodriguez looks into John's eyes and makes SAD SMILE.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Thank you.

EXT GROCERY STORE - LATER

Jaguar stops.

MS. RODRIGUEZ  
This is a bit far from your house  
isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

It's OK, I've done it before.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

Text me when you come out, I'll wait.

JOHN

Thank you Ms. Rodriguez.

(pause)

Wait Ms. Rodriguez there's one more thing. I started talking about why I thought revealing something about ones-self may help a parent child relationship. The reason I said that was because something my dad said helped me understand who he is more. And it also helped save Claudia's life.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

How so?

JOHN

The reason it saved Claudia's life is that my dad revealed he hurt my mom before she died and he felt responsible for it and then

(long pause)

that's when I realized Claudia may have been in trouble because I had repeated my dad's mistake with Claudia. Before her overdose I had hurt her, that's why we went looking for her.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

Get out.

John gets out of Ms. Rodriguez's jaguar and gets hit by a cloud of dust as it speeds away.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The Chang family computer emits a LOUD WHIRLING SOUND as it BOOTS up.

JOHN

Slow piece of junk machine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John MOUSE CLICKS on a PICTURE of Mr. Chang on the computer and Mr. Chang's GREEN PLAD SHIRT morphs into a white dress shirt.

John MOUSE CLICKS again and Mr. Chang's SHAGGY BEARD morphs into a TRIM MUSTACHE, his PUDGY CHEEKS morphs into a LEAN, SQUARE JAWLINE.

John TYPES this message: 'Hi, I am Mr. Chang a life-saving hospital professional, here is my profile. Contact me if interested.'

John hits SEND to TEN FEMALE DATING PROFILES.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Chang sees TEN new email messages.

MR. CHANG

Huh, would you look at that,  
today's my lucky day.

JOHN

Karma, I think, you should respond  
to those umm, job interview emails,  
even though you got your job back,  
you never know, you know what I  
mean?

MR. CHANG

Yeah, maybe I will. Oh John, you  
wouldn't by chance have seen a plad  
shirt lying around have you?

JOHN

You mean the green one you like to  
wear because you think it makes you  
look good? Didn't even know you had  
one.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mr. Chang WHISTLES as he stands in front of the mirror,  
COMBING his hair and ADJUSTING his dress shirt.

JOHN (O.S.)

Dad!

MR. CHANG

Later John, I have a uh, interview  
which I can't be late for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John enters, SHAVING CREAM plastered over his NECK and CHEEK.

JOHN

Oh OK, I was just hoping you could give me some pointers on how to shave.

MR. CHANG

Geez, have you no common sense, wipe that stuff off your neck, you only need a little bit on your cheek.

JOHN

You're such a great teacher when you demonstrate, can you show me the proper method in front of the bathroom mirror.

Mr. Chang GIGGLES.

MR. CHANG

Well, since you put it that way.

Mr. Chang PATS John on the back and they walk off screen together.

JOHN (O.S.)

Could you demonstrate how to put the razor on your cheek too? With that new one over there.

INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mr. Chang enters with a FRESHLY TRIMMED BEARD.

John enters and puts TWO TICKETS on the table.

JOHN

Dad, in case you know the interview goes well today and you want to celebrate, I'll leave these extra tickets to my show for you and your  
(pause)  
Nurse co-worker friends.

Mr. Chang NODS and exits.



INT JOHN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Chang enters and WHISTLES as he strolls past.

John checks the table, the TWO TICKETS are gone.

INT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

CURTAIN falls.

John BOWS to the CAPACITY CROWD.

He sees Claudia who looks twenty pounds heavier has ACNE and Ms. Rodriguez.

Ms. Rodriguez NODS her head at John, John nods back.

He SMILES at Mr. Chang but FROWNS at the EMPTY SEAT next to him.

INT BACKSTAGE - LATER

John sees Claudia towing a LUGGAGE BAG.

JOHN

Claudia, you look ..

CLAUDIA

(finishes John's sentence)

Terrible, but I feel better. My mom and I are going to Mexico for a while, she wants to show me how she grew up and became the woman she is today. She also wanted me to give you this.

Claudia hands John a BUSINESS CARD, the front reads: Paramount Acting Talent Agency, the back reads: Tell them Ms. Rodriguez sent you.

MS. RODRIGUEZ

You only get one chance with them, so don't fuck up.

Claudia and Ms. Rodriguez exit.

A swarm of fans surround John who sees his dad walk out of the auditorium.

JOHN

Excuse me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John RUNS thru the crowd to his dad.

EXT SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

John enters just in time to see the Toyota Corolla sputter away.

Then he notices this TEXT MESSAGE: You are better at this than you are in biology. Now go and spend time with your fans, I have work.

John returns to the auditorium.

INT HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

John OPENS the door.

AWKWARD SILENCE as the hipsters crowd STARES at the football team.

JOHN  
Hey, what's up guys, come in. That means you too Balag.

Balag NODS.

INT JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ALARM CLOCK hits 4:30 AM and BUZZES. John BANGS it shut.

INT JOHN'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

John drops FOUR EGGS into a pot of BOILING WATER.

POP! The eggs BURST OPEN and EGG WHITE drips out.

SMOKE rises out of the TOASTER OVEN.

John RIPS out the power cord and BLOWS his breathe over the BURNT TOAST.

A CLEAN SHAVEN Mr. Chang enters and places a bag of VEGETABLES on the kitchen table.

JOHN  
Dad?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. CHANG

What? You don't recognize your old man anymore?

John CARRIES a plate of eggs and toast to Mr. Chang.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)

You know, I've decided to go cold on this greasy stuff for a while.

John LAYS the plate in front of Mr. Chang, who STARES at it and INHALES.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)

Ehh what the hell, it can wait until lunch.

Mr. Chang eats.

JOHN

Hey dad, do you mind me asking what happened to your nurse friends last night?

MR. CHANG

Guess they had better things to do than spend the evening with a low level RN.

JOHN

Their loss right?

MR. CHANG

Can't blame them, nothing special about a nurse, but.

Mr. Chang places MEDICAL TEXTBOOKS on the table.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)

Head of nursing may elicit a different response.

JOHN

But you never wanted that job, you always complained that it was ..

MR. CHANG

(cuts of John)

Changed my mind young man, don't ask me why.

JOHN

Yes sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mr. Chang's face CONTORTS and then he takes a piece of EGG SHELL out of his mouth.

JOHN (cont'd)  
I, umm, I'll do better next time.

MR. CHANG  
Get some rest, you look tired.

John goes to his bedroom.

Mr. Chang boots up the computer.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
Did you do something to the computer John? It's faster than before.

JOHN  
Oh that, I transferred everything to an SSD and defraged it.

MR. CHANG  
How much did that run you?

JOHN  
Oh it was nothing, Balag got it to me with one of his connections.

MR. CHANG  
Two for one? I'll say, these things are still pretty expensive.

JOHN  
Just one.

MR. CHANG  
What about that old thing in your room?

JOHN  
Oh it's fine for my needs.

Mr. Chang takes a CHECKBOOK out of the drawer.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Dad really, it's OK.

MR. CHANG  
How much was it?

JOHN  
Just a hundred.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mr. Chang EYES John.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Just a hundred ninety nine and  
ninety nine cents before tax.

Mr. Chang hands John the check.

JOHN (cont'd)  
Thank you, dad. I'll put it away  
now, in a place I remember so I  
won't lose it.

MR. CHANG  
Wait, sit down would you son?

John sits down.

MR. CHANG (cont'd)  
You wanted to know about your mom.

JOHN SMILES.

FADE TO BLACK.