

THE HOMESTUDY

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FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

All sorts of families outside of all sorts of homes on a Springtime afternoon. Brownstones, Section Eight, high-rises. Families of one. Families of five. Families of friends.

EXT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A middle-upper class, pre-war apartment building stretches twenty-stories high. Molded concrete, gargoyles, a doorman.

INT. UPPER WEST SIDE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLICK.

ERIC MEYERS (38) lowers a camera. His vibe is two-minutes-from-a-nervous-breakdown meets desperately-needs-a-shag.

He inspects the photo in the viewer. Indecision. A "Liberty Real Estate" pin on his suit lapel. He teeters.

He widens the fish-eye lens - the real estate trick to make a home look bigger than it is.

FOYER

Eric tapes a sign on the open front door that reads: "Open House Today 2-4 p.m." He looks at his watch. 1:50 p.m.

Eric hurries to place business cards and spec sheets on the entryway table. On them, his name and photo. In the

MASTER BEDROOM

Eric centers the bedspread. He runs around the bed, pulls it left. Runs back around, pulls it right.

KID'S BEDROOM

Eric finally pauses. A smile. Stuffed animals are strewn about. Eric arranges them on the bed into a happy little zoo.

Eric positions two teddy bears next to each other. Nuzzles a baby dolphin between them. Snaps a photo. Texts it to "S".

"S" texts back, "SOON!!!" and some heart emojis. Eric EEKS.

The doorbell RINGS. All joy drains from Eric's face. His watch reads 2 p.m. Time to deal with...people.

MONTAGE

-- front door -- Eric fumbles the door open, bangs it into himself. In the hallway, a HIPSTER COUPLE.

ERIC
Welcome. Thank you for coming.
I'm Eric.

The couple exchange looks as they enter. *Weirdo.*

-- hallway -- a BUTCH LESBIAN smacks on a wall. Eric jumps.

-- bathroom -- Eric grimaces as an OLD MAN (70's) tests the shower pressure.

-- front door -- a YUPPIE FAMILY of four stampede inside. Eric clings to the wall. A CRASH startles Eric.

-- kid's bedroom -- YUPPIE GIRL (5) tears through the room. Messes up the bed. Backhands the animal zoo. Eric SCREAMS.

END MONTAGE

FOYER

The girl pouts behind the YUPPIE MOM. The mom snatches Eric's business card off the table. She judges his slogan out loud.

YUPPIE MOM
"Find a house to make your home."
Cute.

Eric's phone RINGS. A leap when he sees the caller ID.

The YUPPIE HUSBAND turns the corner.

ERIC
(into phone)
Hello?

Internal fireworks force his voice an octave higher.

ERIC
(into phone)
OK! Be there soon! Thank you!
(to the family)
I have to go!

YUPPIE HUSBAND
What about --

ERIC
 (ushers them out)
 Now! Now!

YUPPIE MOM
 Where're you going in such a rush?

ERIC
 New Jersey!

PRELAP: A woman's pained screams.

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - NIGHT

An exhausted MOTHER (30) groans through the last minutes of labor. Eric holds her hand and whispers support.

Eric cranes his neck back to search the hallway. A worried SIGH. A snippy DOCTOR redirects him back to the task at hand.

DOCTOR
 Are we helping, Dad?

Eric reassumes position.

A contraction hits hard. The mother WAILS.

ERIC
 You're doing great!

MOTHER
 I need more drugs!

DOCTOR
 Sorry, Mommy! It's time to push!

ERIC
 She's not....

She pushes. Her SCREAM harmonizes with the BABY's first CRY.

DOCTOR
 Hello, Eyelashes!

Some STAFF attend to the baby, some to the mother.

A NURSE hands the baby to Eric. He holds him like plutonium.

ERIC
 I don't know how to do this.

NURSE
 No one does until they do.

Eric's face turns worrisome. The nurse notices.

NURSE

Want me to take your first picture?

Eric nods. The nurse snaps their FIRST PHOTO: In Eric's sweaty arms, a puffy little newborn.

With gratitude and fumbling bliss, Eric searches for his first words to his son.

ERIC

Welcome. Thank you for coming.
I'm Papa.

The nurse hands Eric a bottle. The baby drinks right away. The baby's fingers clench Eric's pinky finger. Magic.

The nurse watches Eric transform. He suddenly seems two inches taller. A tear drips into his smile.

SAM GARCIA (35), a Puerto Rican dreamboat, freight-trains through the doors. His suit jacket swirls like a superhero cape. His notoriously spectacular eyes go wide.

SAM

I'm here!

ERIC

So is he.
(to the baby)
Andrew, this is your Daddy.

SAM

(takes the baby)
Hi, buddy.

Sam kisses the baby's forehead, then Eric. A huddle of love.

In the distance, the mother, a SURROGATE, admires the scene. Eric meets her eyes.

ERIC

Thank you so much.

SURROGATE

(through a smile)
That check better clear.

INT. HOSPITAL NURSERY - DAY

Eric and Sam, slap-happy in rocking chairs. Sam cradles the baby. They look like they've been up for a day. They have been. Eric smells something stinky. He surveys the room.

ERIC

Did you bring the hospital bag?

SAM

(oops!)

I was at work!

Eric pulls the contents out of his own bag.

ERIC

Great. We have a computer cord and two packs of beef jerky.

Eric opens the beef jerky, gives some to Sam.

SAM

Describe it. Describe the birth.

Eric shakes his head *No way*.

ERIC

But the doctor did say, "Hello, Eyelashes." At least we know we got the right kid.

Eric caresses Sam's cheek underneath his long eyelashes. Eric lifts the baby's hand.

ERIC

She should've said "Hello fingernails." Look at these claws.

A hospital ADMINISTRATOR trods toward them in Lane Bryant and a strained smile.

ADMINISTRATOR

Congratulations on your new arrival from everyone here at Vale Park Medical. Do you have a name yet?

ERIC

Andrew.

ADMINISTRATOR

Aw. Sweet. And which one of you is his father?

ERIC
We both are.

The administrator blinks hard.

ADMINISTRATOR
The biological father. For the
birth certificate.

SAM
I am.

ADMINISTRATOR
Last name?

SAM
Garcia.

The administrator scribbles on her form.

ERIC
The baby's last name is Meyers.

ADMINISTRATOR
But the father --

ERIC
Andrew's last name is my last name.
(to Sam)
That was the deal. And the whole
reason we did this in New Jersey.

ADMINISTRATOR
You could've stayed in New York.

SAM
Excuse me, don't talk to my husband
that way. Can you give us a moment?

The administrator pivots. The guys huddle.

ERIC
"Biological father." Already.

SAM
But I am.

ERIC
I know.

SAM
I'm the only one who could be
because of your...status.

You said this was the best way to do it.

ERIC

It is the best way to do it, and probably my only chance.

SAM

OK, then. You said your part takes a few years, right?

ERIC

The second-parent adoption, yes.

SAM

Then your name will be on the birth certificate, etcetera, etcetera.

ERIC

Etcetera, etcetera?

ADMINISTRATOR

Why don't I come back?

ERIC

(to administrator)

Wait, so, married straight people can just sign their names on that paper, put whatever name they want, and walk right out. No adoption, nothing even though Andrew is biologically related to my husband Sam here and our surrogate has relinquished her rights in an enforceable contract. Is that right?

ADMINISTRATOR

Correct. Heterosexual couples have a presumption of parenthood.

ERIC

A "presumption of parenthood."

ADMINISTRATOR

I'll come back later.

The administrator waddles away.

SAM

It'll be fine. Trust me. We're partners. Now come on. Lean in. Family picture.

Sam extends his phone camera. Their three faces pull into frame. Sam's finger moves toward the camera button.

The phone RINGS before the button is pushed. The display reads "RICK."

Sam stands to answer. He passes the baby to Eric.

SAM
(into phone)
Hello?

Eric's head droops. Sam hangs up.

SAM
I gotta go. Campaign emergency.

ERIC
Now? This is kind of important.

SAM
So is keeping my job. Especially now.

Sam gestures at the baby.

SAM
What do we do?

ERIC
He has to stay here. He's jaundiced so we have to keep putting him under that tanning bed thing. Between the fingernails and the tanning bed, I feel like we're taking home a New Jersey Housewife.

SAM
You gonna be all right alone?

Eric shrugs, stunned by the weight of that question.

Sam bends down to go in for a kiss. Eric extends his cheek, but the kiss lands on the baby's forehead.

SAM
Gotta go. Love you.

Eric watches Sam's figure shrink down the hall.

ERIC
(soft mimic)
"Gotta go. Love you."

Eric raises the baby to block the view of Sam. He swirls the baby like a little airplane. He smells a poopy diaper.

NURSERY

The nurse walks in as Eric re-swaddles the baby.

NURSE

Liar.

ERIC

Huh?

NURSE

I know a perfect baby-burrito when
I see one. You've done this before.

Eric hides a smile. He dances the baby on his lap.

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE - SIXTH AVENUE - NIGHT

SUPER: SEVEN MONTHS LATER

A barrage of drunk HALLOWEEN PARTIERS whoop it up.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eric wrestles a stroller through the front door of a small two-bedroom apartment. Noise from the revelry outside.

ERIC

Sam?

No answer.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

A SEVEN-MONTH OLD ANDREW is propped on the couch in his costume - a slice of bread. His chubby-cheeked face pokes out of the middle. He BABBLES. Crawls away. Eric resets him.

Eric strips down to his boxer shorts and socks. He struggles into his own costume, a life-sized jar of jelly.

A peanut butter jar costume lies nearby. Eric's arms restricted, he uses the AI to call Sam on speaker.

ERIC

(to his phone)

Call Sam.

Andrew crawls away again. Eric hops after him. Sam answers.

SAM
 (through phone)
 Hey! Nine-o-four Fifth Avenue.
 We're all waiting. See you soon!

ERIC
 Should I bring your --

Dial tone. Eric grabs the peanut butter costume and Andrew.

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - NIGHT

Eric pushes the stroller through wall-to-wall PARTIERS. He looks for a cab, but the parade blockades traffic. He sighs at the subway entrance, his only option.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

Eric and Andrew ride scrunched with rowdy RIDERS. A YOUNG MAN dressed as Brian from Family Guy pukes down Eric's bare leg. The riders GROAN.

RIDER (O.S.)
 (to puking man)
 Twenty bucks if you lick it back
 up, man!

Andrew cries.

FEMALE RIDER
 (to Andrew)
 Awww, where's your mommy?

Eric bites his lip. Wipes at some sweat.

SUBWAY DOORBELLS.

INT. UPPER EAST SIDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

A DOORBELL. The door opens to reveal Eric, disheveled and panting over the stroller. He straightens, shocked to see...

CATHERINE JOHNSON (30's), Sam's boss' wife. A striking, Asian-American Jackie O. She balances her daughter REBECCA (1) on the pointy hip of her Diane Von Furstenberg dress.

ERIC
 Catherine.

CATHERINE
 Eric. You made it.
 (off of his look)
 Have you never been to the house?

ERIC
 No.

CATHERINE
 (through a smile)
 You brought the baby.

Catherine turns, saucers her eyes. She clip-clops down the

HALLWAY

where the walls are lined with photographs. Eric halts at a framed Playbill with a photograph of Catherine as Éponine in a Broadway production of Les Misérables.

ERIC
 I always forget you played Éponine.

Catherine stops. Her back clinches as if hit with a poison dart. She creeps back toward him.

A little scared, Eric situates the stroller between them.

ERIC
 Didn't you win a Tony?

CATHERINE
 Almost.

ERIC
 Do you miss the theatre?

Catherine taps a fingernail against a photo of herself on the arm of a grinning politician.

CATHERINE
 I never left it.
 (turn and stomp)
 Better wardrobe now.

Catherine swiftly rounds the corner. Eric rushes to catch up. He quickly turns the corner to the

DINING ROOM

where the front wheel of the stroller catches against the doorframe. Eric and the stroller tumble over.

With his back to the room, Eric scrambles to Andrew and wrestles the stroller upright. Checks that Andrew is OK.

Eric turns to find a half-dozen, shocked GUESTS seated in an intimate, formal dinner. They are:

RICK JOHNSON (47), a suave, prominent city council member, at the head of the table;

Sam, perched next to Rick like a puppy;

A Black couple in their 60's, REVEREND and MRS. SMITH;

In the center of the table is Sam's mother, MRS. GARCIA (68), with her trademark scowl. A perfect blend of resentment and disapproval, her expression does the talking.

Eric shudders.

ERIC
(to Mrs. Garcia)
Angelica.

Sam's eyes dart from his mother to his boss to Eric. Shit. He springs from his seat. Rushes to the stroller.

SAM
You OK?

ERIC
We're fine.
(re: his costume)
I'm sorry, I didn't realize...

SAM
(unbuckles Andrew)
Must've gotten the nights switched.

ERIC
Tonight is Halloween.

Sam lifts Andrew in the air to present him to the guests.

An ensemble of OOOH's. MRS. SMITH clasps her hands.

MRS. SMITH
A slice of bread!

CATHERINE
A slice of Heaven is what he is!
Reverend and Mrs. Smith, this is
Sam's partner, Eric and their son,
Andrew.

Catherine double-claps to summon someone.

A NANNY glides in on cue. Catherine passes Rebecca in a rainbow arc into the nanny's arms.

CATHERINE
Thank you, Misty.

Misty and Rebecca disappear into the wings.

Catherine gives the chair next to her a Fosse-pat.

CATHERINE
Right here, Eric.

Eric squeezes himself into the chair. His costume bumps everyone and everything. Sam sits next to him.

SAM
There's always room for dessert!

REVEREND SMITH
I smell Burger King.

Eric discretely wipes at his vomit-speckled leg.

Sam looks through the neck of Eric's costume.

SAM
Do you have anything undern--

ERIC
No. Nope.

RICK
(claps)
Let's say Grace. Reverend?

REVEREND SMITH
No, Sir! Let's hear what our future mayor has to say to the Good Lord.

All but Eric join hands.

ERIC
Sorry, I don't --

CATHERINE
Pray?

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Garcia HUM in disapproval.

Eric relents. He places his hand in Sam's.

Rick takes a dramatic inhale. A spectacle of a prayer begins.

RICK
Dear Lord...

The clock behind Rick shows 7:05.

RICK
...that I may be of service to
those less fortunate. Use me...

Mrs. Smith peeks. Catherine peeks, too. Eric catches them.
The ladies shut their eyes. Eric rolls his.

The clock's left hand slides to 7:13.

RICK
...Amen.

REVEREND SMITH
Amen.

MRS. SMITH
So, who's the baby's mother?

Mrs. Garcia lifts both eyebrows and puts her fork down.

Rick clears his throat. Sam motions *gimme* and takes the baby.

SAM
We --

CATHERINE
They planned it. Now, Rebecca was a
total accident. I had to wait until
Rick was A, home, and B, tipsy
enough for me to make my move.

RICK
Don't be crude.

Eric reaches for Andrew, but Sam passes him to Reverend
Smith. Eric lowers his arms, but his eyes never leave Andrew.

RICK
I'd love to keep you on as my Chief
of Staff, Sam, but voters do love a
family man if you want a seat on
council...

Revered Smith passes Andrew to Mrs. Smith.

SAM
First, we get you elected.

Mrs. Smith passes Andrew to Mrs. Garcia.

RICK
First, you get me elected.

SAM
Then, maybe I win your seat.

RICK
Exactly. And with an asset like
this...

Rick takes Andrew and holds him like a toaster on QVC.

RICK
...you look like a real family.

RICK
Our daughter...

Rick squints.

CATHERINE
Rebecca.

RICK
Rebecca has brought a togetherness
in our home. So beneficial for the
families of New York to see.

REVEREND SMITH
Amen.

Catherine takes Andrew from Rick. She's had enough. She hands Andrew back to Eric, who is relieved baby-hot-potato is over.

SAM
It was so helpful for Eric and me
to see you build your family.
Convinced us to build ours!

Eric glares at Sam.

SAM
And after the election is over next
Tuesday, I get to spend more time
with my little guy.

Eric smirks, doubtful.

SAM
(to Eric)
I promise. Partners.

Catherine rolls her eyes; she knows better.

MONTAGE

-- bedroom -- Bedtime. Eric holds the baby up like an airplane. A kiss on the forehead. Rests him in his crib next to Eric's empty bed. Eric takes his wedding ring off, places it on the nightstand. Lights out.

-- campaign headquarters -- Sam and Rick strategically stick pushpins into a map on the wall.

-- a supermarket -- Eric sticks toothpicks into four cheese samples. Eats them all at once. Andrew in the cart.

-- bedroom - Bedtime. Baby soars like an airplane, a kiss, then the crib. Wedding ring to the nightstand. Lights out.

-- a senior citizen center - Rick gives a speech. Sam's phone buzzes. Eric calling. Sam sends it to voicemail.

-- living room - Eric watches his call get declined. He sits on the floor with the baby in his lap. Shoves a Dorito in his mouth. Flicks Dorito dust off his shirt. Off the baby.

-- bedroom - Bedtime. Baby airplane to the crib. Wedding ring to the nightstand. Lights out.

END MONTAGE

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

"Johnson for Mayor" signs plaster the walls. A buzzing CROWD of supporters. Upbeat music.

In the far, far,

BACK OF THE BALLROOM

Eric holds Andrew in his marsupial carrier. Andrew wears little protective headphones.

A PHONE CALL from KARA MEYERS (32), Eric's cooler, younger sister. Eric puts a finger in one ear to hear.

INT. KARA'S BATHROOM - SAME

Kara floats in a tub of bubbles. Wine, candles.

INTERCUT - BALLROOM/KARA'S KITCHEN

KARA
Happy birthday, big brother!

ERIC
Aw, you remembered!

KARA
Wow! It's mega loud there! Is that
your birthday party?

Eric watches a streamer caress a "Johnson for Mayor" poster.

ERIC
Yeah. Yeah, they threw me a party!
Listen, I have to go.

KARA
Sam stepped up his game! Where's
Andrew?

ERIC
Babysitter. Lemme call you back.

KARA
Wow. OK, I'll let you get back to
your rave, old man! Send pics!

Eric quickly hangs up, disgusted with himself. He leans back, blending into the beige and insignificant wall. Tousles the meager strands of Andrew's hair.

STAGE

Rick and Catherine strut onstage to CHEERS. They wave to the crowd. Catherine holds Rebecca. Sam a few steps behind.

Eric weaves through to the front. Tries to catch Sam's attention. Gets Catherine's, instead. She waves him over. She lowers Rebecca down to him.

CATHERINE
Can you take her? My arms feel like
they're gonna fall off.

ERIC
Of course.

Eric juggles both babies in an increasingly hyped crowd.

A nervous SILENCE washes over the crowd as Rick takes the all-important phone call. He listens. Hangs up. Off-loads the phone to Catherine. Swirls to the podium.

RICK

We won!

Confetti. CHEERS. MUSIC. Sam victory-punches the air. Eric bounces the babies. Proud tears swell in Eric's eyes. He lets out a few HOOO's.

SAM

(into microphone)

Mayor Rick Johnson, everyone!

PHOTOGRAPHERS close in on Rick and Catherine. Rick notices Catherine doesn't have Rebecca.

RICK

(through clenched teeth)

Where's the kid?

Catherine motions for Eric. Eric climbs a few stairs but a SECURITY GUARD stops him. Catherine grabs Rebecca.

Eric and Andrew retreat into the crowd. Sam cheerleads. Eric cheers along. Sam doesn't see him; he isn't looking.

Eric's cheers fade to a sad silence.

Eric grabs a mylar balloon. In it, his distorted reflection.

ERIC

Happy birthday, Eric.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - SIX YEARS LATER

A giant mylar balloon of a number "6" bounces above a six-year-old ANDREW, who flies like an airplane on Eric's legs. The airplane descends amidst noisy CHILDREN and gifts.

Andrew grabs his new football. Tosses it to Sam.

A dozen or so MOMS mingle. Mrs. Garcia perches in a corner.

Catherine and REBECCA, now 7, hand Andrew a gift.

REBECCA

Happy birthday, Andrew!

ANDREW

I got nine presents!

Andrew opens it. A book. *Chicken Little*. He chucks it aside.

Catherine HUFFS, offended.

ANDREW

Can we have cake now, Papa?

Andrew throws the football to Eric. Eric's arms flail like one of those inflatable men at a car dealership. It bounces off Eric's chest and into the cat.

ANDREW

It almost hit Uncle Feathers!

The children LAUGH. Sam laughs, too. Mrs. Garcia sneers.

Sam picks up the ball, throws a perfect-spiral to Andrew.

ANDREW

I'm glad you didn't have work today, Daddy.

SAM

I wouldn't miss it, buddy.

ERIC

(to Sam)
Cake.

KITCHEN

Sam carefully removes a hard-plastic-covered sheet cake from the fridge. Behind him, Eric gathers plates. Eric HUFFS.

SAM

What?

ERIC

You "wouldn't miss it?" You've missed three out of six.

SAM

Cake looks good.

Sam kicks the fridge door closed. Turns to find Eric facing him with plates and a massive knife.

ERIC

It's time to start the adoption.

SAM

Can you put the knife down?

ERIC

It's been six years. We elected your boss, Rick, Mayor of New York City. Twice.

SAM
This cake is heavy.

Eric doesn't even blink.

SAM
Fine. I'll call --

ERIC
I hired an attorney and a social
worker. We can begin as soon as we
sign some papers.

SAM
A social worker?

ERIC
She writes a report, then we go
before the judge.

SAM
Why do we even need to do this?

ERIC
I need some things to be settled.

Eric arches an eyebrow.

SAM
Everyone considers him just as much
yours as mine. I promise.

ERIC
You promised you'd be around more.

SAM
I work. Our cost of living is
higher now. You're welcome.

ERIC
I have a job, too.

SAM
You show, like, one house a week.

ANDREW (O.S.)
Papa! Cake!

ERIC
I wonder why that is.

SAM
Fine. Have the lawyer draw up....

Eric produces a stack of PAPERS with signature flags from a nearby drawer. He plops it on top of the cake's plastic cover. Sam struggles to balance it all.

Eric raises a pen in the air like a sword.

SAM

Now?

The pen lands squarely on top of the papers.

LIVING ROOM

Eric swaggers in, carrying a candlelit birthday cake. Sam paces behind with the plates. Eric's voice soars triumphant as they sing "Happy Birthday."

Catherine takes the plates from Sam with unusual aggression.

Sam's arms dangle. He looks uncertain. And scared.

INT. MIDTOWN RENTAL APARTMENT - DAY

Eric guides two clients, LUCY and TOM (late 20's), through the apartment. Lucy, a dreamy flower child, koala-hugs Tom's arm. Tom taps his phone as if signaling for rescue.

ERIC

The foyer gets lots of light.

TOM

How many square feet?

ERIC

One thousand. You looking for more?

LUCY

We're looking for more of a feeling, right, Honeybunz? Not just square feet or whatever. We want...

ERIC

You want a house to make your home.

Lucy nods, inspired.

KITCHEN

Eric glides in a half-circle.

ERIC

Faux marble countertops.

TOM
Laminate.

ERIC
Stainless steel --

TOM
How much is it?

ERIC
A little above your budget, but
it's a two-bedroom.

LUCY
Bedroom! Can we take a look-see?

Eric nods. Lucy winks at Tom.

LUCY
Be right back.

Lucy drags Tom to the bedroom.

Eric checks his phone. A voicemail plays:

SASHA
(through phone)
Mr. Meyers, it's Sasha Collins,
your social worker. I received all
your questions. Don't worry! I look
forward to meeting your family
today at two p.m.!

Eric checks his watch. 12:30. Panic.

Faint SEX SOUNDS emanate from the other room.

ERIC
Done with the...look-see?

EXT. MIDTOWN RENTAL APARTMENT - DAY

Tom quickly descends the steps. Eric fumbles to lock the door. Lucy tilts against the railing and lights a cigarette.

LUCY
Sorry about that.

ERIC
Don't worry about it.
Must be nice.

LUCY
 Why? You're relatively attractive.
 Are you single?

Lucy exhales smoke in Eric's direction. He takes a lustful, former-smoker's step into the gust.

ERIC
 I have another property...

LUCY
 This one had bad juju.

ERIC
 ...in Chelsea.

LUCY
 (offers her cigarette)
 You want?

ERIC
 I'll call you tomorrow.

Eric dashes away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eric bursts in, excited. His jaw drops. Mess everywhere.

ANDREW
 Papa, I'm hungry.

Andrew slips on scattered playing cards. Sprawled on the couch in sweatpants, Sam twirls the football.

Andrew snickers at a cartoon on the TV.

ERIC
 What are you watching?

ANDREW
 The Yellow Neighbors.

ERIC
 (to Sam)
 We agreed *The Simpsons* was off-limits. And he isn't fed? Twenty minutes until Ms. Collins arrives.

Eric turns off the TV. Sam grumbles to the bedroom.

SAM (O.S.)
 My one day off.

ERIC

What do you want for lunch?

ANDREW

Breakfast for dinner. Why is the lady coming?

Eric crouches to Andrew's level.

ERIC

Ms. Collins is coming to ask us some questions about our family.

Andrew folds his arms, unsatisfied.

ERIC

Only one of us got to be your legal parent when you were born. Daddy got to go first. Now it's my turn.

(sigh)

If you behave when she comes, we'll take you on a Disney Cruise.

Andrew SHRIEKS with delight.

Eric hurries to the kitchen. The football hits Eric in the back. Andrew giggles.

ANDREW

Fumble!

Eric imitates a tickle monster. Andrew escapes with a squeal.

ERIC

OK, now help pick up while Papa makes pancakes.

HALLWAY - LATER

Smoke billows. A smoke ALARM.

LIVING ROOM

On a chair, Eric bangs at the top of a window to pry it open.

FRONT DOOR

A concerned KNOCK. The door opens, a rush of smoke escapes. SASHA COLLINS (30), a biracial, Boho-chic social worker, peeks in. Coughs. She peers into the

KITCHEN

where Andrew stands on the kitchen counter. He aims a fire extinguisher at a smoking pan.

SASHA

Oh my God! Are you OK?

ANDREW

Papa cooked.

Eric runs into the kitchen, freaks out when he sees Andrew on the counter. Double freaks out at the sight of Sasha.

ERIC

Get down from there!

Eric whisks Andrew off the counter. Andrew triggers the extinguisher. Foam sprays everywhere. Eric grabs the nozzle.

Foam blasts on Sasha.

Sam swoops in, broom in hand. He kills the alarm with one strong stab. The detector shatters to the ground.

From a sea of foam, the traumatized cat runs out of the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sam, Eric and Andrew sit on the couch in residual trauma.

Sasha's hair and clothes are soaked. She pulls out a clipboard, flustered but friendly. Wipes at her eye.

SASHA

So, this first visit is just a get-to-know-ya. The homestudy process is a series of visits between the City and the adoptive family. Usually lasts about six months.

(then)

Did you schedule your medical exams?

Eric stiffens.

ERIC

Yes.

SASHA

Psych evals?

The cat passes through, still covered in foam.

ERIC

Yes.

SASHA

Good. After these visits, I prepare a written recommendation. We also need this form filled out by Andrew's school. Then the judge decides whether the adoption is in the best interest of the child.

SAM

Ms. Collins. I am already Andrew's...father-father. Why do I have to be studied?

SASHA

In a second-parent adoption, Eric's right to adopt relies on you and the presentation of a united family. A cohesive team. You don't have to take the classes like most adoptive parents.

SAM

We'll take some cooking classes.

No one laughs.

SASHA

Should we begin?

ERIC

Please.

Sasha clicks her pen.

SASHA

How long have you been married?

ERIC

Seven years.

SASHA

(wink)

I've been with my wife for three.

Sam answers an email on his iPad. Sasha shakes her head. *Rude*. Eric scolds him with a look.

Sam surrenders the iPad to the coffee table.

Andrew picks up the iPad, flips through the photo library.

SASHA
And you've lived in this apartment
for how long?

ERIC
Eight years. Lots of memories.

SAM
Like today, our first fire!

ERIC
There was no fire.

Andrew raises the iPad to Eric, out of Sasha's eye-line.

ANDREW
Haha! That's a booty!

The iPad reveals a photo of Mayor Rick naked on a beach. He's on his stomach, fanny and face grinning back at the camera.

Eric sinks, petrified. He grabs the edge of the seat cushion.

Sams sees the photo, snatches the iPad from Andrew.

ANDREW
Hey!

SAM
Sorry. I should put this away.
Sensitive material. I work in
government. Privacy, etcetera,
etcetera.

SASHA
Of course. I knew you worked for
the Mayor. I didn't want to bring
it up right away. I have to say,
although I disagree with some of
his policies, Mayor Johnson does
seem to have a...a....

Eric emerges from shock.

ERIC
...a personal touch?

She snaps. *Bingo!*

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Sam and Eric on opposite sides of an unmade bed. Two boxers waiting for the bell. Several pillows on the floor. Eric picks up the first pillow, smacks it against the headboard.

ERIC
(hard whisper)
What the fuck is happening, Sam?

Sam points to the wall they share with Andrew's room.

SAM
(hard whisper)
He can hear you. Whisper!

ERIC
We are whispering! If you're so concerned about him, maybe don't give him an iPad chock-full-o-dick pics! Of your boss.
(then)
Where was that beach? St. John?
Where we had our honeymoon?

A BOOM from Andrew's wall.

ERIC
(yells to Andrew)
What was that?

ANDREW (O.S.)
Squib!

ERIC
(to Sam)
What's a squib?

Sam shrugs.

ERIC
(to Andrew)
What's a squib?

ANDREW (O.S.)
Football kick!

ERIC
Read your *Chicken Little* book!

Sam searches the closet. Throws some shirts on the bed.

Andrew's voice blares from the crack underneath their door. It shocks Eric and Sam.

ANDREW (O.S.)
I don't like that book! The chicken
is scared and running.

ERIC
The chicken doesn't know what's
going on. Nothing's what he thinks
it is. Please. Go back to your room
and shut the door. Just for a
little bit, while I talk to Daddy.

The men freeze until they hear a door shut.

SAM
Where's the suitcase?

ERIC
Do you love him?

Sam nods.

Eric yanks the suitcase from under the bed. Shoves it at him.

A loud BOOM from Andrew's wall.

ERIC
(yells to Andrew)
Stop it! Dammit!

SAM
This! This right here. This
constant, miserable bitch. I can't
handle it anymore. I certainly
can't handle that performance we
gave today...

ERIC
Performance?

SAM
...and all these pillows. Who needs
twenty-five pillows on one bed?
It's all just...decoration.

ERIC
So, you just leave? What happened
to "Trust me, we're partners?"

SAM
We've never been partners.

ERIC

Oh, I know. We'd have to be equals.
I've always been the dog sleeping
under your bed.

SAM

You crawl under there yourself.

ERIC

So I'm a dog and you're what? Fun
Dad?

SAM

Oh, I'd love for you to be fun. One
ounce of fun could've made this
bearable. One ounce.

ERIC

Someone has to be the adult.

Sam zips his suitcase.

SAM

Pay the bills yourself then, Mr.
Adult.

Eric throws his weight on top of the suitcase.

ERIC

You better not mess with my
adoption. You are not taking him
away from me.

SAM

I wouldn't want to raise a kid
myself.

ERIC

That's the difference between you
and me.

Sam jerks the suitcase off the bed. *Game on.*

SAM

I'll leave my son here, for now.
While I figure things out.

Sam flings the door open to reveal Andrew, his football
hugged to his chest.

Andrew tentatively tosses the ball to Sam.

ANDREW

Pass.

Sam tries to catch it, but one hand is on the suitcase handle. The ball flops to the ground.

ANDREW
Incomplete.

Sam places a hand on Andrew's cheek.

SAM
Gotta go. Love you.

Andrew follows behind him, dazed, to the

LIVING ROOM

The front door shuts between them. Andrew shivers. In the

BEDROOM

Eric buries a SCREAM into the bedspread.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

The crack of dawn highlights Eric's arm sticking out of a bed covered with junk food wrappers and a pizza box.

The door BANGS open. Andrew bursts in, shocks Eric awake.

ERIC
Aaaah!

ANDREW
If we go on a Disney Cruise and it hits an iceberg will they do women and children first?

ERIC
What? What are you talking about?

ANDREW
Like the Titanic.

ERIC
That was, like, 1930 or something. The boats are better now.

ANDREW
1912.

ERIC
How do you...yes. It would probably be women and children first. Go back to bed.

ANDREW

Then who do I go with if it's women
and children first?

Eric sits up. *A valid point.*

ERIC

I'll plop on a wig and a dress,
steal a boat and find you, wherever
you are. I'll save you. I'm never,
ever leaving you, buddy.

The answer wins a smile. Andrew's demeanor downshifts.

ANDREW

When is Daddy coming back? It's
been three weeks and four days.

ERIC

He'll be back soon, buddy.

ANDREW

Is he in time out?

ERIC

No, no. Hey. Let's conquer the day!

ANDREW

Today is the Mother's Day Tea.

ERIC

Well, let's conquer the tea party.

ANDREW

Tea. Just Mother's Day Tea.

Eric claps his hands and jumps from his bed.

EXT. ANDREW'S SCHOOL - DAY

As the kids arrive at a West Village Catholic school, the icy
principal, MS. STUART (60), greets the families. Her makeup
is tragic, severe. It's the one extravagance she allows
herself, yet she grossly misfires.

MS. STUART

Good morning, Andrew.

Andrew waves hello.

ERIC

Good morning, Ms. Stuart.

Ms. Stuart brushes an imaginary wrinkle out of her blazer.

MS. STUART

Hello.

Eric hugs Andrew goodbye. He braces for a private conversation with Ms. Stuart.

ERIC

Um...Andrew said today is a Mother's Day event?

Ms. Stuart points directly behind Eric. A giant tea cup-shaped poster with "Mother's Day Tea 2019."

ERIC

Ah. It's been - I haven't - it's been a...busy couple of weeks.

MS. STUART

I'm pleased to see the gray sweatpants got the day off.

ERIC

Is the event just for --

MS. STUART

It's just for mothers.

Eric bites his tongue. He hands her a form.

ERIC

So, this is a form we need to have the school fill out for Andrew's adoption. If you could please mail it to the court, I'd appreciate it. I included a stamped envelope.

Ms. Stuart extracts the form from his hand. A pained exhale.

ERIC

(backs away)
Thank you.

INT. CHELSEA RENTAL APARTMENT - DAY

Eric spazzes through the door, keys jangling. Lucy and Tom lag behind, as if keeping their distance from a rabid dog.

LUCY

Such a lonely sound, keys echoing in an empty apartment.

ERIC

Two bedrooms, one bath. Super high ceilings --

TOM

How many square --

ERIC

Eleven hundred. You wanna give the bedroom a "look-see"?

EXT. CHELSEA RENTAL APARTMENT - DAY

Eric repacks the key in the lock box. Tom scurries away. Lucy, in sleuth mode, extends her cigarette to Eric.

LUCY

Want one, Chatty McChatterson? You're on overdrive today.

ERIC

That would make me sick to my stomach and break out in hives. Of course I want it. But no thanks.

Lucy takes a drag. Blows.

LUCY

Maybe it's not a cigarette you need.

ERIC

I can show you a place on Mott Street later this week.

Lucy sneaks a test-squeeze of Eric's bicep.

LUCY

My brother is single. And cute, I guess. Lord knows he needs more than a cigarette.

ERIC

Look. I'm just trying to find you --

LUCY

Yeah, yeah. "A house to make a home." And I'm trying to make a love connection.

(moping toward Tom)

More than one, actually.

(then)

Anyway, this place has...

ERIC
Lemme guess. Bad juju.

Eric snatches the cigarette out of her hand. Inhales hard.
Lucy draws her chin into her neck, weirded out.

LUCY
Are we your only clients?

EXT. ANDREW'S SCHOOL - DAY

Eric waits with the other parents for the students to be released. MOTHERS and their CHILDREN exit the school. Andrew stomps out alone, on the verge of tears.

ERIC
Hey, what's the matter?

Andrew marches past Eric around the corner to

SIXTH AVENUE

and strives to stay three feet ahead.

ERIC
Andrew, stop.

Andrew marches harder.

ERIC
Stop!

Andrew turns, looks past Eric to ensure privacy.

ANDREW
Today was the Tea.

ERIC
I know, buddy. It was for mothers only. Ms. Stuart told me so.

ANDREW
I was the only person without any family.

Eric's chest crumbles in. He kneels to eye level. Touches Andrew's hair. Andrew recoils.

ERIC
Ms. Stuart said I couldn't go.

ANDREW
I don't care.

ERIC
Next year I'll go, I promise.

ANDREW
I don't care.

ERIC
There's a Father's Day thing coming
up, right?

ANDREW
Donuts for Dads.

ERIC
Donuts for Dads. I'll be there, for
sure. Promise. I'll even sign up to
lead the whole event. What do we do
at Donuts for Dads?

ANDREW
Sports.

Eric freezes with fear.

ANDREW
It's a field day.

ERIC
Great.

Andrew sniffs at Eric's face.

ANDREW
I smell smoke.

Eric snaps to standing.

ERIC
I made pancakes.

They resume walking, hand-in-hand.

ANDREW
There's lots of sports at the Field
Day. Maybe Aunt Kara should come.

ERIC
You don't think Papa can handle it?

Andrew drops Eric's hand and walks ahead. Eric shrinks.

INT. ERIC'S BATHROOM - DAY

Eric locks himself inside. Traps an erupting scream. Pushes against the walls like a badger in a cage. Dives into the towel rack. Releases a muffled HOWL into a towel.

Lungs empty, his gaze lands on his phone on the sink.

He FaceTimes Kara.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM - INDIANA - DAY

Kara pushes past her son, Brody (1), and her mother, SUSAN (65) to answer her phone.

Susan rattles a bottle of pills to occupy Brody so she can concentrate on some daytime TV gabfest. In her other hand, she expertly avoids capsizing a glass of cheap Merlot.

INTERCUT - BATHROOM/SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM

ERIC

...and then, I promised him I'd lead the whole field day.

KARA

Lord give us strength.

SUSAN (O.S.)

(to Eric)

Kristin Daley is having gastric bypass surgery!

KARA

If you need me to come help, all you need to do is ask.

ERIC

God, I have no friends other than my sister back home in Chicago.

KARA

Indiana.

ERIC

That's not how I tell it.

KARA

(to Susan)

Can you not let him play with your heart medication?

ERIC

...and the social worker comes back next week to evaluate "my family."

KARA

I could leave Brody here with mom for a week. Maybe two.

Susan pushes partially into frame.

SUSAN

Apparently, Kristin's lap band snapped and everything in there exploded like a jack-in-the-box! If your sister doesn't mind her diet, she'll end up the same. Pow.

Kara pushes her away.

ERIC

I can't ask you to leave your child with her.

KARA

Yes, you can. All you have to do is say the words: "I. Need. Help."

SUSAN (O.S.)

Help? What did he do now?

Kara ducks away from her.

Eric scrutinizes his own face in the mirror.

ERIC

I smoked the second-half of a client's cigarette today. I sucked in that smoke so hard, I've got her lipstick on my lips.

KARA

What color?

ERIC

(inspecting)
Peach?

KARA

Remember that time you wore my Apricot Fantasy? You looked like a corpse.

ERIC

Because I was passed out drunk and you and Kerry Michelson colored me with it. Remember? That was my fiteenth birthday: three idiots drinking Boone's Farm in a basement. You stuck a candle in a Ring Ding and called it my cake.

SUSAN (O.S.)

What? When was this?

KARA

Your son's fifteenth birthday. You weren't there.

(to Eric)

If you're gonna wear lipstick, I'll bring a bold red when I get there Monday.

ERIC

Shut up. Bye.

Eric hangs up with a grateful smile.

EXT. ANDREW'S SCHOOL - DAY

Kara and Eric wait outside Andrew's school amidst a slew of NANNIES and PARENTS.

KARA

Tell me again why he goes to a Catholic school? We're barely even Baptist.

ERIC

Sam hopes his Puerto Rican mother's Puerto Rican Jesus will forgive his Puerto Rican gayness.

Kara tilts her head.

ERIC

It's two blocks from my house.

Ms. Stuart emerges. Waves her finger at some rowdy students.

MS STUART

Stop playing! Stop playing!

KARA

Oh, God. Jafar!

ERIC

Shhh. She already hates me enough.

Andrew dashes past his classmates into Kara's arms.

ANDREW

You came!

KARA

I did!

ANDREW

Is it because Papa and Daddy
broke up?

ERIC

No one broke up.

KARA

It's because I hear you need the
big guns for your Field Day!

Andrew pulls Kara aside.

ANDREW

Papa ate some pie that fell on the
floor.

Kara ushers Andrew around the corner to

SIXTH AVENUE

as Eric lurks behind. She changes the subject.

KARA

What did you study in school today?

ANDREW

Math. We learned how to count the
money to take the bus. I want to
take the bus to school.

ERIC

It's two blocks.

KARA

(aloud to Eric)
Not the point, Papa!
(to Andrew)
What else?

ANDREW

Volunteering. I told them that the lady who carried me in her belly was a volunteer.

KARA

Yes. Yes, she was a very nice...
(to Eric)
...very well-paid...
(to Andrew)
volunteer.

ANDREW

Did I come out of the boobs or the butt?

ERIC

Buddy, can we not talk like that when Ms. Collins comes tomorrow?

ANDREW

The referee is coming again?

KARA

Referee?

ERIC

Yes, because a social worker, just like a referee, is a person who examines a situation, then makes decisions based on the rules.

KARA

(to Andrew)
Wow. You're really teaching your Papa, aren't you?

ANDREW

My football book helps.
(then)
Daddy's coming to get me tonight.

Kara steps back, throws an arm around her sad brother.

INT. ANDREW'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

His jack on, ready to go, Andrew waits at the window for signs of Sam.

Eric watches this painful scene from Andrew's doorway. Eric attempts a familiar distraction.

ERIC
Alphabet game?

Silence.

ERIC
A - alligator.

Andrew lies on his bed and faces the wall.

ANDREW
B - bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eric fidgets on the couch across from Sasha. Andrew plays nearby. Kara's nervous energy channels into overplaying the hostess. She swings a plate of Oreo's in Sasha's face.

KARA
Hors d'oeuvres?

SASHA
No, thanks. Will Sam be joining us?

ERIC
He should be. Lemme text him.

Eric's phone displays the words as he texts:

"Where the F are you? Today is the homestudy visit."

ANDREW
Did he answer?

SASHA
(winks at Andrew)
He's probably busy with the Mayor.

Andrew backs away from the wink. *Creepy.*

ANDREW
I'm gonna go find Uncle Feathers.

Andrew wanders out.

SASHA
Well, since I've got the two of you here, tell me about your parents.

KARA

(points to Eric)

My parent is right there with the shiny, capped teeth. It's nice to watch him raise a kid now that he can reach the kitchen cabinets.

SASHA

Your mother wasn't there to handle things?

KARA

She handled a lot of Michelob.

A fiery look from Eric. Sasha writes on her clipboard.

SASHA

Does alcoholism run in your family?

ERIC

She just means our mom was...young.

KARA

A young magician. Made our dad disappear.

ERIC

We did a lot of the growing up on our own.

With his forehead, Eric directs Kara to the kitchen.

SASHA

Yet, you seem to have a natural talent for parenting.

ERIC

I do? Thank you. I mean, yeah, I think I do.

(then)

Actually, I don't know why that is, though. I never had a role model.

Kara returns, plops down some hummus.

KARA

I know why.

Kara goes back to the kitchen.

SASHA

Well, sometimes we intentionally, or unintentionally, become the opposite of our parents...

Kara returns with a bag of chips. Pops it open.

SASHA
 ...it becomes our subconscious
 mission not to repeat the same
 behaviors...

KARA
 It's actually really simple.

SASHA
 ...in an attempt to heal the
 wounds...

KARA
 You treat Andrew the way you wish
 someone had treated you as a kid.

Kara tosses and catches a chip in her mouth like a dolphin
 getting a reward.

SASHA
 (to Eric)
 Do you treat yourself with the same
 kindness you give Andrew?

Yes...

ERIC

KARA
 Absolutely not.

KARA
 Why do you think that is, doc? Why
 the kindness for the kid but not
 for himself?

SASHA
 He thinks Andrew deserves it.

Kara snaps, points. *Exactly*. Eric is pasted to the couch.

Andrew rejoins, holding the cat.

ANDREW
 (to Sasha)
 Are you a zebra?

Gasps.

ERIC
 Andrew!

SASHA
 Excuse me?

ANDREW
Papa said you're a zebra.

KARA
Andrew!

ERIC
I did not!

SASHA
I'm biracial, kind sir!

Andrew drops the cat, darts for his room.

ANDREW
Not fair!
(points to Eric)
You did too say so! Where's Daddy?
Daddy is never here! I want to
watch the Yellow Fucking Neighbors!

Andrew SLAMS his door. Eric chases after him.

ANDREW'S ROOM

Andrew searches violently through his toys and books.

Eric forges in. Closes the door.

ERIC
(hushed)
What has gotten into you?

Andrew ignores him. He gives each of his books a short inspection, then throws it to the floor.

ERIC
You can't say words like that.
(scrambles)
Alphabet game?

Andrew pounds a book to the floor.

ERIC
You can't watch the Yellow
Neighbors because it's not
appropriate.

ANDREW
I don't watch Yellow Neighbors
because you don't let me. You're no
fun.

Just like Daddy said in your room!
You're no fun and you don't let me
see him.

ERIC
That is not fair.

Andrew finds the book. He searches for a certain page.

ANDREW
Not fair to me!

ERIC
Not fair to...

Andrew shoves the open book in Eric's face.

The page displays a referee dressed in a black-and-white striped uniform with a zebra next to him.

ERIC
(woefully reads)
"Sometimes we joke and call the
referee a zebra because of the
stripes he wears."

Eric deflates.

ERIC
I'm sorry, I forgot. This is how I
explained Ms. Collins's job to you.

Andrew slaps the book to the ground.

ERIC
Listen! I'm sorry I forgot, but I
did not tell Daddy to stay away!
That's not what's happening.

ANDREW
Then he's gone forever because of
me!

ERIC
He's not gone forever. And not
because of you. Maybe he was upset,
like you're upset I forgot that
"zebra" means "referee."
(remembers Sasha)
Oh God - the referee.

Eric swings the door open. Kara tidies the living room.

ERIC
Did she leave?

Kara nods. Eric closes the door. Slides down Andrew's wall.

ERIC
OK. We'll apologize to Ms. Collins later. I'll explain there was a misunderstanding. But it's not your fault, buddy. I'll fix it. Everything is going to be fine...it's all gonna be okay.

Andrew inches to the opposite wall. He picks up the *Chicken Little* book. He flips a page. His voice trembles as he pretends to read.

ANDREW
The chicken is running and afraid. He thinks the sky is coming down...

ERIC
There's hope in the end of that book. You don't have to feel scared like the chicken.

ANDREW
I'm not --

ERIC
It's OK, you don't --

ANDREW
I'm not the chicken!
The chicken is you.

Andrew shoves the book at Eric.

On the cover, a chicken running scared.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eric shovels Oreos into his mouth. He holds *Football for Dummies* in his hand. Kara sorts Eric's backlog of mail.

KARA
...and then what did you say?

ERIC
Nothing. He just climbed into his bed with his back to me.
(looks around)
How is this place still a mess?

KARA
Because I'm not your maid.

Eric punches the countertop. Cookies crumble from his mouth.

ERIC
I don't wanna be the goddamn
chicken!

Kara discovers something in the mail. She flips it up to Eric's face.

KARA
Then be the fox.

An INVITATION to the Mayor's Police Foundation Gala.

Eric ponders the invitation. He shakes the idea away.

ERIC
I don't have the headspace for
political ambush right now. I have
to somehow transform into Super
Jock Dad for an entire playground
of straightees tomorrow. It's
middle school all over again.

KARA
That's why I came.

ERIC
I know, but I need to show him I
can handle it myself.
(at the invitation)
Throw that away.

Eric spins out of the room.

KARA
OK. I'll throw it...
(sticks it on the fridge)
...right here.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

The crack of dawn. Door BANGS open. Andrew bursts in. Eric jolts awake.

ANDREW
Field Day! Field Day!
(jumps on Eric's bed)
Airplane!

Andrew jumps onto Eric's legs. Eric hoists him up.

ERIC

Ugh. You're getting too big for airplane!

ANDREW

No! It's what we do. You and me.

ERIC

You and me.

Eric wipes a tear from his eye.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

As Kara and Andrew file out the front door, Eric grabs the huge donut box on the counter. He sees the INVITATION on the fridge. Rolls his eyes. *Whatever.*

EXT. HUDSON RIVER PARK - SPORTS FIELD - DAY

Overcompensating DADS mingle. Anxious, hyper KIDS chase and wrestle. A "Donuts for Dads" banner hangs along a fence.

Eric struggles to carry hula hoops and a bucket of water balloons. Kara carries boxes of donuts to a picnic table.

A GIRL (O.S.)

You're late!

The children and dads encircle Eric. He plops everything to the ground. A snarling boy, FRANKIE (8) juggles a ball.

BOY

So what's the deal, Coach?

A ball whizzes past. Eric cowers. His trembling voice reads from his clipboard.

ERIC

OK. Group one - sack race. Group two - hula hoop contest. Group three, football. Group four - soccer. Then we'll end with a good ol' water balloon fight.

RON (40), Frankie's macho dad, pipes up.

RON

You in charge of hula hoops?

ERIC

I'm in charge of football.

Andrew proudly CLAPS. Ron PUFFS in disbelief.

Eric BLOWS the whistle. The games begin.

SERIES OF SHOTS - FOOTBALL

-- A ball hits Eric.

-- Eric makes a wrong ref call. Kids SCREAM in his face.

-- Eric scours his *Football for Dummies* book.

-- An angry DAD screams at Eric. Eric squinches to ignore it.

-- The ball hits him again.

-- Andrew droops his head, embarrassed. Some kids fight.

-- Andrew scores a touchdown. Eric misses seeing it. Two kids push Eric's arms up to form the "touchdown" signal.

-- Eric dodges speeding ball. YELPS.

Frankie pipes up.

FRANKIE

Hey, Andrew. You were supposed to bring your dad, not your mom.

ANDREW

I don't have a mom.

RON

(a loud aside)

Nope, test-tube baby over there came from a rent-a-womb.

Eric slams his clipboard to the ground.

ERIC

Can I talk to you a minute?

Eric firmly escorts Ron away by the sleeve. Ron yanks his arm free. They keep their backs to the kids as they argue under their breath. Ron elbows Eric. Eric elbows back.

A water balloon pelts Eric's back. He and Ron turn around.

It's Sam. He holds another balloon high, ready to launch.

SAM
You two done over there?
(to Ron)
Why don't you walk it off?

RON
Nah.

SAM
Take a hike.

RON
Nope.

Sam slinks his arm around Eric's waist. Ron bolts.

SAM
(to the players)
Let's play some football!

The kids and dads excitedly disperse.

ERIC
Why are you here?

SAM
I show up to help and you ask me
why I'm here?

Andrew inches up to Eric, disappointed.

ANDREW
You missed my only touchdown.

Sam throws a consoling arm around Andrew. They walk away.

Eric stands soaked and sullen.

A TEXT ALERT. A text from Lucy reads:

"Hey, smoker. Here's my brother
Carl's number - 646-555-2439."

ERIC
Yeah, right.

Eric looks up to see Sam and Andrew playing catch.

Eric pouts over to the

REFRESHMENT AREA

where Kara puts a donut in his mouth. Sam struts over.

SAM

Slam dunk, today, Skipper. Thank God I showed up.

ERIC

Funny, you don't show up when you're supposed to, like on Monday when your kid stood waiting against a window for two hours. Or Wednesday when the social worker sat in our living room asking where you were. I'm running out of excuses for you.

SAM

I'll make it up to Andrew.

ERIC

When? When are you making it up to him? Sunday?

SAM

I don't know. Tomorrow is Rick's event. Gonna be a late night.

ERIC

Rick? Our super gay mayor you're banging behind everyone's back?

SAM

I still pay the rent. Like I always have. But that goes unnoticed.

(looks over at Andrew)

I'll pick him up Sunday at eleven.

He snickers at Eric's soaked, tight t-shirt.

SAM

Maybe time to go up a size?

INT. ERIC'S KITCHEN - DAY

Eric bursts in, still wet. Snatches the gala INVITATION off the fridge. Stomps to his bedroom. A door SLAMS.

INT. GALA BALLROOM - NIGHT

A glowing blue and gold graphic on the wall: "New York City Annual Police Foundation Gala 2019." OFFICERS in uniforms. ATTENDEES in formal wear.

NEAR THE STAGE

Sam instructs Catherine.

SAM
 ...then you'll take the stage,
 clink a glass or something, and
 introduce Rick.

She double-pats his face.

CATHERINE
 Never tell a falcon how to fly.

Sam's gaze flows to the entryway. He stumbles back in horror.

IN THE ENTRYWAY

Eric and Kara hand an invitation to a DOORMAN.

Eric looks dashing. A determined sparkle. Kara slinks like Marilyn Monroe. Eric snags a glass of champagne from a passing tray. He gulps it down. They glide to the

COAT CHECK

where Kara peels off her coat, revealing a dress that is more Mets Game than Met Gala. Eric notices it for the first time.

ERIC
 Is *Showgirls* filming again?

KARA
 Shut up, I love this dress.

ERIC
Dress is a generous word.

KARA
 I'm here for two weeks. I didn't
 pack for Cinderella's Ball.

Sam stomps over. Eric trades his empty glass for a full one.

SAM
 What are you two doing here?
 (re: the dress)
 So inappropriate. This isn't
 Halloween.

Eric downs his champagne.

ERIC
 She looks fantastic.

He departs with his empty glass up, looking for a fresh one.

KARA

Wanna talk Halloween? What are you going as tonight? The Mayor's side salad? A basic side salad that everyone ignores just to get to the main course?

Sam clutches his chest. He sees Eric on the stage whispering to Catherine. A few yards from them, Rick's worried face.

Sam races away from Kara, toward the stage.

KARA

Yup! Better go get some dressing for that side salad...oh, whatever.

Sam's gone. Kara trods to the bar.

ON THE STAGE

Eric escorts Catherine to the microphone. She strikes a pose. Taps the mic.

CATHERINE

Good evening! Welcome to the Annual Police Foundation Gala. Tonight's event honors you. You who serve our city and help my husband protect the greatest city in the world. To help me introduce the Mayor is Eric Meyers, partner of Sam Garcia, who, if he plays his cards right, will be a new city councilman!

Catherine throws a hip and a wink. APPLAUSE. She hands the mic to a tipsy Eric.

ERIC

Thank you, Catherine. I assure you, Sam is playing his cards.

An abnormally loud LAUGH from Catherine. Terrified looks exchange between Rick and Sam.

ERIC

But that's what New Yorkers do, isn't it? We work hard. For success, for safety, for justice. I wanna thank the Mayor for his personal level of care for my family...and yours.

Eric raises his glass.

ERIC

Please welcome Mayor Johnson. The
Johnson we all seem to love.

Unsure APPLAUSE. Kara HOOTS from afar.

Eric descends offstage. Rick takes the mic.

RICK

Welcome!

Sam pulls Eric aside. Rick blabbers on in the background.

SAM

What are you doing?

ERIC

Getting guarantees.

SAM

What are you talking about?

ERIC

I'm getting guarantees from you
right now, Sam. Or I'll grab that
mic again and shock the liver spots
off half the hands in this room.

Sam tugs him farther aside. Eric grabs another champagne from
a passing tray. Downs it.

SAM

Wow. Last time you made demands,
you had to hold a knife.

ERIC

Oh, I'm holding a big ol' knife.
It's called tomorrow's headlines.
You listening?

SAM

Shhh! Yes.

ERIC

Good. First, you will show up
tomorrow at eleven a.m., as
planned, to pick up your son for
some Hallmark-level quality time.
Not like Field Day. Swooping in,
tryin' to save the day.

SAM

Pretty sure I saved the day.

ERIC

Two, from now on, you will appear at every homestudy with joy on your face and a smile in your heart. You'll play the part of loving husband in front of Sasha, the judge, and anyone else I want you to dance for, Tiny Dancer. Because if I'm gonna lose everything, so will you and your little dog, too.

Points to Rick. Rick sees. Eric gives a witchy-spell wave.

Sam yanks Eric's arm down. Their faces now only inches apart.

ERIC

Papa, do you hear me?

SAM

It's 'can' you hear me --

ERIC

Don't you gay-splain Barbra to me!

SAM

I hear you!

ERIC

Good.

(mocking)

Gotta go. Love you.

Eric plants a defiant kiss on Sam's lips and leaves. Sam stares into the space of a new unknown.

BAR

Eric grabs Kara. He's amped.

KARA

Mission accomplished?

ERIC

One more thing. Go get your coat.

Kara obeys. Eric dials his phone.

ERIC

(into phone)

Hi. I'm Eric, your sister's...acquaintance. She gave me your number. Wanna have coffee tomorrow?

INT. POTATO-TOPIA - DAY

Eric fidgets at the window-facing counter of a potato take-out joint. CARL (40) dashes in like James Bond. He flashes a relieved, "thank God you're attractive" smile.

CARL
Potato-topia, huh?

ERIC
I know, I know. They don't have coffee, but they do have bubble tea. I got you one.

CARL
(looks around)
Bubble tea and potatoes. How long do you give this place?

ERIC
Six months?

They remember to introduce themselves.

	CARL	ERIC
Carl.		Eric.

CARL
So, you're helping my sister get a place?

ERIC
I think I'm helping her get a ring.

CARL
Please don't.

They chuckle.

CARL
Oh, Tom. Tragic Tom.

ERIC
He's way too bland to be tragic.

Carl struggles to get the bubbles through the straw.

CARL
(at the straw)
This is impossible. I shouldn't have to work this hard. So, where are you from?

ERIC
Chi...Indiana.

CARL
Where? I'm from South Bend.

ERIC
Valparaiso! Wow. Not many of us
Hoosiers here in New York.
Rare find.

Flirty smiles.

Eric's phone RINGS and displays: "SCAM LIKELY".

CARL
Ooh! Scam likely! Watch this.

Carl grabs and answers Eric's phone.

CARL
What's the scam, Scam Likely?

Eric cringes, grabs the phone back.

ERIC
Hello?

INTERCUT - INT. POTA-TOPIA/EXT. WAVERLY PLACE

Sam marches down the sidewalk. Andrew drags behind him.

SAM
Are you stroking out?

ERIC
What do you want?

SAM
I need to drop Andrew back off.
Your little stunt last night
might've cost me my job.

ERIC
Whatever. When?

SAM
I'm almost to the house. Why?

ERIC
I'm at the potato place around the
corner. Just bring him here.

Eric hangs up.

CARL
Sorry I screamed --

ERIC
It's OK. Anyway, my son is getting
dropped off here, so...

CARL
You have a son?

Eric sighs. *Here comes the deal breaker.*

ERIC
Yep. He's six.

CARL
Lucky. I'd love to have kids.

Eric is taken aback.

ERIC
Again, a rare find.

Carl aligns his posture at the date's increased stock value.

Sam leads a heartbroken Andrew through the front door.

ERIC
Hi, buddy.

SAM
Sorry --

ERIC
It's fine. Bye.

Sam spots a date in progress. A flash of revenge in his eye.

SAM
(to Carl)
Hi, I'm Sam.

CARL
Carl.

ERIC
OK. Bye now.

SAM
(looks around)
Potato take-out place? Romantic.

ERIC
Goodbye.

SAM
Do you have me listed as
"Scam Likely?"

Eric turns his back to Sam, his attention on Andrew.

ERIC
You hungry?

SAM
(to Andrew)
Bye, buddy. Sorry.

Andrew sinks his forehead to the counter. Eric rubs his back.

Eric faces Carl, looking for a way to wrap up the date on a less awkward note. Carl focuses on Andrew, hoping for the opportunity to introduce himself.

ERIC
You're a casting director?

CARL
Yes.

ERIC
That's fun. You get to create
people's careers.

CARL
Sometimes.

ERIC
But, you see a lot of bad acting.

CARL
(looks up at Eric)
Yeah. I'm an expert at smiling
through a train wreck.

Eric recoils, stung. Hops out of his seat. Pats Andrew's back. Carl opens his mouth to clear up the misunderstanding.

ERIC
I need to get him home.

Carl teeters to standing. A sad wave goodbye.

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eric and Kara perch before two canvasses, Andrew's art supplies, and a bottle of wine. A low-rent sip-n-paint. On Eric's canvas, a halfway decent facial portrait. Kara's looks like Pollock without the genius.

KARA

I sort of figured we'd be doing this with other thirsty singles and real acrylic.

ERIC

I'm not getting a babysitter after today's debacle, so you'll have to make do.

Kara swigs from the bottle.

ERIC

Gross. Use your glass.

KARA

The glass is a middle man.

ERIC

OK, Mom.

KARA

(slaps down her brush)
I should check on Brody.

Kara FaceTimes Susan. Eric ducks out of the phone's view.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - SAME

Susan answers. She gags as she changes Brody's diaper.

INTERCUT - ERIC'S LIVING ROOM/SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM

KARA

Hey.

SUSAN

Hold on. This kid is one poop away from a prolapse. I've never seen anything like it.

KARA

Can you not talk like that in front of him?

SUSAN
Is Eric there?

KARA
Mom! I said, don't talk like that--

SUSAN
What difference does it make? He's basically a Jello mold with a heartbeat.

KARA
Well, I don't want him to be molded in your likeness.

SUSAN
Then come get him, Kara. Since I never do anything right.

KARA
Can I see him, please?

Susan points the iPhone camera at Brody. The camera passes by an ashtray with a lit cigarette.

KARA
Are you smoking around him? What the...
(sees Brody)
...Hi, sweetheart. I'm coming home tomorrow. I love you.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Can I talk to --

Kara hangs up.

KARA
Holy shit.

Eric splashes a violent streak of paint on his canvas.

ERIC
Great. You're leaving tomorrow?

KARA
Obviously. Unless I want to come back to one of those chain-smoking toddlers from the Internet.

ERIC
Sure, leave. But first, paint an apple falling from a tree.

KARA

I'm so glad I came here to help you pick up the pieces.

ERIC

They're still scattered. You wanna borrow a suitcase for your clothes or is a trash bag alright?

KARA

You never could pick your enemies!

ERIC

My enemies are everywhere!

Eric sits. He makes a weak, circular motion around his torso.

ERIC

Everywhere.

Confused, Kara lowers her brush, but doesn't let go.

LATER

Kara is in the same spot. Paint brush clenched in her hand. Her jeans now stained with dripped paint.

Eric's face is swollen from having finally spilled his guts.

ERIC

...and now, my virus is undetectable.

KARA

Because...

ERIC

Because what?

KARA

Because you took care of yourself. And your son. Alone. Does mom know?

ERIC

She'd make this about herself.

She swishes her brush around in the water.

KARA

Wait. You kept this big of a secret from everyone for ten years and still raised a kid all by yourself?

ERIC

Yeah.

KARA

You'd make an excellent woman.

ERIC

Thank you.

KARA

Hold on. Lemme see for sure.

Kara paints big red lips on Eric's face. Then a severe cheek. They laugh.

ERIC

Wait. Wait. Who am I?

Eric adds a huge, pointed black eyebrow like Ms. Collins.

Kara wags her finger and mimics Ms. Collins.

KARA

Stop playing! Stop playing!

Eric's laugh turns serious.

ERIC

Actually, I will stop playing.

MONTAGE

-- Eric's bedroom -- The crack of dawn. Door BANGS open. Andrew barges in. Eric jolts awake next to an empty pie tin.

ERIC

Aaahh!

ANDREW

Where did Aunt Kara go?

ERIC

She had to go back home.

ANDREW

Did she take the bus?

-- Eric's bedroom -- The crack of dawn. Door BANGS open. Andrew barges in. Eric jolts awake next to a pizza box.

ERIC

Aahh!

ANDREW

I need oil and salt for a lava
lamp.

-- Eric's bedroom -- The crack of dawn. Door BANGS against a strategically-placed chest-of-drawers. It BANGS again. The makeshift doorstop gives an inch. Eric props himself up on his elbows, victorious.

ANDREW (O.S.)

From now on, I only swallow my
food! No crushing. Because I'm a
shark.

ERIC

You're a human.

ANDREW (O.S.)

You said I can be whatever I want.

Eric checks his phone: "6:50a.m. Wednesday"

ERIC

I need you to be a really good boy
at Ms. Collins' visit. I'll pick
you up from school at lunch.

END MONTAGE

EXT. ANDREW'S SCHOOL - DAY

Ms. Stuart waits with Andrew outside the front doors. She crinkles her brow at Eric hurrying toward her.

ERIC

Hi. Thanks.

MS STUART

We don't usually dismiss half-day.

ERIC

(to Andrew)

How was your half-day?

ANDREW

We learned Code Blue.

ERIC

Code Blue?

MS STUART

For...unwanted guests.

ANDREW
If a man has a gun in the school.

ERIC
Super.

MS STUART
We do what we have to do. Children
come first. Too bad he'll miss the
rest of today for no reason.

ERIC
Andrew, wait over there.

Andrew walks out of earshot.

ERIC
Our reason is his adoption.

MS STUART
By two men.

ERIC
I haven't asked for your approval.

MS STUART
Haven't you, though?

ERIC
That form is meant to assess
Andrew's aptitude here. Don't take
your view of me out on him.

MS STUART
Missing school --

ANDREW
Papa?

ERIC
Yes, buddy?

ANDREW
Is Daddy going to be there today?

Gulp.

ERIC
Yes.

ANDREW
Well, let him know I'm a shark.

ERIC
Why don't you tell him yourself?

ANDREW
Because sharks bite when they're mad.

ERIC
(at Ms. Stuart)
Well then, we're both sharks today.

ANDREW
Also, I think I'm a shark because sharks leave their mothers right when they're born.

Ms. Stuart folds her arms in holy righteousness.

ERIC
How about we swim home?

Eric's hand on his head like a fin, he weaves down the sidewalk. Andrew joyously joins in for the two blocks home.

EXT. ERIC'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Sam stands anxiously in front of the front door. He sees Eric and Andrew happily run-swimming toward him. He is endeared.

SAM
What's all this?

Andrew runs past Sam, into the building. Sam stops Eric.

SAM
Can I talk to you...

ERIC
Can't talk! We're sharks!

Eric chomps the air at Sam. Runs inside. Sullen, Sam follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sam, Eric, and Andrew sit, in that order, on the couch. Andrew chomps potato chips. His eyes wander everywhere except in Sam's direction. He's still pissed he was dissed.

Sasha sits cautiously in her usual seat.

SASHA
Sam, it's good to see you.

SAM

You too. Sorry about last time.
I've been super busy.
(looks to Andrew)
Buddy, you want some water?

Andrew ignores him. Sasha catches Andrew's vibe.

SASHA

How are you today, Andrew?

Andrew looks away, shrugs.

ANDREW

(I don't know)
Mm-mm-mmmm.

Eric produces paperwork to pull focus.

ERIC

I made a list of our activities, a
family tree...

SASHA

Would you mind if I spoke to Andrew
alone for a few minutes?
(to Andrew)
Would that be OK with you, Andrew?

Andrew chomps a chip.

SAM

Sure. We'll be downstairs. Text me
when you want us to come back up.

ERIC

We could just go in the other room.

SASHA

(to Sam)
Great. Take a walk. I'll text you
when we're done.

EXT. ERIC'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Eric paces. Sam sulks. Gazes up to their apartment windows.

ERIC

We should have stayed up there.

SAM

I miss this building.

ERIC

What if he says something?

SAM

What if...I came back. To it.
What if we tried again?

ERIC

Tried what again?

SAM

Everything happened so quickly when
Andrew flashed that picture. I was
completely caught off guard.

ERIC

(gotcha)
Oh my God!

SAM

I panicked.

ERIC

You're panicking now! When did he
dump you?

SAM

Listen, with you and me --

ERIC

When did he dump you?

SAM

You can't tell me you didn't know
something was going on! If you had
cared, maybe it wouldn't have
gotten so serious.

ERIC

Oh my God! I am going to bang my
head on this brick wall until my
blood forms a river...

SAM

Oh God.

ERIC

How is it my fault you were out
being someone's side piece?

SAM

(smirk)
Side salad.

ERIC
What?

SAM
Nothing.

A new Rolex on Sam's wrist distracts Eric.

SAM
Come on. I'm standing here
admitting I made a mistake.

ERIC
You know what happens here? Right
here, every year?

SAM
On the sidewalk?

ERIC
Every year, I drag a Christmas tree
carcass down five flights of stairs
to this very spot. By myself. You
know what you do?

Sam shrugs.

ERIC
You bitch about the needles.

SAM
So. That's it, then?

A TEXT ALERT.

ERIC
Is that Sasha?

SAM
So, that's just it, then?

ERIC
Was that Sasha?

SAM
I refuse to be blackmailed anymore.

ERIC
(at Sam's Rolex)
Nice watch.

Sam tucks it in his sleeve.

SAM
I'm taking my son tonight.

ERIC
You can take our son until 8:30.
Now, smile. It's showtime.

Eric darts inside. The door smacks into Sam.

INT. ANDREW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eric paces by the window looking for signs of Andrew and Sam.
He checks his phone. 9:20 p.m. It RINGS. It displays "Kara".

ERIC
Hey.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING - SAME

Instead of Kara, it's his mother Susan.

INTERCUT - ANDREW'S ROOM/SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM

SUSAN
Hello, son.

ERIC
Why are you on Kara's phone?

SUSAN
Are you coming home for Christmas?

ERIC
I have no idea.

SUSAN
Why do you sound constipated?

ERIC
Sam took Andrew to dinner. Supposed
to be home an hour ago.

SUSAN
You want my advice?

ERIC
I do not.

SUSAN
If someone stole my man, I'd cut
her tits off, like Christ would do.

ERIC

Where in the Bible is that story?
And someone did steal your man, her
name was Pam.

SUSAN

Your father landed in the gutter
where Jesus flung him. Pam was just
there waiting.

Susan takes a drag off her cigarette.

ERIC

You should quit.

SUSAN

I heard you started.

ERIC

Put Kara on.

SUSAN

She's lyin' down with Brody. That
kid's a monster. Barely sat still
for the Christmas photo. I sent you
one. You get it?

Eric walks to the mail pile.

ERIC

He's a baby.

SUSAN

Well, you never were that squirmy.
Always so calm.

ERIC

Maybe I grew up too fast.

Eric finds a large manila envelope in the pile. It's from
Sasha Collins. THE HOMESTUDY REPORT.

The phone falls from Eric's ear. He doesn't hear:

SUSAN

You did grow up too fast. I do
regret you not having a childhood.
I've always wanted to tell you how
sorry I am that I...robbed your
life in that way.

Phone back to his ear.

ERIC

I gotta go.

Eric slides down the cabinets as he reads.

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A KNOCK at the front door. Eric swings open the door to the HALLWAY

where Andrew stands, shirt covered in blood. Eric SHRIEKS.

ANDREW

I lost a tooth! Can the tooth fairy give me twenty dollars this time?

Andrew hands the tooth to Eric and runs inside.

ERIC

Where were you?

SAM

Dinner. I told you.

ERIC

I told you eight-thirty. It's almost ten.

ANDREW (O.S.)

We went to Sparky Cheese's!

Eric clicks his tongue. Sam clicks back.

SAM

My son wanted pizza. You don't want to try our marriage again? Then I'm not trying at all. I'm done playing your game.

ERIC

There's no game. You can go now. The tooth fairy needs to go negotiate rates.

Sam peels off his wedding ring and throws it at Eric.

SAM

I'm serious. I'm done.

Sam speeds down the staircase.

Eric picks up the ring. He holds his breath until he's

INSIDE

where he latches the door. Presses his hands against it.

Sensing trouble, Andrew sits on the couch with his *Chicken Little* book. He holds it out to Eric.

ANDREW

We're getting near the end.

Eric joins him. He opens to a page with King Leo on a throne.

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eric puts the homestudy report inside a box. Places it on Christmas wrapping paper.

ERIC (V.O.)

(reads)

"Let me tell you what really happened," King Leo said."

EXT. 44TH STREET SIDEWALK - DAY

Carl works up the nerve to dial his phone.

INTERCUT - LIVING ROOM/44TH STREET

ERIC

Hello?

CARL

Hi. I just wanted to apologize for the other day, I didn't mean...

ERIC

No, no, listen. I shouldn't have asked you out yet. I should've waited until I had mourned my marriage or whatever.

CARL

Yeah.

ERIC

And my focus right now is Andrew.

CARL

Mourns his marriage and focuses on his kid. You're the rare find.

ERIC
Thanks, but I don't think I'm ready
to be found.

CARL
When you are, lemme know.

ERIC
You deserve more than potatoes and
bubble tea.

CARL
Yeah. Well, so do you. Bye.

They hang up.

ERIC
Dammit.

EXT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - INDIANA - DAY

Christmas lights are strewn half-assed on the gutter of a
small home. A cornfield in the background.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Christmas music. Chintzy decorations. Brody frolics in
wrapping paper. Andrew glued to an iPad. Opened presents
everywhere. Eric cleans the mess.

Kara holds a piece of cake. Susan swirls her Merlot.

An unattractive, middle-aged REPORTER appears on the TV.

REPORTER
Merry Christmas! It's an unusually
warm forty degrees in Northwest
Indiana today...

KARA
(joking)
He is so hot.

SUSAN
Maybe he's single.
(to Eric)
You like your egg nog?

ERIC
It's like drinking a doughnut.
(to Andrew)
Can you put that down for a sec?

Andrew puts down the iPad. Joins Eric. Together, they hand Kara a wrapped box.

ERIC

Here's one more present...from us.

Susan stomps over to Kara in a jealous fit.

SUSAN

And here's a present from me.

She snaps away Kara's plate. Kara opens the box.

KARA

Oh my Gosh. Your homestudy report.

An arm around Andrew as she reads:

KARA

"...Andrew is a smart, creative little boy who is cared for deeply. Sam and Eric are loving but flawed, like most parents are..."

(to the room)

Ain't that the truth. Yesterday I almost left Brody in a shopping cart at Kroger's.

SUSAN

Good thing you didn't get studied.

ANDREW

The referee's report is good?

ERIC

The report is very good, buddy. What did you say to Sasha - Ms. Collins - when you two were alone that time?

ANDREW

I don't remember.

ERIC

Well, whatever you said, you scored a touchdown.

Andrew hugs Kara.

SUSAN

Why does she get a present?

ERIC

She helped make this happen.

SUSAN

And I watched her kid. Where's my present for that?

KARA

Your present is being able to spend time with your grandson...

ERIC

...while the other becomes part of our family.

SUSAN

I already raised my kids. One of 'em mean as a raccoon and the other eats like she's tunneling to freedom.

Kara grabs the cake plates and storms out. Eric follows her.

Susan turns her attention to Andrew.

SUSAN

What did Santa give you?

ANDREW

There's no Santa. No way he could make it everywhere in one night. Not even with the time zones. These presents were just Papa.

SUSAN

Your Papa, always good with the presents. Just remember something, mister. No matter where your other father goes with his new family - your real family's right here.

KITCHEN

Kara throws the plates into the sink.

KARA

Why can't she skip one dig at me? Just let one, you know, pass by?

Andrew CRIES in the other room. Eric rushes back into the

LIVING ROOM

Susan fake-fusses with Brody. Andrew hides by the window.

ERIC

What happened in here?

SUSAN

Nothing.

ERIC

Andrew, what happened?

SUSAN

(shrugs it off)

I told him Sam was probably with his new family.

ERIC

New family?

SUSAN

New family, other family. Whatever you two are doing now. How am I supposed to keep up with it?

ERIC

That's not true, buddy.

(to Susan)

You don't make any sense.

SUSAN

You want my advice?

ERIC

(to Andrew)

See? She isn't making sense.

Andrew whimpers.

ERIC

Alphabet game? A-

ANDREW

A - asshole!

Eric bites his tongue. Continues.

ERIC

B - boat.

SUSAN

You gonna let him talk like that?

ERIC

You may not recognize what's going on here, but this is called parenting. I'm calming him down with a game we play.

Susan exhales victory.

SUSAN

Uh-huh. And how do you think you know that game? Huh? From me. When your father left, we played that game so many times, you could read by the time you were five. The one thing I didn't do was lie.

ANDREW

Did Daddy start a new family?

ERIC

No. We're his family. Grab your presents. We're going home.

ANDREW

Can we take the bus?

Susan stops Andrew, bends eye-to-eye.

SUSAN

You can go to your Papa for all the love you want, little man. But remember.

(at Eric)

You can always come to Grammy for the truth.

ANDREW

Like King Leo from my book.

Eric leads Andrew out.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

The crack of dawn. Door BANGS open. Andrew barges in. Eric jolts awake. Oreos all over the bed.

ANDREW

January twenty! January twenty!

ERIC

Adoption day!

ANDREW

Hail Mary!

ERIC

What's a Hail Mary?

ANDREW

When you just go for it.

INT. SURROGATE'S COURT - COURTROOM - DAY

Eric and Andrew fidget in the pews of the courtroom. Eric looks up, surprised to see Catherine in the gallery. He nervously waves to her.

ANDREW

What's the matter, Papa?

ERIC

Nothing, buddy. I'm just nervous
...because I'm happy. Why's
Rebecca's mommy here?

ANDREW

I told Rebecca I get to miss school
today for my adoption.

ERIC

Very sweet.

Eric calls Sam.

ERIC

(intense whisper)
Are you lost? Room 512.

SAM

(through phone)
I told you. I'm done. Good luck.

DIAL TONE.

A BAILIFF lumbers in, just steps ahead of the JUDGE (55).

BAILIFF

All rise. Judge Meredith Farley,
presiding.
(checks docket)
In the Matter of Meyers. Please
step forward.

ERIC

(to himself)
Hail Mary.

They proceed forward, Eric's shaking hands on Andrew's shoulders. The judge shuffles through her papers.

JUDGE

Good morning.

ERIC

Good morning, your honor.

The judge looks up to see Andrew.

JUDGE

This must be Andrew. Hello.

Andrew hides behind Eric's arm. The judge smiles.

JUDGE

Well, I have here a glowing report from Ms. Sasha Collins, the social worker who studied your family.

JUDGE

(thumbs through files)
Your psychological evaluation - good. Medical report...

Eric holds his breath.

JUDGE

...fine.

Eric exhales. The judge looks up.

JUDGE

So, today, we...hold on.
(looks at papers)
You are Mr. Meyers?

ERIC

Yes.

JUDGE

Where is Mr. Garcia?

ERIC

He's running late, Your Honor.

JUDGE

He needs to be here for me to proceed.

ERIC

But we're here, Your Honor. And you have the report. Sam works for the Mayor; he probably got held up on important business.

JUDGE

I'm sure the Mayor would agree there's hardly more important business than the adoption of one's own son.

ERIC

Well, Mr. Garcia is the biological father, Your Honor --

JUDGE

And you're petitioning for a second-parent adoption. For the Court to proceed, he needs to be present.

ERIC

But --

JUDGE

I'm sorry, Mr. Meyers. We'll have to adjourn this for another time.

ERIC

Your honor, please. Can...can my son please step outside somewhere - close - for a moment so I can speak with you directly?

(to Andrew)

OK, buddy? I just need to have some adult-talk for a minute.

JUDGE

Bailiff, would you mind?

Andrew reluctantly shuffles away with the bailiff.

Eric stretches his neck to ensure Andrew is out of sight.

ERIC

Your Honor, please. I need this to happen today. Everything you need to know is right there in that report. I've done nothing for six years except work toward this day.

JUDGE

Mr. Meyers --

ERIC

Every day of my life, people have told me how little I deserve. Those lies started so early, I believed them all. It's been really hard to unlearn these lies of worthlessness. And I treated myself as such, as you can see from my medical records. Then, one day, Andrew came. When I held him for the first time, I knew why I was put on this Earth.

God was granting an honor to someone who was worthy. That baby was counting on me. And I was counting on myself. I have earned the right to have my name on that adoption certificate. And his birth certificate, medical records, and freaking forms for day camp! But unless you sign that paper, my name isn't valid. Anywhere!

JUDGE

Mr. Meyers --

ERIC

How do I become valid? Who do I have to be? I tried to be the fox, tried not to be the chicken, I even took a stab as the world's worst coach! I don't know who to be!

JUDGE

Enough! Collect yourself! Until all parties are present, the law prevents me from proceeding. Adjourned.

ANDREW (O.S.)

Papa?

The judge, Eric and EVERYONE turn their heads to see Andrew and the bailiff, who failed to ever get Andrew outside.

ANDREW

Did I get adopted?

INT. SURROGATE'S COURT HALLWAY

Eric pulls Andrew down a corridor.

ANDREW

Did I get adopted?

EXT. SURROGATE'S COURT - DAY

Eric pulls Andrew down the steps. Andrew skids to a stop.

ANDREW

Did I get adopted!

ERIC

Not yet. The judge said...not yet, only because she needed Daddy to be there but he's busy working.

ANDREW

Do I have parents?

ERIC

Of course, sweetheart.

ANDREW

He's not busy working, and the judge said I don't have parents.

ERIC

He is busy working and yes you do!

ANDREW

Daddy's right there!

Sam stands like a soldier next to an opened back door of a hired car. Eric storms to him.

ERIC

Where were you?

SAM

Andrew, get in the car.

ERIC

What do you think you're doing?

SAM

Andrew, get in the car!

ERIC

What're you doing?

SAM

I'm getting...what did you call it? Guarantees. I'm filing for divorce. Custody will be a cinch because, well, you have zero rights. And if you defame me or my boss in any way - utter one word of those silly rumors you've been swirling around, you'll never see him again.

Andrew clings to Eric. Sam wrestles to get him in the car.

ANDREW

No!

ERIC
Please don't.

SAM
Get in the car!

Eric envelops Andrew. But Andrew snaps, and punches Eric.

ANDREW
Why am I going? You said you'd save
me! Why?

Sam lifts Andrew. Plops him hard inside the car. Drives away.

Eric crumbles to his knees.

Catherine stands in the background, stunned.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

The alarm clock SOUNDS. Eric looks at his closed door,
confused. Until he remembers.

At the start of a SCREAM, Eric stuffs a pillow in his mouth.
The alarm clock grows louder. No one to hear, nothing more to
lose, he throws the pillow aside.

Eric releases a guttural, sustained HOWL.

EXT. ANDREW'S SCHOOL - DAY

In a rush, Sam drops Andrew off at the corner of the school.

Andrew looks to the sky as if he heard a distant scream.

SAM
You have lunch money or whatever?

Sam hands Andrew a twenty-dollar bill. Gives him a pat on the
head and hurries away. Andrew considers the twenty-dollars.

ANDREW
Daddy?

SAM
(stops)
Yeah.

ANDREW
Would you steal a boat to find me?

SAM
 (flags a cab)
 Go to school, buddy.

ANDREW
 (a challenge)
 I'm going to see King Leo for the
 truth.

Sam laughs it off and gets in a cab.

Andrew evaluates Sam's reaction. Sam's cab pulls away. Andrew
 rushes away from the school to

SIXTH AVENUE

and consults an MTA transit map. He puts the twenty into a
 Metrocard machine. Grabs the card and the change.

EXT. CITY BUS - DAY

Andrew boards the bus behind a bunch of adults and dips his
 Metrocard like everyone else.

INT. ANOTHER VACANT APARTMENT - DAY

Eric trudges inside. Tom and Lucy follow. Lucy seethes.

Eric's phone VIBRATES. It reads: "Susan." He declines it.

ERIC
 This place is in your budget.

LUCY
 Did you take my brother to a potato
 place then ghost him?

TOM
 Let's look around.

Lucy gives Tom a "talk to the hand."

ERIC
 I didn't ghost him. You forced that
 date. I wasn't ready.

LUCY
 Forced?

ERIC
 Yeah. Forced. I have a feeling
 you're pretty good at that.

TOM
We should go.

Now Eric gives Tom a "talk to the hand."

ERIC
But before you go, I did your brother a favor. I'm not exactly winning at life right now. I certainly haven't found an apartment for you two. But that's not really my fault, is it?

Lucy opens her mouth to bark back. Eric's phone RINGS. He throws up an index finger. Answers with speakerphone.

ERIC
Hello?

MS. STUART
(through phone)
Hello Mr. Meyers, it's Ms. Stuart. Andrew isn't in school and we didn't get an email saying he was out sick. Could you send one over?

ERIC
Sure. Let me call you back.

Eric hangs up. He storms to the door. Spots the spec sheets with his slogan across the top. Rips them to shreds.

ERIC
You wanna know how to "make a house a home?" Ya pick a partner, ya pick a place, and no one runs out the door. Now let me do you a favor.
(points to Tom)
He's the bad juju! Been ready to run since Day One. Close the door behind you.

EXT. MOTT STREET - DAY

Eric marches furiously. He phones Sam.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - SAME

Sam slaps his phone to his face to answer.

INTERCUT - MOTT STREET/SAM'S OFFICE

SAM
What did you do?

ERIC
I got a call from the school --

SAM
So did I. If you took him, I'm
calling the police.

ERIC
Wait. He's not with you?

SAM
I took him to school! You're going
to jail if he's at your house.

ERIC
You're going to Hell if he's not!

MONTAGE

-- Eric's building -- Eric runs up the stairs.

-- a crowded terminal -- Andrew spins, overwhelmed.

-- Eric's apartment -- Sam and Eric bust through the front
door. They trash the apartment looking for him. Nothing.

-- the terminal -- An adult male's hand touches Andrew's
shoulder.

-- Andrew's bedroom -- Sam paces like a maniac. Eric is
still, like he's trying to receive a telepathic message. His
hand rests on the football. Sam and Eric's eyes meet.

-- sports field -- Sam and Eric arrive, search around.

END MONTAGE

EXT. SPORTS FIELD

The field is empty, save one distant runner.

SAM
He's not here.

Eric shoves Sam.

ERIC
One day! You had him for one single
day, and our six-year-old is gone.

SAM
I dropped him off --

ERIC
First you ditch us. Then you leave
us like idiots in that courtroom
yesterday. Then rip him away --

SAM
I didn't rip him --

ERIC
You ripped him away from me.
(then)
I'm calling nine-one-one.

SAM
Wait. If we call the police --

ERIC
Yep. The second I say I lost my
kid, I lose. It's all over for me.

Eric paces in every direction. A boil rises in his veins.

ERIC
Dammit!

THREE TONES as he types three times. Hard.

Eric holds the phone out in front of him. The screen: "MOM."

SUSAN (O.S.)
(thru speaker phone)
Hello?

Eric wrestles the words out of his mouth.

ERIC
I need help.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Susan listens and nods.

SUSAN
What's the last thing he said?

SPORTS FIELD

ERIC
(to Sam)
What's the last thing he said?

SAM

(it was nonsense)
He asked if I'd steal a boat. Then
something about going to see King
Leo for the truth.

Eric races away.

INT. LAGUARDIA AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Eric charges through the terminal. He robotically scans the crowd. Sam ping pongs behind him. They reach the

AIRPORT POLICE ROOM

where Andrew sits ashamed next to an OFFICER.

Eric rushes to embrace Andrew. Andrew sobs.

ANDREW

I'm sorry.

OFFICER

Said he was going to see his
grandmother. Who are you?

SAM

We're his parents.

OFFICER

Can I see some ID?

Sam hands the officer his ID.

Eric grabs Andrew's face to stop him from bawling.

ERIC

Shhh. It's alright. Daddy said you
were going to see King Leo. For the
truth. How about I be King Leo, OK?

Andrew nods. Eric takes a huge breath.

ERIC

Daddy and I did break up. When he
left me, he moved out for good.

(then)

You were right. Daddy was not
working yesterday. I should not
have made up that lie.

(then)

I should have stood up to Ms.
Stuart about the Mother's Day Tea.

The truth is, I didn't try hard enough.

(finally)

I lost the adoption in Court yesterday. But I am still your Papa. Always. No matter what that judge or anyone else says.

A firm glance to Sam.

The officer holds Sam's ID up, matches his face against the face on the television overhead.

OFFICER

That's you on the news, dude.

On the TV, photos of Rick and Sam. A NEWSCASTER announces:

NEWSCASTER

Numerous sources reporting today that, for years, New York City Mayor Rick Johnson and his Chief of Staff have been embroiled in a sexual affair funded by taxpayer money. Allegations of fraud...

Sam lunges at Eric. The officer jumps between them.

OFFICER

Hey!

ERIC

It wasn't me! I swear, except to Kara and mom, I never said a word! I'm a good liar, Sam. Good liars keep secrets.

Sam's phone RINGS. It displays "RICK." Sam looks at the phone, then to Andrew and Eric.

ERIC

Take that call. You go do your job.
(draws Andrew close)
And I'll do mine.

Sam runs out.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Susan quietly closes the door on a sleeping Andrew. She reaches Eric's doorway. Eric hunches in his bed. His lips move in prayer.

Susan lightly pulls his door shut. It makes it halfway.

ERIC
Mom?

SUSAN
Yeah?

ERIC
Thank you for coming. But listen.
You have to be nicer to my sister.

SUSAN
(nods)
Get your rest now. People with
your...condition...need their
sleep. Keep your immune system up.

Eric's jaw drops as the door closes.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM - DAY

Morning light shines through the blinds. Eric's door slowly opens. Andrew crawls into bed with him. A little cuddle.

ERIC
What do I smell?

ANDREW
Grammy making pancakes. She said we
have to go back to court today? I
don't wanna. I wanna go to school.

EXT. ANDREW'S SCHOOL - DAY

Eric and Susan escort Andrew to the school door through
whispering PARENTS.

Ms. Stuart charges through. She extends an empathetic arm to
Eric. The other around Andrew.

MS STUART
(at parents)
GOSSIPING IS A SIN!

The parents cower.

ERIC
(shocked)
Thank you.

MS STUART
(told you so)
Children come first.

Ms. Stuart ushers Andrew inside. Eric and Susan walk away.

SUSAN
That's one scary chica.

ERIC
SHHH.
(nods *let's go*)
You heard what she said.

EXT./INT. SURROGATE'S COURT - DAY

A bustle of REPORTERS outside the building.

Eric stands before Judge Farley. Susan sits nearby.

JUDGE
I didn't expect to see you back here so soon, Mr. Meyers. Of course, I am aware of the news, which explains Mr. Garcia's absence the other day. So, today we're here because you have filed for an emergency Petition for Legal Guardianship of Andrew Garcia while Mr. Samuel Garcia is...detained. Correct?

ERIC
Correct.

JUDGE
Is Mr. Garcia's counsel present?

An attorney, MR. SOLOMON (50), buttons his jacket and stands.

MR. SOLOMON
Yes, your honor. Seth Solomon on behalf of Mr. Garcia. My client reminds the court that he alone retains custody, and...

JUDGE
Yes, yes, we know. We'll hear from you in a minute, Mr. Solomon.
(to everyone)

My job today is to determine, in light of Mr. Garcia's situation, who is best suited to be the legal guardian of Andrew Garcia.

SUSAN

Susan Meyers, your judgeship.
Eric's mama. My son here --

JUDGE

The Court notes your support.
(extracts a letter)
Speaking of notes of support, I have a letter here I'd be remiss not to read.
(reads)
"Dear Judge Farley,

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

-- Catherine's desk -- Catherine writes the letter.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

To be a good parent is to be imperfect. It is a daily adventure with no roadmap that often veers off course.

-- Election night -- CLOSE on Catherine. Rick hands her the phone after the "winning call." She looks at it closely.

A TEXT MESSAGE from Sam reads:

"I love you. Always. No matter what. Sam"

Catherine is stunned. She comes-to. Plastic smile.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

It is to bite one's lip, sometimes until it bleeds, in order to keep the peace. And keeping the peace is not always peaceful.

-- Eric's apartment -- Eric disheveled in gray sweatpants. He serves Andrew dinner with a smile in the living room. Back in the kitchen, a silent scream into a dishtowel.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

It is to endure sudden turbulence, to keep the adult problems between the adults.

-- Andrew's birthday party -- Catherine flinches as Sam brushes by her.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
To know when to step in and stand
up...

-- the Mayor's Gala -- CLOSE on Catherine when she hands Eric the mic. A wild hope in her eyes Eric will bust her husband.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
And when to stand back and...wait.

-- outside the courthouse -- CLOSE on Catherine as she watches Sam rip Eric and Andrew apart.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
Our partners shape-shift before our
eyes, forcing us to make tough
decisions.

-- outside Eric's apartment building -- Eric rejecting Sam.

-- a study -- Catherine swirls a martini.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
But even through doubt and despair,
good parents return to the fight.
They may lie a thousand lies...

-- Eric's apartment -- Eric opposite Sasha during a visit.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
...but always for a greater truth.
A truth that serves their
children...

-- courtroom -- Eric's diatribe during the first hearing.

CATHERINE (V.O.)
...and sometimes...

-- Catherine's study -- A computer screen displays an email to news outlets with the subject: "AN AFFAIR AND A FRAUD."

CATHERINE (V.O.)
...a truth that serves themselves.

Catherine sips her martini. Presses SEND.

BACK TO COURTROOM

JUDGE

"Such parents, like Eric Meyers, should be rewarded the rights they have earned. Warmest regards, Mrs. Catherine Johnson."

The judge carefully folds the letter. Eric in shock - Catherine *always knew*.

Mr. Solomon's mouth agape.

JUDGE

Mr. Solomon, your turn.

Mr. Solomon clears his throat.

MR. SOLOMON

My client wishes...to appoint Mr. Meyers as a legal guardian of his son, Andrew Garcia.

Mrs. Garcia shoots Eric a look to kill.

JUDGE

You could have mentioned that at the two-minute mark and we'd all be at lunch by now.

(back to Eric)

You once asked me what it would take to be "valid." Well, you tell me what it took. You've proven yourself valid to your mother, to the First Lady of New York City, and to a man who's likely to spend a few seasons in jail. I know you are valid in your son's eyes. My question is, are you valid in your own?

Eric twists his wedding ring.

ERIC

I lied to you.

JUDGE

Pardon?

ERIC

I lied to you last time I stood here. I said I don't know who to be. That's a lie. Everyone always asks Andrew, "Where's your mommy?" She's right here.

I'm his mother and his father and
the wind underneath his airplane.

The judge smiles.

JUDGE
Motion granted.

GAVEL.

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

A fish-eye camera lens replaced with a 43mm lens for an
accurate perspective. A camera CLICK.

EXT./INT. POTATO-TOPIA - DAY

A "Closing Soon" sign hangs above the front window. Sam stops
just underneath it. An incredulous shake of the head at Eric,
who delivers a faint grin through the glass. Sam goes inside.

Eric drinks bubble tea. He struggles to get a bubble through
the straw, just like Carl did.

SAM
Seriously? This is where you want
to do this?

ERIC
I feel bad it's going out of
business. I think I cursed it.

SAM
Funny.

ERIC
You said you wanted an "ounce of
fun." Here it is.

A sad laugh. Sam sits.

SAM
What does the judge want us to do?
A visitation schedule, etcetera,
etcetera?

ERIC
Etcetera, etcetera. Until you
become...otherwise disposed.

SAM

Look on the bright side. If I go away, you won't have to see my face.

ERIC

But he needs to see your face.

SAM

I'm sorry, Eric.

Eric struggles to remain composed.

ERIC

Where's your Rolex?

SAM

Bail.

Eric tries to get a bubble through the straw again.

ERIC

God, this is impossible.

SAM

That wasn't St. John in that photo. I wouldn't do that to you.

Eric stirs the tea with a somber relief. From the

OUTSIDE

Their faces blur in the window. Then from across the street, their figures appear even smaller.

SAM (O.S.)

Well, what now?

ERIC (O.S.)

Now I meet a client about a lease.
(sincere)
Gotta go. Love you.

INT. ERIC'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

A hand signs a lease. Lucy. On the other side of the room, Eric takes down photos from a wall and puts them in a packing box. The house is mostly empty. He tosses her the keys.

ERIC

Congrats.

Lucy jangles the keys.

LUCY

Hm. Not such a lonely sound after
all. I can feel...magic here.

ERIC

Full-blown, Stevie Nicks-level
sorcery happened here. A few
exorcisms...

Eric gently takes down the PHOTO of him and baby Andrew.

ERIC

...but yeah, a lot of magic.

INT. ERIC'S NEW APARTMENT - ANDREW'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eric hangs the BABY PHOTO on Andrew's new bedroom wall.
Andrew snuggles into bed. Eric sits down beside him.

ERIC

Time for night-night?

ANDREW

Mm-hmm.

ERIC

Want me to read you a story?

ANDREW

A new one, though. But first....

Andrew hops out of bed. Straightens his legs together.
Stretches out his arms like airplane wings. A huge smile.

Eric curls to the ground to become the wind. With his legs,
he lifts Andrew up...and takeoff.

FADE OUT.