

DEAD END

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. COASTAL CONNECTICUT--1989

In the affluent town of Fairfield, more New York than New England, many are caught up in the worship of avarice. It is a time of excess and Hair Metal still has hold on popular culture but things are changing. Some look to the future for meaning, others to the past.

INT. HOUSE-BEDROOM-AFTERNOON

A 16 year old named JOAQUIN CHANDLER looks like a long haired hippie from 1969 as he sits on his bed reading a book on the band the Doors.

A poster of Jimi Hendrix sit opposite his bed as well as an M.C. Escher poster. Bean bag chairs are scattered across the hardwood floor in the fairly large and clean room. A desk sits next to a window.

The door slams open and MR. CHANDLER, a man who loves his country club, comes stumbling in wearing a three piece suit. A martini splashes back and forth in his hand as he eyes Joaquin's book.

He pours himself into a bean bag chair and Joaquin's eyes, too troubled and wise to be 16, never look up at him from behind the book.

MR. CHANDLER

Glad to see you reading but enough with the books about outcasts. First it was Van Gogh and now the Doors.

(pause)

So, you going to say hello to your father Joaquin?

JOAQUIN

Hello father.

MR. CHANDLER

You know all that hippie crap goes nowhere right?

JOAQUIN

What?

MR. CHANDLER

I did the flower child thing and it is indeed childish, flawed.

JOAQUIN
Peace and love is flawed?

Joaquin lowers the book and looks at his father struggling to sit upright. Joaquin tugs on his shirt collar.

MR. CHANDLER
Flawed in the sense that it doesn't change the world. It's an illusion, though pleasant, that make people make mistakes.

Joaquin puts his book down and rolls over to the side of the bed. His eyes slowly lower and narrow to stare at his grinning father. Mr. Chandler sits up straight and takes a sip of his drink.

JOAQUIN
Little early don't you think?

MR. CHANDLER
Don't you dare judge me kid. And here, I came up here to help you.

Mr. Chandler slugs down the rest of his drink.

JOAQUIN
With what?

MR. CHANDLER
With this defeatist experiment in identity. The whole Dead Head thing is beneath you.

JOAQUIN
The Dead Heads I've met don't judge me and don't say things like others are beneath me.

MR. CHANDLER
Just wait. Groups are groups and sooner or later they will judge you.

JOAQUIN
Whatever.

MR. CHANDLER
What's your goal by associating with such people anyway? It's going to be 1990 soon and you need to get on track if you're ever going to get into a good college.

Mr. Chandler wobbles back and forth then snaps up to his feet. He loses his balance but is able to regain his footing before hitting the wall behind him.

Joaquin hops off his bed and with a dancer's gait walks over to his father. He outstretches his hand.

JOAQUIN

I'm just trying to figure things out.

Mr. Chandler looks at his son's hand but does not take it. He looks at his son's face and chuckles once.

MR. CHANDLER

I don't want you wasting your time trying to find yourself with a bunch of losers.

JOAQUIN

I'm not. If you don't mind, I have to practice my guitar scales and do my homework so I can go to Port Chester. Mom already told me I could go.

Mr. Chandler eyes his son up and down. He shrugs.

MR. CHANDLER

Good. Good. Practice. I must go practice something myself.

JOAQUIN

What?

MR. CHANDLER

Agreeing with your mother.

Mr. Chandler exits. Joaquin tugs on his shirt collar.

INT. PALACE THEATER-NIGHT

During intermission of the concert, Joaquin comes out of the smoky bathroom and heads down the second floor causeway. He bumps into a few stoned guys wearing tie-dyes and baseball caps.

In front of Joaquin, a security guard in a yellow windbreaker intentionally bumps into a SKINNY GUY with long hair and glasses and sends him to the ground.

The skinny guy's glasses fall off his face and into the foot traffic. Joaquin sees the glasses about to be stomped on so he rushes over and swipes them off the ground.

On his hands and knees, the skinny guy searches frantically for his glasses. Joaquin steps next to him.

JOAQUIN

Hey man, snagged your spectacles.

He offers the skinny guy his hand and helps him up.

The guy takes the glasses and brushes off his knees.

SKINNY GUY

Saved me bro. Saved me. Thanks.

Joaquin lifts up his hands.

JOAQUIN

No thanks necessary.

He walks away and sifts through the crowd. He finally reaches his friends MIKE and TOPHER sitting against the wall.

Mike Schoenfeld is a Dead Head geek. Knows all there is to know about the Grateful Dead. His black curls never fall below his chin. He looks like he hasn't eaten in a week.

Topher Santana is Mike's physical opposite. He's a kid who was recruited by every sports coach in high school but has rejected the jock path. His straight blond hair reaches his below his shoulder blades.

Joaquin sees a girl, 17, who is wearing all purple, also sitting against the wall a few people down from Mike. She looks up at him and gracefully smiles.

Her name is VANESSA HOLMES and is a boarding school hippie chick whose eyes consume the light around her. She is graced with the demeanor created by upper-class cash.

Joaquin squats next to Mike and leans over.

JOAQUIN

Yo Mike, dude, I'm going to go scope that girl in purple. You ever seen her before?

Mike, obviously stoned, snatches a look at Vanessa.

MIKE

That's Vanessa. She's from New Canaan.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Actually, I think she knows your
bro Hunter. You don't stand a
chance with her Keen.

JOAQUIN

Really? We'll see.

MIKE

Really.

With a hefty push, Joaquin springs up to his feet. He glides
over with a devilish smile. Vanessa looks up at him as he
gets near.

JOAQUIN

Hi. I'm Joaquin.

VANESSA

Hi. I'm Vanessa.

He gestures to the open space next to her on the wall.

JOAQUIN

Can I sit?

VANESSA

Sure.

Joaquin slips down the wall and turns towards her. He sucks
in his cheeks and looks her directly in the eyes.

JOAQUIN

My friend over there, Mike, told me
you were from New Canaan.

VANESSA

I thought I recognized Mike down
there.

She leans forward and waves to Mike. Mike waves back.

VANESSA

So where are you from?

JOAQUIN

Fairfield.

VANESSA

Same town as Mike. I know a few
people from there. Do you know
Taylor Price or Hunter Chandler?

JOAQUIN

I know them both and Hunter is my brother.

VANESSA

No shit. You know, now that I look, I see the resemblance. Is he still with that girl Trudy?

JOAQUIN

Yup.

VANESSA

Is he here?

JOAQUIN

No, he's at some party.

The crowd in the causeway starts to filter back into the main hall. Then music begins to play and everyone rushes through the entrances. Mike and Topher disappear in the flow.

Vanessa grabs Joaquin's hand.

VANESSA

You want to dance with me?

JOAQUIN

Yeah.

His eyes go wide and he nods with a smile from ear to ear.

She stands and pulls him up. Vanessa leads him through the entrance to the balcony. Joaquin looks back at the thinning crowd behind as they pass through the arch into the dark concert hall.

BALCONY

The band plays. The stage lights bounce across the audience below.

Vanessa and Joaquin, both sweaty, dance a couple feet apart.

They get closer.

The band stops. People cheer. Joaquin and Vanessa stare into each other's eyes.

The band starts up again. Vanessa sweeps her hand across Joaquin's thigh.

They dance closer. They get closer. They embrace.

She tilts her head back with a grin. She nods to the side.

She takes his hand and pulls him over to the wall. She pulls out a pill.

JOAQUIN

What is it?

VANESSA

Ex.

He looks curiously at the pill but takes it and pops it in his mouth.

She winks and pulls him back over to where they danced before. The light show becomes more intense.

They begin to dance really close and she lifts her lips up to his. They kiss. Hippie kids dance next to them in a trance like states.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATER

Filled with Volkswagen buses, BMW's, Volvos, and a few painted school buses, a mini-bizarre takes place with vendors and makeshift concession stands selling hippie gear, food and booze. Vanessa and Joaquin walk hand in hand with smiles ear to ear.

In a group of people by a drum circle set up by a pickup truck, TAYLOR PRICE holding a beer catches a glimpse of Vanessa. If it were the year 1200, he would be a Viking.

Taylor breaks away from the group and burst through the crowds blocking his way.

TAYLOR

Hey Vanessa! What's up beautiful?

Vanessa lets go of Joaquin's hand and runs over. She leaps into his arms. They swing hug in a circle.

Joaquin, still in a drug daze, smiles as Taylor puts Vanessa down. Taylor looks over Joaquin with one raised eyebrow.

TAYLOR

Yo yo. If it isn't Peachy Keen.
What's up kid? Where's your bro?

JOAQUIN

Hey Taylor, Hunter is at a party.

Joaquin rubs his hands together and brings them up to his eyes and stares at his fingers. Taylor looks to Vanessa.

TAYLOR

Let me guess? Ex.

She slowly nods as a smile creeps up on her face.

VANESSA

Good show wasn't it Tay?

TAYLOR

Not bad even with all the U.C.'s around.

VANESSA

Really?

Joaquin looks up from his rolling fingers with a confused expression.

JOAQUIN

What's U.C.?

Taylor snickers.

TAYLOR

Under cover. Narks kid. Narks.

Vanessa turns to Joaquin and looks a little disappointed.

TAYLOR

There are some heavy cats prowling the east coast Keen. Dead tour has begun. Speaking of, are you hitting shows Van?

VANESSA

Yeah, can't wait to get to the Alpine valley shows.

TAYLOR

Righteous. I'll call you and we'll make plans to roam together. Lovely seeing you Van. Have to go catch my ride. Later Keen.

Joaquin lifts his hand and waves as Taylor walks away through the crowd. Vanessa turns to Joaquin with a devilish grin as the sounds of drums get louder from the drum circle.

VANESSA

You going on tour? I'd love to see you again.

JOAQUIN

Love to see me again? Yeah, I'll go.

VANESSA

Cool. Let's go find Mike.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN BUG -- LATER

Mike drives as Topher is slumped in the back seat with his eyes rolling back in his head. He tries to keep awake but nods off. Joaquin is in the passenger seat. They drive down I-95.

Joaquin watches the road blur by. Headlights track inside the car.

JOAQUIN

I'm in love bro. Going to see Vanessa on tour. It'll be like freedom.

MIKE

No shit. I decided to go too. My parents are cool if I pay for it.

JOAQUIN

We'll find freedom.

MIKE

Okay. (chuckles) Don't want to throw shade in your sunshine Keen, but dude, Taylor is after Vanessa. Everyone knows that.

Joaquin turns to look at Mike and then sits back into the seat as he rolls his fingertips together.

MIKE

Thought you should know. Dude, the Foxborough show is just around the corner. It's going to be killer. If you want a ride, hop in with me.

JOAQUIN

We'll go together and I'll find her. I'll find freedom. (crosses arms on chest)
I love her. Love you too man.

MIKE

Fuck. Thought that Ex would have worn off more by now.

JOAQUIN

She gave me her number. I'm going to call her. You know, I love you man.

MIKE

I know. Everyone loves everyone but how you going to slip by your parents?

With expanding eyes, Joaquin stares intently at his fingers as if they were revealing the mysteries of the universe.

JOAQUIN

Don't know. I'll figure it out. I love this car too. So round. Do your fingers feel tingly?

EXT. FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL-PARKING LOT-MORNING

A bright and sunny day spreads across the sky. Joaquin and Mike walk by a group of Metal Heads in jean jackets smoking cigarettes. STEVE CERRONE, a rather aristocratic but hefty, Metal Head wearing a Slayer t-shirt steps out of the group and over to Joaquin.

STEVE

If it isn't my favorite pair of crunchy granolas. You guys coming to my party?

Joaquin brushes his hair back and Mike nods.

MIKE

Wouldn't miss it Steve.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Sure, I'm in.

Steve tosses his smoke to the ground and grinds it under his heel.

STEVE

Cool. The party at Casa Cerrone starts at eight. Sorry but no Flower Power music but there's going to be a jam session if you want to bring an axe Joaquin. Heard you're pretty good for a beginner.

JOAQUIN
 (jokingly)
 I don't know. My Strat is new and
 I don't want any of your evil metal
 vibes rubbing off on it.

Mike chuckles and Steve leans towards Joaquin.

STEVE
 You could use a little metal bro.
 It's healthy. See you guys in the
 courtyard. Later crunchies.

MIKE
 Later.

Joaquin and Mike head to the side door. A young COP with his
 arms crossed looks at them as they pass by.

COP
 I'm watching you two.

Mike scans the cop up and down.

MIKE
 You know there are support groups
 to help you with that.

Joaquin and Mike steps through the door. It swings closed.
 The cop realizes what Mike meant and turns. He points and
 angry finger at them.

JOAQUIN
 Nice dude.

INT. CLASSROOM -- LATER

Joaquin sits in the back of the full classroom where posters
 of Bob Dylan and Walt Whitman are side by side. He doodles
 dancing bears in his notebook.

The English teacher MR. DALY is standing in the front of the
 room. He is a teacher who lives on coffee and has a Browns'
 (NFL) mug on his desk.

MR. DALY
 And so that's why poetry is
 important. It frames the world we
 live in. Just take any of your
 favorite songs. The lyrics are
 poetry.

(MORE)

MR. DALY (CONT'D)

We just listened to Tom Sawyer from Rush and for your final assignment, take a song you like and breakdown the meter, rhyme scheme and themes. Doesn't have to be long just prove your work. And then the final exam.

The class moans.

Mr. Daly walks behind his desk and plops down into his seat. He leans forward on to his desk.

MR. DALY

Multiple choice.

The class enlivens. Eyes widen. The class cheers.

MR. DALY

That's it. Get out. Take the extra fifteen minutes and just be. Shoo.

The class exits as Mr. Daly gets up and makes his way to the door. As Joaquin approaches with his Doors book in hand, Mr. Daly lifts his hand. Joaquin sees and rolls his eyes. He stops.

MR. DALY

A word Mr. Chandler?

JOAQUIN

Sure Mr. Daly.

Mr. Daly pushes the door closed. Joaquin goes and sits in a desk chair. He tugs on his collar.

MR. DALY

So what are your plans for the summer?

JOAQUIN

I don't know.

MR. DALY

You should come to a Fairfield University for my young writer's workshop.

JOAQUIN

I don't know. I'd rather be doing things than writing about them. Wouldn't fit in anyway.

Joaquin slouches in the seat and puts book on the desk. Mr. Daly walks up lifts an eyebrow.

MR. DALY

What? You mean nerds?

JOAQUIN

Actually, yeah. I'm surrounded by these sheltered kids who don't do anything all year long. Don't want to be stuck with them.

Mr. Daly steps back. He turns and walks towards the window. He opens the blinds.

MR. DALY

I understand. And yes, most of your classmates are sheltered but they have direction.

Joaquin put the notebook on the desk.

JOAQUIN

I know.

Mr. Daly turns around and faces Joaquin.

MR. DALY

I know you do. And I'm not being sarcastic. I saw your test scores from when you were in middle school. I talked to your seventh grade teacher Mr. Costello. He thought you would skip high school entirely but then there was that suspension and you missed thirty days of school in the eighth grade and barely passed.

Joaquin puts his hands on the boo and looks down to the floor.

JOAQUIN

Why'd you do that?

Mr. Daly sits on the corner of his desk.

MR. DALY

Because some of your work blew my mind. It was like I was reading a Phd candidate. You are obviously hiding your intelligence and I just want to bring it out in the open.

(MORE)

MR. DALY (CONT'D)

That's why I want you to go to the workshop. There your thoughts would be unrestrained.

JOAQUIN

A prudent man conceals his knowledge, but fools proclaim their folly.

Mr. Daly shakes his head. He stops and looks at the ceiling.

MR. DALY

See. How many sixteen year olds quote Proverbs? Why do you want to conceal your knowledge?

JOAQUIN

I don't want people to bother me.

Joaquin lifts his head up. His eyes are lowered and he looks somber.

MR. DALY

Why?

JOAQUIN

Too many expectations and most people can't see who I am anyway. Do you know what it's like to do things that others can't do and the only way they can explain it is cheating?

Mr. Daly stands.

MR. DALY

No. I don't.

Joaquin stands and grabs his book.

JOAQUIN

I do. People aren't afraid of average so I became average. Thanks for your offer but as Coleridge said 'To sentence a man of true genius to the drudgery of school is to put a racehorse on a treadmill.' May I go now?

Mr. Daly's face hardens. Joaquin tugs on his collar.

MR. DALY

You think you're a genius?

JOAQUIN

I think everyone has the potential
for moments of genius so yes.

MR. DALY

I hate to say this but for such a
smart kid I think you are on the
road to doing some regretful
things. I just want to help you
find the right direction. Will you
consider my offer?

With a bowed head, Joaquin goes to the door and opens it.

JOAQUIN

I guess one of the problems with
being me is that I want to find out
on my own. But thanks Mr. Daly.

Joaquin closes the door behind him.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE-LIVING ROOM-LATER

Mr. Chandler sits on the couch wearing a silk robe. MRS.
CHANDLER, who looks like Grace Kelly working on Wall street,
stands with her arms crossed. Angry eyes glare as if she
were a scorned goddess. The AC hums through the vents.

MRS. CHANDLER

That's it Reed. No more.

MR. CHANDLER

Calm down Dorothy.

Her lips quiver. She takes a deep breath. Rage bubbles
inside her.

MRS. CHANDLER

Fuck you Reed, I'm not calming
down. I tolerated your crap in the
past because of Hunter and Joaquin
but bringing a country club slut
into my home is unforgiveable.

Mr. Chandler stands and the robe almost slinks off him but he
catches it. Mrs. Chandler turns away and goes to the doorway
leading to the solarium.

MR. CHANDLER

We haven't had sex in two years.
What'd you expect Dorothy?

MRS. CHANDLER
I expected you to not be a piece of
shit.

Mr. Chandler rolls his arms up.

MR. CHANDLER
So where does this leave us?

MRS. CHANDLER
There is no us anymore.

MR. CHANDLER
Over this?

Back turned, Mrs. Chandler puts her hands on her hips.

MRS. CHANDLER
This and every other whore.

Mr. Chandler steps to her.

MR. CHANDLER
What about the boys?

Her arms go down.

MRS. CHANDLER
They're staying with me until they
finish college.

KITCHEN-SIDE DOOR

Joaquin enters and places his backpack on the floor by the
door. He walks through the kitchen and around the corner.

LIVING ROOM

Mr. Chandler tightens up the belt of the robe.

MR. CHANDLER
You're a fucking bitch.

MRS. CHANDLER
You are a spoiled child.

HALLWAY

Joaquin stands still and listens. His face goes blank.

LIVING ROOM

MR. CHANDLER

I'm taking my money with me.

Mrs. Chandler steps through the doorway into the solarium. The sun shines brightly through the wide panels of glass.

MRS. CHANDLER

It's your daddy's money and it's not really a threat considering I make more than you at a real job.

MR. CHANDLER

I'm glad this is fucking done. Free fucking free. Finally, I'm fucking free.

MRS. CHANDLER

(sarcastically)

Free? You've acted like you didn't have responsibilities anyway. Free?

Mr. Chandler pivots around.

MR. CHANDLER

You.

Joaquin steps into the living room shaking his head. His father is surprised.

JOAQUIN

You two should have split years ago.

Mrs. Chandler spins around with a look of dread on her face. She reaches out toward her son. Joaquin turns his head away and disappears up the staircase.

Mrs. Chandler drops her hand to her side.

MRS. CHANDLER

As if he weren't having enough problems.

Mr. Chandler turns to her with a hard look. He takes a deep breath and flares his nostrils as he exhales.

MR. CHANDLER

Can't protect him from the world or it will take everything he's got.

Mrs. Chandler's eyes narrow. Her head tilts. Her lips thin.

MRS. CHANDLER
I can't believe you.

INT. MANSION-VANESSA'S ROOM -- DAY

On a bed covered with pillows, below a wall tapestry, Vanessa lounges with a phone in her hand.

VANESSA
(annoyed)
Yes mother all my stuff from
Andover is here. (pause) Yes
mother, Esperanza is here. (pause)
Fine. (pause)
See you when you get
back from Prague. Ciao.

She hangs up the phone and rolls off her bed. She huffs her annoyance.

Vanessa makes her way through a maze of a mansion and gets to the kitchen. There ESPERANZA, the Argentine nanny/cook, listens to a Spanish radio station and chops vegetables.

VANESSA
Uno momento por favor Esperanza.

ESPERANZA
Si Miss Vanessa.

Esperanza puts the knife down on the cutting board. Vanessa, with a slight tremble, picks up a piece of chopped carrot next to the knife.

VANESSA
I'm having friends over. Stay in
the house please and wait for the
new landscapers. I'll be in the
stable.

Esperanza puts her hands on her hips and shakes her head twice.

ESPERANZA
You mother said no visitors until
she get back.

VANESSA
They're not visitors. They're
guests and I talked to mother.
It's bueno.

Esperanza picks up the knife and begins to chop.

ESPERANZA
Okay Miss Vanessa.

Vanessa kisses Esperanza on the cheek and walks out the back door.

INT. HORSE STABLE-SECOND STORY LOFT

By an open window, Vanessa nervously smokes a cigarette.

She sees a Jeep roll up the driveway and park by the gates. She smiles and puts the cigarette out in a huge glass dish. She heads out quickly.

GATES

Taylor hops out of the driver's seat. MELODY, a rich hippie chick, and CARLOS, 20's, wild eyed man with dread locks gets out of the Jeep.

Vanessa opens the gates and skips over to them and hugs Taylor. It is a deep embrace. Carlos scans Vanessa up and down. The hug ends.

 TAYLOR
Took a while but we found the new
digs. Posh.

 MELODY
Hey baby girl. What's shaking Van?

Vanessa turns and smiles at Melody.

 VANESSA
Hi guys. Glad you got here.
Everything's cool. My parents
aren't going to be back for at
least two weeks.

 TAYLOR
Cool. Sanctuary.

Like a cat on the prowl, Carlos slowly looks over the property and his gaze lands on Vanessa. His face is blank.

 MELODY
This is Carlos.

Vanessa extends a shaky hand.

VANESSA

Nice to meet you Carlos. Do you
have the stuff?

He steps up to Vanessa and gets real close, almost nose to
nose.

CARLOS (JAMAICAN ACCENT)

Aye. Thank Jah for beauty in this
world.

He hugs Vanessa and then begins to rub her back. He brings
her tight and his hips push hers in circles. Vanessa's eyes
widen with a trepidation.

Taylor steps up to them and puts his hand on Carlos's
shoulder. Carlos stops his grinding and looks back.

TAYLOR

How about you show us the fresh
produce.

CARLOS

Irie.

STABLE-LOFT

Exposed beams of the half finished loft hang above the group
of four in the back corner of room as they sit at a round
table. Horses can be heard below. A grand bay window
overlooks a patch of woods.

Carlos puts his hand in his pants. The girls eye him with
surprise like he's going to whip out his cock.

He pulls out two plastic bags and tosses them on the table.

Taylor unrolls the bags and his eyes light up.

CARLOS

It be ital mon. The mushrooms of
the soil and the sacrament, the
sacred herb.

VANESSA TO TAYLOR

Ital?

TAYLOR

It's like Kosher for Rastafarians.

Vanessa turns to Carlos with a nervous smile.

VANESSA

My mother met a couple in London who were from Jamaica. My mother loved them. Said they were the nicest people with the most lovely accent. And they were white. Are you from Jamaica too Carlos?

He sits back in the chair.

CARLOS

No Ridgewood, New Jersey. But someday I'll join my brethren on the island.

Melody puts her hands on the table and leans in. Vanessa is uncertain what do next so she freezes.

MELODY

Great space up here girl. Are you keeping it all rustic and half finished up here?

VANESSA

No. My parents had a tiff with the contractors so they're waiting until they get back from Europe to find a new one.

Carlos grabs the bag of mushrooms and sections out doses. He puts his hand out.

CARLOS

Jah does provide but I must ask for a fee.

Vanessa, Melody and Taylor wrench cash from their pockets and hand it to Carlos. He stuffs it in his pocket and then grabs the bag of pot.

CARLOS

Papers?

Vanessa puts her hand up.

VANESSA

Hold on.

She gets up and goes over to the corner where a blue bong sits partially hidden by a block of wood. She puts it on the table.

VANESSA

Here. You first Carlos. Hey Taylor, can I talk to you for a second? It's about that ride.

Taylor stands.

TAYLOR

Sure.

VANESSA

You guys go ahead. We'll be right back.

They walk over to the stairwell.

VANESSA

Relieved that's over. A little sketchy and you said he was a real Rasta.

TAYLOR

He is. Just not from Jamaica.

VANESSA

Yeah, a Jersey Rasta. (rolls eyes)
So, what's with tour?

Taylor puts his hands on her shoulders.

TAYLOR

Travel, hotel, tickets are all in place except for ticket the Cal Expo shows but they should be easy to score.

VANESSA

Cool.

He takes his hands off her shoulders.

TAYLOR

So what's up with you and Joaquin?

She steps back.

VANESSA

Nothing really. He's nice.

He grins.

She wags her finger.

TAYLOR

Heard he's going to a few east coast shows. He told his bro and he told me.

VANESSA

I know he's going to shows.

TAYLOR

I'm not baby-sitting.

She rolls her eyes.

VANESSA

He's only two years younger than you mister.

TAYLOR

He's a tour virgin. You going to intro him to the scene?

VANESSA

No. He has to deal with that on his own. But I'm going to see him at Giant's Stadium. I talked to him on the phone.

Taylor tilts his head down to look deeply into her eyes.

TAYLOR

So you are hooking up with him?

She gets face to face.

VANESSA

And if I was?

INT. JOAQUIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Joaquin plays his acoustic guitar on the corner of his bed next to his Doors book. His father walks in.

MR. CHANDLER

We need to talk Joaquin.

Joaquin stops playing and rests the guitar down on his bed. He tugs at his collar and looks at his father.

JOAQUIN

About?

MR. CHANDLER

About me and your mother.

Mr. Chandler sits on Joaquin's bed.

JOAQUIN

You're getting a divorce and moving right? What's there to talk about?

Mr. Chandler puts his hands on his knees and hunches slightly.

MR. CHANDLER

Yes. We are. But actually, I want to talk to you about a few other things.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Let me guess? My clothes, my hair, or are you going to say some crap like I love you?

Mr. Chandler straightens up.

MR. CHANDLER

I do love you. Guess you sniffed that one out.

JOAQUIN

Sure.

Mr. Chandler rubs his knees and then grips them.

MR. CHANDLER

Listen. I did the Flower Power thing. I smoked pot and did other stuff. Not proud of it and it doesn't lead anywhere. Smoking pot is actually bad for you.

Joaquin looks away.

JOAQUIN

Like drinking isn't. I heard all this before.

MR. CHANDLER

All right. Not where I wanted to go. I understand what it's like to be your age.

Joaquin snaps a sneer at his father.

JOAQUIN

(irritated)

Do you? You had free love. We have AIDS. You had a counter culture. We have Hair Metal. LSD was legal. Now, we go to jail for life for having a joint. You understand what it's like to be young, but not being young now.

Mr. Chandler closes his eyes. Takes a deep breath. He opens his eyes and looks at his son.

MR. CHANDLER

True. Every age is different. Be smart and don't make the mistakes of the past. The hippie movement died out for a reason.

Joaquin grabs his guitar.

JOAQUIN

I get it. I have to practice now.

Mr. Chandler stands up and flattens down his shirt.

MR. CHANDLER

Okay. You'll find out on your own just like with everything else.

Mr. Chandler walks to the doorway, pulls out a cigarette and lights it. He takes a puff and blows it up to the ceiling.

MR. CHANDLER

From Hunter I expected this. From you I expected, well, a lot more.

JOAQUIN

Okay.

Mr. Chandler leaves and Joaquin gets up and closes the door. He locks it.

From under his bed, Joaquin pulls out a cigar box and he goes over to the window. The box is gently placed on the windowsill. He tugs on his collar.

The lid opens and a ceramic pipe packed with marijuana lies next to a pack of cigarettes. He pulled out a cigarette and puts it between his lips.

The pipe is pulled out and the window opened. Joaquin pulls a lighter out from his pocket and lights the cigarette.

The cigarette is between his fingers. He cups the pipe with the same hand.

Joaquin lights the pipe and blows the smoke out the window. Quickly, he takes a drag of the cigarette and blows it in the room.

JOAQUIN

Liars.

EXT. FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL-COURTYARD- MORNING.

Topher, with a big back pack, sits next to Joaquin on the brick wall below windows that look into the cafeteria. They are on a raised cement patio. A group of Metal Heads smoke cigarettes at the other end of the patio.

TOPHER

What do you have left?

JOAQUIN

A Bio exam and it's over.

TOPHER

Rough. I just have Home Ec.

A group of guys come out and start playing cards on the patio ledge. One guy waves to Joaquin. Joaquin waves him off.

Steve appears from around the corner and walks over to Joaquin and Topher.

STEVE

Major yo Crunchies! How's the last day?

JOAQUIN

Good. Almost done. You?

STEVE

Done, done and done. So, you two coming to the party right? My bro is home from college and got barrels. This ain't small time boys, four kegs.

Topher shields his face from the sun as he looks at Steve.

TOPHER

Damn, that must have took some coin.

STEVE

Actually it's not too bad when you
have someone who's twenty-one buy.
No need to bribe the guy at the
liquor store.

Steve slides down on the wall and lights up a cigarette.

Topher pulls out a pack of cigarette and slides out a fake
cigarette that is really a ceramic pipe packed with
marijuana. He holds it out.

STEVE

You brought a one-hitter to the
courtyard. Balls kid.

TOPHER

Nice one ain't it? Got it for five
bucks from that head shop in
Norwalk during their going out of
business sale.

Joaquin tugs on his collar. Topher lights the pipe.

The young cop enters the courtyard at the far end of the
patio.

Joaquin sees and jabs Topher with his elbow. Topher has a
look of panic as he struggles to hold in the pot smoke.

STEVE

Fuck. Topher get up. Walk away.

The cops squints and stares down Steve. The cop sniffs the
air, tilts his head, and heads towards them

Steve stands and puffs on his cigarette a few times. He goes
to head off the cop as Topher grabs his bag.

Joaquin pulls out a pack of cigarettes and lights up.
Topher's face is going red. Topher begins to leave.

Topher convulses a few times but holds back the smoke.

STEVE

Hey Officer Friendly, how's writing
parking tickets? Making the quota?

COP

Steve Cerrone. Knew I'd run into
you. You're always where trouble
is.

Joaquin puffs his cigarette and Topher coughs the pot smoke out as he slips away through a nearby door.

STEVE
Trouble? Me?

COP
What's that I smell?

Joaquin tugs on his collar as he blows a puff of smoke out.

The cop side steps Steve.

STEVE
Oh that horrible smelling shit.
Yeah, it's those Turkish cigarette
my buddy smokes. Smells like
rotten Oregano. No accounting for
taste now is there. But hey,
you're a cop. You know a lot about
bad taste?

The cop puts his hand on Steve's shoulder but doesn't look at him.

COP
One day kid.

STEVE
You wish. Well, time to roll. See
you later Keen.

JOAQUIN
Later.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

INT. JOAQUIN'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

With Walkman headphones on his ears, Joaquin lays on his bed with his arms behind his head. The sounds of his parents fighting rattle through the house.

His door opens and HUNTER, Joaquin's brother, a guy with a surfer vibe, enters. Hunter is taller than Joaquin and wears white.

Hunter closes the door and recoils at the screeching coming from downstairs. He plops down in a bean bag chair.

Joaquin takes off his headphone. He hears the fighting and his lips tighten up as he shakes his head.

JOAQUIN
Still at it.

HUNTER
And it's not going to stop until
the lion tamers step in.

JOAQUIN
So, what do you want?

HUNTER
You know everything right?

JOAQUIN
I know enough.

Hunter rocks forward and pushes up on the bean bag chair.

Joaquin slips his legs off the bed.

HUNTER
He's going to Granny Cecelia's in
Napa.

JOAQUIN
Cali?

HUNTER
Yup, that's going to leave you here
alone when I take off for college.
You think you can handle it?

Joaquin puts his hands on his knees.

JOAQUIN
Does it change anything?

HUNTER
True. With mom and dad in NYC all
the time we practically raised
ourselves.

Hunter runs his hand over his hair.

JOAQUIN
I guess.

HUNTER
When you taking off for tour?

JOAQUIN
A few days but I have to find a way
to get it by mother.

HUNTER

She's pretty overloaded right now
so it shouldn't be hard.

JOAQUIN

Don't want to have to come back
between every show to make her
think I'm just bouncing around at
friend's houses.

HUNTER

You need a long term cover so she
won't worry while you're gone.

JOAQUIN

That won't happen. She worried a
lot when you went on the
Appalachian trail hike last year.

HUNTER

That was a great trip. From Jersey
to Georgia. (smiles)
I remember the Smoky Mountains were
awesome and we saw a black bear in
Kentucky. The best was in Georgia
though because we ended up making
our way to Athens. Great place.

Joaquin half smiles. He shakes his head.

JOAQUIN

The Appalachian Trail doesn't go
through Kentucky. You went on
tour.

Hunter puts his hands behind his neck.

HUNTER

Bingo.

JOAQUIN

Nice. Thanks.

Hunter rocks his way to his feet and stands.

HUNTER

You all set otherwise?

JOAQUIN

Yeah, Mike got a hook up for
tickets and he's getting a new
ride.

HUNTER
What about guilders?

JOAQUIN
Cleaning out the saving's account.

Hunter ambles over to Joaquin and slow punches him in the shoulder.

HUNTER
It will be crazy. I assure you.
Fun but crazy. Keep your head on
straight and if people are too nice
they either want something from you
or they're high. Trust me, not
everyone is cool.

JOAQUIN
I know.

HUNTER
You might be a genius little
brother but you don't know shit.
And dude, if you get to bang that
chick Vanessa, wear a raincoat.

JOAQUIN
Get out Hunter. (pause)
And thanks bro.

Hunter opens the door to the sounds of their parent's still arguing.

HUNTER
We both need to get out of here.
Later.

He closes the door.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Down a long crescent driveway packed with cars, Joaquin and Mike make their way to a grand house. The property is heavy with trees.

A teenage party rages inside and outside of the large house.

Joaquin and Mike go around back.

Kids swim in a dark slate pool. Others bounce on a trampoline. A line moves at the keg of beer on the widespread patio. At a table, a group of white kids dressed like Run DMC play quarters.

The abrupt sound of a guitar starting, stopping and tuning rumble outside from down in the basement. Mike and Joaquin look at each other as they approach the stairs of a screened in porch.

JOAQUIN

Basement?

MIKE

Beer first.

BASEMENT

Steve and a group of long haired guys, including Topher, stand at one end of the vast unfinished space. Exposed support beams are planted in a smooth cement floor. A ramshackle of amps, drums, guitar stands, cords and microphone stands hold back the growing crowd.

Joaquin and Mike make their way over beers held high.

STEVE

One, two, three...

Steve plays the opening bars to "China Road" and then the band joins in at the proper measure. The guy with the longest hair sings.

The crowd cheers. Metal head girls start to dance with cigarettes dangling from their mouths.

Joaquin and Mike stop and sip their beers.

MIKE

Dude, I'm trading my bug for a sixty-seven split window.

JOAQUIN

V Dub bus! Stylin.

Mike nods his head to the music.

MIKE

It's killer. So, that Appalachian trail hike BS really worked?

JOAQUIN

Sure did but my parents are a little distracted anyway.

MIKE

Killer.

RYDER and KATRINA, preppie-hippie girls, long straight hair, pretty in a elfish way, cut and slink through the crowd over to Joaquin.

RYDER

Hey Keen, where's your brother?

An unenthusiastic smile lifts on Joaquin's face.

JOAQUIN

Hi Ryder. He went to Sutherland's graduation party in Southport.

Ryder flutters her eyes.

RYDER

I heard you're going on tour.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Wow, word gets around fast.

KATRINA

Could I ask you something Joaquin?

He nods. She leans into whisper in his ear.

KATRINA

Could you get me a sheet?

Joaquin pulls away.

JOAQUIN

Sorry Katrina. I don't mule.

Katrina gives Joaquin the puppy dog eyes.

KATRINA

I'll give you an extra hundred. I can't go to shows because of summer school.

Mike steps in.

MIKE

Kat, why don't you ask Taylor?

Katrina rolls her eyes and then looks sternly at Mike.

KATRINA

He's sketchy. Last time he brought me bunk.

JOAQUIN

Why ask me? I don't know anyone.

Katrina and Ryder look at each other and then at Joaquin.

RYDER

Won't Hunter be there?

Joaquin sips his beer.

JOAQUIN

No. He's getting all set in the city before NYU this fall.

KATRINA

The city. Cool. If he's going to be in the city, maybe we can hit up some shows at the Wetlands? Tell him to call me all right.

JOAQUIN

All right. Later Ryder. Later Katrina.

The girls nod and then bounce away through the crowd.

JOAQUIN

Man it sucks being his brother.

The guitar strap of one of the musicians slips off and his guitar crashes to the ground. The band stops.

STEVE INTO A MIC

Oops. Song wasn't going that good any how. I'm getting a beer. You guys go ahead without me.

Steve puts his guitar down into a stand. Another guitar player starts playing the opening bars to "Crazy Train"

Steve makes his way through the crowd and Mike pulls out a lighter, lights it, and holds it up.

Steve sees the lighter. A smile grows on his face. He gives Mike the finger as he gets close to Mike.

STEVE

Major yo guys. Hey Mikey Mike. Yo Joaquin, if you you want to jam you can use my axe. Having fun?

Mike sips his beer and then nods.

JOAQUIN

Fun so far.

STEVE

Cool. Hey Keen, got a new Takamine twelve-string acoustic. Want to see it?

Joaquin sips his beer.

JOAQUIN

Sure man.

STEVE

It's in my room. Want to see it Mike?

MIKE

Maybe later. I'm going outside to see what's up.

STEVE

Rock on. Follow me.

INT. STEVE'S ROOM

The door is closed. Posters of Metallica, DEO, Slayer and Ozzy Osbourne hang on the walls. Joaquin steps over to the bed and looks down at the Star Wars blanket. He chuckles.

Steve unzips a nylon gig bag on the floor and pulls out a twelve-string acoustic guitar.

JOAQUIN

R2-D2, nice.

STEVE

Hey, R2-D2 has balls. Does what he wants.

JOAQUIN

Point taken.

Steve places the guitar on the bed.

STEVE

Fucken A right?

JOAQUIN

Fucken A dude.

The bed bounces as Steve sits down.

STEVE

Play it.

Joaquin picks up the guitar like it was a baby and goes over to a chair in the corner by the window where the party can be seen outside.

He finger picks a few chords and then strikes a few notes in a minor scale. Joaquin stares at the fret board.

JOAQUIN

This is glassy smooth man. The action is lower than I thought and the strings tension ain't that tight for a twelve-string.

Steve stands.

STEVE

You know, I've been wanting to ask you why you got into the hippie shit. You used to be a skate rat and listened to better music.

Joaquin lifts his head and scans the posters in the room.

JOAQUIN

Things change. Guess I wanted to find people who think differently and don't stress out all the time. Plus, I wanted to get into more complex music.

Steve heads to another window and looks out.

STEVE

So you listen to the Grateful Dead? Dude, all because Jerry sits there and does fifteen minute solos doesn't mean it's more complex.

He goes and sits on the corner of the bed.

JOAQUIN

It's Fusion... Jazz.

Steve shakes his head.

STEVE

You like Jazz? Bullshit bro.

Joaquin looks irritated.

JOAQUIN
Metal is just four chords played
fast.

Steve puts his face in his hands and shakes his head back and forth.

STEVE
No no no no.

He pulls his hands away.

STEVE
Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhodes,
Steve Via, Joe Satriani do things
Jerry can't dream of.

Joaquin gently finger picks an E minor chord and then stops.
He stands and hands the guitar over.

JOAQUIN
Those guys can shred but Jerry has
touch and soul.

Steve starts putting the guitar back in its case.

STEVE
Different strokes I guess. The
Dead just don't do it for me. It's
(does finger quotes) "take it easy
music". No range.

JOAQUIN
Like Slayer has range?

The zipper is pulled and Steve leans the case in the corner.

STEVE
Okay. That's true but my deal is
more with Dead Heads, the hardcore
ones. They only listen to the Dead
or music like the Dead. That's it.
They're stuck. I remember you
liked Van Halen.

JOAQUIN
Yeah.

STEVE
Still?

JOAQUIN
Yeah but I can't let others know.

Steve walks to the door.

STEVE

Why?

JOAQUIN

They think it's angry. It harshes
their mellow.

Steve opens the door. Music and party sounds flood in.

STEVE

Fuck their mellow. If you like a
band you like a band. Doesn't
matter what others think. Be
yourself, and if you aren't, you
can't be a good musician because
you'll just sound like someone
else. That is the definition of
suck.

JOAQUIN

What is that Spinoza?

Steve looks confused.

STEVE

What?

Joaquin puts his hands up in defeat.

JOAQUIN

Nothing. Steve Cerrone, Metal head
philospher.

STEVE

Dude, you are weird. Let's go get
a beer and bong hit.

Just as they are about to walk through the door, red and blue
lights flash through the windows. They spin to see. Steve's
eyes go wide.

STEVE

Fuck. Oinkers.

INT. JOAQUIN'S ROOM -- MORNING

Still groggy, Joaquin hobbles over to his telephone still in
the same clothes as the night before.

JOAQUIN

Go better wash my face first.

He goes to wash his face.

He comes back and sits by the phone. He tugs on his collar.

Joaquin puffs out his cheeks and lets loose a series of staggered breaths.

He picks up the phone and dials.

JOAQUIN

Hi Vanessa, it's Joaquin. (pause)

Good. (pause)

Yeah I'll be there.

(pause)Cool.(pause)

Noon by a purple dragon bus.

(pause)

I'll find it. Can't wait to see

you. (pause)Oh yeah. Peace.

EXT. BANK-PARKING LOT-MORNING

July 2, 1989. Joaquin walks out of the bank and stuffs an cash envelope in his pocket. He heads for a white 1967 Volkswagen bus. He gets in.

BUS

Mike is at the wheel and Joaquin, looking very excited, bounces in the passenger seat.

JOAQUIN

Got it. All my cash.

MIKE

Right on. Let's get Topher.

The bus pulls out on to a busy main street. The bus is slow and cars honk their annoyance.

MIKE

Yeah I know. We're slow.

JOAQUIN

All in a rush to get nowhere.

Where are your bootlegs? Want to put in some music.

MIKE

Got a box in the back. Wait until we get Topher though. I don't want you dropping the box and getting them out of order.

JOAQUIN

Jeez dude, how many bootlegs do you have anyway?

MIKE

About three hundred.

JOAQUIN

Do you even own any Dead studio albums?

MIKE

Not one.

They pull onto a narrow street loaded with Cape Cod style houses one right next to the other.

MIKE

Sure everything's cool with you and your parents?

JOAQUIN

The camping, Appalachian trail thing, worked perfect. Shit, they wouldn't notice if I was gone anyway.

MIKE

Rough stuff you're going through but believe me man, divorce is better. My parents hated each other.

JOAQUIN

My parents hate each other. No past tense. I don't understand how people who loved each other end up hating. Why don't people just split before it gets nuts?

MIKE

Wish I knew. But soon, we'll be at a show smoking kind leaving this bullshit behind.

INT. TOPHER'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Through the kitchen, Topher makes his way to a cluttered TV room where the curtains are drawn.

MR. SANTANA, unshaven, in a robe, sits on the couch. A fold out TV tray used for eating has only a large plastic cup on it. A handle of gin sits on the coffee table. A covered piano sits in the corner.

Topher walks up to a sideboard covered in picture frames. Three of the photos are face down. He picks one up. It is of his mother and him when he was young.

His face falls into sadness. He puts the photograph back face down.

TOPHER

Going dad.

MR. SANTANA

Good. Leave just like everybody else.

TOPHER

Don't do that.

MR. SANTANA

Get out of here.

TOPHER

Dad you need to get out. Nothing's bringing her back and you're going to run out of the money you got from the policy. It's been over a year.

MR. SANTANA

Don't fucking tell me what to do you fucking druggie. Go play with your pussy hippies friends and don't bother coming back.

TOPHER

This is my house too. She left it to me too.

MR. SANTANA

Playing that card eh? No more money. Live here all you want but get your own shit.

TOPHER

Dad don't do this.

MR. SANTANA

It's done.

TOPHER
Guess it is.

DRIVEWAY-- LATER

Next to a covered boat on a trailer, Topher stands with his sleeping bag and guitar case in hand. A backpack looks like hunch on his back. He bounces on his toes.

The Volkswagen bus pulls up and Topher runs up like an eager puppy.

BUS

The side door slides open and Topher piles into the seat behind the table.

TOPHER
Show time. Off to Foxborough.
Sullivan Stadium.

Joaquin twists in his seat.

JOAQUIN
Excited?

TOPHER
Twitching. Let's season the road trip with a little herb don't you think?

Topher shuts the side door.

MIKE
No dude, not yet. It's only two hours away and the troopers will be out in force pulling over vehicles with Dead stickers.

JOAQUIN
Yeah, let's just wait. We have all day.

Topher packs his gear behind the seat and then pops forward.

TOPHER
Cool. I just burned a bit ago anyway.

MIKE

Topher, grab that box in the back
with the bootlegs. Find that 79
New Years show.

TOPHER

On it.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- LATER

The bus rattles down I-95 North at a top speed of Sixty-five miles per hour. They are the tortoise and the rest of the cars are the hare.

Smoke spouts out of the exhaust a few times but clears up. Grinding noise can be heard over the rumble of traffic but they keep going.

The bus drives by Providence Rhode Island. They drive by a sign for Woonsocket. They take the exit for 495 North to Foxborough MA.

They take exit 14 and turn onto Route 1. A Sullivan Stadium sign comes into view. They are on the road to that leads to the stadium. One way in and one way out.

The bus pulls in behind a Volkswagen Beetle with Grateful Dead stickers and follows it. They pass by a lot where rows of empty semi-truck trailers are dry docked. The sides read G.O.D in big letters. Some hippies sleep under the trailers.

The parking lot looms in front of Mike's bus. It's is full.

The bus pulls up to a parking attendant booth and they pay the fee.

The bus pulls in and drives down the rows of VW's, Volvos, painted school buses. People are out tailgating. There are few parking spots.

BUS

Joaquin and Mike scan for open spaces as they putter along.

JOAQUIN

This is what we get for not leaving
earlier.

A space comes into view through the windshield.

MIKE

There. Yes.

They park. Topher makes his way up to the front seats.

TOPHER

We have to go find Davis for tickets. He'll be easy to find though.

JOAQUIN

Plimpton?

MIKE

Yup.

JOAQUIN

I thought he moved to the West coast.

MIKE

He did. Think he's driving that same crazy station wagon as he did last year at Fairfield High.

TOPHER

All right guys. This is it. Tour begins and we're going to take this adventure to the end. Right Joaquin? Even if can't get with Vanessa you're going to keep on truckin, right?

JOAQUIN

It not just about her man.

TOPHER

Damn straight. It's about being free from the bullshit.

EXT. PARKING LOT

The bus doors open and the boys hop out. The sounds of drums echo through the lot and are joined with the sounds of music being pumped out of car radios.

They walk up and down the rows of cars. The lot is a hippie bizarre, a traveling freak show, and a place to get lost. It's full of color.

As the boys seek Davis Plimpton, they pass Dead Head vendors selling clothes of all kinds from tie-dye t-shirts to Peruvian hats. Little shops with trays of beads pass by as people barter, buy, and sell.

Drum circles are everywhere set up in open spaces. Hippies play Hacky-Sack in large groups. Others juggle with balls or with Devil Sticks. Frisbees patrol the skies. Music plays and most look happy or high.

The boys walk along as Dead Head drug dealers walk by one after the other.

DEALER ONE

Got the Kind.

DEALER TWO

Shrooms baby. Magic from the earth.

DEALER THREE

Blotter... Buds

TOPHER

Oh my.

The boys make their way close to the stadium. A young man wearing a wrap around floral skirt walks by with his arms crossed. Joaquin notices and turns to Mike.

JOAQUIN

Hey Mike, look at that cat.

Mike give a quick glance.

MIKE

Think that dude wants Ecstasy.

JOAQUIN

So that's why his arms are crossed like an X.

END OF ROW OF CARS

In front of an old "woody" station wagon, a drum circle plays along with a guy jamming on a pan flute. Across the way a sign reads FREE HUGS.

On the hood and windshield of the station wagon is a Navajo blanket. DAVIS PLIMPTON, 18, an old money preppie-hippie whose hair couldn't be any blonder, lies eyes closed on the blanket sunning himself.

Davis has the posture and facial expressions of Sammy Davis Jr. and when he speaks he sounds like George Plimpton with his jaw wired shut.

The boys step up to the station wagon.

MIKE

Davis bro, you in the world of the living?

Davis shields his face with his hand and then opens his eyes slowly.

DAVIS

Hey, hey, Mikey Mike, what's shaking?

Davis slips off the hood and brushes his plaid shorts flat.

TOPHER

Hey Davis, been awhile.

Davis looks at Topher

DAVIS

You sprouted Topher. Holy shit.
Good to see you.

Davis bear hugs Topher. Joaquin steps back.

The hug ends and Davis hard pats Topher on the back three times.

Joaquin tugs at his collar. Davis steps up to him and extends his hand.

DAVIS

Hey bro, Davis Plimpton and you are?

They shake hands.

JOAQUIN

Joaquin Chandler.

Davis's head jerks back in surprise.

DAVIS

Hunter's little brother?

JOAQUIN

Yup.

One eyebrow lowers on Davis's face and he scratches his chin.

DAVIS

Damn, I thought you were like twelve years old. Heard about you. Crazy stories kid, crazy.

(MORE)

DAVIS (CONT'D)

Fucking impressive though. Nice to finally meet the mad genius.

JOAQUIN

Nice to meet you too. Mind if I ask what story?

Davis leans against the car.

DAVIS

The one all of Fairfield was talking about a few years ago. You're the kid who rigged that test and the whole PTA was up in arms because some other kids had to retake it.

JOAQUIN

I didn't cheat.

DAVIS

I know I talked to your brother. Hey Joaquin, don't let the ordinary get in the way of an extraordinary life. (pause) (claps hands together)
So kids, what'd you need?

Mike steps in.

MIKE

Tickets. Not floor. Just entry.

A thin smile grows on Davis. He lifts a finger and goes inside his station wagon.

Davis reappears with three tickets fanned out in his hand.

DAVIS

Fifty-five each. Sorry but it's 1989 and the economy sucks.

JOAQUIN

Not a problem.

The boys pay.

A hippie chick, GIRL ONE, in a billowy flower skirt walks by with a garland of daisies and scarlet begonias in her hair. She puts her hands together as if in prayer and walks up to Davis's station wagon. Tufts of armpit hair show.

GIRL ONE

I need a miracle. Do you have one?

DAVIS
Sorry darling but no miracles
today.

The girl looks at Davis seductively.

GIRL ONE
Too bad. Miracles happen when
miracles happen.

Davis winks at her.

DAVIS
Maybe next time.

She slinks off around the growing drum circle.

Mike nods once to get Davis's attention.

MIKE
Dude, you going to have tickets at
Buffalo? Don't have tickets for
Rich Stadium either.

Davis hops back on the hood.

DAVIS
Sure will. So, if you guys want to
burn before the show come back here
around five but now I have business
to attend to.

MIKE
Cool. Let's go guys.

INT. MIKE'S BUS -- LATER

They guys sit eating Falafels in foil. Joaquin wipes his
mouth.

JOAQUIN
What's this miracle thing I keep
hearing Mike?

Still chewing, Mike turns to Joaquin.

MIKE
Miracles are tickets people give
away. From the song "I need a
Miracle"... You know...
(sung)
I need a miracle everyday.

Topher crumples empty aluminum foil in his hands and tosses it on the table.

TOPHER
Hell Keen, I knew that. You're supposed to be the smart one.

JOAQUIN
(jokingly)
Fuck you man.

Topher does a fake air kiss. Joaquin give him the finger.

MIKE
Know what sucks? Some shady dudes send their pretty girlfriends out to scope for miracles and they have tickets already. Then they sell them.

JOAQUIN
That's sketchy. Didn't think shit like that happened on tour.

TOPHER
Don't matter, we don't need any miracles.

INT. SULLIVAN STADIUM-CONCOURSE-NIGHT

Groups of Dead Head collect along the walls. The walkway is cramped with mystified hippies and crowd noise. Mike, Joaquin and Topher walk through the turmoil wide eyed and ready for fun.

The boys stop in front of an entrance tunnel where a sign indicates the section and rows. Mike pulls out his ticket and looks at it. Topher fiddles with a small, knit, rainbow satchel strung around his neck. Joaquin tugs on his collar.

MIKE
This is it.

Topher squeezes his knit satchel and closes his eyes. Joaquin puts his hand on his shoulder.

JOAQUIN
You okay Topher?

Topher's eyes slowly blink. The crowd noise grows.

TOPHER

Holy shit. I'm on the verge you know. Don't think I even want to do shrooms.

The boys step to the wall to get out of the way of the surging crowd.

MIKE

Did you get shrooms?

A guy with blond dread locks turns his head as he walks by and stops.

DREAD LOCKS GUY

You need shrooms? Got some that will take you to Wonderland.

Joaquin smiles.

JOAQUIN

No thanks bro. We're good.

DREAD LOCKS GUY

Right on. If you need any, I'm always near the Winnebago with the rainbow tires. Grams are cheap. Have a good show.

The man slips back into the crowd entering the stadium seating.

The boys enter through the tunnel. They stand at a guardrail and stare out over the field where open space slowly fills with bodies.

JOAQUIN

Last time I came here I saw a Patriots' game with my father. It was so huge. Looks so much smaller now.

They head down a set of stairs and sit at a ledge/over-hang.

Topher rocks back and forth in his seat with his eyes opening and closing.

JOAQUIN

Topher man, you sure you're okay?

Topher stops rocking.

TOPHER

Sure dude. I'm good. This high is a bit hard though.

MIKE

Really? I just have a head high.

TOPHER

While you guys were talking with Davis after we burned, I smoked with that red head who was selling grilled cheeses a couple spots over.

Joaquin leans forward.

JOAQUIN

The girl who came over and tried to sell us opium?

TOPHER

Sure enough. But hell man, I thought it'd be soapium. Not the pure stuff.

MIKE

Uncut opium is rare. So how does it feel?

Topher starts rocking again.

TOPHER

Like I'm a rubber band being tickled in the stomach.

Joaquin sits back.

JOAQUIN

Dude if you start bugging, tell us. By the way, who's opening up Mike?

MIKE

Los Lobos. Hope the Dead play Masterpiece or China Cat Sunflower.

LATER

The concert is in full swing. Joaquin watches a few girls dance in their seats a few rows over. Topher sits with his hands on his forehead, eyes wide.

Mike dances back and forth in front of his seat. He wipes his forehead and sits. Joaquin twist to look at Mike.

JOAQUIN
I'm going to wander.

MIKE
Right on. Watch out for Spinners.
Think they're on Jerry's side.

Joaquin's eye brows lift.

JOAQUIN
Why?

MIKE
They're trancing, spinning in
circles, and don't move for anyone.
Might get whacked in the face.

TOPHER
Spinner are assholes. They worship
Jerry.

JOAQUIN
Worship Jerry, really? Haven't met
any yet.

MIKE
They don't really worship Jerry.
They think his guitar playing
channels god though. They're not
bad just flaky. Sort of like Hare
Krishna but they won't talk to you
unless you're one of them or in the
Family. Don't bother trying to
talk to them.

Joaquin moves to the rhythm of the music but looks confused.

JOAQUIN
What family?

MIKE
It's a group of heads who have been
on tour for a long time and most
are basically businessmen. They
think they're VIP's or something.
Fucking hippie Mafia selling the
light. You know, doses.

JOAQUIN
Snobby Hare Krishnas and an LSD
Mafia? Weird. Didn't expect that.
I'm off.

CONCOURSE

Joaquin saunters down the hall through the masses of dancing hippies. His step is in time with the music echoing through the crowd. A man with a DEA vest steps into view. People get out of his way and cops follow behind.

The DEA AGENT eyes Joaquin. He steps in Joaquin's way. Joaquin tries to move around him but is blocked.

The agent puts his hand up.

DEA AGENT

Hey kid. Aren't you a little young
to be here?

Joaquin lifts his head.

JOAQUIN

I'm eighteen. Excuse me.

He tries to walk away. The agent sidesteps in front of him and puts his hand up.

DEA AGENT

Sure. (long pause)
All right. Move along kid. And by
the way, don't eat the brown acid.

Joaquin's face wrinkles with confusion.

JOAQUIN

Okay.

The agent laughs as the crowd parts in his path.

Down the bending hallway, Joaquin comes across a group of people spinning in circles with their arms outstretched. Some are barefoot. Some have their eyes closed. Some men wear wrap around skirts with flower patterns but are otherwise naked. All spin like whirling Dervishes.

Joaquin slides against the wall so not to come in contact with these people. In his path, a girl with colorful beads in her hair tumbles to the ground.

He rushes over to pick her up. The other Spinners keep spinning.

Joaquin extends his hand.

JOAQUIN

Are you all right?

She looks at him like he was diseased. She squints and nods in acknowledgement but doesn't care for his help.

She gets back up and starts spinning.

JOAQUIN

Guess they were right.

CONCOURSE-INTERMISSION

The hall and bathrooms are packed as Joaquin makes his way back to his section.

In front of the tunnel leading to his seats, a crowd had gathered. The sounds of girls weeping over takes the crowd noise.

Cops run by followed by E.M.T.'s.

Joaquin gets to the crowd and sees one of the girls he was watching before at his seat convulsing on the ground. The E.M.T.'s hold her down.

Joaquin slips by.

SEATS

Mike stares off into space as Topher rolls his fingers in front of his nose. RUSS, a grizzled guy in his mid-twenties, sits next to Topher. Joaquin sits.

JOAQUIN

Hey Mike, what happened to that girl who was sitting over there?

Mike rubs his face.

MIKE

She started flipping out. So her friend took her away. How'd you know something happened?

JOAQUIN

Saw her freaking out in the hall surrounded by cops and E.M.T.'s.

Slowly rocking back and forth, Topher stops and looks over to Joaquin.

TOPHER

Harsh.

MIKE

That's what happens when you don't
know what your doing.

TOPHER

Yo, Keen. This is Russ.

Joaquin leans forward.

JOAQUIN

Hey Russ.

Russ, stoned as Stonehenge, stares forward with wide glazed
eyes.

RUSS

Hey.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATER

They boys followed by Russ walk through the active parking
lot. Drum circles play. Music is pumped out of cars. Many
cars are leaving.

Russ speeds up and walks next to Mike.

RUSS

Hey man, just wanted to say thanks
for the lift to Buffalo.

MIKE

No problem. You said you know a
good spot where we can camp tonight
right?

RUSS

Oh yeah. It's close.

MIKE'S BUS-- LATER

Through the windows suburban Massachusetts is seen as they
drive down back roads. Russ sits in the passenger seat.
Mike drives. Topher is in a daze in the far back seat and
Joaquin sits at the table looking out the window.

MIKE

Dude, you said you knew this area
man.

RUSS

Been ten years since I was back
here. I'll find it though.

JOAQUIN

Ten years?

RUSS

Yeah man, that when I first went on tour. I was probably about your age.

MIKE

Wow. That's a long time. How do you pay for it?

Russ's eyes cinch tight. His head tilts. He is irritated.

RUSS

Not cool man. I don't ask you how you get around.

MIKE

Nevermind bro. Anything look familiar.

RUSS

Not yet.

GROCERY STORE-PARKING LOT -- LATER

In an alley next to where the bus is parked, Russ urinates. He finishes and walks back.

BUS

Joaquin and Topher sleep where they sit. Mike rubs his face.

Russ slips in the passenger seat and closes the door. All the windows are open.

RUSS

Sorry for getting us lost man.

MIKE

No worries. But if you could lend some green towards gas tomorrow, that would be cool.

RUSS

No problem man.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- MORNING

Mike's bus sputters down I-90 West. Thick smoke begins pouring out of the exhaust.

The gears grind and the bus begins to bounce. They pull off onto the shoulder by a sign for Springfield.

The boys get out of the bus. Topher lights a cigarette and Mike and Joaquin go to the back and open the hatch to the engine.

MIKE

Fuck. I think the engine seized.

JOAQUIN

That means the bus is dead, doesn't it?

MIKE

Fuck.

Russ hops out of the side of the bus and scratches his head.

RUSS

What's up?

MIKE

Engine died.

RUSS

Beat.

Over the sounds of the highway traffic, a horn blares. A tow truck comes at them on the shoulder. It screeches to a halt just a few feet away. Joaquin jumps back.

A thick necked driver, greasy overalls and a mullet, gets out. He wipes his hands on his knees as he walks up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-LUXURY SUITE-DAY

Vanessa sits at the window smoking a joint with the phone to her ear. Taylor, Carlos and Melody are asleep on one of the beds in a room covered in luggage and hippie gear.

VANESSA

Yes mother I just got into the city. I'm visiting Dawson. (pause) Yes, the one from Deerfield Academy and yes, I'm staying at the Four Seasons. (pause) Yes. (pause) Esperanza is taking care of everything. Yes mother. Have fun in the Seychelles.

Vanessa hangs up the phone and rolls her eyes. Taylor wakes up. She puts the joint in an ashtray and stands up.

He rolls out of bed, nothing but boxers, and shuffles over to Vanessa.

TAYLOR

What's wrong?

He rubs her shoulders.

She grabs his wrists.

VANESSA

Oh nothing except my parents decided to extend their trip and go on a vacation where I've never been. And they know I always wanted to go to the Seychelles.

He slides down his hands to hers, steps back and swings his arms.

TAYLOR

Damn it. Looks like you're just going to have to have more adventures with us... Crazy last night wasn't it?

She smiles and flips her hair back.

VANESSA

Wetlands was fun. Want to roll the van with all the stickers out the door and drive away. You know, I love the city. There are always so many freaks in NYC. Love it.

Taylor looks intently at Vanessa.

TAYLOR

Me too and thanks for picking up the tab on this place.

Taylor picks up the joint and Vanessa sits. The sunlight falls across her face.

VANESSA

Happy to provide. So what are we going to do until the shows?

Taylor takes hit and blows the smoke over the sleeping Melody and Carlos.

TAYLOR
Think Steel Pulse is playing
downtown. We can just hop the
subway.

On the bed, Carlos's eyes blink. He sniffs the air and
pushes up.

VANESSA
No Reggae tonight. Something else.

TAYLOR
We'll find something.

VANESSA
Speaking of finding, don't let me
forget about finding Joaquin at
Giants.

TAYLOR
Who?

VANESSA
Don't be jerk.

EXT. TOW TRUCK GARAGE-PARKING LOT-MORNING.

A four lane road is full of traffic zipping by. It cuts
between strip malls on then edges of Springfield MA. Mike's
bus is hooked to a wrecker by the entrance and Joaquin and
Topher stand outside of the office window.

Mike's hands can be seen waving in disgust through the window
in front of the edge of a desk. His hands lower to his
sides. His head lowers. He shakes his head in disbelief as
he exits outside through a the office door.

Russ walks out from around the corner and up to Topher. Mike
approaches and Joaquin looks at him with anticipation.

Mike stops, bites his lip and addresses his friends.

MIKE
Pirates man. Fucking pirates.

Topher nods his chin up once.

TOPHER
What?

MIKE

They don't work on VW's and want eighty bucks to tow it down the road plus the tow here.

JOAQUIN

Why didn't they just tow us there?

MIKE

Mass-hole highway robbery. Fucking pirates. They drive around looking for breakdowns and then extort double the fee.

Topher rubs his knuckles and shakes his head.

TOPHER

I heard about them but I didn't think it was real.

JOAQUIN

They can't do that.

MIKE

They just did. We're fucked.

Topher's nostrils flare. He grits his teeth.

TOPHER

Fuck no.

Topher storms into the office.

He waves his hands and begins yelling.

The bay doors to the garage open.

In the garage where cars are up on lifts, the mechanics and other drivers converge to the side door that lead into the office.

The office door opens, and Topher comes flying through to the ground.

A large BURLY MAN man with a buzz cut comes stomping out with an unlit cigar in his mouth. Faded tattoos stretch on the man's forearms as he pumps his fists. The garage workers pile out of the bay.

Topher gets up. Dusts off his knees and rushes the man. Topher tries to throw a punch.

The burly man grabs Topher's arm and then slugs him in the gut. Topher drops to his knees.

Mike runs over and drags Topher away.

Joaquin jumps in front of the burly man and other workers surging forward. Russ runs away down the street.

JOAQUIN
(yelling)
Back off asshole.

The man and the workers stop.

BURLY MAN
And what are you gonna do punk?

Joaquin points at the burly man.

JOAQUIN
My dad's a lawyer in New York jerk.
He'll have your place shut down.

The burly man shakes his head and steps up to Joaquin. The man spits his cigar at Joaquin's feet and stares him down.

BURLY MAN
Fucking rich kids from Connecticut.
Lucky it isn't the good old days or
nobody would ever find you. But
you got balls so...

The burly man turns around and waves at a VINNY, a lanky guy in greasy coveralls.

BURLY MAN
Vinny, get that piece of shit out
of here. Drop them off by that
Sunoco. Let em push.

INT. MIKE'S BUS -- MOMENTS LATER

The bus is attached to the wrecker at a forty-five degree angle and the boys lean to keep upright while sitting in the driver and passenger seat. Topher is in the back holding his stomach. The road rolling by can be seen through the windows.

TOPHER
What happened to Russ?

MIKE
No clue.

JOAQUIN
He ran.

The bus comes to a stop. Through the front windshield Vinny is seen getting out of the wrecker. He detaches the hookup. The bus is lowered. The boys are silent.

The bus is horizontal.

JOAQUIN

Crazy.

Vinny walks to the driver's side window and knocks.

Mike lowers the window.

VINNY

Your bunch of lucky fucks.

Vinny points at Mike and then Joaquin.

VINNY

If it was up to me I'd beat the
crap out you little fucks. Nah,
nevermind, get the fuck out you
dirty hippies.

Vinny turns and walks back to the wrecker. Joaquin rubs his face. His hands are shaking slightly.

JOAQUIN

Crazy.

The wrecker screeches away.

EXT. GAS STATION -- LATER

A mechanic looks at the bus's engine along with Mike as Topher stands out near the curb watching traffic. In a phone booth on the sidewalk, Joaquin hangs up the phone.

Hands in pockets, Joaquin hunched over walks over to Topher and taps him.

Topher looks at Joaquin with a sullen face.

JOAQUIN

Well, Hunter is going to pick us up
in a few hours.

TOPHER

What about the bus?

JOAQUIN

You heard what the mechanic said
when he saw it. It's done.

TOPHER

What about Mike and rides to the other shows?

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Don't know but guess we're missing Buffalo and probably Philly. Might be able to get rides with Vanessa and her crew at Giant's. If not we can hitch or something.

Topher scratches his head.

TOPHER

Maybe we should just bail?

Joaquin straightens up.

JOAQUIN

No dude, I have to see Vanessa.

TOPHER

It will definitely put the squeeze on cash trying to cop rides.

JOAQUIN

We'll find a way.

They go over to the bus and the mechanic is removing parts. Mike's arms are crossed as he turns to them.

MIKE

Sorry guys but the bus ain't going to make it on tour. The guy said he could fix it up enough to get back to Fairfield. It's will take all my cash. My trip is over for now.

JOAQUIN

Dude that sucks. Hunter's coming to pick us up. You can still find a way to meet us at the Giant's shows right?

Mike's arms go to his sides.

MIKE

No... I can't. Have take care of this. But, I'm going to ask you guys for a favor.

TOPHER

What man?

MIKE

Just bring me some new bootlegs.

TOPHER

Sure man. I'll get a tape of every show I can. By the way, thanks for everything.

MIKE

Dude, thanks for sticking up for me.

Mike hugs Topher.

MIKE

Serious dude. Thanks but don't do that crazy shit again.

Mike pats him hard on the back. The embrace ends with Mike shaking his head.

TOPHER

Keen here stood up too. You know Keen, I always thought your Pops was a stock broker. Didn't know he was a lawyer.

JOAQUIN

He isn't. But stock broker doesn't scare anyone.

MIKE

You two are crazy. You guys be safe.

Mike hugs Joaquin.

EXT. GAS STATION -- AFTERNOON

Hunter driving a Jeep Cherokee pulls in the parking lot. He parks and gets out.

Joaquin and Topher stand ready with the gear at their feet. Hunter waves.

The boys grab their bags and guitars and head to the Jeep. Mike walks with them and helps load their stuff.

The three friends hug. Topher and Joaquin get in the Jeep.

They drive away and wave to Mike as they pull out.

JEEP-- LATER

The highway rolls by through the windows. Joaquin is in the passenger seat.

HUNTER
About twenty minutes.

Topher leans up from the back seat.

TOPHER
Thanks Hunter.

JOAQUIN
Yeah, thanks bro.

ANGELO
Not a problem in the least.

TOPHER
So Hunter, how many shows are you going to?

HUNTER
None. Got to get ready for NYU.

JOAQUIN
God I wish I was out of high school.

HUNTER
Be careful what you wish for. You'll be out soon.

EXT. FAIRFIELD TRAIN STATION-MORNING

July 9th. Sunny. The day of the first Grateful Dead's shows at Giant's stadium. Joaquin and Topher look weary standing on the platform. Their bags are at their feet but only Topher has a guitar.

TOPHER
Dude, freaken exhausted. Back hurts too.

JOAQUIN
Mine too. Couch hopping really sucks.

TOPHER

It was the only way. If I went home, it'd be over.

JOAQUIN

I know. We should have gone and slept at the beach.

TOPHER

I slept under the Pavilion at Penfield once. Right under the deck. Woke up to a dog staring at me through the stairs. Dude, should we go burn. It's going to be a couple hours until Giant's.

JOAQUIN

No dude. Train will be here in like ten. Can't be late to see Vanessa.

TOPHER

Sucks they banned smoking last year on the trains.

JOAQUIN

Not like they didn't smell bad enough.

TOPHER

Hunter took your guitar home right?

JOAQUIN

Yup. I'm just afraid I'll damage it.

TOPHER

Nah, but, hey, do what you want.

The platform fills with more suburban commuters.

TRAIN-- LATER

The boys shuffle down the Metro-North train car looking for a seat. They pass by other Dead Heads who smile or give the peace sign.

They find a three person seat across from a man in a three piece suit who eyes them up and down and then raises his newspaper.

Joaquin slips besides the window and they put their gear on the extra seat between them.

TOPHER

Soon bro. (coughs) You know where
the Port Authority is right?

JOAQUIN

I think it's on forty-first. I
figure we can just follow the
others to the bus station.

TOPHER

Grand Central is on forty-second
street?

JOAQUIN

Yup.

Joaquin nods his head and reclines. He twists to look out
the window. Coastal Connecticut zips by.

GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL-NEW YORK

The boys hobble up the stairs to the main concourse. The
information desk sits in a sea of fast moving people. They
bump through the crowd.

Joaquin spots a group of Dead Heads and points. They follow
the group outside.

STREET

With tight grips on their gear, the boys navigate through
dense foot traffic of NYC. They almost lose track of the
group of Dead Head. They start jogging.

The group reappears and the boys stop jogging. The group
turns down a block. The boys follow.

PORT AUTHORITY TERMINAL-41st and 8th Avenue.

The boys wait in line and grin at each other. They get to
the ticket window. A sign reads Meadowlands.

JOAQUIN

One more obstacle down.

Smiling the boys find their bus.

PORT AUTHORITY BUS.

Still smiling, the boys bounce in their seats. New York City
shrinks in the distance.

The bus comes to a sign for the Meadowlands Complex on the highway. All the hippies cheer.

The bus stops outside the arena. The boys get out into the scorching heat.

Holding his bag Joaquin tries to shield his face from the sun. They walk over to a sidewalk where fast paced hippies saunter by.

JOAQUIN

We're here.

Topher turns to Joaquin.

TOPHER

Time to burn and then find Davis.

JOAQUIN

Absolutely.

EXT. GIANT'S STADIUM-PARKING LOT -- LATER

Colorful school buses dot the landscape. Grills waft smoke across the low sky. The vendors have set up shop. The traveling hippie circus is active. Cops walk the perimeter of the lot. Helicopters fly above.

Joaquin and Topher shelter in between two trucks and smoke pot from Topher's cigarette shaped one-hitter pipe. The crowd has grown thick.

The boys finish and step into an open space by three guys playing Hacky-Sack.

JOAQUIN

It's about time for me to find
Vanessa. You go find Davis and
I'll be there in a bit.

TOPHER

Cool.

The boys go in opposite direction.

HEAD OF ROW.

Next to a sign indicating the section, a school bus with a purple dragon on the side sticks out at the end of the aisle. Vanessa stands beside it smoking a cigarette. Her large sunglasses hide her face. A knit bag drapes around her shoulder.

A raggedy hippie chick in her twenties, worn with drug abuse, with tufts of armpit hair, walks up to Vanessa on shaky feet.

ARMPIT HAIR GIRL

Are you divine? You look divine.
Do you have a miracle?

Vanessa slips her sunglasses down and has an expression of pity. The girl smiles. She's missing teeth.

Vanessa look of pity is now tinted with disgust.

Vanessa forces a smile and slips her sunglasses back up.

VANESSA

Sorry. I don't have any miracles.

ARMPIT HAIR GIRL

Could you spare some change?

Vanessa reaches in her pocket and pulls out a pack of Camel cigarette and two quarters.

VANESSA

All I have is a pack of Camels and a fifty cents. You can have a smoke and the change.

The armpit hair girl smiles a broken smile. Vanessa hands her the change and a smoke. The girl leaves through the colorful throngs of people.

Vanessa's face brightens up as she sees Joaquin approach through the throngs. He sees her. He smiles and waves.

She throws her arms open and he steps into an embrace.

JOAQUIN

Hi.

VANESSA

Hi.

Joaquin closes his eyes as they squeeze each other tight. A look of relief washes over his face. The embrace ends and they stare at each other.

VANESSA

So glad you made it. I was getting worried.

JOAQUIN

Nothing could have stopped me from getting here. Who was that?

VANESSA
Just another tour ghost.

JOAQUIN
What's that?

Vanessa rubs her hands together low by her waist.

VANESSA
A Dead Head who's dead to the
outside world.

JOAQUIN
Oh. So what do you want to do?

VANESSA
Just hang and shop.

JOAQUIN
Cool. I just need to find this
dude Davis Plimpton. He's got
tickets.

VANESSA
I know Davis. Still scalping,
always the capitalist.

JOAQUIN
Yeah but I still need a ticket.

VANESSA
No you don't.

JOAQUIN
What?

VANESSA
I have two extra. A couple of
people who I came with decided to
hang out in the city.

JOAQUIN
(excited)
Killer. Thank you. Could my
friend Topher get the other?

VANESSA
Sure. Come on.

Cops walk by on the road that circles the stadium. A cop on
horseback follows.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Joaquin and Vanessa, shoulder to shoulder, stroll up and down the parking lot

They investigate a large vendor selling crystals, jewelry, posters, t-shirts (tie-dye) and Guatemalan clothes.

She buys an amethyst crystal.

They read pamphlets at a Green Peace booth.

They stand by a drum circle as others dance around in various stages of undress.

Joaquin shakes hands with a few guys selling grilled cheese sandwiches out of the back of a Volvo. Vanessa smiles.

They sit on a curb and sun themselves.

BACK TO SCENE

Back at the school bus with a purple dragon, Joaquin and Vanessa stop and turn to each other.

She pulls out the crystal. It glitters with prismatic beams falling across her hand.

VANESSA

This one is amazing. I feel so at peace when I look at it.

JOAQUIN

It's pretty. Are you going to make a necklace or something?

VANESSA

No, I like the way this feels in my hand. Some think they help positive energy flow into you and balance out all of the bad vibes we pick up around us.

JOAQUIN

They are know for having interesting properties. Did you know that if you squeeze a quartz crystal it gives off an electrical charge. It's called the Piezoelectric effect.

VANESSA
(vindicated)
So they really can conduct positive
energy. I knew it.

JOAQUIN
It's really a release of an
existing charge but nevermind.
It's really cool.

She puts the crystal in her pocket and take the concert
tickets out of her bag. She hands them to him.

VANESSA
Here. Take these. I have to go
see some people.

JOAQUIN
Can I come with you?

VANESSA
Sorry. These people don't really
talk to people they don't know.
They're kind of connected with
Johnny Appleseed.

JOAQUIN
Who's that?

VANESSA
Top acid chemist in the country.
No one knows what he looks like and
his people are really cautious.
Especially with all the DEA around

JOAQUIN
Right on. I have to find Topher
anyway. I'll see you at the seats.

VANESSA
I don't really stay at the seats.
I dance in the halls but I'll try
to stop by.

JOAQUIN
Oh, okay, no worries. I'll find
you.

She hugs him.

VANESSA
Got to fly. Bye.

She waves and walks off.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Fuck.

EXT. PARKING LOT-DAVIS'S STATION WAGON. -- LATER

Joaquin sits on the bumper of the vehicle. Davis isn't there. He eyes the Chevy Suburban in the next spot over that is clad in Dead sticker and one Mustangs sticker.

JOAQUIN

Fairfield people. Wonder who?

Joaquin sits on the bumper and waits. The crowd thins. The sun gets lower in the sky.

Davis pops out from in between the vehicles and taps Joaquin on the shoulder. Joaquin twists to see.

DAVIS

Hey Joaquin, what shaking buddy?
Need a ticket?

Joaquin stands up and tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Hey Davis. No, I just came by to see what was up and was supposed to meet Topher around here. You seen him?

DAVIS

Sure dude. He was over with the Jawehs. By their big black bus. Think they were handing out food.

Davis leans on the hood.

JOAQUIN

What's a Jahweh?

Davis rolls his neck.

DAVIS

The people with the black tour bus who seem cool but when you talk to them it obvious they're a cult.

JOAQUIN

They like Spinners?

DAVIS

Sort of but not really. The Spinners keep to themselves but the Jahwehs recruit. They like kids from rich families so they can get their cash.

JOAQUIN

That's sketchy.

DAVIS

Cult usually are.

JOAQUIN

Better go find Topher then.

DAVIS

I would. But hey, if you want to burn before the show. Come by.

JOAQUIN

Cool.

They shake hands and Joaquin takes off into the hippie masses.

Through the parking lot Joaquin searches and comes upon the black bus. It has open parking spaces around it as if there were an invisible barrier.

A fold-out table is set up with bowls of vegetarian food. Two men in their thirties sit behind it. Both have long straight hair to their waists. One is blonde. He is PAUL.

Joaquin walks up to the blonde guy.

JOAQUIN

Hi.

The man looks at Joaquin with fluttering eyes.

PAUL

Hello young soul. May the perpetual light shine on you.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Thanks. I was wondering if you've seen my friend Topher. Sort of lost him.

The man puts his hands together as if in prayer.

PAUL

And we have found him. We've been waiting for you. Hold on. I'll get him. If you would like some food you are free to partake.

JOAQUIN

Thanks.

The man leaves and goes into the black bus. He comes out with Topher. Topher waves as he walks up with Paul.

TOPHER

Hey Keen, glad you found me. I got us a hook up for tickets and a ride.

JOAQUIN

Dude, I got us tickets.

TOPHER

No way. Well I got us a ride to RFK and Paul said we could travel with them as far as we want.

JOAQUIN

Really?

PAUL

As far as you want.

JOAQUIN

Wow. Let's talk about it later but we should go hang with Davis before the show. Let's go.

TOPHER

Cool. Hey Paul, I'll come back before the show starts. All right?

Paul bows.

PAUL

Wonderful. We'll have your floor tickets waiting.

TOPHER

Right on. See you in a bit.

Joaquin nods and smiles as he puts his arm around Topher's shoulder and pulls him away. They walk down the parking lot.

JOAQUIN

They're giving you floor seats?

TOPHER
General admission.

JOAQUIN
Vanessa gave me two tickets so I'm
going to sit there.

TOPHER
Dude, floor. Have to grip those.

JOAQUIN
Do what you want. Listen, I think
we can get a ride with Vanessa to
the other shows. No need to hook
up with those guys.

TOPHER
I know what you're thinking. The
Jahwehs are cool. Trust me. And
dude, it's free and they have food.

JOAQUIN
Let's talk about it tomorrow.

EXT. PARKING LOT-DAVIS'S STATION WAGON. -- LATER

A group of four guys has gathered around Davis as Joaquin and Topher walk up. They curiously inspect the group as if they recognize the guys.

Around Davis are CHUCK, a round jolly 17 year old with black curly hair, SPENCER, a brooding quiet type also 17, WALLY, a rail thin aspiring photographer also 17, and GRAHAM, has the longest hair and is in constant motion also 17. They are all from Fairfield.

Chuck sees Joaquin and Topher. His eyes go wide and he lifts his arms.

CHUCK
Well if it ain't the shake in
Shakedown Street. What's up
brother Joaquin, bother Topher?

Topher smiles and nods his head like he was listing to music.

TOPHER
Hey Chuck. Thought I might see you
guys.

JOAQUIN
What's happening Chuck?

Chuck goes over and hugs Topher and then Joaquin.

SPENCER
What's up Joaquin, still keeping
with the guitar?

JOAQUIN
Of course.

SPENCER
Cool we'll have to jam sometime.

JOAQUIN
Right on.

TOPHER
Hey Spencer, Wally, Graham.

WALLY
Hey kid see anything interesting
today?

TOPHER
Everything.

GRAHAM
Hey Joaquin, saw your brother
before we left. He wanted me to
tell you to wear a raincoat.

JOAQUIN
Funny. It's an inside joke. Even
when he's not here he has to rip on
me.

GRAHAM
That's what big brothers are for.

CHUCK
You boys having fun?

JOAQUIN
So far.

TOPHER
Just glad not to be home.

CHUCK
Right on. We were just about to
scrounge some grub and get some
gas. Nitrous awaits. Want to
come?

Joaquin looks to Topher. He shrugs and half nods.

JOAQUIN

Sure.

CHUCK

You coming Davis?

DAVIS

No my brother. I must attend to business.

CHUCK

Cool.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATER

The six guys from Fairfield sit in a circle in an open space by a service entry to the stadium. Tour buses and semi-trucks are parked behind a gate that leads inside. The guys are finishing up eating food wrapped in foil.

Joaquin goes over and tosses his garbage in the trash. Topher and Joaquin still have their bags.

CHUCK

Joaquin, why don't you guys stow your shit in the Suburban?

JOAQUIN

Really. Thanks.

CHUCK

No problem brother. Can't have you lugging that gear around all the time.

Joaquin sits and other finish and relax.

SPENCER

Wally bro, you on the lookout for that shady cat who burned you for buds at Buffalo?

WALLY

That rat will probably stay out of sight. Had good stories though.

GRAHAM

That cop story was outstanding.

CHUCK

Think that's a tour myth.

JOAQUIN
What's the story?

Wally straightens up and leans towards Joaquin.

WALLY
All right.

FLASHBACK

THE PARKING LOT AT RFK STADIUM IN WASHINGTON D.C.

A long hair wiry hippie makes his way to a van with tinted windows.

The guy knocks on the side door.

WALLY (V.O)
There was this guy, a new member to the Family, who was getting his first taste of washing crystal LSD.

The van door opens and the guy slips in.

In the van the guy hugs another hippie guy sitting cross legged.

The wiry guy pulls out a small plastic box and hands it to the other guy. The guy smiles and opens it.

In the box is a small piece of crystal LSD.

WALLY (V.O)
This dude was instructed to chop up the crystal and make sheets of blotter. Like this one crystal makes like a thousand sheets of fifty hits when you dissolve it in gallons of water.

The wiry guy gets out of the van.

Inside the van, four two liter coke bottles are filled with water. A stack of paper that look like they have tiny postage stamps lined up in rows is pulled out from a false compartment in the floor.

WALLY (V.O.)
So the guy got to work but was too stupid to have someone watch for cops.

Outside in the parking lot, a young cop strolls swing his night stick. He comes across the van with tinted windows and lifts his eyebrow in curiosity.

The cop goes to the back window and looks in.

WALLY (V.O.)

This young cop comes on the guy and sees him chopping up the crystal on a mirror like it was cocaine.

The cop goes to the side door and tries to open it but it's locked.

The guy inside is startled and hurriedly tries to hide the mirror with the powder.

The cop bursts in. The man throws up his hands.

WALLY (V.O.)

The dude is held at gun point. And the cop finds the chopped up crystal.

The cop, holding the mirror, sniffs a few inches from the powder.

WALLY (V.O.)

But the cop has no idea what it is. There's no smell so he dips in and tastes it.

The cop dips his finger into the powder and touches it to his tongue.

TOPHER (V.O.)

Holy shit, that like taking a whole sheet.

WALLY (V.O.)

No, more like a hundred.

The cop walks the wiry guy back to his patrol car and stuffs him in the back.

The cop gets in the front seat and uses the radio.

WALLY (V.O.)

So the cop in one shot took more acid than like anyone. So they go to his cruiser and the cop radios in about having a guy in custody.

(MORE)

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

There some thing going on the other side of the stadium so the other cops can't come to check out what he got. So the cop called for a tow truck to impound the van all the while the dude in the back is freaking out.

The wiry guy in the back of the cop car is shaking his head and rocking back in forth in the back seat. Other hippies come around the car and start harassing the cop.

WALLY (V.O)

So then it happens. The cop starts hallucinating. Hard.

The cop wipes his brow. He looks at his hand. The sweat turns to steam.

He shakes his head and when he stops he sees the world still shifting from side to side.

The cop looks flushed. The guy in the back creeps up and looks through the plastic seat divider. The guy smiles a nasty grin.

The cop blinks incessantly. He sees the world break in half and fall away. A dark abyss rises. A hoard of rainbow colored dragons attack the cop. He screams.

A few hippie guys see that the cop is freaking out and the cop goes perfectly still.

The hippie guys open the cop's door and check him. He doesn't move. They let the wiry guy in the back out.

WALLY (V.O.)

So the cop flips out and basically is paralyzed by the trip. The dude is let out of the cruiser by some other dudes and makes his escape.

HOSPITAL--ER

The cop is in a hospital bed staring blanking at the ceiling. The heart monitor flat lines. Doctors try to resuscitate him.

BACK TO SCENE

Joaquin listens intently, eyes wide, and Wally leans back.

WALLY

So the cop was taken to the hospital. And they couldn't do anything. He died of heart failure. Some doctors said he died of fright.

JOAQUIN

That's insane.

WALLY

And for a moment, so was the cop.

JOAQUIN

Was going to try it since everyone else does, but I'm not so sure anymore.

CHUCK

I don't think that happened but a lot of strange shit happens at shows.

SPENCER

No shit. I saw fights at RFK and JFK last year. The scene has gone all crazy with meatheads since "Touch of Gray" got played on MTV.

TOPHER

It may be the one song I don't like.

CHUCK

Joaquin, about dosing, if you want to try it, try it. But don't do it because other people do it.

JOAQUIN

Does it expand your mind like I've read?

CHUCK

Not for me. It's just another few more fried brain cells. Plus, doing it for the first time in a wierd in a place can be bad.

TOPHER

I thought you dosed?

JOAQUIN

Nope.

The group stands up. Graham claps his hands together.

GRAHAM

Let's go hit some killer bees.

SPENCER

Now you're talking.

TOPHER

Cool. My high from earlier is wearing off.

CHUCK

Let's back to the Suburban so you guys can toss that shit inside. Then it's time to explore.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATER

Lines of fans start pouring through the gates of the stadium. Joaquin and Topher, red eyed and high as hell, stop on the sidewalk.

TOPHER

Dude, I'm going to go grab some grub with the Jahwehs. Plus, they have floor tickets for us.

Joaquin tugs on his collar. He looks mildly revolted.

JOAQUIN

(annoyed)
I have tickets.

Topher puts his hands together.

TOPHER

Dude, floor and food. They're cool man and we have to at least take their offer until something definite comes around. Don't worry about it.

Joaquin tugs on his collar harder.

JOAQUIN

No dude. I don't want to. We should stay together.

TOPHER

Aren't you going to see Vanessa? You'll probably take off with her man.

JOAQUIN

No dude. You can come with us.

TOPHER

No dude. I'm taking Paul up on his offer. You go have fun. I'll see you later at the Suburban to burn with those guys.

JOAQUIN

They said we could stay at the motel with them so make sure you get there before they take off. I don't want to sleep under the bridge.

TOPHER

No worries. Take off.

Topher takes off into the parking lot. Joaquin pulls out the two tickets and begins walking toward an entrance gate. A SCALPER with a Giant's t-shirt stands nearby.

SCALPER

Tickets. Only ten over face value.
Tickets.

The girl with the armpit hair who had asked Vanessa for a ticket walks by Joaquin with her finger in the air indicating one.

ARMPIT HAIR GIRL

Miracle. I need a miracle.

Joaquin shrugs.

JOAQUIN

Could sell it. No, fuck it.

He jogs up to the armpit hair girl and taps her shoulder. She turns around.

ARMPIT HAIR GIRL

Are you divine? Can you make miracles?

Joaquin leans in.

JOAQUIN

Just call me San Joaquin.

He hands her the ticket.

INT. GIANTS STADIUM--CONCOURSE -- LATER

Joaquin walks the halls scanning for Vanessa through the hippie masses swirling about.

He makes it to his section. He looks at the ticket to confirm he's at the right place.

He sits and watches the people down a few rows spill over the border wall and down to the field where they hop the metal divider fence.

Security guards with yellow wind-breakers reading Staff chase down some of the wall hoppers. Few are caught but the ones who are treated roughly by the guards.

The stadium fills.

The evening falls in fast forward.

The opening band comes and goes and the world is dark.

In the distance, the Grateful Dead come on and the light show begins in a burst.

Joaquin keeps scanning his section. He keeps looking behind him at the stairs hoping Vanessa would be there.

People dance around him. Smoke wafts by. The orgiastic atmosphere writhes with music, sweat, and sex.

Joaquin keeps watch. She never comes. He never leaves his seat.

The show ends and Joaquin, despondent, makes his way out into the crowd.

PARKING LOT

Joaquin with his head down navigates the crowd and makes it back to Davis's station wagon and the Suburban. The others are there partying including Topher.

Happy as puppy, Topher trots over to Joaquin.

TOPHER

Hey brother, how was your show?

Joaquin lifts his head.

JOAQUIN

She didn't show up.

Topher cringes for a second.

TOPHER
Rough buddy. Did you at least have
fun dancing?

JOAQUIN
Didn't dance. These guys ready to
go.

TOPHER
I think so but listen. Paul said
we could stay with them.

JOAQUIN
The Jahweh dude?

Topher nods his head rapidly. His pupils are dilated.

TOPHER
Yeah, they have room, food and will
let us travel with them.

JOAQUIN
What's the catch?

TOPHER
No catch. Like I said they're
cool.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN
No. I don't think so. Let's just
stay with these guys.

Topher steps back and splays out his hands. He shrugs.

TOPHER
I'm going to stay with Paul.
Already told him I would.

Joaquin crosses his arms.

JOAQUIN
I'm not going.

TOPHER
That's cool. Do what you want.
Just stopped by to grab my gear
anyway.

Topher begins to head to the Suburban and Joaquin grabs his
shoulder.

JOAQUIN

Be safe.

Topher looks over his shoulder and winks.

TOPHER

Don't worry. If they get weird I can take them.

Joaquin's hand slips down. He steps away.

Topher grabs his gear and walks over to the guys standing in front of Davis's station wagon. He says his goodbye and heads out.

Joaquin watches his friend merge with the crowd and then a shiny lighter catches his eye on the ground. He picks it up and flicks it. It lights once and then fizzles. He tries again and it won't light.

INT. MOTEL ROOM -- LATER-- NIGHT

Smoke wafts in thick curls around the room. Chuck and Spencer sit on one bed doing bong hits.

Wally cleans his camera at the table. Graham reclines on the other bed sipping a beer and Joaquin is at the foot watching an old TV.

Joaquin goes over to the window and looks out. Dead Head walk by and give him the peace sign. He waves.

WALLY

Hey Joaquin, grab me a beer will ya?

JOAQUIN

Sure. Can I have one Graham?

GRAHAM

That's what they're there for.

Joaquin goes to the chest where the TV sits. Below is a cooler. He gets two beers.

Joaquin hands a beer to Wally and cracks his. He takes a sip.

Three hard bangs on the door startle them all. Chuck rushes to hide the bong. Joaquin looks around frantically and puts the beer on the cooler. Spencer jumps up and looks through the peephole.

Spencer, relaxed, turns around rolling his eyes and shaking his head.

SPENCER

It's only Jesse, Kimber and Raquel.

GRAHAM

Almost forgot they were showing up.

Spencer opens the door and three pretty girls, all preppie-hippie chic, come in with glowing faces.

Jesse, 17, striking, long straight black hair, Helen of Troy beautiful leads the way. Behind her Kimber, 17 but looks 25, with deep eyes with a soft but sexy pouting face. Then Raquel, 18, coy, almost exotic, the most cosmopolitan of the three, saunters in and nothing seemingly impresses her.

The girls have on similar Preppie Hippie shorts and floral tops like most of the suburban girls at the shows but their accessories show their wealth. They are clearly intoxicated.

Joaquin turns away, blushing, for a second. He has dreamt about these girls since puberty began.

He slides over to the table as the girls take seats on the beds. Jesse bounces on the corner of the bed nearest to the table.

Chuck pulls out the bong and offers it to the girls. Raquel takes the pipe.

Chuck reclines, lifts his arm and points at Joaquin.

CHUCK

Ladies, ladies, if you didn't know already, that is Hunter's brother Joaquin.

Joaquin looks at the girls one at a time and timidly waves.

Raquel waves while blowing out her bong hit. Kimber stands up and begin making her way towards Joaquin. Jesse hops off the corner of the bed and as she lands she gives Joaquin a kiss on the cheek.

JESSE

Cheers darling. Where is Hunter?

JOAQUIN

Back in Fairfield dealing with his move to NYC.

JESSE

That's right NYU this fall.

Joaquin nods and Kimber is upon him. She pulls Joaquin up from his seat to hug him and ends up squishing his face against her breasts. Joaquin's eyes expand. He is embarrassed as he hunches to hide an unexpected erection.

Kimber lets go. Joaquin plops back down on leans forward.

KIMBER

Hey Joaquin. Haven't seen you since your brother tutored me. Where you been?

JOAQUIN

I didn't go anywhere. I was in school. Walked by you in the hall almost everyday.

KIMBER

Really? No. Well, Fairfield High is huge. But anyway, you know, I think you might actually be cuter than your brother now.

Joaquin, embarrassed, fake snickers.

JOAQUIN

Thanks.

Over sped up time, the room fills with smoke as they party.

Wally and Chuck pass out.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM--WALKWAY -- LATER

Struggling to keep one eye open, Joaquin leans against the exterior wall of the motel room by the window. He smokes a cigarette with a shaky hand.

Kimber and Jesse come out. They flank Joaquin.

JOAQUIN

Hey.

They lean against the wall as well.

JESSE

Why are you outside?

Joaquin's red eyes slowly flutter.

JOAQUIN

To get away from the smoke.

JESSE

You came outside to get away from
the smoke to have a smoke?

JOAQUIN

Yup. That sounds silly doesn't it?

Joaquin chuckles.

KIMBER

So what brings you to the shows.

JOAQUIN

A girl.

KIMBER

How exciting. Have you seen her?

JOAQUIN

Yes.

JESSE

So, how's it going?

JOAQUIN

She said she was probably going to
be somewhere but didn't show up
even though I told her I'd be
there.

KIMBER

That's not good.

JESSE

Yeah. Not good.

JOAQUIN

Why? Lots of things could happen
to have made her not see me.

KIMBER

Hate to break it to you but if a
girl is interested she'd be there.
Trust me. Right Jesse?

JESSE

Kimber's right Joaquin.

JOAQUIN

(sad)
What can I do?

KIMBER
Nothing. Move on.

JESSE
Have fun.

Joaquin slides to the ground. The girls bend down and squat beside him.

He rubs his forehead with the palm of his hand that is holding the cigarette.

KIMBER
Don't worry. You're young and there'll be plenty of girls. Don't be sad.

JESSE
Look at your brother Hunter, girls everywhere in Fairfield County are after him and you're cuter.

JOAQUIN
That's the problem. It sucks being Hunter's little brother.

Jesse leans over and kisses him on the cheek.

JESSE
You're going to do really well with the ladies in a few years. Trust me. Hey, could you help us get Raquel down to our room? The guys are all asleep.

JOAQUIN
Sure.

EXT. GIANT'S STADIUM-PARKING LOT -- MORNING

The Suburban parks in a spot. They guys get out in pretty rough shape. The sun burns the sky above. Sunglasses come out. Wally has his camera slung around his neck.

The parking lot is fairly full but quiet all save the noise from the nearby roads. In cars, buses, on hoods and on the ground between cars, Dead Heads are strung about in different states of sleep or wakefulness.

The five guys from Fairfield, walk down the rows of cars and vehicles looking for Davis's station wagon. Wally snaps photographs of rubbish, sleeping people, grills, and vomit.

Joaquin looks around like he found a set of ancient ruins.

At the station wagon, they find Davis asleep on the hood.

In the distance, a repeating chant can be heard just over the traffic noise. It gets closer.

CHANTERS

(soft)

Wake up hippies. Wake up! Wake up
hippies. Wake up!

The chant repeats, gets closer and stops.

Chuck taps Davis. Davis slowly opens his eyes and shield them from the sun.

DAVIS

Hey Chuckie, what's up?

CHUCK

Not much yet bro, just coming by to
say hello.

The clapping sound of jogging shoes on pavement can be heard. The chant begins again and is louder.

DAVIS

What the fuck? Not here.

GRAHAM

What not here?

DAVIS

Hey Graham, down at RFK last year a
bunch of Marines ran through the
lot every morning chanting shit.

A row of guys in blue t-shirts come running around the corner.

CHANTERS

(loud)

Wake up hippies. Wake up! Wake up
Hippies. Wake up!

The column of jogging men gets close and the police cadet emblem for a local NJ police department can be seen on their chests.

Joaquin eyes the guys as they run by.

JOAQUIN

Those aren't Marines. Looks like
police cadets.

Davis slides off the hood. He stretches as he stands up
straight. He yawns. This causes Spencer to yawn.

DAVIS

Fucking Feds probably spread the
word to local law enforcement to
harass us. Fucking fascists.

Joaquin grabs Chucks shoulder.

JOAQUIN

I'm going to go find Topher and
Vanessa. You guys are going to be
around right?

CHUCK

Sure my brother. We'll be here if
you need us.

Joaquin smiles and shoulder bumps Chuck.

JOAQUIN

Right on. Later. Yo Davis, I'll
be back for a ticket.

He waves as he turns and walks away.

DAVIS

One will be waiting.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATER

Joaquin eagerly searches for Topher. He gets sight of the
black Jahweh bus and heads for it. The activity around him
increases as vendors set up and drum circles form. Smoke
wafts overhead.

At the Jahweh bus, Paul sets up a fold out table and sees
Joaquin coming. He stops and rubs his hands together.

PAUL

Hello brother. We missed you last
night. We had a wonderful time
with your friend Topher.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Where is he?

Paul looks up at the sun and closes his eyes. Five seconds go by and he looks down on Joaquin who crosses his arms.

PAUL

He went out into the scene. He said he would be back before the show.

Joaquin nods his head and shift his weight on his feet.

JOAQUIN

Okay. Thanks.

PAUL

Any time young one. You are welcome here.

Joaquin forces a smile and disappears into the thickening crowd.

In front of a pickup truck with an enclosed bed, Joaquin comes across a circle of people playing guitars. Topher is one of them. Joaquin lets out slow breath and sighs in relief.

Topher sees Joaquin and stops playing. He exits the circle.

TOPHER

Hey bro, want to join in?

JOAQUIN

No, don't feel like it. You all right?

Topher puts on a face of fake shock.

TOPHER

No dude it was awful. I got free food and got to dance right below Jerry on the floor.

Joaquin shakes his head.

JOAQUIN

Don't be a dick Topher.

TOPHER

You worry too much. Listen, come over here.

Topher puts his arm around Joaquin and they walk a few steps over.

JOAQUIN

What?

TOPHER

Listen, we can ride with the Jahwehs but they guys I meet right here are actual Family. Totally cool and will let us roll with them if we help them peddle.

JOAQUIN

Peddle what?

TOPHER

Whatever.

Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN

Thought the Family was all Mafia like?

TOPHER

No dude, they just skate on schwag. No posers man, they know if your hip. Plus, they have killer buds. You in?

JOAQUIN

I have to find Vanessa. Still hope I can link up with her.

Topher steps back and puts his hands up.

TOPHER

That chick is playing pretend man. Bail on her Keen and let's get this adventure going.

JOAQUIN

All I do is think about her. I'm not letting go before I even start.

Topher steps back.

TOPHER

Do what you want but right now chill with me and I'll introduce you to these guy.

Joaquin nods and shrugs at the same time. He tugs on his collar.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-LUXURY SUITE

Vanessa and Taylor lie next to each other on top of the covers of the large bed. In the bed next to them Carlos and Melody are asleep. They roll over and light cigarettes.

TAYLOR

When do you want to head over?

VANESSA

An hour before the show. Don't feel like tripping there all day. These hits have high mike count and it's way too hot out there. We'll drop a few hours before.

TAYLOR

Whatever you wish. So you ran into Hunter's brother right?

VANESSA

I did. He looked happy but sort of lost.

TAYLOR

He's still a kid.

VANESSA

Yeah, he needs to grow up.

TAYLOR

You know what? We should dose with him? Give him the acid test.

VANESSA

All right.

TAYLOR

I'm not baby-sitting if he freaks out.

VANESSA

Me neither.

EXT. PAVING LOT--LATER--NOON

Under the heavy sun, Topher and Joaquin sit at the circle where the people have stopped playing guitars for the moment.

A few guys get up and leave.

Topher points to JAMMER, 20, braided hair, a fairly muscular guy for a hippie.

Jammer reaches over. Joaquin and he shake hands.

JAMMER
I'm Jammer. You are?

JOAQUIN
Joaquin, but it's easier to call me Keen.

Jammer smiles and strums a chord.

JAMMER
Nice to meet you Keen. It seems my colleagues have left to attend to some chores. You guys want to toke?

Topher nods.

JAMMER
Cool.

Two pretty girls come over and stand behind Jammer. They like photo-negatives of each other. SHINE is blonde and has pure white skin. BLISS has jet black hair with dark olive skin. Jammer looks over his shoulder at them.

JAMMER
Hey ladies. This is Topher and Keen. These are the lovely Shine and Bliss.

The girls both wave. Shine flips her hair back.

SHINE
Hi Topher. Hi Keen. I'm Shine

Joaquin waves.

TOPHER
Hi Shine. Hi Bliss. Love your names.

Shine flutters her eyes.

SHINE
Thanks.

Bliss rubs her fingertips together.

BLISS
Thanks.

JAMMER

Would you two care to join us for a session?

SHINE

Right on.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK BED -- MOMENTS LATER

Shines slips up to Topher as he nestles next to a round window in the corner. Bliss and Jammer lean against the cab's back window as Joaquin, slightly hunched, sits next to them. Jammer pulls out a cylindrical piece of aluminum foil from his crotch.

Joaquin looks surprised and Topher scoots closer to Shine.

JAMMER

Here's the deal. I got fifty Thai sticks to peddle. You guys help me out and you both can roll with us from here to RFK, Deer Creek, Alpine Valley, Cal Expo, and the Greek. Got major hookups on the way. But before you guys think about it. How about a little taste test.

Topher smiles and nods. Joaquin tugs at his collar.

TOPHER

Cool. Fire it up.

Bliss hands Jammer a pipe and he packs it. He rolls his neck and lights a match. He puffs it until it glows.

They pass around the pipe. With each round Joaquin and Topher melt down. Their eyes become slits.

The session ends with Jammer ominously chuckling. It is staggered laugh and he rubs his stomach. Bliss runs her hand on his chest. Joaquin looks away.

Shine begins to rub Topher's leg and he looks at her hand. He smiles. Shine pulls him close and they make out.

Joaquin sees Topher and Shine so he looks away only to see Jammer and Bliss caressing each other's genitals.

Joaquin freezes, closes his eyes for a second and takes deep breath.

JOAQUIN

I think I'm too high. Gotta go.

Joaquin tries to slip away but Jammer grabs his shoulder.

JAMMER

It's good man. Join us and you'll feel all right. Bliss is awesome and I'll teach you things I bet you never heard of.

Joaquin grabs Jammer's hand and pulls it off his shoulder.

JOAQUIN

No dude, I don't do that. I got girl to see.

Bliss tongues Jammer's ear as she winks at Joaquin. She stops.

BLISS

Don't worry about your girlfriend. This isn't anything. Just fun.

Joaquin pushes his way over to the hatch and pushes the window flap open. The light falls across Topher and Shine who are furiously groping each other.

Jammer puts his hand up.

JAMMER

No strings attached.

JOAQUIN

No, gotta go. Topher.

Topher looks to Joaquin as Shine keeps launching her sexual attack.

JOAQUIN

Come on.

TOPHER

Go ahead man. I'll find you later.

Topher returns to his groping and kissing.

Joaquin climbs out the back hatch.

PARKING LOT

Through the swirling masses of Dead Heads and freaks, Joaquin huffs and puffs as he tries to regain his composure.

He shuffles down the aisles of vehicles. He rubs his face with his palms and looks to be on the verge of tears.

The sound of a woman crying and of feet slapping on the cement grabs his attention. Joaquin turns to see a rail thin man with no shirt convulsing on the ground.

A couple of people rush over and subdue the man's flailing limbs. Joaquin steps back.

JOAQUIN

Harsh.

A GUY, early 20's, with blonde dreads steps next to Joaquin.

GUY

Way harsh bra. Looks like the dude got dusted. Fucken sad shit.

JOAQUIN

What do you mean dusted?

The guy eyes Joaquin up and down.

GUY

Nice to be innocent. He's on Angel Dust kid.

JOAQUIN

PCP? I didn't think people used that anymore.

GUY

Making a come back along with D.M.T.

JOAQUIN

Should I get some help.

GUY

No kid. You get help he goes to the pokey. Just leave him be.

JOAQUIN

Oh.

EXT. PARKING LOT-DAVIS'S STATION WAGON. -- LATER

Chuck sits on the hood and Davis lies on Navajo blanket covering the windshield. The nearby drum circle plays with heavy beats.

Joaquin approaches with his hand in his pockets. His face is pale and sullen.

CHUCK

Hey my brother, how's the scene treating ya?

Davis shields his eyes from the sun that breaks through a patch of dark clouds above.

JOAQUIN

It's not what I thought. Thought it would be, you know, harmonious and cool.

CHUCK

I thought that before too but don't let a few bad dudes ruin your good time.

JOAQUIN

Didn't think there'd be like cliques you know.

CHUCK

Sort of like high school isn't it? But there are more drugs, well a little more drugs.

JOAQUIN

Funny. Just thought it'd be different that's all. Thought I'd be free from all the craziness and maybe find out what life's about.

CHUCK

Keen, shows are for fun. It ain't a place to find yourself but be careful because you sure can get lost.

JOAQUIN

Seems that way. Would never have thought that before.

Davis sits up.

DAVIS

Joaquin, the scene is a scene. Different players, different day, but it goes on anyway and doesn't stop. So have fun and just don't cross Family and you'll be fine.

CHUCK

Especially when they're selling nitrous. Heard a story about a dude, who took a prime gas pumping space in a lot in Landover and after that he pretty much got the shun. Poor guy got sold bunk everything.

Joaquin's eyes go wide.

JOAQUIN

Fuck this. I'm going to find Topher. I'll be back.

DAVIS

Okay. By the way, I got your ticket. Just come by before the show.

JOAQUIN

Thanks man.

Joaquin makes his way back to Jammer's pickup truck. He carefully investigates through the small windows. There aren't any people inside the bed's cabin.

He clenches his fist and grits his teeth. He looks up to the dark stormy clouds.

JOAQUIN

What am I going to do? (pause)
Looks like rain.

He takes a deep breath and puts his hand out. A rain drop falls onto his palm.

JOAQUIN

Feels like rain. (pause)
Screw it. I'm finding Vanessa.

INT. GIANTS STADIUM--CONCOURSE -- EVENING

Joaquin breaks off from the group of Chuck, Graham, Spencer, Wally, Jesse, Kimber and Raquel.

Chuck puts his finger up and then trots through the crowd, some people still damp from the recent rain, over to catch Joaquin.

He taps Joaquin's shoulder.

CHUCK

Yo Keen, good luck finding that girl and don't worry about Topher. He'll be fine. Letting you know we're going to camp after the show but then head back to Fairfield in the morning. So if you're going to stay, you need to grab your gear later.

JOAQUIN

Cool. Thanks.

CHUCK

During the Drums-Space jam we'll be out around here if you want to join us. And watch out for people with spray bottles that look way too high. They might have liquid LSD in the water.

JOAQUIN

Thanks. See you later.

Joaquin waves and blends with the crowd in the hall. He begins his search for Vanessa.

Through the halls he roams. Passes by group of guys playing Hacky-Sack, people leaning against the walls so high that they can barely stand, and collections of suburban Dead Heads chugging beers by the vendors.

Cops patrol in groups of three. As Joaquin passes by a set of cops, an emaciated man in a purple dress and torn t-shirt focuses in on Joaquin. The man locks in and grabs Joaquin's shoulder.

EMACIATED MAN

Shrooms, paper, liquid. Come on little brother what you need. I got all the light from the sun.

Joaquin forces a smile.

JOAQUIN

I'm good man.

The man's face twitches.

EMACIATED MAN

Good good. Spread the light my brother. Spread the light.

Joaquin picks up his gait and then the crowds surge into the stadium through the tunnels to the seats. In front of Joaquin, a guy with a Dancing Bear baseball cap perks up.

GUY WITH CAP

Wow, opening with Feel like a
Stranger. This show is going to be
special.

The guy pulls out a piece of paper and a pencil and jots something down. He then runs up the tunnel.

Joaquin slowly walks through the tunnel. The light show can be seen at the end.

INT. GIANTS STADIUM--CONCOURSE -- LATER

Intermission has come. Joaquin has made his way back into the concourse to search for Vanessa.

Many sweaty, exhausted people line the halls in various states of disarray. Joaquin passes by a guy not much older than he who is just wearing boxer shorts. The guy taps Joaquin's leg as he walks by.

BOXER SHORTS

Hey bro, that Drums-Space was
killer, ya got an extra smoke?

Joaquin flips the guy one out of his pack. The guy gives him the peace sign as Joaquin walks away.

The crowds in the hall thin as the second set begins. A girl with five beaded necklaces skips by Joaquin as she taps her fingertips together.

BEADED NECKLACE GIRL

Foolish Heart, Foolish heart, yeah
they started the second set with
Foolish heart.

Joaquin passes through a group of Spinners. He makes his way around the bend of the hall. Two cops haul away a strung out guy.

Joaquin gets out of the cop's path and across the way he sees Shine and Bliss dancing together. Their tops are translucent from the sweat. Joaquin's eyes bulge.

Bliss sees Joaquin and smiles. She rushes over.

BLISS

Join us. Topher and Jammer will be
back in a bit.

Joaquin waves her off.

JOAQUIN

No, I have to find somebody.
Thanks.

He pushes away through the crowd and wipes his brow.

Visibly shaken, head down, Joaquin passes by another tunnel
entrance and just glances over. There Vanessa dances next to
Taylor. Her hands and finger roll like water in front of her
face as she shimmies and bounces.

The song ends from inside the stadium. Applause and cheers
resound. Vanessa claps.

With a beaming smile, Joaquin approaches Vanessa and Taylor
who are looking away.

TAYLOR

Man, still freaking about when
Mickey played the Beam during
Drums.

VANESSA

Lovely, crazy. So peeking right
now. Hope they play Morning Dew.

Joaquin taps Vanessa's shoulder. She spins around.

Her face brightens and she grabs Joaquin in a big bear hug.

Taylor steps back and leans on the wall. Another song starts
and people in the hall and tunnel start dancing.

Joaquin pulls Vanessa to the side.

Taylor gives Joaquin the peace sign and nods once.

TAYLOR

Hey little Chandler, having fun?

Joaquin shrugs.

JOAQUIN

Not exactly.

TAYLOR

That's sacrilege kid. Heresy.
Need to get you some fun.

Joaquin turns to Vanessa and looks at her deeply.

JOAQUIN

You look beautiful. Glad I found you.

VANESSA

Me too. Sorry I didn't go see you before but things came up.

JOAQUIN

I get it. It's been a weird couple of days.

Vanessa looks at Taylor.

VANESSA

So what do you want?

JOAQUIN

Want?... I just want to be with you.

VANESSA

You want to be with me. Okay then be with with me mind, body and soul. Take this.

She reaches inside her pocket, looks around, and slips out a square of aluminum foil. She unfolds it. Blotter acid is revealed with little airplane on each square.

Joaquin puts his hand up in refusal.

JOAQUIN

No thanks. I don't want to dose and lose my mind. Not ready for that.

VANESSA

Come on. Take it. We'll have a fun trip.

JOAQUIN

No. I'm not into that now.

She folds the foil back and stuffs it back in her pocket. She looks disappointed.

VANESSA

Guess you are just a child. I had hope for you but I can't hang out with kids. I'm going to dance now.

Taylor, still leaning on the wall, smirks and then starts dancing.

JOAQUIN

What? I thought you liked me?

Vanessa looks up to the ceiling and then right at Joaquin's wrinkled face.

VANESSA

You're a nice kid but still a kid.
Sorry, I'm going to dance now.

Joaquin's shoulders slump.

JOAQUIN

I came to these shows because of you. I've dealt with a bunch of insanity because I thought I love you.

Vanessa shakes her head and puts her hand on his shoulder.

VANESSA

You don't even know me. All that other stuff was the Ex. Man, you really are a child. I'm going to dance now.

Joaquin tugs on his collar. His head tilts down.

JOAQUIN

That's all it was. None of it's real.

He walks away. She starts dancing.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- LATER

Joaquin walks out of an entrance gate into Giants Stadium while the show goes on. The parking lot is fairly quiet. Those who didn't get in pass each other with glances.

Music plays from car radios. Traffic noise can be heard. Joaquin makes his way towards Davis's station wagon and the Suburban.

A high pitched hiss catches Joaquin's attention. He stops and sees a man filling up balloons in front of a RV. A line of ten people stand waiting. Joaquin shrugs.

Joaquin now with a balloon finds a dark space between two cars and sits down against a tire. He huffs. He huffs.

All goes black.

DREAM

Joaquin walk in a negative world of the parking lot scene. What is dark is light. What is black is white.

He comes across a few Spinners twirling. They spin away into the sky like helicopters. From above Topher descends down a hemp vine. Two snakes are wrapped around his neck.

JOAQUIN

I was wrong. This isn't what I thought.

TOPHER (VANESSA'S VOICE)

Of course it's not. This palace is broken down at the end of a dead end street.

The sky falls.

BACK TO SCENE

Face down on the pavement next to a puddle, drool coming out of the corner of his mouth, Joaquin wakes up. He wipes away spit and gravel as he pushes himself up. A guy with a red bandanna peeks over.

RED BANDANNA

Yo kid, you all right? Thought I saw you take a digger.

Joaquin blinks hard and then stabilizes himself.

JOAQUIN

I'm okay. Thanks.

RED BANDANNA

Watch out for the hippie crack man. Whippets will steal your face.

Joaquin waves the guy off. He looks down to the puddle. He picks up a small asphalt pebble and tosses it into the puddle. It ripples.

JOAQUIN

Ripple.

He looks to the balloon casing on the ground.

Tears well up in his eyes.

He pulls on his collar and stretches it. His eyes close. Held back emotion surges. He whimpers.

Joaquin puts his palms on his forehead. His sobbing becomes overwhelming.

He hits his forehead with his palms.

JOAQUIN
Stupid, stupid, stupid.

He stops weeping with a deep staggered breath. His eyes open full of tears.

JOAQUIN
This is all wrong. It's not
freedom at all.

SUBURBAN--LATER--SHOW IS OVER

All the people from Fairfield are there, guys and girls, Topher too, and Joaquin walks up upon the revelers. Chuck stands next Wally on the outside of group.

CHUCK
Dude, I liked that version of
Knocking on Heaven's Door. It was
good encore.

WALLY
Wasn't bad but every show I go to
ends with Knockin.

Joaquin taps Chuck's shoulder. He spins around.

CHUCK
Hey brother Chandler, sorry we
missed you for a session during
Drums but so, did you have a good
show?

Crestfallen and with his head slightly titled to the side, Joaquin tugs on his collar.

JOAQUIN
I left before the second set ended.
Sorry I missed the encore though.
I like that Dylan song. Hey, you
think I could get a ride back home
with you guys?

CHUCK

Sure brother. You're always welcome. Here's the deal. We're going to head back to CT tonight but along the way we're going to find a place to camp. Maybe Cranberry park in Norwalk.

JOAQUIN

Cool. Got to go tell Topher.

Joaquin approaches Topher. His eyes are wild as he looks upon Joaquin.

TOPHER

Hey bro. You missed out. You should have stayed.

JOAQUIN

I'm leaving.

Topher squints and leans to Joaquin.

TOPHER

(surprised)
What the fuck do you mean?

JOAQUIN

Going home. This isn't for me.

TOPHER

Vanessa bailed on you huh?

JOAQUIN

It wasn't real in the first place and this whole scene isn't what I thought. I'm going home.

TOPHER

No dude, stay. You promised you'd stay. (deep breath) Don't worry, Jammer will hook us up. Or if you want I can get David to give us ride with the Jahwehs? You can't go home. You'll be stuck in Fairfield all summer. Fuck that.

JOAQUIN

So I guess you're not coming back with me?

TOPHER

Fuck no.

JOAQUIN
 Promise me you'll be safe.

TOPHER
 Of course I'll be safe. No
 worries.

JOAQUIN
 Okay then.

TOPHER
 You really leaving?

JOAQUIN
 (solemn)
 Yeah.

Joaquin's eyes well up. They hug.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- 1-95--_MORNING

The Suburban is stuck in traffic but after they get around an accident the vehicle moves along. A green sign for Fairfield comes up.

SUBURBAN--INSIDE

Wally snaps photos through the windows. Graham drives. Spencer is in the passenger seat. Chuck and Joaquin sit in the back surrounded by gear.

CHUCK
 That's rough brother but there are
 plenty of pretty ladies. And
 here's the thing too man, you're
 way too serious. Going to shows is
 about fun. Nothing more. All that
 other other stuff you're looking
 for, you already have it. Just got
 to let it be and be yourself.

JOAQUIN
 Thanks man. And thanks gain for
 the ride.

From the passenger seat, Spencer turns around.

SPENCER
 Next stop Fairfield, thanks for
 flying... oh shit. Cops.

Red and blue lights flash through the vehicle as the siren blares. A state trooper's cruiser is bearing down on them.

WALLY

Oh shit.

GRAHAM

Do I pull over? Where is he?

CHUCK

Not good.

The sirens get louder. The lights brighter.

Joaquin looks back quickly and buckles his seat belt.

The cruiser passes by.

A collective sigh of relief.

CHUCK

That was close. Almost pinched.
(deep exhale) Damn Staties always
targeting cars with Dead stickers.
Well we made it kids.

EXT. JOAQUIN'S HOUSE -- LATER

Around the back Joaquin enters through the back door.

MUD-ROOM

With his bags in hand he creeps in. A pot of water whistles on the stove. Joaquin knows he is caught. He enters the kitchen.

His mother stands at the stove with a tea cup. She sees Joaquin and isn't surprised.

MRS. CHANDLER

So following the Grateful Dead
didn't suit you after all.

JOAQUIN

What? I uh...

MRS. CHANDLER

Please Joaquin, like I didn't know
the Appalachian trail hike wasn't a
cover. Let me guess, you got that
idea from your brother. I knew
about him too.

(MORE)

MRS. CHANDLER (CONT'D)

Glad you decided to come back.
Makes things easier too since your
father will be here soon to discuss
the future.

JOAQUIN

Okay. I'm going to go unpack and
clean up.

MRS. CHANDLER

Please do. I can smell you from
here. And also, now that your
father doesn't live with us, no
smoking in the house.

DINING ROOM--LATER

The whole family is present at the
table.

MR. CHANDLER

When the divorce is final I'll be
moving to California. Joaquin
you'll be living here. And believe
me, this is the best thing for all
of us.

Joaquin sits back and tugs on his collar. His face is sunken
and flushed. Hunter slaps his hands on the table.

HUNTER

Good. You two need to get on with
your lives. Kind of sad it took
this long for you both to finally
act. Could have saved me and Keen
a lot of grief if you'd just done
it earlier.

MRS. CHANDLER

But we wanted to save you from the
stress of this.

HUNTER

And you just created more.

JOAQUIN

Just don't go off get married to
people half your age okay.

MR. CHANDLER

Don't worry about those things son,
just know that we love you. Hope
you can adjust to the change.

Joaquin leans forward. His chin tilts up slightly.

JOAQUIN
Everything changes.

MR. CHANDLER
All right. Your mother and I have
things to discuss. You two are
excused.

The boys leave.

HALLWAY

As Joaquin is about to reach a door, Hunter lightly punches him on the back. Joaquin turns. His face is wrinkled with sadness and tinted with anger. Joaquin blinks out tears.

HUNTER
Sorry about what happened Keen.

JOAQUIN
Nothing you could have done about
mom and dad.

HUNTER
Not that. Vanessa.

JOAQUIN
Had to find out on my own. But
next time, I'll listen. Thanks
Hunter.

HUNTER
Just don't follow after...

He puts his hand on Joaquin's shoulder.

JOAQUIN
Don't worry, I don't follow any
more.

Hunter then punches Joaquin on the shoulder. Joaquin grimaces and rubs his shoulder. Hunter winks.

HUNTER
It's all you now.

In his room, Joaquin walks over to desk where the Doors book lies on the corner. He picks it up and goes to his small book shelf. He puts the book away.

He scans the shelf for another book and finds "A Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley and pulls it out.

EXT. FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY -- MORNING

On a sunny hillside parking lot, Steve sits in a blue steel station wagon and waves out the driver's side window towards a brick hall (Canisius Hall). The sound of the passenger side door is heard.

STEVE

Hey Mr. Daly. Long time.

Mr. Daly waves as he stands next to a cute girl with long black hair wearing a Fishbone t-shirt. The girl waves.

Steve turns to face the steering wheel. We don't see the passenger seat.

STEVE

You dog. That chick is hot Keen.
Let's go.

Steve cranks up the radio. He peels out and tears through the back gates to the campus.

EXT. TOWN PARK--GRAVEL PARKING LOT---LATER

Out of Steve's station wagon, the end of Faith No More's Epic blasts. The song turns off. The doors to the vehicle open.

Steve gets out of the driver's seat. Mike's bus pulls in the lot by a sign that reads Perry's Pond.

The bus parks. And Steve walks over. Mike gets out.

STEVE

Major yo, what's up guy? Been a while Mikey Mike.

MIKE

Hey Steve. Not much. Finally got some time off work. Can't believe the summer's almost over?

STEVE

Yeah, got something else you ain't gonna believe. Yo, Keen.

Joaquin gets out of the passenger seat. He has short hair and is wearing a black t-shirt.

Mike is taken back. His face drops in disbelief.

MIKE

Holy shit. Keen you're all GQ.
Hell of change.

JOAQUIN

Everything changes bro. Can't live
in the past.

Joaquin pulls out a cigarette and lights it as he approaches.

Mike and Joaquin bump shoulders while they grasp each others' hands.

STEVE

Listen to this Mike. Keen and I've
been jamming. Kid cut his hair and
now he's better guitar player.
Like a reverse Sampson or some
shit.

MIKE

Really. You going Metal Keen?

JOAQUIN

No. Just being me.

MIKE

So you heard about Topher?

Joaquin blows a puff of smoke in the air and slowly looks around to Mike. He lifts his hand to tug on his collar but stops and puts his hand down.

JOAQUIN

Sure. Federal Marshall brought him
back.

STEVE

Poor kid. They put it in the paper
too. My mom saw it.

JOAQUIN

Looks like he's got Rehab time in
his future. Better than jail
though.

MIKE

It's all messed up. He didn't even
get caught with anything. Another
kid who doesn't fit the mold so
send him to Rehab.

STEVE

Rehab's a joke. It's like colonial times when they put people in the stocks to shame them.

JOAQUIN

At least he's not hurt. I felt bad leaving him but he wouldn't come back.

MIKE

He does what he wants man. So what are you doing Keen? Been a while.

The guys begin walking towards the hiking trail.

JOAQUIN

Stopped smoking pot. Listening to new music. Playing guitar. Writing songs. Writing other stuff.

STEVE

Kid goes to classes in summer with Mr. Daly when he doesn't have to. Idiot.

JOAQUIN

It's not like I get grades or it counts. It's kind of fun.

MIKE

Right on. You good otherwise?

JOAQUIN

I'm finding my way.

MIKE

What new music are you talking about?

Joaquin stops. They all stop and stand at a split rail fence entrance. The curving path in front of them leads into the green woods.

JOAQUIN

Steve turned me on to this band Faith No More. They're amazing.

MIKE

I think I heard something on the radio once. It was like metal with a keyboard player. Interesting stuff.

STEVE

It's great. The new album is called The Real Thing. You can borrow the tape if you want. It'll change your life.

MIKE

Thanks Steve. Hey Joaquin, you going to the fall shows?

JOAQUIN

No. I'm done with the scene. Not what I thought it would be. My problem was I was looking to the past to figure out my future. Wasn't being myself. Not doing that anymore. Plus, you can't live in the past. It only holds back the present.

Joaquin looks up to the leaves rustling in the wind.

MIKE

Glad to see you're doing all right. That Vanessa thing was messy.

JOAQUIN

Way over that. Met a girl in my writing class. Cool as hell. Hates the Dead.

Mike shakes his head and laughs. He drapes his arm around Joaquin and Steve.

STEVE

Amazing what chicks will do to a guy's head.

Joaquin wraps his arm around his friends.

JOAQUIN

It's one thing I wouldn't change. You guys ready? Let's go.

They walk onto the hiking trail.

(If possible Epic from Faith No More plays)

Fade out.