

ARMAGEDDON TIME

Written by

James Gray

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ARMAGEDDON TIME

1 EXT. THE CLOUDS

1

White. The CAMERA TILTS DOWN to SEE: a handful of some of the tallest older BUILDINGS in NEW YORK CITY.

We begin to PAN, AWAY FROM THE SKYLINE...THROUGH MIST...

Across the BRIDGE and the RIVER...toward...

QUEENS. And all those residential houses, and low-level buildings...

SMASH CUT TO:

2 INT. PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MORNING

2

SUPERIMPOSE THE LEGEND: "QUEENS, NEW YORK. FALL, 1980."

A public school: P.S. 173Q. A large SIXTH GRADE classroom. The desks and books and blackboard are worn, perhaps as much as 30 years old; cursive handwriting templates line the top of the room and are yellowing with antiquity.

The classroom is INSANELY PACKED AND FILLED WITH THE ENERGY OF FORTY-FIVE CHILDREN.

It is a real mix of ethnicities: white, Black, Asian, Latino. Tall, short. Fat, skinny. In short, everyone looks different from everyone else.

The TEACHER, a diminutive man named MR. TURKELTAUB, is at the blackboard. He CLAPS HIS HANDS REPEATEDLY for ATTENTION:

MR. TURKELTAUB

Arrright, come on, settle down!

The CLASS QUIETS. A beat. He begins:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

Welcome to first day of school. My name is Mr. Turkeltaub, and I hope you all had a good summer. Mine, on the other hand, was a little too short, but what else is new.

As Turkeltaub speaks, the CAMERA MOVES IN, not TO A CLOSE SHOT ON THE TEACHER, but rather to a CLOSE SHOT on:

A DRAWING, on a desk, over the shoulder of a student. Primitive, but not bad: a rendering of MR. TURKELTAUB, drawn in pencil, on white lined paper, in one of those black-with-white speckled "composition" books so popular with grade school.

REVEAL the "artist," a boy of twelve: PAUL GRAFF, red-haired and pale and freckled and bespectacled. He PLANTS his TONGUE in his cheek wall as he works. Over this image:

MR. TURKELTAUB (O.C.) (CONT'D)

You are in the sixth grade now,
which means every one of you has
added responsibility. Because you
are the leaders of this school.

CUT BACK to ANGLE ON TURKELTAUB as he looks at his book:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

Okay then...let's go. Jennifer
Ashkenazi?

A KID'S VOICE

Here!

ANGLE BACK ON PAUL, who looks around to see if anyone is looking. No one is. So with a smirk, he holds his drawing up to his classmates.

Many of the boys eye his masterpiece with curiosity as Mr. Turkeltaub continues to look at his attendee list. (The GIRLS ARE MUCH MORE DILIGENT AND ORDERLY, far better behaved.) A NOTE is passed to PAUL: "DRAW A TURKEY BODY!"

MR. TURKELTAUB

Keith Breslow?

ANOTHER KID'S VOICE

Here!

PAUL DRAWS a TURKEY BODY on Turkeltaub's portrait, then SHOWS the DRAWING AGAIN. LAUGHTER. TURKELTAUB LOOKS UP.

A BEAT OF SILENCE. Nothing. Back to the book:

MR. TURKELTAUB

Jonathan Davis?

In the BACK OF THE CLASSROOM: JOHNNY DAVIS, tall, Black, a year older than the other kids. He grins and stands:

JOHNNY DAVIS

(bad English accent)

The name's Bond--JAMES Bond!

The CLASS LAUGHS, and Paul turns to Johnny, smiles in approval. Another kid snatches the drawing, passes it AROUND.

MR. TURKELTAUB

Mr. Davis! You and I are old
friends at this point, and you KNOW
I will NOT tolerate any nonsense!
(death stare, then)
Joanne Dersch?

KID'S VOICE

Here...

Turkeltaub LOOKS UP, sees Paul's drawing being passed about.

MR. TURKELTAUB

Arrright, give me that! Come on--
YOU!

Paul panics. A fellow student sheepishly hands the drawing to the teacher. Turkeltaub looks at it.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

Who did this?

Silence. Paul quakes.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

Who DID this?!?

Silence again.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

If no one admits to it, there's no
gym. Who did this drawing?

(silence)

Okay. I'm counting to three, and
then there's no gym for a week.

(silence)

One.

(silence)

Two.

Paul STANDS. Doesn't say anything. CLASSMATES GIGGLE. Mr. Turkeltaub looks at his attendance book, walks over to him.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

What's your name?

PAUL GRAFF

Paul Graff.

Tears well up in Paul's eyes. Turkeltaub looks tenderly at him for a moment, then thinks better of it:

MR. TURKELTAUB
And you think this is appropriate?
(beat)
I'm ASKING you a question.

PAUL GRAFF
I...just wanted to make everyone
laugh.

MR. TURKELTAUB
Oh, a comedian. You wanna be Mr.
Popularity, is that it? Okay,
stand up there, in front.

PAUL WALKS TO THE FRONT OF THE ROOM. A KID'S VOICE calls out
a mistake on the teacher's name:

KID VOICE
Mr. Turkey--Turkeltaub? How many
loose-leafs will we need?

JOHNNY DAVIS stands, FLAPS his ARMS like a CHICKEN. PAUL,
and THE CLASS, BREAK INTO HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER.

MR. TURKELTAUB
JONATHAN DAVIS! Get down here!

Davis points to his own chest. Sotto:

JOHNNY DAVIS
Me...?

MR. TURKELTAUB
Yes, you! I'd think after last
year you might've grown up a
little, but I guess that'd be too
much to ask!

Turkeltaub grabs a desk, spins it violently to the front of
the room right near the blackboard. Davis takes his things
and makes his way to the FRONT OF THE CLASSROOM.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
No wonder it's your second time
through sixth grade with me!
'Cause you got nothing up here,
Mister--NOTHING!

Turkeltaub points to his HEAD.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Animal...

Davis has heard this, and the insult lands. He is humiliated, and sits in a solo desk right in front of the blackboard. Paul FACES the blackboard, standing right next to the seated JOHNNY DAVIS.

Then, A SOUND of CHIMES: it comes from a very old loudspeaker above the blackboard. A VOICE:

WOMAN'S VOICE (LOUDSPEAKER FUZZ)
Attention please, teachers and students. Would you please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States.

Everyone stands.

THE CLASS (O.C.)
*I pledge allegiance, to the flag,
of the United States of America.
And to the Republic, for which it
stands, one nation, under God,
invisible [the class gets it
wrong], with liberty and justice
for all.*

Someone makes a "RASPBERRY" NOISE:

MR. TURKELTAUB
HEY! HEY! SHUT IT, RIGHT NOW!

3 INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

3

Mr. Turkeltaub is trying to teach a math class. Paul is WASHING DOWN THE BLACKBOARD on the SIDE OF THE CLASSROOM. Davis pounds erasers. Turkeltaub is writing on the front blackboard, speaks aloud his writing:

MR. TURKELTAUB
Exchange...one ten...for ten
ones...

He turns around to the class and repeats it, like a mantra. Meanwhile, EDGAR ROMANELLI, a classmate, raises his hand:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
Exchange one ten for ten ones! And
that's how you subtract large
numbers! SUBTRACTION! Yes--

EDGAR ROMANELLI
I don't understand, Mr. Turkeytaub.

MR. TURKELTAUB
Turkletaub! I just told you,
Mister--?

EDGAR ROMANELLI
Edgar Romanelli.

MR. TURKELTAUB
 MISTER ROMANELLI. Were you
 listening? Repeat it to yourself.
 It's very clear if you LISTEN!
 Class? EXCHANGE ONE TEN FOR TEN
 ONES!

THE CLASS
 EXCHANGE ONE TEN FOR TEN ONES!

Every time Turkeltaub turns to the blackboard in front, his
 back to the class, PAUL does a DISCO TRAVOLTA MOVE. The
 CLASS CLOWN, for sure. LAUGHTER.

Turkeltaub, his back still to the classroom:

MR. TURKELTAUB
 Mr. Davis, I have eyes in the back
 of my head!

JOHNNY DAVIS
 I didn't do anything!

MR. TURKELTAUB
 Cut it out or you go to Principal
 Sebell's office!

We SEE a FLASH of GUILT across Paul's FACE; he LOOKS at
 Johnny.

4

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

4

An ellipse. The class is learning cursive. Paul stands in
 front of the blackboard. Turkeltaub hovers over students as
 they write:

MR. TURKELTAUB
 A "G" and an "S" aren't the same
 letter... (checks the clock)

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

Okay, all of you need to sign your permission slips. For a trip, next week--to the Guggenheim Museum. Now line up, against the wall, shortest to tallest--

The class utters a collective "YESSSS!" Johnny gets up, starts to walk to the door--as does Paul.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

No, not you, not the two of you. Gym is a privilege.
(to Johnny)
Especially not you. Sit back down. And when you hear my whistle for end of gym, out there, THAT'S when you can go home.
(to the rest of the class)
All right, let's go! Double file!

The CLASS DEPARTS, except for JOHNNY DAVIS and PAUL GRAFF.

MOMENTS LATER: ANGLE THROUGH WINDOW

The STRAINS of DISCO music. PAUL WATCHES as the class is spread out in the SCHOOLYARD, in LINES.

They are throwing beanbags in the air and catching them. After a while, we SEE/HEAR TURKELTAUB SHOUTING through an electric bullhorn:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

And...FREEZE!

Turkeltaub BLOWS HIS WHISTLE. Everyone STOPS throwing beanbags and FREEZES. Idiotic "exercise." Paul looks over to Johnny, who is sorting through small white CARDS.

PAUL GRAFF

Johnny?

JOHNNY DAVIS

Yeah?

PAUL GRAFF

I woulda, um, said something if you really got in trouble.

JOHNNY DAVIS

(shrugs; then)
Don't matter.

(MORE)

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

Turkey acts like he could see
behind him--like he's got *special*
powers and shit. But he don't ever
do nothing.

PAUL GRAFF

What're you looking at...?

JOHNNY DAVIS
Apollo mission patch stickers.

PAUL GRAFF
Oh wow, that's so cool...

JOHNNY DAVIS
My step-brother give them to me.
He's in the Air Force, down in
Florida.
(beat; re: outside)
Turkey's still playing that disco
shit.

PAUL GRAFF
(a laugh)
I know. And disco like, totally
sucks.

JOHNNY DAVIS
You know Kurtis Blow, Graff? Or
Sugar Hill Gang?

PAUL GRAFF
No, not really... But I have a lot
of records at home.

JOHNNY DAVIS
What d'you got?

PAUL GRAFF
I have...the Beatles' red and blue
albums? Which is basically all
their best songs. They might get
back together soon, I heard.

No reaction really from Davis, so:

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)
You could borrow 'em if you want.
You got a record player?

JOHNNY DAVIS
No. But I know somebody that does.

Then, A WHISTLE from BELOW/OUTSIDE, and TURKELTAUB'S VOICE:

MR. TURKELTAUB (O.S.)
And, FREEZE! ARRRIGHT! ENOUGH!

JOHNNY DAVIS
(snort; then)
He don't ever give the full period.

ANGLE ON THE YARD as it empties. Davis and Graff move to collect their things.

6

EXT. P.S. 173Q/"FRESH MEADOW LANE" - MOMENTS LATER

6

Paul and Johnny are walking away from the school toward a desolate street. They look at the Apollo Mission Patch stickers:

PAUL GRAFF
Cape Kennedy sounds so cool...with all the rockets, and palm trees, and everything.

JOHNNY DAVIS
Definitely. And the astronauts live down there, too.
(beat)
I could do that--join the Air Force and be a pilot, then go to astronaut school.

PAUL GRAFF
Yeah...that'd be amazing.

JOHNNY DAVIS
It's a lot of training, though. You gotta be like, super sharp.

PAUL GRAFF
(nods; then)
I--I like to build rockets. I'm gonna get a model of the Saturn V--the moon rocket.
(beat)
C'I see?

JOHNNY DAVIS

(as he hands it over)

I gotta be careful. I don't want Turkey to take 'em, like he took your drawing.

PAUL GRAFF

I know! But my mother's President of the P.T.A., and I bet she could get him in a lotta trouble.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Oh, THAT I wanna see. Turkey shitting hisself would be excellent.

Beat. They arrive at a bench. Johnny sits, putting his stickers in his backpack.

PAUL GRAFF

You going on the school trip?

JOHNNY DAVIS

(shrugs; then)

Dunno. Costs a lot.

PAUL GRAFF

I could probably get the money for you--my family's pretty rich. We went to England with my grandpa last year, and we saw Big Ben.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Cool.

PAUL GRAFF

(beat; smiles)

So you could just get your mother to sign and it'd totally be party time!

JOHNNY DAVIS

Actually I stay with my grandma. And she don't remember *nothing*. Sometimes she don't even remember *me*.

PAUL GRAFF

(awkward laugh)

That's so weird... Where you live again?

JOHNNY DAVIS

Hollis.

(beat; gesturing)

Gotta get on the bus. Cool hanging
with you, Graff. See you tomorrow.

JOHNNY DOES A SLOPPY MILITARY SALUTE:

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

Ten-hut!

Paul smiles, salutes, too. The two walk separate ways.

7 EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE

7

A semi-attached row house in a working class neighborhood in Flushing, Queens.

Paul walks up the steps, takes out a preposterously long keychain, tries to open the door. It won't stretch long enough. He has to unlatch it, not an ideal system.

8 INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - VESTIBULE

8

Paul enters through the small vestibule leading to the living room. Silence. Paul calls up.

PAUL GRAFF

Ted? Ma? Dad?

No answer. Excited, to himself, with a fist pump:

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

YESSSSS.

He walks up the stairs.

10 INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - PARENTS' ROOM

10

Paul enters his parents' room. Ambles over to a chest below a large mirror. He goes through his mother's jewelry.

Paul looks at a wedding picture of his father and mother, which is inside the box. They look happy. HE LIFTS the FELT DRAWER, under which he finds a stack of CASH. He takes TWO TWENTY DOLLAR BILLS and pockets them.

Checks himself in the mirror in front of him. Shadowboxes. Aloud:

PAUL GRAFF

Turkey! Hey TURKEY!!! "I'm
heavyweight champion of the world!"

Mocks a CHEERING CROWD, does a ROCKY-STYLE KNOCKOUT PUNCH.

11 INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM 11

THE CAMERA PANS AROUND: a Reggie Jackson poster and a Muhammad Ali poster and a COMIC COVER on the wall. Toy Soldier WALLPAPER. Model planes hang from the ceiling.

He is DRAWING a SUPERHERO, sitting with his knees down on the carpeted floor, his ass up in the air.

HE HEARS SOMETHING: JANGLING KEYS. PAUL'S FACE LIGHTS UP.

THE CLICK OF A DOOR LOCK. A HUGE GRIN ON PAUL'S FACE.

12 INT. LIVING ROOM 12

Paul's Grandfather, GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ, enters with a grocery bag (marked "King Kullen"). He wears a polyester shirt and slacks, and a Greek fisherman's cap. Smiles broadly. Paul HUGS the man tightly and kisses him:

PAUL GRAFF
Hey Grandpa!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Hello there, young man! Mmmm, give you a hugga-mugga.

PAUL GRAFF
Check THIS baby out. I made my own superhero: "Captain United!"

Paul shows him his latest drawing:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
What's that, a new one... Ah...
He's flying, high up over the city.
(keeps looking)
'S very impressive.

PAUL GRAFF
(precocious, with humor)
Thank you, my good man!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ pulls from his coat pocket a pack of jellybeans.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Hey. I got you some jellybeans.

He throws the pack to PAUL, who catches it.

PAUL GRAFF

Mom says I can't eat them--they're
bad for my teeth.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Ah, get out of here. I been eating
jellybeans all my life and look at
my teeth--perfect.

Rabinowitz OPENS the VESTIBULE COAT CLOSET to hang his coat.
It makes a LOUD SQUEAK and FEELS QUITE STIFF.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

(to himself)

What's with this, here...

PAUL GRAFF

Grandpa?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
(preoccupied)
Mmm?

PAUL GRAFF
I think I want to be a famous
artist when I grow up.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Good! You can do whatever you want
to do. But if you're gonna be
famous, you've got to sign the
drawing. Right? All the great
artists, they sign their work.

PAUL GRAFF
Oh yeah, I forgot.
(looks at shopping bag)
What's for dinner?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Let's take a look--uh--look what I
see--

Grandpa SHOWS him the bag's contents: RONZONI and RAGU. Paul
CLAPS, then throws his hands up in TRIUMPH:

PAUL GRAFF
Oh yeah! Now THAT is what I call a
DINN--NNAY!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Hooray, for spaghetti! You know, I
never had spaghetti when I was your
age. You're a lucky kid.

PAUL GRAFF
Oh my God, NEVER? What's a wronga
witha spaghetta la sauce?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
What's wrong is my mother thought
it was bloody worms.
(back to the door hinge)
Today was your first day of school,
I heard.

PAUL GRAFF
Yes indeedy. I hung out with my
friend Johnny. And we're going on
a trip next week, to the Guggenheim
Museum.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Very nice...

Paul dives into another bag: an ESTES SATURN V model rocket:

PAUL GRAFF

Holy cow!!! You got it, that's
amazing! Let's make it!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Just the first few steps today--
everyone'll be here for dinner
soon. And oop--

He grabs Paul's arm gently:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

Don't tell your mother--it'll be
our secret.

Paul nods, hugs his grandfather around the waist. The
background is the DINING ROOM, dark. The CAMERA DOLLIES PAST
THEM and towards the DARK ROOM.

THE LIGHT COMES UP in the DINING ROOM and the SUN GOES DOWN.
TIME HAS PASSED:

DISSOLVE TO:

13 THE DINING ROOM TABLE, 13

Now set. A woman, ESTHER GRAFF (more on her in a moment),
enters with platters in her hands. She places the food on
the table. Counts place settings..

A SCREAM, over an image of the HAMSTER in CLASPED HANDS.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Oh my God! Get that thing away!
It's a RAT, in the house!!!

WIDEN TO REVEAL:

14 INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER 14

Paul's IMMEDIATE family. That would be: his brother, TED,
three years older, DRESSED IN PREP SCHOOL ATTIRE. Holding
the hamster.

Also here: his grandmother, MIRIAM (also known as "MICKEY"); his great aunt RUTH, 70s, and his great uncle LOUIS, late 60s, otherwise known as LOBBY and a dead ringer for Jimmy Durante.

TED GRAFF
 (laughing at her horror)
 It's a hamster, Aunt Ruth. Named Rosie. For my science project.

AUNT RUTH
 GET IT THE HELL OUTTA HERE!

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ
 Ruthie, it's just the kids' pet!

AUNT RUTH
 We had enough of them growing up, Mickey! Get it AWAY from me!

Laughing, Ted puts his hamster into a small cage. Paul and his Grandfather come downstairs. AD-LIBBED "HELLO"s. PAUL IS BEAMING, holding part of the MODEL ROCKET. Grandma looks at Aaron, vaguely accusatory:

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ
 Where'd you two wander off to?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 (sheepish)
 Upstairs...working on a little project for him, that's all.

Ted approaches Paul:

TED GRAFF
 What's the project, shithead?

PAUL GRAFF
 'S for school.

TED GRAFF
 You mean Fake School--you actually have to work at MY school. And get real punishment. But you're probably too dumb to get in!

With a shit-eating grin, Ted punches Paul in the arm. HARD.

PAUL GRAFF
 OWWW! Why'd you do that?

TED GRAFF
 'Cause I *felt* like it.

15

INT. KITCHEN

15

ESTHER GRAFF at the stove. IRVING, her husband and Paul's father, PULLS HIMSELF OUT FROM BEHIND THE REFRIGERATOR. IRVING, age 42, is dressed in a V-neck T-Shirt and dark gray pants; he's a strange mix: Stanley Kowalski with a PhD. Paul's mother, ESTHER, is earthy, dark-haired. Rolls her facial tissue in her sleeve.

IRVING GRAFF

I think I figured it out why it's making that grinding sound. The thing isn't built to last forever.

ESTHER GRAFF

Okay, but I need you away from there at some point. I need to get to my food this month.

Aaron enters, sees the refrigerator away from the wall.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

What's happening in here? 'S not working?

ESTHER GRAFF

Hi Dad. I don't know the story.

Aaron then turns, puts on an apron which has distinctly feminine touches.

IRVING GRAFF

Aaron--before you do that, maybe you could help me with this. I mean, if anyone could, you could!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Let's see what we got...

Aaron bends down, does a voltage meter reading. As they do, Esther steps over them, opens the fridge. Irving starts to laugh; re Grandpa:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

(smiles gently)

Looks all right.

Irving stands up; he grabs a piece of salami.

16

INT. LIVING ROOM

16

The boys are fighting. Aunt Ruth:

AUNT RUTH

C'mere! This is what your great grandparents were like! You should look through this every once in awhile!

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

Ruthie, they don't need to see that. Come on.

AUNT RUTH

They should learn about the family.

The TWO BOYS SETTLE DOWN A BIT, look OVER the SHOULDERS of the seated Aunt Ruth and Uncle Lobby. Grandma Mickey disengages, intentionally. She watches with dismay.

ANGLE ON PAUL as they eye a coffee table book: "THE OLD COUNTRY," by Abraham Schulman. Leafing through: PICTURES of EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWS, c. 1900:

Entering the living room: Irving, who is now eating the piece of salami and belching. He SEES the boys. To Paul:

IRVING GRAFF

Why don't you and your brother get out your instruments. And play.

Without argument, Paul goes to the piano. Meanwhile:

TED GRAFF

Tsk. No, please, Dad. I suck.

IRVING GRAFF

Well, if you learn to play better, you'll become, you watch--you'll be the most popular person at any party.

TED GRAFF

By playing the *concertina*!?

IRVING GRAFF

Yes, by playing your concertina, wise guy! It's better than playing a, a, a bunga-bunga instrument!

(beat)

G'head. For your grandparents. Be a nice thing to do.

Ted stands next to Paul, picks up his concertina. Irving STANDS by the piano, "conducting." The two boys unhappily play possibly the worst rendition of a TBD Public Domain song in all human history.

PAUL GRAFF

It's so hard...wait...

The grandparents try to get into it, despite the fact that both kids are terrible at their instruments:

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ
Isn't that absolutely marvelous!
Beautiful boys!

She summons them, like the Dowager Empress, and they both kiss her on the cheek. She is royalty.

Ted then PINGS Paul behind the EAR:

PAUL GRAFF
OWWWWWW! STOP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Frustrated, Paul slams his hand down on the piano. As he goes to the kitchen:

IRVING GRAFF
Where you going? 'Was terrific!

17

INT. KITCHEN

17

Where Esther is slaving over the stove. The local news is on the television, and Grandpa Aaron divides his attention between the television (local news--"Live at Five," with Jack Cafferty and Pia Lindstrom) and his kitchen duties.

PAUL GRAFF
Ma, Ted pinged my ear!

No response.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)
MA.

ESTHER GRAFF
I heard you...

PAUL GRAFF
So?

ESTHER GRAFF
He pings you and you ping him. The two of you just need to stop. Because I can't take it anymore.

PAUL GRAFF
What do you mean? HE. PINGED ME!

ESTHER GRAFF
And you're totally innocent, I'm sure.

PAUL GRAFF
YES!!!! I AM!!!

ESTHER GRAFF

I don't believe you, I'm sorry.

Unexpectedly, she SMILES at him, STICKS OUT HER TONGUE:

ESTHER GRAFF (CONT'D)

How was school, buster?

PAUL GRAFF

It was fine... I have Mr. Turkeltaub. Can you sign a permission slip? We have a class trip next week--

(claps hands together once)

Into the City! With my frey-hends!
[Meaning "friends"]

ESTHER GRAFF

(with a playful shimmy; pointing)

Your mother did it already, at my school meeting.

Grandpa hands Paul a slice of cucumber, which he makes DISAPPEAR; then he makes it reappear in his other hand. Amused, Paul takes it. As Paul eats it, chomping loudly:

PAUL GRAFF

Ma, how much power do you have at school? Do you run everything?

Hearing this, Grandpa LAUGHS. So does Esther.

ESTHER GRAFF

No, I don't run everything. I'm president of the P.T.A. Why?

PAUL GRAFF

Just wondering.
(re the food; derisive)
What is this?

ESTHER GRAFF

Scrod. It's a type of fish.

PAUL GRAFF

Whoa, I'm definitely not eating that.

ESTHER GRAFF

Why not? Here, look--it flakes. That's how you know it's fresh--

PAUL GRAFF

Like fresh DOGGY do. I'll just eat the spaghetti and order dumplings from Fan Fan, for delivery.

ESTHER GRAFF

No, you're NOT gonna order dumplings. We HAVE food here.

PAUL GRAFF

We'll soon see about that.

ESTHER GRAFF

NO. Don't you dare, buster! I'm not paying for it--you think we're millionaires here?!?

As Paul LEAVES the kitchen, his mother infuriated, she tries a different tactic:

ESTHER GRAFF (CONT'D)

I love you!

PAUL GRAFF

I don't care!

18

INT. DINING ROOM

18

The family around the table. A dinner. *In medias res.*

ESTHER GRAFF

(summoning courage)

So. I have decided. With all your support, I'm gonna try and run for District School Board.

(beat; no reaction, so:)

Okay?

At first, Irving doesn't respond, then belches, making an "OOH-pah" SOUND. Finally:

IRVING GRAFF

Good.

PAUL GRAFF

You gonna win?

ESTHER GRAFF

With your support, I will.

PAUL GRAFF

Oop, sounds like you're not gonna!

ESTHER GRAFF

(to Irving)

Did you hear what he just said???

(back to Paul)

I said I needed your SUPPORT. Not rude comments.

IRVING GRAFF

Don't make yourself objectionable for once. Okay?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

(SIMULTANEOUS)

(almost under his breath)

Be nice.

ESTHER GRAFF

You're gonna catch your father's temper.

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

Esther, why on earth would you run for the board, with Ted in private school?

ESTHER GRAFF

For Paul's sake! To have a say!

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

I'm sorry, I think that's absolutely crazy. Paul should be going to Teddy's school anyway. And we can help. Can't we, Aaron?

Aaron does not answer. Paul PERKS UP. CONCERN on HIS FACE:

ESTHER GRAFF

He's fine where he is for now, Mom.

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

(nose wrinkling)

I'm just saying...the public school system is just not what it was when I taught there.

PAUL GRAFF

Grandma!? I like school--all my friends're there.

Aaron looks at Paul's plate, then at Paul, who eats only the spaghetti.

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ
You'll make friends anywhere.

(to Esther)

The class sizes are out of control,
and the kids that they have coming
in from the neighborhoods from all
over. The Blacks, coming in...

ESTHER GRAFF

MA.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
They have nowhere else to go,
Mickey. Their own schools are
falling apart.

ACROSS THE TABLE, AUNT RUTH, TO TED, SIMULTANEOUS, looking at
a GLASS on the table and speaking a tad too loudly:

AUNT RUTH (SIMULTANEOUS)
I don't believe it, these are my
glasses. I brought them back from
Czechoslovakia!

TED GRAFF
YOU were in Czechoslovakia, Aunt
Ruth? Isn't that Communist?

AUNT RUTH
(as if he should know)
I worked for the Pentagon, right
after the war! Relocating
displaced persons, in Prague!

TED GRAFF
That's so cool!

Subversively, Grandpa Aaron PUTS more pasta on Paul's plate.
Paul grins widely at his grandfather in gratitude.

ESTHER GRAFF
Your Great Aunt is a very
impressive person.

AUNT RUTH
I went to a thrift store there and
found all these glass kiddish cups.
I was gonna bring them home to my
father. But I saw names at the
bottom of the cups--and I knew they
were stolen from Jews who went to
the camps! I almost fell over.

SIMULTANEOUS: Irving COUGHS; an ENORMOUS BALLOON of COFFEE
starts to BLOW OUT HIS NOSE as his eyes slam shut. Only Paul
and Ted see it and start LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY.

Paul points right at Irving.

AUNT RUTH (CONT'D)
How could you kids laugh about
that!? The Nazis took them, to the
camps!
(to Esther)
(MORE)

AUNT RUTH (CONT'D)

Esther, the kids're laughing, about
Nazis!

MORE LAUGHTER from the boys. The adults are uncomprehending.
Esther looks to her father, who shrugs it off. Irving turns,
looks at Paul's FULL PLATE:

IRVING GRAFF

(to Paul, re his plate)
Behave. And eat the meat, that's
all. Here--

Irving pushes some of the fish towards Paul, separating it
from the bone. Aaron has been pushing the carbs, and tries
to behave himself.

PAUL GRAFF

I don't see why we can't just have
Chinese food every night.

ESTHER GRAFF

Because then we wouldn't have a
single dollar for other things. I
teach HOME ECONOMICS. You know
what that means? That means I
teach how to stick to a BUDGET.

(to Irving)

He doesn't know the meaning of the
dollar. Or how HARD we work. Does.
Not. Get. It. At all.

Paul lets out a "SQUAWK" sound to imitate his mother.
Everyone ignores it. As Paul gets up from the table, he
snaps his fingers, grins, looks at everyone:

PAUL GRAFF

Dumplings, suckers!

Ted PICKS UP the dish and, grinning, CAUSES the SPAGHETTI TO
SLIDE ON THE DISH. To PAUL:

TED GRAFF

Get me some fried!

ESTHER GRAFF

Now YOU don't like dinner?

TED GRAFF

The spaghetti has all this water in
it, Ma. It's slipping and sliding
on the dish.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Don't play games with that.

ESTHER GRAFF

(to Paul)

Where are you going? Don't you dare.

TED GRAFF

"Hey Mamma, you're a tourist trap, Hey Mamma, your pasta tastes like crap..."

IRVING GRAFF

(to Ted)

Stop. You heard your grandfather, put that down! You'll wind up with it all over the rug!

IRVING EYES TED WITH INTENSITY.

19

INT. KITCHEN

19

Where Paul picks up the telephone. Starts to dial a number.

ESTHER GRAFF (FROM THE OTHER ROOM)

Put down the phone!

(Paul does not)

I said, put down the phone!

(to her husband)

Irving--

IRVING GRAFF

(still eyeing Ted)

Paul, put down the phone! No Ching Chang Cho food tonight! Stop, your mother made dinner!

ESTHER GRAFF

You're not ordering dumplings! We have plenty of food here, food I slaved over! Now PUT DOWN THE PHONE!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Paul! PAUL! Hang up the phone!

20

INT. DINING ROOM

20

Uncle Louis sits, eating everything in sight as Ted rotates his plate. With a shit-eating grin:

TED GRAFF

Uncle Louie, which horses did you bet on today? Did you win?

UNCLE LOUIS
Shhhh! C'mon, kid, don't say
nothing!

21 INT. KITCHEN 21

Paul on the phone:

PAUL GRAFF
Hello, I'd like to place an order
for delivery--one order, fried
dumplings, and one order roast pork
fried rice.

22 INT. DINING ROOM 22

Esther STANDS AND SCREAMS to NO ONE IN PARTICULAR:

ESTHER GRAFF
HE'S ORDERING CHINESE FOOD--I DON'T
BELIEVE IT! I HONESTLY DON'T
BELIEVE IT!!!!

The DINNER FALLS APART COMPLETELY, with Ted SINGING AGAIN and
holding his plate in a circular fashion--and the spaghetti
SLIDING OFF HIS PLATE and onto the FLOOR.

IRVING GRAFF
GODDAMNIT!!! WHAT DID I SAY?!?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Oh boy--that'll stain! Jeez! You
got club soda?!? Quick!

IRVING is DARK, his JAW CLENCHED. HE TAKES HIS BELT OUT OF
HIS PANTS and LOOPS IT, as if to SWAT TED. As TED RUNS AWAY:

IRVING GRAFF
I'm gonna RAP you one!

23 INT. BATHROOM - LATER 23

Paul comes out of the bath. He rubs the towel across his
back, violently, then crouches in front of a small electric
heater. He YELLS so that the whole house--if not the whole
neighborhood--can hear:

PAUL GRAFF
Grandpa?!?

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)
Get into bed already or you're
gonna get the "bastinado!"

ESTHER GRAFF (O.S.)
He'll be up in a minute! Brush
your teeth!

Paul walks over to the sink, wets the toothbrush, then puts
it back in the rack without brushing.

24

INT. KITCHEN

24

Esther cleans up, with Grandpa Aaron's help, near the sink.
The Mets game is playing in the background, on a small green
transistor radio the shape of a ball.

At the kitchen table, with coffee: Irving, Ruth, Mickey.
Watching the "McNeil/Lehrer News Hour" on PBS.

ESTHER GRAFF
If you're losing feeling in your
leg, then you need to get it
checked.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Yeah. I will... It'll all be a
lotta nothing.

ESTHER GRAFF
Let's hope.
(louder, to the table)
Miriam, d'you want the Chinese
leftovers? Paul's dinner?

IRVING GRAFF
No no, don't give 'em away--I'LL
eat them!

ESTHER GRAFF
(beat)
I'm tired...

Aaron senses his daughter's flagging composure:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
C'mere.

He starts dancing with her; her spirits revive. A clip of
RONALD REAGAN on the television:

RONALD REAGAN (ON TV)

*"If we let this be another Sodom
and Gomorrah... Maybe we might be
the generation that sees
Armageddon..."*

IRVING GRAFF

(re Reagan; shrugs)

Sounds like a Class-A *schmuck*.

26

INT. BEDROOM

26

The room is lit mostly from the hallway. Paul looks through the book: "The Old Country." BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS of miserable-looking and impoverished souls. A silhouette appears in the doorway, and Paul slides the book down the side of his bed.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Go to sleep. That's when you grow.
If you want to be tall.

PAUL GRAFF
Can you stay with me?

Aaron steps into the room, sits on the bed.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Someday, you won't want me here.

PAUL GRAFF
NO WAY. That's NEVER gonna happen.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
I dunno, you and your brother're
already giving your mother a hard
time...

PAUL GRAFF
Hey grandpa, when you said today
the spaghetti was bloody worms--
what did you mean?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Just that my mother--you know, when
she came into the country, they
served spaghetti at Ellis Island.
And she thought it was bloody
worms. So she never ate it. Never
had it in the house.

PAUL GRAFF
Oh yeah! I could see that... But
then why'd she come here?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 (almost amused!)
 'Cause they were gonna kill her.

PAUL GRAFF
Who would?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 Well, she was from a very
smalllllllll town, called Ostropoi,
 in Russia. And the troops would
 come look for the Jews. One night,
 they rode into her parents' store
 and stabbed them, right in front of
 her. She had nightmares about it
 as long as she lived.

PAUL GRAFF
 Wow...

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 Yep, wow. But she told me--"never
 forget the past, because you never
 know when they might come looking
 for you," and she got away--she
 left Russia and made it to England.
 To Liverpool.

PAUL GRAFF
 The Beatles!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 That's right. Beatles... Anyway,
 she met my old man, my dad, in
 Liverpool. They got married, had
 me. When the old man died, she
 said, "okay, let's go." And we
 came here, to America. I was ten.
 "Zhizn' eto son."

A beat. Paul can barely process this, so:

PAUL GRAFF
 Can you sing the funny song?

Grandpa does an exaggerated mock singer's throat clear, then:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
*"Mares eat oats and does eat oats,
 and little lambs eat ivy--a kid'll
 eat ivy too, wouldn't you?"*

Paul LAUGHS HEARTILY.

A27 INT. KITCHEN

A27

Esther is at the table with Ted. A FRENCH TEXTBOOK is open, in front of the two:

ESTHER GRAFF

A "Buche de Noel." It's a cake,
like a log. A dessert.

TED GRAFF

"BOOSH." "BUSH?"

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

Esther, it's time. Go get him
please.

Esther looks at the clock, leaves the table.

B27 INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM

B27

Esther comes up the stairs, joins the two:

ESTHER GRAFF

Dad--Mom wants to leave.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

All right, coming down.

(back to Paul)

Have a good time in school. I'm
glad you could see your friend
again. I bet that was nice.

ESTHER GRAFF

It's grandpa's birthday soon,
you'll see him.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 Ah. My birthday! Yes. Don't
 remind me. I'll be hrrmph hrrrmph
 years old, BOO HOO HOO! Okay,
 goodnight, little boy.

And with that, Grandpa reaches over and turns off the light
 near Paul's bed. They depart.

Paul takes the COVERS, PULLS them over his head. Makes an
 OPENING to see out, but does it as a protective move against
 the Bogeyman...

27 INT. BEDROOM - LATER

27

It's dark.

Church bells ring in the distance. The leaves from the
 window make a shadow on the ceiling. Sirens from fire trucks
 and police...

Paul IS ASLEEP. A DREAM. Images, from "The Old Country."

THEN: MEN ON HORSEBACK. SILHOUETTES. It's DARK. FIRE
 BEHIND THEM. ANOTHER OLD PHOTO: MEN GALLOPING TOWARDS US.
 They are brandishing SWORDS.

They're Cossacks. Ready for murder. Then, A VOICE:

IRVING GRAFF (PRE-LAP)
 Goooooooood morning!

28 INT. BEDROOM

28

Bright and early. The DOOR BURSTS OPEN. It is the cheerful
 and goofy version of Irving:

IRVING GRAFF
 Good morning good morning DING
 DING, DA DING DING! Good morning
 to YOU, good morning to YOU!

Paul puts a pillow on his head.

PAUL GRAFF
 Stoppppppppp!

IRVING GRAFF

UP, big boy! I got a steam boiler
to fix at nine, I can't hang
around. At least take a swig of
orange juice and wash your teeth.

(overly dramatic, opera
voice)

Time for school!!!

Paul rises after much sturm und drang. Irving ventures into:

29

INT. HALLWAY

29

Where we SEE Irving enter Ted's room, pushing a cassette tape
down into a player.

Irving's face wrinkles--the music is horrible to him.

He breaks into a completely uncoordinated DANCE, with a grin
on his face. Ted MOANS and buries his face in the pillow.

Irving DANCES back into the hallway, pumps his arms awkwardly
like a chicken and GRINNING:

IRVING GRAFF

Holy smoke. What a song. This is
real oonga bunga music. Ho-lee
smokes! Who can listen to this?!

Continues to DANCE LIKE A CHICKEN. Paul enters the hallway
as Irving sings a made up morning family melody.

31

INT. CLASSROOM

31

The CLASS poses for a PHOTO. The WHOLE GROUP. The kids are
being arranged from shortest to tallest--the tallest wind up
in the back row. Paul winds up in the back row. JOHNNY
DAVIS winds up in the back row too, almost hidden.

Johnny and Paul both make RABBIT EARS on the kids in the row
beneath them as Turkeltaub gives a kid a CLASS SLATE:

MR. TURKELTAUB

Hey. Stop it up there. And don't
get too close together, remember,
lice is not your friend... Hold
this. Smile, for the camera.

The PHOTO is taken.

MOMENTS LATER:

The class begins to disperse:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
Okay, let's go, permission slips!!!

The KIDS hand in their slips. Paul turns to JOHNNY DAVIS:

PAUL GRAFF
You gonna come?

JOHNNY DAVIS
(like it's no big deal)
Nah. 'S okay.

PAUL GRAFF
(whispered; pretend cool)
Dude--

Paul gives Johnny TEN DOLLARS.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)
I tol' you, my parents're really
rich.

Johnny thinks, then signs the PERMISSION SLIP. Hands it in.

MR. TURKELTAUB
Everyone has to have a buddy, find
a buddy!

Turkeltaub looks at the signature, then at Johnny:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
This's your mother's signature?

JOHNNY DAVIS
My grandma's.

A beat. Turkeltaub is SKEPTICAL:

MR. TURKELTAUB
If I call your home, your
grandmother will say she signed it?

JOHNNY DAVIS

I don't know. We don't got a phone
right in the house.

Turkeltaub is given pause. Then:

MR. TURKELTAUB

Arrright, just get on the bus.

(to the whole class)

Okay, everyone has a buddy! Now, I
want good behavior from everyone!

32 EXT. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM OF ART - DAY

32

SERIES OF SHOTS of the famous building, CLOSE UP.

MR. TURKELTAUB (POST-LAP; CONT'D)

GOOD behavior!!!!

33 INT. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM OF ART - DAY

33

Paul looks around the crowded room. Noisy. Great KANDINSKY
PAINTINGS, all around. With his class, which is acting
insane--lots of punching and unruly behavior. Turkey is
trying in vain to control everything. Meanwhile, Johnny
walks along with Paul, near him, and sidles up to one of the
paintings. He POSES in a POMPOUS WAY. Almost immediately:

MR. TURKELTAUB

Mr. Davis! Don't make me throw you
out! Because I WILL! Get with the
group!

A GUIDE GIVES POSTCARDS of PAINTINGS FROM THE COLLECTION to
all the kids:

GUIDE

Here's a little something for all
of you if you quiet down! A sort
of welcome from us here, at the
Guggenheim! Here, here ya go!

Paul EYES HIS POSTCARD: it is a painting by Kandinsky. As he
does, the class stops at a painting:

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Now this is "abstract art". Can
anyone here tell me, what is
"abstract?"

LAUGHTER. TALKING. No one in the class knows.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

SHHHHH. Anyone?

SILENCE. SORT OF.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Okay. "Abstract" means it's not trying to be ..anyone? Realistic! That's right!

The kids make a "WOOOO" sound... The SOUND FADES.

All the crowd and noise DISAPPEAR. There is only a room full of art and Paul.

We CUT BACK WIDE, and now Paul is COMPLETELY ALONE. With all the ART. He approaches several works, and the images flood him/us. CLOSE SHOT of a PAINTING. BACK TO PAUL. Music BUILDS. Over this:

A VOICE

Paul?

Over walks the Guide with a HUGE SMILE on his face.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Paul, you are a genius. You have a true understanding of the work far beyond anyone else here. And you'll be a millionaire soon. Look around, you're already famous!

Beaming, Paul looks around to SEE a CROWD OF PEOPLE right outside the gallery. THEIR VOICES:

THEIR VOICES

Look! It's Paul Graff!

Out steps: MR. TURKELTAUB.

MR. TURKELTAUB

Your grandfather sent us your drawings. And we judged them the best superhero drawings that we have ever seen. And we happen to have them, right here.

Turkeltaub takes them out and hangs the drawings right on the wall. Paul is BEAMING as the crowd looks on in awe; FLASH PHOTOS. He turns back to look at the KANDINSKY PAINTING.

GUIDE

You know, if you touch that painting, you will get the artist's talent. It will go right inside you--

And so Paul walks up to the work. THE MUSIC GETS LOUDER AND LOUDER. It seems to CLIMAX when he touches it!

All of a sudden, a SHOCK--THE MUSIC CUTS OFF--

THE GUIDE

Grabs Paul's ARM and yanks him away from the sculpture:

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Absolutely NO touching the art! NO!

BACK TO REALITY.

Mr. Turkeltaub, not with him but with the other students, turns around, hearing this minor kerfuffle, and glares at Paul. JOHNNY DAVIS sees it too, and smiles broadly--thrilled by the rebellion. He PUMPS HIS FIST.

MR. TURKELTAUB

Arright, we're going downstairs to lunch, and you need to keep TOGETHER...

Davis approaches Paul:

JOHNNY DAVIS

Turkey didn't do no head count.
(beat)
You wanna split?

PAUL GRAFF

Right now?

JOHNNY DAVIS

Yeah, man! Go wherever!

Paul looks around. Thinks...GRINS. THEN THE TWO SKULK AWAY.

35

EXT. CENTRAL PARK

35

THE BOYS jog at first, further and further from their classmates and from their guardians.

The JOG becomes a RUN--A SCREAM and HOLLER... LAUGHTER... Pretending they're on the lam:

JOHNNY DAVIS
They're coming, they're coming
right behind us! Don't turn around!

PAUL GRAFF
They're getting closer!

JOHNNY DAVIS
COPS ARE COMING!!!

THEY RUN AND RUN AND RUN...

HOWLS OF LAUGHTER...

CUT TO:

A36 EXT. TIMES SQUARE STREET. DAY

A36

Paul and Johnny turn the corner, a woman argues with a man as they step towards each other, on the verge of violence. They catch one thing the CRAZED WOMAN says to the man:

CRAZED WOMAN
Ahh, FUCK YOU IN THE ASS!

36 INT. TIMES SQUARE PIZZERIA - DAY

36

The two boys, huddled around a video game. Eating CANDY--it is CIGARETTE CANDY (!), and the boys BLOW SMOKE (which is POWDERED SUGAR). They think they look like James Bond. Johnny plays, Paul watches.

JOHNNY DAVIS
Oh, shit--this game is so fly...

Paul DARKENS. Seems to consider something:

PAUL GRAFF
Hey Johnny?

JOHNNY DAVIS
Yeah...?

PAUL GRAFF
You think they're gonna know we cut out?

JOHNNY DAVIS
No way. I tol' you, they don't do no head count.

PAUL GRAFF

Yeah, I guess so--I just hope they don't check.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Ain't nothing's gonna happen to you, man! You're like, rich and your mother is president of the school. Turkey ain't gonna touch you.

PAUL GRAFF

But what about you? 'Cause I mean, Turkey picks on you all the time.

JOHNNY DAVIS

(more serious)

He don't mean *shit* to me...

Then JOHNNY LOSES; he turns, taking a "puff," and NOTICES:
THE SONG ON THE RADIO: "RAPPER'S DELIGHT," by THE SUGAR HILL
GANG. Then, a radio announcement:

RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT (RADIO FILTER)

*"The Sugar Hill Gang, October 17,
18, and 19th, at the Ritz! Tickets
on sale for the..."*

JOHNNY DAVIS

Damn...Sugar Hill Gang! I tol' you about them! You and me--we're going to that shit, next month! Cut out from school early.

PAUL GRAFF

Let's go to Colony! I'll get the record!

A HIGH-FIVE.

37

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - LATER

37

Paul and Johnny on the train, Paul holding his record proudly. They are passing the APOLLO MISSION PATCH STICKERS between each other. JOHNNY HOLDS UP some duplicates:

JOHNNY DAVIS

I got doubles. You could have one. If you want.

PAUL GRAFF

Really??? Which one's the first one? With Neil Armstrong?

JOHNNY DAVIS

That ain't the first one, that's
eleven. With the eagle on it.
It's worth the most, it's really
valuable. Here, the names're on it.

PAUL GRAFF

Thanks, thanks so much!

JOHNNY DAVIS

I walk on Mars, they make a patch
and it's the Davis mission!

PAUL LOOKS AT IT; PRECIOUS! A CROWDED TRAIN. Black TEENAGERS across the train eye Johnny for hanging with Paul. One of them calls out to JOHNNY:

BLACK TEENAGER

Hey homo--what's that game?

JOHNNY DAVIS

Ain't no game, it's from NASA!

BLACK TEENAGER

(laughs)

NASA? They ain't gonna let your
black ass through the back door!

Then the TRAIN STOPS, and the teens, giving up, exit. Johnny looks at them leave.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Fuck them, man.

As the train starts up again, Johnny gets up from his seat. He OPENS THE DOOR of the subway train that leads to the next car. Paul follows.

38

INT. BETWEEN TRAINS

38

Johnny rides between both cars. Paul copies him. Grins. The TWO CARS' platforms move ALMOST in SYNC. Johnny OUTSTRETCHES HIS ARM, toward the speeding tunnel girders.

His ARM GETS CLOSER TO THE GIRDERS.

PAUL GRAFF

Hey, I--I don't think you should do
that! You could get really hurt!

Johnny turns back to look at Paul, a blank expression that seems to say, "I don't give a shit."

He walks into the next car.

39

INT. NEXT CAR

39

Where Paul follows.

Johnny doesn't respond. Something has happened to him. He seems to have retreated into himself.

PAUL GRAFF

Y'know, I cou'probably come over--

JOHNNY DAVIS

Nah, man. You can't come to where
I live...

(beat; almost to himself:)

I'm probably moving soon anyway.

PAUL GRAFF

Yeah... Me too!

The train seems to be coming to a stop.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

(not Johnny's stop)

Wait--you getting out...?

JOHNNY DAVIS

That's right! Do I got your
permission?!?

(beat)

I'm just--tired of taking shit from
everybody...

Confused, Paul is frozen. As a joke, he SALUTES Johnny:

PAUL GRAFF

Yessir!

Johnny doesn't respond in kind. The TRAIN PULLS TO A STOP.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

See you in class, dude!

As Johnny GETS OUT, a muttered:

JOHNNY DAVIS

If Turkey tries to mess with me,
just one more time--I swear I'm
gonna jump that motherfucker.

THE DOORS OPEN. Johnny gets out. The train speeds away.

40

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM

40

"RAPPER'S DELIGHT" is playing on Paul's stereo.

Paul takes the POSTCARD out of his pocket, unfolds it. Looks
long and hard at the painting. A KANDINSKY, from the museum.
He tapes it to his wall. A voice:

ESTHER GRAFF (O.S.)

Paul!?! Come down, please!

41 INT. LIVING ROOM

41

Paul comes down to SEE his GRANDFATHER and MOTHER SITTING THERE on the COUCH. Esther has a coffee cup in her hands. Aaron holds a package inside a brown bag. At first, Paul is terrified--is this about cutting school?

PAUL GRAFF

'Sup? Everything...cool?

Beat. A BROAD SMILE:

ESTHER GRAFF

It's grandpa's birthday, but he gave you a present. Because he's always thinking of you.

PAUL GRAFF

(gasps with pleasure)

What is it?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Open it up.

Paul comes over, shakes it; it's heavy. He unwraps it. It is a wooden box. Inside: a SELECTION OF OIL PAINTS.

PAUL GRAFF

(a la Phil Rizzuto)

Holeeee COW...

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

They can make a mess, so just be careful. Water won't clean it.

ESTHER GRAFF

What do you say?

PAUL GRAFF

Thank you so much, my good man!
It's like a set for professionals!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Well? You wanted to be a professional? Right?

ESTHER GRAFF

(sobers; as though trying
to avoid a car accident)

Let's say it's a very good to have
as a *hobby*.

ANGLE ON GRANDPA AARON, who stares at Esther, trying to rid himself of his sour reaction to that. Oblivious, Paul breaks the moment:

PAUL GRAFF

Now we really need to get YOU something.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Nah, no you don't. Seeing you is my present, how's that?

ESTHER GRAFF

Go put your shoes on. We're gonna go to Sly Fox Inn and then a movie, maybe.

PAUL GRAFF

'Kay. Wait, Ma...the school didn't call you, did they...?

ESTHER GRAFF

No, why?

PAUL GRAFF

(grins)
Just wondering.

ESTHER GRAFF

Go get your shoes on.

INCREDIBLY CHEERED, PAUL GOES BACK UP THE STAIRS, clutching his paint set as though his life depended on it.

42

EXT. MAIN STREET MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

42

ANGLE ON THE MARQUEE: "PRIVATE BENJAMIN-GOLDIE HAWN"

The family, Grandparents and Great Aunt and Great Uncle included, exit the theater.

Buoyant. Except for Grandpa Aaron, who is steps behind. No one really notices--but PAUL DOES, and he keeps looking back:

ESTHER GRAFF

I thought it was a very very interesting picture! She became a liberated woman! She was a "JAP," but she grew up--

UNCLE LOUIS
(lighting a cheap cigar)
She's supposed to be Japanese?
See, I didn't get that.

ESTHER GRAFF

No, "Jewish American Princess,"
Lobby!

UNCLE LOUIS

Never heard of that in all my life.

IRVING GRAFF

Goldie Hawn is still really
something!

ESTHER GRAFF

Well, she's not exactly old.

IRVING GRAFF

YEAH, no--she has a, a, such a
delightful presence.

PAUL GRAFF

Grandpa?

OVER THIS, Paul SEES that his GRANDFATHER, AARON, LAGGING
just a BIT. Something isn't right.

Ted then grabs Paul's nipple and TWISTS.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

OWWW! Why can't you STOP???
You're the biggest jerk!

Paul turns, looks back at his GRANDFATHER, WHO STOPS to
MASSAGE his leg; his FACE REGISTERS a FLASH of PAIN. Then he
COLLAPSES, with almost stunning FORCE.

Everyone halts. The boys register bewilderment. ESTHER'S
FACE GOES WHITE, and she FREEZES.

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

Oh my God. OH my God--Aaron!

IRVING JUMPS into ACTION, moving to Aaron to help him up:

IRVING GRAFF

Whoa whoa, big guy--y'arright?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Yeah, I just, I slipped, the cracks
in these damned sidewalks--the city
doesn't pave--

QUICKLY, Esther seems to recover. Yet, almost for herself:

ESTHER GRAFF

Okay, all right, he's fine. He's
FINE! He FELL, that's ALL.

IRVING GRAFF
 (helping Aaron up)
 Take it EASY there, Aaron. I got
 ya!

As he gets up, Aaron smiles at Paul, WINKS. TO COVER:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 Hello, little boy!

Everyone walks again. Paul lays back, walks with his grandfather now. He laces his arm into his grandfather's as they approach their cars.

PAUL GRAFF
 You gotta be careful!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 (sotto)
 Just use those paints I got you.

PAUL GRAFF
Course I will, pardner!

ESTHER GRAFF
 (to Irving)
 Let's go look at houses.
 (to her parents)
 Happy birthday, Dad--g'bye,
 Miriam...

Kisses all around--as Paul EYES his Grandfather...

43

INT. PLYMOUTH VOLARE - NIGHT

43

The family is in the car now (a mint green Plymouth Station Wagon from 1968), driving down a street in Jamaica Estates. It's a ritzy neighborhood, or at least what passes for one in this part of the city. Paul looks out the windows; Irving drives. Many posted "REAGAN '80" campaign lawn signs.

IRVING GRAFF
 Boy, a lotta signs for Reagan...
 I'll tell you, you don't gotta
 worry about people coming in from
 all over in *this* neighborhood...

ESTHER GRAFF

HERE'S a house. People [with] more money than God.

(another house)

Now this one, I like. The Tudor style.

PAUL GRAFF

Is that Tudor style, Ma?

ESTHER GRAFF

No. But this one is, over here.

(beat; to herself)

Just gorgeous...for when our boat comes in.

(louder, to Irving)

What do you think?

IRVING GRAFF

Very nice. If I can open up the handyman business, with Ron Cornell--it's just a goldmine for home improvement here.

He looks over at Esther, who gives a negative shrug. Sotto:

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

I'm trying to get us there. I'm trying...

PAUL GRAFF

(confident announcement)

I think I'm gonna be an artist when I grow up.

TED GRAFF

(snorts; then)

THAT'll make you a ton of money.

PAUL GRAFF

Ma? That true?

ESTHER GRAFF

Well, it's a very hard industry. And we don't have a lotta connections.

IRVING GRAFF

You study something you can fall back on. Like computer graphics, THAT'S a growth industry.

ESTHER GRAFF
 (back to the houses)
 Wow, this one is just gorgeous!

ANGLE ON PAUL as Ted SMILES AT HIM MISCHIEVOUSLY. We HEAR:

MR. TURKELTAUB (PRE-LAP)
 I know we were all inspired by our trip to the Guggenheim Museum. So today, we're going to try our very own art project.

44

INT. PS 173Q - CLASSROOM

44

Mr. Turkeltaub is supervising, with kids drawing. Paul couldn't be happier, and it is impossible to suppress a smile. Sitting at a desk in the front next to the blackboard is JOHNNY DAVIS, who is PRACTICING POP AND LOCK MOVES.

MR. TURKELTAUB
 You find a word. A word that is a noun. You know what a "noun" is?

THE CLASS
 "A Person Place or Thing..."
 (some of the class:)
 "That ends in 'ly'!"

MR. TURKELTAUB
 No no no, no "ly"!!! That's an adverb! So you take a word that is a noun, and you write it out in letters made up of exactly that thing. So--here--look--the word is "BOOKS"--

Turkeltaub unspools an example: A PICTURE DRAWN OF THE WORD "BOOKS" in which each letter is made up of several small images of books.

JOHNNY DAVIS, sitting in the solo desk in the front of the class, CONTINUES HIS POP AND LOCK MOVES. He's getting some attention from his classmates.

Turkeltaub spins around, SEES Davis:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
 BOOKS, Mr. Davis. Something you don't know anything about.

Turkeltaub turns back to the class. And then:

JOHNNY DAVIS
Fuck you, Turkey.

The CLASS IS STUNNED.

MR. TURKELTAUB
Mr. DAVIS! Your mouth should get washed out with soap! You're not doing the project--you're gonna just sit there!

JOHNNY DAVIS EYES Mr. Turkeltaub:

JOHNNY DAVIS
Fine by me.

45

MOMENTS LATER

45

As Turkeltaub walks around, looking at kids' drawings:

MR. TURKELTAUB
All the paper should be covered with a color.
(beat)
Use your imaginations and be original!
(beat)
Color the drawings, not the desk!

Paul is DRAWING his own version of a Kandinsky. He even signs it with Kandinsky's name.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
What's this? Scribbles!?

PAUL GRAFF
It's a Kandinsky.

MR. TURKELTAUB
Stand up.

Paul stands.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
Go to the front.

Paul walks to the front.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
Class! We went to the museum. And who saw this paintings like this?

A HANDFUL of HANDS GO UP. Edgar Romanelli smiles and shouts:

EDGAR ROMANELLI
I REMEMBER! It's a copy!

PAUL EYES ROMANELLI ANGRILY.

MR. TURKELTAUB
Now what did I say to you, Mr.
Graff? About doing your own work
here? What two words did I write
on the board? Class?

The CLASS SPEAKS in UNISON, sort of:

THE CLASS
BE ORIGINAL!

MR. TURKELTAUB
The assignment was turning words
into images. Karen, hold up your
drawing.

A young girl named Karen holds up her drawing:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
Karen's word is "shoes," and her
word is made up of tiny shoes.
Where is your word?

PAUL GRAFF
(almost ready to cry)
I don't have a word. I did it to
show Kandinsky...

MR. TURKELTAUB
Well, this is a copy, and it's not
the assignment. So you didn't
listen!

JOHNNY DAVIS
The drawing's excellent, man.

MR. TURKELTAUB
(to Davis)
Mr. Davis, I didn't ask YOU.

Davis STANDS, approaches--a hint of CONFRONTATION:

JOHNNY DAVIS

That's 'cause you're a goddamned
Turkey. AND I WILL FUCK YOU UP.

The CLASS BREAKS INTO ABSOLUTE BEDLAM. Mr. Turkeltaub,
enraged, stands, charges to Davis. Forcefully grabs his arm,
yanks him:

MR. TURKELTAUB

Down! To Mr. Sebell! RIGHT NOW.

Johnny walks out of the classroom.

46

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

46

Mr. Turkeltaub leads class discussion using "Cuisinaire
Rods," some kind of graph teaching method. Paul is placing
his RODS in COLORFUL and OBVIOUSLY WRONG formations.

MR. TURKELTAUB

Now--put the GREEN rod on the
number six row, with the "A"
column.

The class puts the small green wooden rod on their graphs.

JOHNNY DAVIS reenters. Paul looks up, wondering if something
dramatic might take place. The classroom is tense.

Turkeltaub STARES at JOHNNY, says NOTHING. Johnny eyes what
the others are doing. Sotto voce:

JOHNNY DAVIS

I need a piece of graph paper.

MR. TURKELTAUB

Forget it. You're too behind now.

(beat)

The painting area is a mess back
there. Why don't you go on cleanup
duty and wash out the brushes? Take
them to the bathroom and wash them
out.

Johnny gets up, walks to the back behind the paint easels and
grabs the brushes. HE exits.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)

(to the class as a whole)

Good, Mr. Davis, helping out for a
change. All right, who else wants
to help on cleanup duty? Who will
volunteer?

Paul raises his hand.

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
All right, Paul, go 'head.

Paul walks out.

47 INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM. DAY

47

Paul moves to Johnny, who's near the stall, running the sink. Quietly:

PAUL GRAFF
Didjou get in trouble?

JOHNNY DAVIS
(as if to say, "of course not")
No. I was down there for awhile and nobody even come talk to me the whole time. So...I just come back up.

Paul nods; then pipes up about the art supplies:

PAUL GRAFF
These brushes, 'f I took them, they'd never know they're missing.
(smiles; proudly)
A pret-ty good little present for myself--

As Paul describes his potential thievery, Johnny reaches down into his pocket. Shows Paul a JOINT. Marijuana. Grins.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)
What is that?

JOHNNY DAVIS
My cousin give it to me. He said You smoke it, you just like, laugh and laugh.

PAUL GRAFF
(a huge grin)
Cool! You're gonna do it? Now?

JOHNNY DAVIS
Yeah. Suck it in. It's made of tea and shit.

Davis takes out a lighter, lights the joint. Starts to puff, holding in a cough. Paul takes it.

A48 INT. CLASSROOM

A48

Mr. Turkeltaub SEEMS SUSPICIOUS that the boys haven't returned. Looks at his watch. Frowns, leaves the room.

MR. TURKELTAUB
What the hell's going on out there...

B48 INT. STALL

B48

Turkeltaub enters, sees the two boys with the joint.

MR. TURKELTAUB
How DARE YOU! HOW DARE YOU!!!!

He takes the JOINT from Paul. To JOHNNY:

MR. TURKELTAUB (CONT'D)
You are a menace! A MENACE!!! The two of you--THAT'S IT!!!!!!!!!!!!

48 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

48

Paul is seated in the office. Partitioned, through glass: JOHNNY DAVIS, seated in another section of the space. The Principal, GORDON SEBELL, is in intense conversation with Mr. Turkeltaub.

All of a sudden, Paul's mother, ESTHER, marches in. Speaks with the Principal for a moment, and the moment is GRAVE INDEED. Paul's head is BOWED.

PRINCIPAL SEBELL
Paul, do you know what was in that cigarette?

PAUL GRAFF
Yeah--it was tea.

Sebell looks at Esther. Back to Paul:

PRINCIPAL SEBELL
Young man, what you were smoking is *illegal*, and you could go to jail. Is that what you want?

PAUL IS SILENT. Esther is STRANGELY QUIET, CALM:

ESTHER GRAFF
Would you please answer him?

PAUL GRAFF

No. Obviously not.

ESTHER GRAFF

(to Sebell)

Principal Sebell, I can tell you, he had no idea what he was doing. There isn't anything like that in our home. And he wasn't the one who brought it to school.

PRINCIPAL SEBELL

We know that.

ESTHER GRAFF

(tries to go on the
offensive; positive)

And--and I think it is incumbent upon the school not only to really take a good long look at class size, but who's in what class.

PRINCIPAL SEBELL

Mrs. Graff, I know you were thinking of running for the district board--but--have you ever thought about a remedial education for Paul?

ESTHER GRAFF

Remedial...?

PRINCIPAL SEBELL

Yes, remedial classes, for your son.

ESTHER GRAFF

(given pause; darkens)

No. I have not.

PRINCIPAL SEBELL

It might be an option for you and your family, going forward.

(beat; re Paul)

Because he may be a bit slow.

Esther's disposition changes completely. She seems almost proud of Paul now. It was precisely the wrong thing for him to have said, and she defends her son:

ESTHER GRAFF

My son is not slow. No sir.

(to Paul)

Get up. Time to go.

They get up.

49 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - FOYER

49

As they walk through, Paul looks over at Johnny and both suppress laughter. We overhear TWO WOMEN who work at the school, to each other:

WOMAN ONE

...We could not get ahold of the grandmother yet, so best option seems for him to stay here, and when we get ahold of Special Services for Children, he can...

Esther sees the two boys grinning at each other:

ESTHER GRAFF

Keep walking.

50 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY/STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

50

Paul leads, walking with a SWAGGER, of all things. He's gotten away with murder--he thinks.

Esther is deeply upset, for all sorts of reasons. Interior, in a sort of daze, talking aloud to herself:

ESTHER GRAFF

(hushed, grabbing Paul)
How could you do that?

PAUL GRAFF

(stops)
What? How'm I supposed to know it's against the law, Ma? 'Sides, it's fine, you're the president of the school.

ESTHER GRAFF

No I'm NOT! I'm in the PTA! And after this little episode, I don't think I can try and run for the Board or *anything else*, for that matter.

PAUL GRAFF

Okie-doke.

He starts walking down again. Esther is snapped from her haze, and upset by his rudeness. Grabbing his arm now:

ESTHER GRAFF

"Okie-doke" is not a respectful response! Where did you learn this disrespect?

PAUL GRAFF

Sorry! Just chill out!

ESTHER GRAFF

Who gave you that cigarette? That Black boy, sitting there?

(no answer, so:)

You need to stop associating with people like him.

PAUL GRAFF

What--do you mean? Why?

ESTHER GRAFF

I think you know exactly what I mean.

PAUL GRAFF

You mean 'cause he's Black? I hung out with him last year, too--

ESTHER GRAFF

(through clenched teeth)

STOP IT.

TWO STUDENTS COME DOWN THE STAIRS. Esther smiles a forced SMILE. They walk by. She continues, hushed:

ESTHER GRAFF (CONT'D)

No, not because he's Black. He could be orange or green or yellow. That's not the point. The Principal says he was left back--

PAUL GRAFF

So?

ESTHER GRAFF

So it means he's not very bright.

PAUL GRAFF

No it doesn't! He's like, super smart! And really cool!

ESTHER GRAFF

Well, we'll have to tell your father.

A beat.

PAUL GRAFF

(struck by this)

Why? What's he gonna do?

ESTHER GRAFF

We'll see. But big changes are coming, buster.

Paul is petrified. Esther overtakes him down the stairs.

51 OMITTED 51

52 INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 52

Terrified, Paul comes into the house, with his mother:

ESTHER GRAFF

Irving?

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)

Whaaaat?

PAUL GRAFF

(sotto)

Ma, no--please, don't--

ESTHER GRAFF

Irving, I need to talk to you!

A look of fear across Paul's face. Paul bolts. He runs up the stairs to:

53 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 53

Where he locks the door. And waits. And waits.

Then we begin to HEAR a RUMBLE. It's his father, coming up the stairs, with a FEROCIOUS ENERGY. Through the door:

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)

Open the door.

Paul is silent.

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(with true rage)
Open the door!!!!

PAUL GRAFF
I can't.

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)
Paul.

PAUL GRAFF
You'll hit me, Dad!

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)
(explosive)
Open it up!

PAUL GRAFF
I'm not doing it.

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)
Your mother just told me you smoked
DRUGS?!?

PAUL GRAFF
I didn't know that's what it was!

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)
OPEN. THE GODDAMNED. DOOR!!!

A beat. All of a sudden, the screws start getting undone in the door's lock. PANIC enters Paul, and he runs to the door, trying frantically to put the screws back as they start to fall.

His father is unscrewing the doorknob lock.

Searching through the medicine cabinet, he tries to find something that could be a weapon, to protect him.

There is NOTHING.

He backs up, into the corner, stepping into the bathtub. The DOORKNOB SCREWS FALL, ONE BY ONE.

Paul loses it, SCREAMS, STARTS CRYING HYSTERICALLY.

BOOM. The door IS BROKEN DOWN IN A RAGE.

There STANDS HIS FATHER, BELT CURLED in his HAND, ready to strike. Ted stands behind him, with a GRIN. Can't wait to see Paul get punished.

Irving SWATS Paul SEVERAL TIMES with his belt, then, after a moment, he stops.

He has a look of true rage on his face, but perhaps seeing Paul in such a state of terror, he catches himself.

He doesn't soften, exactly. But he doesn't know what to do.

A crying Paul STAYS in the corner of the bathroom. Sensing Ted GIGGLING:

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

What're you laughing at? There's not a single goddamned thing that's funny about this!

Paul, to Ted, through an ocean of TEARS:

PAUL GRAFF

GET OUT OF HERE, YOU ASSHOLE!

Then... A CRACK in Irving's toughness.

IRVING GRAFF

Get cleaned up for dinner. And wash your teeth after--with the Water Pik. Your breath is like trench mouth.

Mumbled but clear:

PAUL GRAFF

I hate you... [I] hate this family...

IRVING GRAFF

What did you say?

PAUL GRAFF

Nothing...

Irving notices Esther through the doorway, on the STAIRS.

IRVING GRAFF

Someday he'll learn, he's not the smartest kid on earth.

ESTHER GRAFF

We need to move him to Ted's school now. He needs to be somewhere with real discipline.

IRVING GRAFF

We'd have to *schmear* them but good.

ESTHER GRAFF

I'll take him for an interview.

PAUL GRAFF

NO WAY. I'm NOT changing schools!

IRVING GRAFF

Uh-uh, sorry, buddy. You don't get to call the shots. Things're gonna be different around here. And your friend's *from hunger*--you're not gonna talk to *him* anymore.

Paul enters his bedroom, SLAMMING HIS DOOR.

54

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

54

Paul, lying on his bed, face down.

He SITS UP, HEARING CONVERSATION DOWNSTAIRS. He CAN'T QUITE MAKE OUT WHAT'S BEING SAID... SEEMS IMPORTANT.

Then, FOOTSTEPS, and PAUL LIES BACK DOWN, PRETENDING HE is ASLEEP.

Grandpa Aaron enters quietly, holding something: a book.

As Aaron places the book he'd brought on the dresser, he picks a shirt up from the floor, starts to fold it properly. Paul TURNS TO LOOK, gets CAUGHT. He is indeed AWAKE.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

I brought you something.

He hands him the book: "HISTORY OF ART, by H.W. Janson." It's in decent shape, but slightly tattered. Clearly used.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

A lotta good stuff in there, a lotta artists and...anyway, you can see what they did. Wish more were in color, but--whatever.

(beat)

It was my son Benjamin's book.

PAUL GRAFF

(subdued)

Thank you...

Paul sits up, takes the book and looks at it with a fair degree of awe; he starts looking through photos of art through millennia:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

He would've been your uncle...

Paul sees a painting of a landscape by Claude Lorrain, stops.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

He used to send us drawings like that, from the different places he was in, all over Vietnam. They were really very nice.

(sotto)

He was gonna study, in the City. But...he didn't make it.

(beat; cheers himself)

All right. You have it now, good. I got you the set, and you take some lessons. You got the whole thing.

PAUL GRAFF

My mom and dad said I can't make the "big buckaroos" doing art stuff.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

(shrugs)

Your parents have your best interests at heart but--

(with humor)

I'm your grandfather and I know best.

(more serious)

Just stay focused on what you wanna do and don't worry about all the other baloney.

(beat)

Okay? It's something you love, you follow that.

Paul leafs through the book: SEES A DRAWING OF HANDS, a STUDY. Grandpa Aaron looks around the room for a moment, then spots the rocket he bought for Paul at the beginning of our story. Half-constructed, on the desk. PAUL BRIGHTENS.

PAUL GRAFF

It's really hard--it's a skill level 3.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
 (acting impressed)
 Well, looks pretty good to me. So
 finish it and we'll go launch it,
 at Flushing Meadow.

A SOUND. Something HITS the window. Aaron senses something;
 he leans over, kisses Paul on the top of his head.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
 You'll be okay. Your friend, too.
 I'll see you soon.

He departs.

THWWWWAP! Another SMALL ROCK hits the window. Surprised,
 Paul comes to the glass. Down, in the alley, is JOHNNY
 DAVIS, with a big smile on his face; a wave. PRE-LAP:

PAUL GRAFF (PRE-LAP)
 How'd you know where I live?

55 INT/EXT. BACK DOOR - NIGHT

55

The two talk through the screen door. Whispered:

JOHNNY DAVIS
 (with a mischevous laugh)
 From that chart they had on you.
 It had all the information!

PAUL GRAFF
 Well, I mean, we were gonna move,
 to a much *bigger* house soon.
 (turns back toward house;
 back to Johnny)
 Shhhh, wait.

56 EXT. BACKYARD - CLUBHOUSE. NIGHT

56

Paul walks Johnny to the WOODEN STRUCTURE known as "The
 Clubhouse." Johnny is blown away by how elaborate it is:

JOHNNY DAVIS
 Whoa, you could just move in *here*!

PAUL GRAFF
 My Dad built it, coupla years ago.

JOHNNY DAVIS
 Your Dad? Built this whole thing
 for you? Shit, man.

PAUL GRAFF
Yeah. When he wasn't in an
"asshole" mood.

57 INT. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

57

Paul and Johnny enter.

JOHNNY DAVIS
This got a window, and everything--
what's this do?

He looks at a PANASONIC CASSETTE TAPE PLAYER/RECORDER.

PAUL GRAFF
It's for music, and like, sometimes
I make dumb tapes.

JOHNNY DAVIS
That's definitely cool.

As Johnny looks at the device:

PAUL GRAFF
Johnny--my parents're gonna try and
send me to my brother's school. 'S
called Forest Manor--it's really
strict.

JOHNNY DAVIS
Damn...

PAUL GRAFF
(under his breath)
I dunno, I'm gonna try and get my
grandpa to change their minds,
maybe.

JOHNNY DAVIS
(nods; then)
Hope he does...

PAUL GRAFF
What about you?

JOHNNY DAVIS
They sent me up to the third floor,
with like, all the weirdos. So I
decided, I'm cutting out for good.

PAUL GRAFF
What d'you mean? Where you gonna
go?

JOHNNY DAVIS

Join up with the Air Force
eventually, like I said... But for
now--just, make some cash! Buy
shit, get like, a penthouse for me
and my grandma!

PAUL GRAFF

Get your own house--that's so cool!

JOHNNY DAVIS

That's right, my own place.

Awkward pause.

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

Okay...

(beat)

So I'll be seeing you. I guess...

(MORE)

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Hey, I'm going to that Sugar Hill Gang concert next week. You wanna catch that? Next Monday night!

PAUL GRAFF

For sure!

JOHNNY DAVIS

Excellent. If you're not back at school, I'll find that other place and come by at the end of the day. What's that again?

PAUL GRAFF

Forest Manor.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Forest Manor, yeah. The show's gonna be special.

(beat; sobers)

Good luck.

High-Five. Paul watches as Johnny runs away, into the night.
ANGLE ON PAUL as we HEAR:

A MAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)

Discipline. Strong moral character. Ethics.

58 EXT. THE FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - FRONT - MORNING

58

The camera DOLLIES UP to the front doors of a PREPARATORY SCHOOL that is architecturally quite different from the public school. Doric columns, brick, c. 1917. Over this:

A MAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)

Our curriculum is rigorous, and we stress personal responsibility in our students.

59 INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

59

Paul stares at the art on the wall. It is American art, c. 18th century, of gentry riding horses. CHARLES V. FITZROY III, the school HEADMASTER, smokes a pipe and speaks with Paul. Esther sits next to Paul:

HEADMASTER FITZROY (CONT'D)

So tell me Paul, why do you want to come to Forest Manor?

PAUL GRAFF
(shrugs; then)
I don't, really.

ESTHER GRAFF
(aghast)
Yes he does. He's very nervous
about this.
(back to Paul)
Tell him what you said.

PAUL GRAFF
That the lunches are probably a lot
better here?

ESTHER GRAFF
No. That's not what we talked
about.
(serious)
We want the best education for him
at this point. And we think he's
ready.

HEADMASTER FITZROY
(nodding)
You know Paul, our teachers here're
all on the same page. They're here
for the student. They'll stay for
extra help--they aren't members of
any *union*. We have no unions here.

Paul looks at his mother, who is NODDING along with what
Fitzroy is saying. Finally, Paul reveals a concern:

PAUL GRAFF
My brother, um, he says you have,
like, detention?

HEADMASTER FITZROY
(nodding)
We are firm and we don't tolerate
bad behavior. Because learning
cannot be impeded. Understood?

ESTHER GRAFF
Paul, go wait outside, please.

PAUL RISES, LEAVES.

60

INT. WAITING ROOM

60

Paul walks out, into a small carpeted waiting room. Looks like an Ethan Allen showroom. He turns back. THROUGH the crack in the door leading to Fitzroy's office:

PAUL SEES his MOTHER TAKE A WHITE ENVELOPE OUT of HER PURSE...HANDS IT TO FITZROY...

ANGLE ON PAUL as we:

61 INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

61

The whole extended family, together again. Brunch. Bagels and lox and whitefish and herring and so forth. Esther is serving on platters what had been brought in from a deli:

ESTHER GRAFF

(pointing to bagels)

Okay...we have plain as well as onion, you just have to look, I don't know what's what.

(looks to Paul, who is sullen)

Your waffles will be out in a minute.

TED GRAFF

Course he can't eat what everyone else eats.

IRVING GRAFF

Hey!

ESTHER GRAFF

Leave him alone. He's in a mood.

PAUL GRAFF

YOU put me in a mood. Trying to get me to change schools. But I'm NOT going, so...

Esther looks to Grandpa Aaron to speak; Aaron turns to Irving. In Russian, he asks:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (SUBTITLE)

Vy khotite, chtoby ya skazal yemu seychas? (You want me to tell him now?)

IRVING GRAFF (SUBTITLE)

Da, da, yemu nuzhno eto uslyshat'.
(Yes, yes, he needs to hear it.)

Grandpa looks at Paul for a moment. The rest of the family seems prepped for something:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

I told your parents to do that,
Paul.

Paul stares at his grandfather, shocked. Looks at all the others: has he been betrayed? DEVASTATED:

PAUL GRAFF

You did...?

Esther goes to the kitchen, comes back with Eggo waffles.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Yes I did. Because the game is rigged. And we have to do everything we can for you and your brother.

IRVING GRAFF

Listen to what he's telling you.

PAUL GRAFF

I AM listening, if I even knew what he was talking about!

IRVING GRAFF

Why don't you stop talking and pay attention, for the first time in your life?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

I was a very good student. But my name is "Rabinowitz"--and college after college, they looked at me, at the interviews--and they said, "we have enough New Yorkers here."

ESTHER GRAFF

That's right.

IRVING GRAFF

You know what he's telling you?
New Yorkers?

PAUL GRAFF

No.

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

It means they didn't want any more Jews.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

They hated us, they didn't want us.
And they still hate us.

(MORE)

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

(beat)

Now, YOUR name is "Graff." That's
a better name--you can blend in.

(MORE)

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

And this school could get you into a new group, a new group of friends, and you could go to the college you want.

PAUL GRAFF

College doesn't matter if you wanna be an *artist*--

ESTHER GRAFF

You're going to college.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Our families, you know, your father's family and ours', we didn't have the good luck. We didn't bring a lot of money into the country. And I was a "shop" teacher. But your grandmother and I, we saved, and we can help your parents now.

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

We're going to help you.

IRVING GRAFF

So then it's settled. He's in.

Grandpa Aaron MASSAGES his LEGS as he speaks, physically in some pain. Looks at Paul, who seems devastated, near tears:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Listen, you'll have your ups and downs, and if you're gonna be an artist, you will have big highs and lows.

ESTHER GRAFF

Who knows WHAT he'll be. He's young.

IRVING GRAFF

He'll have dinner with kings if he plays his cards right.

(to Paul)

This's a NEW chapter for you!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

You'll be okay, Paul.

(beat)

The world is another story.

ANGLE ON PAUL. It's as though the whole family has teamed up against him...

62

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

62

It's still dark.

We PAN ACROSS: A BLUE BLAZER, HANGING UP on the closet door, as are Paul's pants and shirt. Gym clothes and shoes are laid out as well. BURSTING IN IS TED, who throws clothes on Paul's head, laughing at his brother's misfortune:

TED GRAFF

Time to get up and into the uniform, schmuck!
(holding up the tie)
Nice clip-on. You should learn how to make a real one.

PAUL GRAFF

(almost in panic)
THIS IS WHAT MOM GOT ME, I DON'T KNOW! LEAVE ME ALONE, FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE--DICK!

TED GRAFF

There's assembly today...
(whispered)
Just fit in and act cool. Don't talk a lot. If you're weak, even for one second, they'll jump all over you. And you don't need to tell them we're Jewish, by the way. I'm serious.
(beat)
Okay, get up--don't make me late!

ANGLE ON PAUL.

63

INT. KITCHEN

63

Irving is sitting there, a half-eaten Entenmann's chocolate donut next to his POSTUM "coffee," his New York Times in front of him. AND SO IS an EXPLODED PART OF THE STOVE. He is working on a WIRING PIECE, with a SOLDERING IRON. Esther is cutting coupons out of the newspaper.

Paul appears. Dressed in his school uniform. Spiffy. Sort of. With his hair awkwardly PLASTERED TO HIS HEAD and HOLDING A BLACK ATTACHE CASE. Both parents look up, smile:

IRVING GRAFF

AH! LOOK AT YOU! First day of the rest of your life, the young man!

ESTHER GRAFF

C'mere. Warm today, you don't need
a coat.

Paul walks over to her; Esther fixes his hair a bit.

ESTHER GRAFF (CONT'D)

You look absolutely gorgeous.

PAUL MAKES an EXAGGERATED "RETCHING" NOISE. She joins him,
partly in mockery, partly to make light of it all.

PAUL GRAFF

(deeply upset)

I look like a total *idiot*. I can't
even have a normal knapsack?

IRVING GRAFF

No! That says you are ready to
work--you come as a STUDENT. I set
the combination at 414, for your
birthday. So you don't forget.

PAUL GRAFF

You just want me to be like you...

IRVING GRAFF

(more serious)

NO no, big boy. I don't want you
to be like me. I want you to be a
whole lot *better* than me!

(looking at a wall clock)

Time for you to go.

PAUL GRAFF

Aren't you taking me?

IRVING GRAFF

(back to his soldering)

No. You're taking the subway. Go
'way. Time to GROW UP.

PAUL GRAFF

I don't know HOW to take the
subway! Ma?

ESTHER GRAFF

I'm not getting involved.

PAUL GRAFF

Oh my GOD!

Ted ENTERS the KITCHEN, TAKES a DONUT. ELBOWS Paul. Sotto:

TED GRAFF

You're right, you DO look like an idiot.

65 OMITTED

65

66 INT. THE FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - MAIN HALLWAY

66

CLOSE SHOT on SCHOOL BANNER. PAN OVER to REVEAL: the students, arriving. Paul and Ted, who goes off in the opposite direction. Paul waves, is then alone. Paul looks to SEE: an OLD WHITE MAN in a THREE-PIECE SUIT. He is balding, with a mustache. And he is staring right at Paul.

Paul looks to SEE the OLD MAN still staring at him. It's getting creepy. Finally, the Old Man makes his way toward Paul. He's a distinguished-looking guy in Paul's eyes.

The Old Man stands right in front of Paul, LOOKS HIM UP and DOWN. A look of disdain on his face. DISGUST.

Paul, meanwhile, feels...TERROR. His snotty side disappears.

OLD WHITE MAN

Are you a student at this school?

PAUL GRAFF

Um... Today is my first day.

OLD WHITE MAN

(a skeptical eye)

What's your name? Where are you supposed to be right now?

*
*

PAUL GRAFF

I'm not sure... Today is my first day.

*
*
*

OLD WHITE MAN

(a skeptical eye)

What's your name?

*
*
*

PAUL GRAFF

Paul. Graff.

*
*

The Old White Man looks Paul up and down again, as though Paul were a specimen.

*
*

OLD WHITE MAN

Graff. What kind of name is "Graff"?

*
*
*

PAUL GRAFF

Well, originally it was
"Greizerstein."

*
*
*

OLD WHITE MAN

Well, since you're new here, Mr.
Graff, you should know we have a
tradition here. And you have an
obligation to live up to that
tradition.

*
*
*
*
*
*

PAUL GRAFF

Yes sir.

*
*

OLD WHITE MAN

All right. There's going to be an
assembly this morning. You head
right through those doors, young
man.

*
*
*
*
*

PAUL GRAFF

Thank you.

*
*

*

67 OMITTED

67 *

*

69 INT. STAIRWELL

69 *

The STUDENTS are CONGREGATING to ENTER the GYMNASIUM. Paul is being moved here and there, like he's cattle. He is trying to find his place--literally. SEES Ted, HORISING AROUND with his FRIENDS. DYING TO BE HEARD NOW:

PAUL GRAFF

Ted! Hi Ted!

TED GRAFF

(turns, angrily)

What do you want???

PAUL GRAFF

(stunned)

N--nothing. We gonna meet after school, go together on the subway?

Ted looks at him as though he's nuts, ignores him.

70 INT. GYMNASIUM

70

The GYM has been made to appear like an AUDITORIUM. The space itself has a stage, the curtain closed; the metal fold-out seats arranged in the hundreds for the students. Paul watches as the school SINGS the ANTHEM, which is set awkwardly to the melody of Beethoven's "Ode To Joy":

THE WHOLE SCHOOL

"All hail to thee, Forest Manor, it is to thee I sing. Whether it be to the red or blue, we remain steadfast and true! Our girls wear pearls, our guys wear ties! High shall our purpose be, virtue is our guide--for God is on our side!"

Headmaster Fitzroy steps to the PODIUM. Applause.

HEADMASTER FITZROY

Good morning, Forest Manor!

Paul LOOKS OVER at his classmates, all around. TWO KIDS (whom we'll meet later, Topper and Chad) are making spitballs and using small white straws for launch.

HEADMASTER FITZROY (CONT'D)

I know I speak for the entire school community about how proud we are to have one of our own come visit all of us for assembly today. As you know, the Trump family is very dear to us, helping us build our new wing. And next year, we're starting a new library, with them front and center! Fred--please--stand, would you?

FREDERICK TRUMP stands, smiling, waving to the students and teachers. He is the man who sent Paul and Steven Epperson into the Headmaster's office!!!!!!

HEADMASTER FITZROY (CONT'D)

A wonderful tribute to our motto: "semper sursum," ever upward! Because like the Trump family, we are committed to excellence. Now, we have an election coming up--

A SPONTANEOUS CHANT OF "REA-GAN! REA-GAN!" breaks out amidst a smattering of boos. THUP! A SPITBALL hits Paul's cheek. He simply wipes it off and continues to listen:

HEADMASTER FITZROY (CONT'D)

No, I'm talking about our student elections! I would encourage each and every one of you who is thinking of running to listen today. And with that, please welcome United States Attorney Maryanne Trump. Maryanne?

THUP! Another one hits Paul, in his temple. He looks over; his classmates are staring at him, grinning. PAUL SMILES, lets out a LAUGH. They SMILE BACK. This Paul is KINDA COOL! Then one classmate SHOOTS A SPITBALL at the other.

MARYANNE goes to the podium, a kiss from Fitzroy.

MARYANNE TRUMP

Thank you so much, Headmaster Fitzroy...

(to the students)

Today, I'm not here to give you the same ol' talk. I'm gonna give it to you straight! Seniors, juniors, all of you here. You're gonna wanna go to a good college, you're gonna wanna succeed.

(MORE)

MARYANNE TRUMP (CONT'D)

But you're not going to. That's right. Unless. Unless you follow the example I'm gonna set forth for you. Now you may be saying to yourself, what does she know? Well, when I came here, no one handed me anything for free. How did I succeed? By good old-fashioned hard work. And that's how you're gonna make it. If it was a question of an assignment for English class? I did what was asked of me--and more. I knew, there was no free lunch. Through college, law school, the US Attorney's office I was a woman in a man's business. But I kept on fighting. That's right, girls--I'm talking to you, too! You can be anything you want to be in this, the greatest country in the world. All it takes is dedication! I look at others in my family--my brother, Donald. He went here, not always studying so hard, mind you! But I see him now, at his desk at 7:30 every morning, ready to take on the world, just as my father did. Now, you people here in this institution are gonna wind up on top. And you'll know, at the end of the day, it won't be because a handout, but because you have earned your way there. That's why I'm proud to present the award which has always been my favorite: last year's student who best represents the Forest Manor School ideal. You know that doesn't mean the best grades, or the most popular student. It means the student who possesses the most balanced qualities of citizen and ambassador. So: the Frederick C. Trump award to the student who best represents the Forest Manor ideal goes to...PAUL GRAFF!

SHOCKED, PAUL SMILES BROADLY and WALKS TO THE FRONT of the WHOLE SCHOOL. APPLAUSE. He ACCEPTS an ENORMOUS TROPHY--

MARYANNE TRUMP (CONT'D)
 PAUL GRAFF, you have been here with
 us for such a short time, and
 already, you are beloved! YOU are
 the ideal person--

CUT BACK TO:

71 REALITY--

71

MARYANNE TRUMP
 ...The award for last year's
 student goes to CHRISTOPHER
 FREEMAN! We are SO PROUD OF YOU!

Paul watches the rest of the school APPLAUD, and a high school senior stands. With a smile, he walks up to the podium to accept his award. He has blond hair and is slender, with round glasses. He is wearing Topsider sailing shoes. CHEERS.

72 INT. "HOMEROOM" - CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

72

Paul, in the classroom. Class will begin momentarily. Everyone stares at him as he sits at a desk. SILENCE.

The kids are the very opposite of P.S. 173Q. They are all skinny, with perhaps one exception, and all white, with no exception. They are prim and proper. And the class is LESS THAN HALF THE SIZE with several Apple II PLUS Computers.

He opens his attache case, takes out his looseleaf binder. He opens the book. A NOTE FROM MOM: "I LOVE YOU". Looks around in the quiet room. EVERYONE STARES AT HIM. A couple of kids let out a laugh. He hears a voice--

KID'S VOICE

Topper--

Paul looks to SEE CHAD EASTMAN, grinning, motioning to another kid, presumably TOPPER LOWELL, copying Paul's hand being near his mouth.

Paul's hand drops to his side. He FEELS like he's choking, with the tie. He UNBUTTONS the TOP BUTTON, behind the tie knot.

Without any guidelines about what to do, he STARTS DRAWING A PICTURE OF HIS HAND. Topper approaches.

TOPPER LOWELL

What're you doing?

PAUL GRAFF

Just drawing. A picture of my hand.

TOPPER LOWELL

Cool. I'm Topper. What's your name?

PAUL GRAFF

Paul. Spelled with two "r"s.

TOPPER LOWELL

Paul, with an "r"?
 (beat; softens, pleased)
 Oh I get it. Nice to meet you.
 Welcome.

The TEACHER WALKS IN: MISS BOSTER, a dowdy and serious woman in her mid-30s. The kids sit, hands folded, on the desk. Quiet, orderly, way different from Mr. Turkeltaub's room.

MISS BOSTER

Hello everyone. We have a new student in the grade joining us today. Paul Graff. Hello, Paul-- I'm Miss Boster.

PAUL GRAFF

Hello. Miss Boster.

SOMETHING DISTURBS HER. She APPROACHES HIM, ICILY:

MISS BOSTER

Button that top button. Now, please.

Paul buttons his top button. She is quietly terrifying. Walks back toward the front of the class:

MISS BOSTER (CONT'D)

So Columbus Day is next week, and we will be spending the week learning all about Christopher Columbus.

An OVEREAGER STUDENT RAISES HIS HAND:

MISS BOSTER (CONT'D)

Yes? George?

A STUDENT, GEORGE MADISON, SPEAKS UP:

GEORGE MADISON

Columbus discovered America. He came here on the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria, and he met Indians.

MISS BOSTER

Good, yes. Where was he from?

PAUL looks around: the CAMERA FOLLOWS his POV. THE SHOES, the same on everyone: TOPSIDERS. The KNAPSACKS, all "L.L. BEAN." And so on...

VOICE

Ohhh, I know, I know!

MISS BOSTER

Veronica?

Student VERONICA speaks up:

VERONICA BRONFMAN

He was Italian, and Queen Isabelle gave him the money for the ships, from Spain!

MISS BOSTER

Very good.

VERONICA BRONFMAN

And when he came to America, he thought he was meeting people from India. So he called them Indians-- that's why they're Indians.

TOPPER LOWELL

(with a grin)

Didn't he just make them all slaves? And how could he discover America, if they were already here?

GEORGE MADISON

No, the slaves were from Africa! And then they went back!

MISS BOSTER

No no, most didn't. But some Blacks did go back to Africa. Who can tell me--how many Blacks went back to the country of Liberia, after the Civil War?

CHAD EASTMAN

Not enough!

The CLASS LAUGHS UPROARIOUSLY as Paul watches.

73

EXT. PLAYGROUND - LATER

73

Paul is seated on a bench, eating LUNCH. He is near the fence. By himself. His classmates eye him. All of a sudden:

JOHNNY DAVIS (O.C.)

Hey Paul!

Surprised, Paul turns to look, doesn't know precisely what to do; he acts like he doesn't know Johnny and doesn't turn around immediately.

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

Paul!

Finally, with no choice, Paul TURNS. Gives a slight NOD of his HEAD. Johnny takes a few steps toward Paul:

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

What's goin' on, man!

PAUL GRAFF

Hey.

JOHNNY DAVIS

So what up? You coming to Sugar Hill Gang?

PAUL GRAFF

Sugar Hill...?

JOHNNY DAVIS

The Sugar Hill Gang show! Tonight!

PAUL GRAFF

Oh...yeah...I--I don't know if I can. Sorry.

JOHNNY DAVIS

(beat)

SHIT. You're missing out! 'S gonna be killing...

Paul nods, looks at Johnny's feet. Johnny's LEFT FOOT is exposed, HIS TOES BLOODY, his SNEAKER COMING APART. And he is FILTHY.

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

(betrays a hint of sheepishness)

(MORE)

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

Listen...No big deal, but I got some dudes from the City coming 'round and looking for me. They're trying to put me in some foster shit. So I might come stay in your clubhouse for a night. If that's all right.

Paul turns to look back, SEES: Topper and Chad and others noticing him in conversation with Johnny.

PAUL GRAFF

(coldly)

I dunno. Could--could get kinda cold in there.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Something *wrong*, man?

PAUL GRAFF

No... Just... I gotta go back to class now.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Arright... Well, I'll see you--maybe at your place! But I got an idea. I'm working on something BIG.

PAUL GRAFF

'Kay. See ya.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Yeah... Okay. I'll see ya...

Johnny notices something is WRONG, that PAUL HAS DISTANCED HIMSELF FROM HIM, but he does not mention it. He BACKS AWAY, walks off.

Topper and Chad approach:

CHAD EASTMAN

Who was *that*?

PAUL GRAFF

(shrugs)

Somebody from my old school...I...I don't really know him.

CHAD EASTMAN

Did you go to school with...*niggers*?

Paul is stunned, knowing instantly the horror. But a big GRIN comes across Chad's face, and he leans into Paul:

CHAD EASTMAN (CONT'D)

Did they ever *come to your house?*

PAUL GRAFF

Umm...one came once? Maybe.

Chad turns to Topper:

CHAD EASTMAN

Oh my God, he had one in his house!

PAUL GRAFF

(fumbling)

I'm--just kidding.

TOPPER LOWELL

(to Chad, even through smile)

Arrright, stop stop stop.

(back to Paul)

What class d'you have next?

PAUL GRAFF

Um, gap session, whatever that is.

TOPPER LOWELL

Oh, it's like, just total bullshit.

I dunno, maybe if you start crying,

she'll let you plant your face in

the middle of her boobies.

THE BELL RINGS. ANGLE ON PAUL as HE WATCHES JOHNNY WALK AWAY INTO THE DISTANCE. Over this, we HEAR:

FEMALE TEACHER (PRE-LAP)

Welcome to your first session,
Paul.

74

INT. FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

74

Paul walks over, sits down at a desk in his otherwise empty classroom. The desks are assembled in a circle.

We SEE a FEMALE TEACHER from behind; the camera DOLLIES INTO a CLOSE UP on PAUL as the scene progresses. We NEVER SEE THE FACE OF THE TEACHER, only HEARING HER VOICE:

FEMALE TEACHER

This is a place where we express
our feelings openly and honestly.

(MORE)

FEMALE TEACHER (CONT'D)

Anything you think we should, um,
talk about?

PAUL GRAFF

(shrugs)

I dunno.

FEMALE TEACHER

Okay... uh... Anything interesting
in the news? Since it's your first
time, maybe we start there.

PAUL GRAFF

Um...the Presidential election,
maybe? I heard Ronald Reagan
talking about Armageddon, on TV.

FEMALE TEACHER

Do you know what that is,
Armageddon?

PAUL GRAFF

Actually, no.

FEMALE TEACHER

Well, "Armageddon" is from the
Bible. It means, a big battle and
the end of the world. Are you
worried about it?

PAUL GRAFF

Not really...it's just, my tie
feels like it's choking me. In my
old school, you could just...wear
whatever.

FEMALE TEACHER

But don't you think everyone looks
nice?

Paul LOOKS DOWN, at his books.

PAUL GRAFF

I guess... I mean, at my old
school, even our textbooks were
torn up and written in, here
they're all new. And--I've never
even seen a computer before either,
but here there's like a whole
bunch.

(looks back at the
computers)

So...it's pretty different.

As he LOOKS at the COMPUTERS, the CAMERA PANS to SEE AN OPEN WINDOW, out to the street, as the SCENE CONTINUES.

FEMALE TEACHER

And how do those differences make you feel?

PAUL GRAFF

Like it's more...*serious*, kinda?

FEMALE TEACHER

Mmm-hmm.

PAUL GRAFF

I dunno. Right now, I'm just sorta trying to fit in, make friends. Even though I don't really feel like I belong.

FEMALE TEACHER

The other students aren't being nice to you?

PAUL GRAFF

No, they're okay. But I can't tell if they really mean it or not.

TEARS FORM in Paul's EYES.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

Sometimes, I just want to run away. I'm afraid I'll say something the other kids think is stupid and they'll all think I'm not cool. And then I get kinda angry at myself.

FEMALE TEACHER

But why would you get angry at yourself?

LONG BEAT. Paul WIPES his EYES, then:

PAUL GRAFF

Nah, I don't really mean angry.

75

EXT. AUSTIN STREET. DAY

75

Paul is walking down the street. A voice, TOPPER, calls after him:

TOPPER LOWELL

Hey Graff! Where you going?

Paul turns around. Topper, walking towards him.

PAUL GRAFF
Subway. To go home.

TOPPER LOWELL
(pointing to the attache)
What's that?

PAUL GRAFF
It's called an attache case.
(beat; trying)
It's kinda fly, actually. It has a
secret 3-digit number for the
combination and like, you're the
only one who can open it.

Topper, meanwhile, TAKES a LARGE black MAGIC MARKER out of
his POCKET and starts to SCRIBBLE GRAFFITI on a BLUE US
POSTAL SERVICE MAILBOX. Paul looks at him, and it:

TOPPER LOWELL
It's my TAG: "4SURE!"

PAUL GRAFF
Oh, cool...

TOPPER LOWELL
Hey--from behind, you know you look
just like Yellowman?

PAUL GRAFF
(a laugh; then)
Well, as long as he's good-lookin',
sounds pret-ty good to me!

TOPPER LOWELL

You just need to listen to Ras
Baba, the DJ! Ras Baba, Out of "U-
ti-ca Avenue, MAAN"?

PAUL GRAFF

I'm sorta into the Sugar Hill Gang
right now.

TOPPER LOWELL

Don't know that. But--

(beat)

I decided: I'm gonna call you
"Baba" from now on.

PAUL GRAFF

(shrugs)

'Kay. 'S definitely better than
shithead, I guess.

Topper laughs.

TOPPER LOWELL

Arright, well...see you 'round!

PAUL GRAFF

See you.

Paul waves, walks off toward the subway.

78

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

78

ESTHER, asleep on the sofa. She awakens to a noise--PAUL:

ESTHER GRAFF

Oh my God, you're home--I was so worried--I fell asleep here, waiting for you! My God, what--what time is it?

PAUL GRAFF

I got lost. I took an express train by accident.

ESTHER GRAFF

Well, just CALL next time, buster! There's pay phones!

PAUL GRAFF

Sorry.

He's about to go to the kitchen, when:

ESTHER GRAFF

Paul? You're gonna need to go see your grandfather this week.

PAUL GRAFF

Okay...

ESTHER GRAFF

He loves you so much.

PAUL GRAFF

(stops, turns back)

I know he does. Is...something wrong with him?

ESTHER GRAFF

No. Nothing's wrong.

(crying, trying not to)

He just wants to spend some time with you, that's all. He said you two would launch your rocket.

PAUL GRAFF

Oh yeah... I gotta finish it.

But her expression is grave. Sensing her distress, Paul steps over to his mother, sits with her on the couch.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

I'll go see grandpa, Ma. I promise! Don't worry...I had a pretty good day at school.

ESTHER GRAFF

I'm glad you did, we'll, we'll talk
about it...

She strokes his head, grows more emotional; she whispers:

ESTHER GRAFF (CONT'D)

Paul, all my hopes're with you and your brother now. You're my angels and you're everything to me. You understand?

(beat)

You're my *whole* life.

PAUL GRAFF

But you have all of us, Ma--me and Ted, and Dad, Grandpa and Grandma...

ESTHER GRAFF

I know...

(smiles through tears)

I'm gonna go upstairs now, I'm not feeling well tonight.

He nods.

ESTHER GRAFF (CONT'D)

Make sure everything's locked up. Your father saw a Black boy snooping around outside in the alleyway earlier...

She gets up, goes upstairs. ANGLE ON PAUL.

79 EXT. BACKYARD - CLUBHOUSE

79

Paul walks outside, into the backyard.

PAUL GRAFF

Johnny...?

(beat)

Johnny! You there? Johnny!

Looks into the dark clubhouse. No one is there. But he DOES FIND a WRINKLED APOLLO STICKER on the ground.

LEFT BEHIND BY JOHNNY DAVIS...

80 INT. PLYMOUTH STATION WAGON

80

Esther drives. Paul looks out the window, excitedly sliding to the side when he sees his grandfather on the bench, waiting for him. Paul then holds the completed model rocket up to the window, smiling broadly. His grandfather gives him a "thumbs up."

ESTHER GRAFF

I'll wait in the car for you.
I...don't wanna have to park.

81

EXT. FLUSHING MEADOW PARK - MOMENTS LATER

81

Grandpa Aaron sits on a concrete ledge as Paul attempts to rig the rocket and launch pad for liftoff.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

You have to put the igniter all the way in. Because if it falls out, it won't work.

PAUL GRAFF

(with cheer)

I did it, grandpa--I promise!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

Arrright...good.

(beat)

It's a little windy, so that might affect it, too. If we're lucky it just goes straight up and comes down near us.

PAUL GRAFF

(pointing to the rocket)

I put these markings on the side, just like on the *real* Saturn V.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

I saw that. You got the payload marking details and everything--you're a lot more patient than I am. Beautiful job...

(beat)

Listen, Paul--c'mere for a second.

Paul sits by his side.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go away tomorrow, for a few days. On a trip. Hopefully, not too long and I'm back soon.

PAUL GRAFF

A trip...?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

It's not--not too far, just out on the Island. I have to go check out some things. Anyway, I wanted to tell you myself, so you weren't wondering where I was if you didn't see me around.

PAUL GRAFF

Okay...but you better come back soon!

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ

I will.

(beat)

The connectors are set?

PAUL GRAFF

I. Shall. Check.

Paul stands, turns back to the launch pad connectors.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
How...how you been doing,
otherwise? How's your new school?

PAUL GRAFF
(shrugs)
Feels like I'm in the stupid army.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Sometimes you need to be strict.

Paul seems interior. Doesn't respond.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Huh?

PAUL GRAFF
Yeah.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
What's the matter?
(beat)
What's wrong?

PAUL GRAFF
Nothing.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
I could tell something is bothering
you. Come on.

PAUL GRAFF
Not really.
(beat)
It's just, sometimes the kids say
stuff.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
(a beat; darkens)
What do you mean, what stuff?

PAUL GRAFF
About other kids.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Like what?

PAUL GRAFF
Like, they'll say bad words about
the Black kids.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
And what d'you do when that happens?

PAUL GRAFF
(as though it's smart)
I don't do anything, of course.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
You don't do anything? Well,
that's a whole lotta shit.

Paul's mouth opens--did his grandfather really say that?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Yeah, I said a bad word. But you need to say something--*especially* you, you're on the ball, you were raised better than that. Y'know, I learned [a] long time ago, the people who say that garbage to your face will make a crack about you when you're not around. You understand what I'm telling you?

Paul stares at him, then nods. Surprised by the outburst.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
So next time, you'll be a mensch?

Grandpa Aaron sticks his hand out to shake. Strange, a handshake and not a hug.

Paul didn't expect a handshake, but he commits.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
Good. Good firm handshake. Now, I got something *else* to tell you.

PAUL GRAFF
Tell me what?

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
Not now. Let's see this thing go up first. C'mon, let's go.

PAUL GRAFF
I'm so nervous--

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
No no, be brave. You gotta give it a countdown, right?

PAUL GRAFF

Okay! Yes! Ten...nine...eight...
seven...six...five...four...
three...two...one...BLAST OFF!

The ROCKET ignites and goes high in the sky. Paul RUNS after the rocket as the parachute carries it tens of yards away.

TENS OF YARDS AWAY

Paul looks back, WAVES to his GRANDFATHER, who WAVES BACK. He then looks to: ESTHER GRAFF, in the CAR. She is STARING AT PAUL, a look of true loss on her face, TEARS IN HER EYES. Paul cannot--yet--understand...

82

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM

82

Paul is asleep. It's early in the morning. Irving enters:

IRVING GRAFF

Paul, you need to get up. Right now.

PAUL GRAFF

(discombombulated)
What...?

IRVING GRAFF

Get dressed. Not for school.

83

INT. LA GUARDIA HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

83

Ted and Paul sit on a bench. Irving is standing. Ted has a restless leg.

IRVING GRAFF

Sit still, please. And sit up straight--look presentable.
(beat; to self)
Gonna go find out what the hell is going on...

Impatient, Irving exits the room.

PAUL GRAFF

What's going on?

TED GRAFF

Grandpa had surgery, this morning.

PAUL GRAFF

For what?

TED GRAFF

They said bone cancer. Mom knew like a month ago but Dad said they were worried about how you would take it.

PAUL GRAFF

What do you mean??? I could take anything! I'm just, I'm kinda worried about *Mom*, how she'll react.

TED GRAFF

Then just act normal! Don't be all weird, can you do that for a minute?

PAUL GRAFF

Is he gonna die? She's gonna freak out if he dies.

TED GRAFF

(sotto)
She won't if you act normal, asshole.

PAUL GRAFF

(beat)
Grandpa said he had something he had to tell me...

TED GRAFF

Probably that you're a dope.

Irving comes back:

IRVING GRAFF

Arrright, c'mon.

84

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

84

Everyone is around Grandpa Aaron's bed. Ted and Paul enter. A Nurse stands by Aaron's bedside.

IRVING GRAFF

Aaron? The boys're here to see you.

Aaron seems totally discombobulated:

PAUL GRAFF/TED GRAFF

Hi, Grandpa! Grandpa?

AARON does not respond. He is YELLOW in COLOR and COMPLETELY DAZED, his EYES SLAMMED SHUT. He is not aware, and instead begins to recite a HEBREW PRAYER:

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
*"Shema, Yashar'el! Yahuah Elohaynu
 Yahuah echad. U'ahavtah ?? eth
 Yahuah Elohayka, v'kole levav'ka,
 v'kole nefeshka--"*

He STOPS for the NURSE to FEED HIM APPLESAUCE. His eyes still shut, he swallows and pauses for just a moment. Then continues again:

AARON RABINOWITZ
*"V'kole meod'ka; v'ahav'ka l'reacha
 kemo'ka..." Baruk atah Yahuah
 Elohaynu, melek..."*

Irving looks at Paul, who seems shell-shocked. To Esther, re Paul, whispered:

IRVING GRAFF
 Maybe he shouldn't see him like
 this.

Esther seems utterly devastated and cannot even respond.
Paul moves closer:

PAUL GRAFF
 Grandpa?

IRVING GRAFF
 He can't hear you.
 (to Ted)
 Why don't you take your brother
 out.

PAUL GRAFF
 Grandpa? I'm here! You were gonna
 tell me something.

All of a SUDDEN, despite STILL in his TRANCE and seemingly out of it, Grandpa Aaron's HAND reaches to Paul's hand, TOUCHES IT. GRABS PAUL'S HAND and STROKES IT GENTLY. Paul is shocked, deeply upset. An orderly comes in to change the IV.

Irving motions to Ted, and then Ted comes to Paul.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)
 No--I wanna stay!

Paul sits down, against the wall. Sotto, to himself:

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

I wanna stay.

We MOVE IN on AARON... The FAMILY IS AROUND HIM.

88 EXT. CEMETERY - SUNNY DAY 88

A FUNERAL. A long line of CARS, PULLING UP to A HOLE IN THE GROUND. It's silent.

A COFFIN. Esther walks to the front, dabbing her eyes with a tissue. She is with her mother, Mickey, and Ruth and Louis.

89 INT. FAMILY CAR. DAY 89

Irving is still in the car, looking out the window. The boys are in back, behind him. Irving turns to them:

IRVING GRAFF

We don't need to stay too long.
Let your mother alone, we can just
stay in the car.

(beat; to himself)

He's going in the ground, that's
it... Okay...

TED GRAFF

But Dad...?

IRVING GRAFF

What.

TED GRAFF

Why are we staying in the car?
Doesn't Mom want us out there?

IRVING GRAFF

No, it's all right. Let her, you
know, have her feelings, and then
we can swing around and go home.

(beat; sotto)

He was a terrific guy, your
grandfather. A terrific guy...

Totally unexpectedly, Irving begins to TEAR UP. The boys are shocked. Irving TAKES a handkerchief out, wipes his eyes.

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

Always respected me, you know? The
only one. The rest of your
mother's family heard my father was
a plumber and bang, they just
turned their nose up. Not him. And
when I was in night school--HE was
the one helping me with my exams.

(MORE)

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

(beat)

He held us all together...

(MORE)

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

Well, that's it... I guess it's
all on me now...

Irving collects himself. Paul and Ted WATCH the CEREMONY in
silence, through the GLASS of the CAR. Paul has his
SKETCHPAD; he writes words to his brother: "THIS IS SO
STUPID, WE SHOULD BE OUT THERE WITH MOM"

Ted grabs the pad. Writes back: "WE HAVE TO STICK TOGETHER."

90

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

90

The FAMILY gets out of the car, walks to the house in
silence. Paul looks to his distraught mother, who
nonetheless gives him a smile through her sadness:

ESTHER GRAFF

I'm going to make some tea. If
someone could bring me the electric
blanket, that would be a help...

IRVING GRAFF

I'll be right up.
(to Ted)
Bring in the garbage cans, please.

TED GRAFF

What about Paul?

IRVING GRAFF

Don't argue.

A91

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A91

Irving GIVES Esther a CUP OF TEA, then stands over her,
silent.

Paul enters, looks to see his mother, seated at the table.

IRVING starts to MASSAGE ESTHER'S ARMS and SHOULDERS. His
back is to Paul, too. IT IS A TRULY LOVING GESTURE.

91

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

91

In the midst of laundry lines, where large sheets billow in
the wind. Paul ENTERS THE ALLEYWAY, picks up a tennis ball
that was lying in the grass. He throws against the garage
door.

A VOICE (JOHNNY DAVIS)

Hey, man!

Paul approaches the "window."

92

EXT. CLUBHOUSE

92

Paul moves quickly to it:

JOHNNY DAVIS

What's goin' on!

PAUL GRAFF

Hey! You were here before, weren't you!

Paul SEES on the floor: CANS OF FOOD, OPEN, a BLANKET.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Back and forth. Those dudes come by my grandma's place again. So I'm here for a little bit, 'til it's cool to go back. 'F it's arright with you.

PAUL GRAFF

(nods; then true remorse)
Sure, you can stay... Sorry I, I couldn't really talk at school. They're like, super strict there.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Oh, I could see that, for sure.

PAUL LOOKS IN, SEES JOHNNY'S BLOODY TOES, exposed through HOLES IN THE SNEAKERS. THEY APPEAR INFECTED NOW.

PAUL GRAFF

Whoa! Your toes, they're all cut up, and bleeding! You need band-aids. You should come inside--

JOHNNY DAVIS

Actually, it's getting a LOT better.

(beat)

But looks like you're all set up-- in your suit!

PAUL GRAFF

(shakes his head; then)
It's for my grandpa's funeral.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Oh, damn. That's heavy.

Paul nods. Then, sympathetically:

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)
Y'know--I been thinking about it
for awhile... See, my step-bro,
he's in Florida. Right? I make my
way down there, do shit until I
could sign up with the Air Force
and NASA. But they're building
this thing in Orlando, called
"Epcot." Here, lookit--

He RUMMAGES through his things, FINDS a PAMPHLET FROM DISNEY
WORLD, the kind a TRAVEL AGENCY MIGHT HAVE. Paul takes it.

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)
I bet you could draw portraits
there, like you do in class. Make
money that way.

PAUL GRAFF
In Florida...?

JOHNNY DAVIS
Yeah. Orlando. You could do that.

PAUL GRAFF
Seems kinda far...

JOHNNY DAVIS
Shit man, what're you staying
around here for?

PAUL GRAFF
I know...
(beat)
I should get you a coat. And some
band-aids.

JOHNNY DAVIS
Okay! But--I ain't gonna stick
around long, probably. I bet
they're gone now.

PAUL GRAFF
You could stay as long as you want.
If you're here tomorrow after
school, I'll bring some pizza.

JOHNNY DAVIS
Cool! But I'm thinkin' Florida
soon!

PAUL GRAFF
[I'll] Be right back.

PAUL goes back into his house, pamphlet in hand... We STAY with JOHNNY, who watches Paul enter the house. THE DOOR is LEFT OPEN. JOHNNY LOOKS DOWN AT THE PANASONIC TAPE RECORDER.

He pushes the CASSETTE DOWN and PRESSES "RECORD."

JOHNNY DAVIS
"Cape Kennedy...and Johnson Space Center. To Mars Mission Number One! The spaceship has landed!"

93 EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE. DAY 93

Johnny approaches the door. Enters. Over this, we STILL HEAR:

JOHNNY DAVIS (V.O.)
"This is Houston. Houston, this is Colonel JOHNNY DAVIS, up here."

94 INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 94

Johnny looks through the rooms of the house. Different. Not opulent, that's for sure. But--different.

JOHNNY DAVIS (V.O.)
"Okay, Colonel Davis--we're ready for your departure from the module... Houston, I'm stepping off the craft now... I feel freer than I ever did before... I am encountering extraterrestrial life... Will they welcome a stranger, or will they be hostile...?"

JOHNNY COMES UPON:

95 INT. STAIRCASE 95

Paul sits on the first two steps, still holding the pamphlet. He IS LISTENING looks through the stairs:

In the REFLECTION of the glass of a framed painting, he SEES his mother, Esther, and father, Irving, speaking to each other in their bedroom. *In medias res*, JOHNNY APPROACHES FROM THE LIVING ROOM. BOTH LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING:

IRVING GRAFF

...But he doesn't have the same
potential that Ted does--

ESTHER GRAFF

I'm *asking* you to stop...
Please...

IRVING GRAFF

And the school will cost your
mother an arm and a leg. Who knows
when she'll need more help, now
that she's alone. We're *dependent*
on her.

ESTHER GRAFF

When she can't pay anymore, I told
you--we will figure it out...

Beat. Can't leave well enough alone:

IRVING GRAFF

I'm just gonna say it again--Paul's
not going to be able to handle it.

ESTHER GRAFF

(her voice breaking)

Oh my God, you cannot help
yourself! He had no chance if he
stayed! None--he's in danger!

(beat)

Maybe he won't ever be a student.
But I will be *damned* if you tell me
what to do with my son at this
point. I don't understand--are you
jealous of his opportunity? Is
that it?

A beat. Irving is left speechless for a moment, then:

IRVING GRAFF

What're you talking about? Course
I'm not jealous! But--they
assessed him as slow--

ESTHER GRAFF

FUCK them.

IRVING GRAFF

These tuitions, Esther, I, I can't
pay, I feel the pressure, in my
chest.

ESTHER GRAFF

What do you want to do, Irving?
With my father gone, there's nobody
left who connects with him. Not
you. Not anybody...

Johnny looks at Paul for a moment, then to the pamphlet.
Johnny backs away, out of the room. Then we HEAR:

A WOMAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)
 Today I want you to focus on you.

CUT TO:

96 INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

96

Paul in class. Drawing, of course. THIS TIME, A PICTURE OF A LUNAR MODULE, hovering above the moon. The art instructor, MS. MOUSTAKAS (it was her voice we heard during the "gap" session), talks to the room:

MS. MOUSTAKAS (CONT'D)
 And each time we try to draw ourselves, we are drawing not only what we see, but what we think we are *inside*... Our essence...

Ms. Moustakas turns her back to the class, goes to the projector. Starts to put IMAGES, SELF-PORTRAITS by FAMOUS ARTISTS, on the wall. Keeps TALKING, but the SOUND FADES...

PAUL LOOKS OVER, AT AN OPEN WINDOW. NEARBY: HE SEES THE LARGE GROUP of APPLE II PLUS COMPUTERS.

Seems to THINK OF SOMETHING. All of a SUDDEN:

MS. MOUSTAKAS (CONT'D)
 Paul? Earth to Paul!

PAUL GRAFF
 (caught)
 Sorry...

Ms. Moustakas walks up to Paul's desk, sees a drawing of the LUNAR MODULE. She holds it up to the class:

MS. MOUSTAKAS
 A spaceship, drawn by our Space Cadet!

The CLASS LAUGHS. She looks at it, then over to Paul.

MS. MOUSTAKAS (CONT'D)
 This isn't the assignment. But it's beautiful. I like it.
 (MORE)

MS. MOUSTAKAS (CONT'D)

(quietly, to Paul)

Now let's do the assignment.

Paul nods. She TAKES the LUNAR MODULE DRAWING AWAY FROM HIM.

VERONICA BRONFMAN

What're you going to do with it?

MS. MOUSTAKAS

That's none of your beeswax, Miss Bronfman! You shall see!

CHAD EASTMAN

Are you gonna throw it away?

MS. MOUSTAKAS

Shhhh...

PAUL looks up at the CLOCK: 2:45 PM. THE BELL RINGS...

PAUL GRAFF (PRE-LAP)

I got you a slice, from Angelo and Al's. I didn't have enough for two but they're big slices.

97 EXT. CLUBHOUSE - LATER

97

Paul approaches the clubhouse, a PIZZA BOX in his hand. Johnny sticks his head out the window:

98 INT. CLUBHOUSE

98

Johnny opens the box, starts eating immediately:

JOHNNY DAVIS

This's excellent...thanks! Angelo and Al's, still the best. The right amount of cheese, and the way it melts! Damn!

Beat.

PAUL GRAFF

Johnny?

JOHNNY DAVIS

Yeah?

PAUL GRAFF

How much is it to go to Florida?

JOHNNY DAVIS

'S like, a thousand dollars. I don't have nothing like a thousand dollars yet. But I'm gonna. Definitely...

PAUL GRAFF

A computer could get you a lot. That's a lot, right?

JOHNNY DAVIS

I guess. Which computer you talking about?

PAUL GRAFF

An Apple II Plus.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Oh, you could sell that. For a lot, I bet.

PAUL GRAFF

Well, my school has like, a zillion of those... And they don't really use them.

Beat.

PAUL GRAFF (CONT'D)

They wouldn't even notice one of them was gone--probably ever.

Beat. Johnny grows SERIOUS.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Oh shit--you gonna take one?

PAUL GRAFF

I dunno...

JOHNNY DAVIS

Man... A computer...? You're crazy! How you gonna do that? Ain't nobody gonna let you just go through the front door with it.

PAUL GRAFF

You go in through the window. They're so stupid, you--

THEN, A VOICE:

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)
Paul?!? Paul, time to wash up for
dinner!

PAUL GRAFF
I guess I gotta go back in...

JOHNNY DAVIS
Arright man, later. And thanks for
the pizza!

Paul waves, goes inside.

99 INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 99

Paul CANNOT SLEEP. He stares at the ceiling. HE HEARS
CRYING, from DOWN THE HALL. It is his MOTHER. HE PUTS HIS
HANDS ON HIS EARS to BLOCK THE SOUND.

Paul GETS OUT OF BED, STARTS to GET DRESSED.

100 EXT. CLUBHOUSE 100

Paul approaches the window of the clubhouse. Johnny wakes:

PAUL GRAFF
Johnny! JOHNNY!

JOHNNY DAVIS
(still sleepy)
Wha--?

PAUL GRAFF
Let's go do it. Let's take it!

JOHNNY DAVIS
Take what...?

PAUL GRAFF
The computer! We can GET it so
easy! I know how to get in and
everything. And then I'll go with
you, to Florida!

JOHNNY DAVIS
C'mon, man...

PAUL GRAFF
No, we CAN! Let's do it! Let's
go!

JOHNNY DAVIS

(beat)
A computer...?
(wakes more)
You must be outta your mind...

PAUL GRAFF

No, that'll pay for everything.
And they won't know.
(beat)
You coming with me?

Johnny ponders, staring at Paul. Grows more awake. He decides something, then puts on his shoes, gingerly.

Paul and Johnny LEAVE from the clubhouse, running up the alleyway. Johnny LIMPS a bit, his TOES INFECTED.

102 EXT. THE FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - SIDE - NIGHT 102

The kids walk around to the side of the school, FURTIVE and HUNCHED. JOHNNY is LIMPING. Approaching a window. It's HIGH.

Johnny sticks out his hands, makes a basket to step on.

Paul puts his foot in Johnny's hands and steps up, holding the ledge for support. He then pulls himself up and inside:

103 INT. CLASSROOM 103

Into the darkened computer room, with all the machines. Paul stands there, looking at all the equipment.

A beat of silence.

Johnny's VOICE, WHISPERED:

JOHNNY DAVIS (O.S.)

You good?

PAUL GRAFF

It's weird, I just need to take a huge shit all of a sudden.

JOHNNY DAVIS (O.S.)

(laughs; then:)
Damn, man--you gotta hold it in!
And hurry up!

Paul OPENS THE COMPUTER ROOM DOOR, enters:

104 INT. MAIN HALLWAY

104

It is very dark indeed. He takes several steps into the hallway, looking through the glass into the HEADMASTER'S OFFICE.

A GLASS DISPLAY: "THE FOREST MANOR FAMILY"

In it: a NEWSPAPER PHOTO of DONALD TRUMP, smiling, receiving a PLAQUE.

Paul spins around, but before going back into the COMPUTER ROOM, HE SEES: "ART BY OUR STUDENTS".

HIS DRAWING, of THE LUNAR MODULE. ON THE WALL. PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED, among a host of "VOTE" signs. A true surprise.

Something about this, about seeing the art displayed proudly, gives Paul PAUSE... BUT...

HE TURNS AND RE-ENTERS:

105 INT. CLASSROOM

105

Where he approaches the computer.

Paul SEEMS to have FROZEN.

JOHNNY DAVIS (O.S.)
Dude! What's going on?

Johnny CLIMBS UP. Enters. Sees Paul just standing there.

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)
What're you doing?!?
(beat)
We taking this shit or not?

PAUL GRAFF
(stammering)
I just...wanted to see...how to unhook it.

JOHNNY DAVIS
What're you talking about? You ain't taking it?

Paul stands there for a beat, and then BOTH SIMULTANEOUSLY SWOOP DOWN TO THE COMPUTER. The two UNPLUG THE UNIT.

107 EXT. ALLEY

107

The two kids huddle with the computer. Johnny's EYES widen:

JOHNNY DAVIS

Holy shit... Can't believe this...

PAUL GRAFF

What do we do with it now?

JOHNNY DAVIS

(thinks, then:)

Well...I got a guy--he's got a pawn shop on Sutphin Boulevard, and I bet he's gonna want this. I could take it to him tomorrow, and then it's Fla-ree-da, my man!

PAUL GRAFF

That's excellent! Maybe...we could like, take the train, or a bus!

JOHNNY DAVIS

Yeah, bus could be good... What time is it?

PAUL GRAFF

Oh man, it's sooo late--it's 3:30!

JOHNNY DAVIS

(a laugh)

Whoa. Gonna be morning pretty soon!

(beat)

I'll go back to my grandma's, get the rest of my shit. Then we could meet, at like, hundred eighty-eight street, and seventy-third avenue. At five?

PAUL GRAFF

Yes!

JOHNNY DAVIS

Arright, see you later!

Paul grins. They do a dance, a sort of happy dance, then split up.

A112 INT. JOHNNY DAVIS'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A112

The room itself is dark, a woman sleeping in the bed. It is JOHNNY'S GRANDMOTHER.

The window is open, the curtains gently blowing. The space is cluttered yet bereft. Entering is Johnny, who packs things in his bag. He turns to look at his Grandmother, in the bed. She looks at him and smiles, a surprise:

JOHNNY DAVIS

Grandma? I have to leave.
'Cause...otherwise, they're gonna come take me away. But I'll be good--I'll be with my friend, and it's gonna be fine.

JOHNNY'S GRANDMOTHER

(not comprehending)
All right.

JOHNNY DAVIS

(realizing lack of comprehension)
I hope you understand me. I love you, and I know you loved me. Cared for me.

JOHNNY'S GRANDMOTHER

(still smiling)
Yes... Honey... I'll see you soon.

He bends down, kisses her. Departs.

CUT TO:

108 OMITTED 108

109 OMITTED 109

EXT. FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - MORNING

Kids in the yard, playing.

110 INT. FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - HALLWAY - MORNING 110

Paul is crouched, with his attache case, arranging his books and putting the case on a rack. He looks exhausted. Students mill around, doing the same. *In medias res:*

GEORGE MADISON

Did you study for the health class test?

TOPPER LOWELL

Nah, it's all penis shit. Like, what is the cowper's gland...?

CHAD EASTMAN

Wait, is that the gland that tells you whether you're coming or going?

They laugh. Paul smiles but seems preoccupied.

TOPPER LOWELL

(to Paul)

Hey Baba, did you? Study?

PAUL GRAFF

No. Course not.

TOPPER LOWELL

Wow. You look so wasted! Are you wasted?

PAUL GRAFF

(closer to Topper)

I'm cutting out of here soon. You'll see.

They think he is kidding; Topper SMILES, a slight LAUGH. They get up, walk around to:

111 INT. CROWDED HALL

111

Filled with students. As Paul and Topper and Chad walk down the hall, coming in the opposite direction, is HEADMASTER FITZROY...AND TWO COPS. They seem SERIOUS!!

TOPPER LOWELL

Whoa, the cops're here! Wonder what that's about..

ANGLE ON PAUL, grave concern on his face.

Paul BACKS AWAY...

B112 INT. LIVING ROOM

B112

Paul enters the house. Looks around, nervous. Goes up the stairs.

112 INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - PAUL'S BEDROOM - LATER 112

Paul enters the bedroom. Takes his attache case and EMPTIES it of all BOOKS. Starts SHOVING CLOTHES INTO IT.

113 INT. PARENTS' ROOM 113

Paul goes into his mother's DRESSER DRAWER. TAKES ALL THE MONEY--about two hundred dollars. He is out of breath, DEEPLY CONCERNED...

A PIECE OF MUSIC BEGINS--"ARMAGIDEON TIME," by The Clash. It's playing in another room. Paul is startled.

115 INT. TED'S BEDROOM 115

Paul enters. Ted moves to his bed, a copy of Aldous Huxley's "Antic Hay" on his chest. The Clash is playing on his stereo.

PAUL GRAFF

Hey... I...didn't know you were home.

TED GRAFF

Yep. I'm home.

PAUL GRAFF

Cool... What're you listening to?

TED GRAFF

The *Clash*, baby...

PAUL GRAFF

Oh.

Paul's about to turn to leave, when:

TED GRAFF

So how much did you take?

PAUL GRAFF

What do you mean?

TED GRAFF
 (rolls his eyes)
 I heard the drawer, you schmuck.

PAUL GRAFF
 (beat; sheepish)
 All of it.

TED GRAFF
 She'll notice.

PAUL GRAFF
 I know. But I'm leaving tonight.
 For good. So I don't even care.

Ted smiles.

TED GRAFF
 Call me when you make it all the
 way down to Jewel Avenue.

PAUL GRAFF
 No, I'm serious, Ted. I'm leaving.

TED GRAFF
 Yeah? For where, Mr. Stud?
 Perfect place for you is the VIRGIN
 Islands.

Ted laughs at his own joke.

PAUL GRAFF
 (deadly serious)
 I'm not coming back. I swear.

TED GRAFF
 (sobering)
 Don't do anything dumb. If that's
 possible for you. Here--

Ted HANDS HIM HIS BACKPACK.

TED GRAFF (CONT'D)
 Better than that dumb briefcase.

Paul nods. A CLICKING, DOWNSTAIRS. THE FRONT DOOR OPENS. A
 VOICE:

IRVING GRAFF (O.S.)
 HELLO?!?

117 INT. LIVING ROOM

117

Armed with his brother's backpack, Paul SKULKS PAST IRVING, who is looking through mail in the dining room. Barely looking:

IRVING GRAFF

Who's that there?

PAUL GRAFF

It's me. Just gonna go around back, to the clubhouse for a bit!

IRVING GRAFF

Then put out the cans, they're coming tomorrow! Your mother's at your grandma's, sitting shiva. So we'll be eating late.

PAUL GRAFF

'Kay!

Paul exits.

118 EXT. STREET - EARLY EVENING

118

Paul walks down Utopia Parkway. It is uncommonly FOGGY and quiet. The streets are now dark, lit only by the orange sodium vapor streetlights.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Of Paul walking to his destination. In the fog, a dark silhouette amidst an uncharacteristically quiet and eerie evening.

THEN WE SEE TWO FIGURES. JOHNNY IS WAITING AT THE CORNER, COMPUTER IN HIS ARMS; and HE AND PAUL WALK OFF TOGETHER.

119 EXT. CORNER OF HILLSIDE AVENUE AND UNION TURNPIKE

119

Outside "E-Z PAWN SHOP."

JOHNNY DAVIS

Okay, I'm going inside, pick up the cash. And then I'll go 'round, to the other side of the street. All you gotta do is go into that alley there. You see it?

PAUL GRAFF

Yeah but--I could totally come in
with you.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Nah man, he *trusts* me. So you go
and wait 'til I come out. And then
we can split for GOOD.

PAUL GRAFF

Arright. I'll wait there.

JOHNNY DAVIS

(broad smile breaks out)

We're close, man. We're CLOSE!!!
'S gonna work out--we got it MADE!

Paul WATCHES FURTIVELY through the glass; from across the
street; Johnny NODS, excited.

The Pawn Shop Owner retreats to the back. PICKS UP THE
PHONE. In SOME PAIN, JOHNNY DAVIS sits down on a fold-out
chair and looks around the shop, which is densely filled with
all sorts of random products...

Paul RETREATS deeper into the alley.

The Pawn Shop Owner RETURNS from being on the PHONE and GIVES
JOHNNY a SMILE.

121 EXT. ALLEY 121

Paul waits in the alley. All of a sudden... He hears a
DISTANT SIREN...

Then--FLASHING LIGHTS as a POLICE SQUADRON CAR passes by.

Paul senses something is UP, STARTS WALKING AWAY...

122 EXT. ACROSS FROM THE PAWN SHOP 122

Paul approaches. There are POLICE LIGHTS CUTTING THROUGH the
fog, and Paul moves closer to SEE:

A CRIME SCENE? In front of "E-Z PAWN SHOP"!!!!!!

JOHNNY DAVIS, LINED UP AGAINST A POLICE CAR.

PAUL BACKS AWAY, then RUNS. A COP SEES HIM RUNNING AWAY,
SUSPICIOUSLY...

123 EXT. BACK ALLEY 123

Paul is beside himself, trying to escape. A POLICE CAR STOPS
right in FRONT OF HIM.

A SQUADRON CAR stops. A COP GETS OUT OF THE CAR. In the distance. Starts APPROACHING Paul!

COP
Hey! Hey, you!

TWO COPS GET OUT.

Paul raises his arms.

COP #1
In the car!!! NOW!!!! And keep
your mouth shut!

Paul obliges.

124 INT. COP CAR 124

He IS SEATED NEXT to JOHNNY DAVIS. NEITHER SAYS A WORD TO THE OTHER. But...Johnny is cuffed, and he is NOT... The CAR PULLS AWAY.

125 INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT 125

Paul is accompanied to what looks like a small cage. He looks around; no one is paying attention to him. It is MADNESS in here. Where did they take Johnny?

THEY ARE INSPECTING VOTING MACHINES into the FRONT PART of the STATION. The POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO is DIRECTING WORKERS:

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
The polling areas'll be in front--
all the voting machines go in
front, guys!
(to himself)
Goddamned election, can't wait 'til
it's over with already.

At last, the SERGEANT approaches, and they open the CAGE.

126 INT. STATION - NEAR THE DESK 126

JOHNNY IS HERE, at the opposite end of the table. OFFICER PATRICK SCOTT leans to D'Arienzo, who has entered. In his ear:

OFFICER PATRICK SCOTT
Pawn shop owner called it in...hot
serial number on the unit...

D'Arienzo listens, then sits down, talks to Paul.

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Do you know this young man?

Paul nods, petrified.

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO (CONT'D)
Who is he?

PAUL GRAFF
My friend.

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Well, your friend's in real trouble
here. He stole a computer.

Pregnant pause from the cop. Then:

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO (CONT'D)
Wanna tell me about that?

PAUL GRAFF
I...I don't really know what
happened...

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Then what were you doing there?
You just said he's your friend--how
good do you know him?
(beat)
The two of you're in real trouble.

A beat. Quietly:

JOHNNY DAVIS
(re Paul)
He didn't do nothing. It's me.

Paul is STUNNED by this. SPEECHLESS.

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Oh, he was just along for the ride?
(to Paul)
You're a little angel? Your friend
did it all?

PAUL GRAFF
Um... I don't...

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Blub blub blub, you got no words
all of a sudden.

JOHNNY DAVIS

He didn't do it.

PAUL GRAFF

(finally)

No--that's--that's not true.

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO

What's that?

PAUL GRAFF

We both did it.

(beat)

From where I go to school.

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO

All I know is, you guys're now
telling verry different stories
here.

PAUL GRAFF

No! I swear!

(beat)

We were trying to get enough money
to go to Florida...

The Sergeant's face sours at the absurdity of the "plan."

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO

Look, whatever is going on at home,
if you have a real problem, there
are people you can talk to here.

PAUL GRAFF

I don't have any problems at home.
I just hate it.

JOHNNY DAVIS

He's just saying some shit. He
didn't do anything.

PAUL GRAFF

Oh my God, why are you saying that?
(closer, sotto)
Why are you telling them that?!?

JOHNNY DAVIS

He wasn't even in there.
(turns to Paul)
Right?

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Shut up now, the both of you.
We're gonna have to sort these
little fairy tales out later.

D'Arienzo is distracted by another office entering,
whispering in his ear. D'Arienzo leaves.

PAUL GRAFF
(whispers, to Johnny)
Why are you telling them that?

Angrily, Johnny gives him a visual sign, gritting his teeth,
as if to say: "SHUT YOUR MOUTH, DON'T FUCK THIS UP."

NO ANSWER. MOMENTS LATER, IRVING ARRIVES. He SEES Paul, who is filled with fear.

Johnny is watching the whole thing that follows. The SERGEANT SEES IRVING. A look comes over him, a broad SMILE:

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Irving? Irving Graff?

IRVING GRAFF
Yes...?

The Sergeant WARMLY sticks his hand out to shake:

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO
Tom D'Arienzo, I live over on Jewel Avenue. We got a mutual friend, Nick Bloom?

IRVING GRAFF
Oh yes, yes, hello!

AWKWARD BEAT.

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)
So my son here is uh...involved in something?

SERGEANT D'ARIENZO says nothing. Thinks for a moment. Then he motions for Irving to ENTER an OFFICE, which he does.

The two have a CONVERSATION, and Paul watches through GLASS... Then Paul TURNS back to JOHNNY. PATRICK SCOTT sits down and tries to act friendly to Johnny. Dulcet but forced tones:

OFFICER PATRICK SCOTT
Sit tight, we're just gonna get someone to talk with you. But we're all your friends here. Arrright?

Johnny sits there, staring at Scott for a moment. And then he PIPES UP, equal parts contempt and heartbreak:

JOHNNY DAVIS
You're not my friend.
(beat)
And you're not ever gonna be my friend.
(beat)
You're gonna tell me some shit, you care about this and that.
(MORE)

JOHNNY DAVIS (CONT'D)

But I'm not gonna listen to that
shit from any of you. 'Cause you
don't care, and you're never gonna
care. There ain't no one else
gonna stick up for me except me.

Johnny turns, LOOKS AT PAUL. After a BEAT, the men EMERGE.

IRVING GRAFF

(to Paul; quietly)

Come with me.

Paul doesn't move. Shocked.

POLICE SERGEANT D'ARIENZO

Listen to your father.

JOHNNY DAVIS

Let it go, man. Don't make no
difference.

(beat)

Let it go.

IRVING GRAFF

I said, come ON.

Reluctant, Paul stands. Waves to Johnny. He walks out of
the station with his father.

127 EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - STREET - MOMENTS LATER 127

The Plymouth Station Wagon pulls up to the house.

128 INT. FAMILY CAR. NIGHT 128

Paul is inside. IRVING is behind the wheel. Parks the car.
Gives a weary EXHALE. After SILENCE:

PAUL GRAFF

Please can we just go into the
house, Dad? You don't have to hit
me. I won't get into trouble
again, I promise--

IRVING GRAFF

I'm not gonna hit you, Paul. But
we got very, very lucky. That's
all I'm gonna tell you.

Paul does not answer.

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

I fixed that cop's hot water heater a few years ago, and I didn't charge him. That's why you're not up shit's creek right now, in a juvenile detention center somewhere.

PAUL GRAFF

Dad--I have to tell you something.

IRVING GRAFF

What.

PAUL GRAFF

I did it. I did--

IRVING GRAFF

(cutting him off)

Everybody makes mistakes. You won't do it again.

Best.

PAUL GRAFF

What's going to happen to my friend?

IRVING GRAFF

(shrugs, shakes his head)

You're a Black and you get a police record, you're in deep shit. My guess is you never see him again.

PAUL GRAFF

It wasn't his fault--

IRVING GRAFF

(forcefully, almost enraged)

Shut your mouth. Okay?

Paul stares at his father, then looks down, devastated. Irving calms, grows ever more introspective. In fact, at moments, his expression contorts, as though he is conflicted inside, torn apart, devastated:

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

Life is unfair. Nobody likes that-- it's the worst thing in the world. But I learned long time ago--be thankful when you're on the winning side. We're Jews, usually we aren't.

(MORE)

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

When you get older you can change the world. Right now, you just need to get past this and become a *mensch*.

A long BEAT. Paul LISTENS, without sarcasm, with humility. Irving changes gears, becomes more parental:

IRVING GRAFF (CONT'D)

Your friend got the shaft, you feel bad. I understand that. And in a lotta ways, you'll never be closer to your friends than when you're this age. So I'm sure you'll miss him. But there's a time when you just have to put *being* a kid behind you. Maybe it's too early for you, I dunno. But this is your time, and you can't choose. You may feel you let him down, and I won't lie to you: it may haunt you the rest of your life. Trust me, I know. So all you can do is now make the most of your break, and don't look back. Do you hear what I'm saying to you?

PAUL GRAFF

(sotto)

Yes.

TEARS BEGIN TO FORM IN IRVING'S EYES. He LOOKS at his son, gently touching his son's cheek:

IRVING GRAFF

Let's go inside, please.

(beat)

You need to just forget about all this. Let's hope it doesn't break your mother's heart. She's already having a rough enough time lately.

129 OMITTED

129

130 INT. HOUSE - FOYER

130

The TWO ENTER the dark house. Irving goes toward the kitchen, Paul walks up the stairs slowly, as though in a horror film.

OVER THIS, we HEAR:

JOHN CHANCELLOR (PRE-LAP)
 "Good evening, and welcome to NBC
 News's coverage of the 1980
 Presidential Election."

CUT TO:

CLOSE SHOT on a TELEVISION SCREEN:

JOHN CHANCELLOR (CONT'D)
 "Our team of correspondents,
 analysts, pollsters, and
 commentators're assembled here in
 New York and around the country to
 see if Jimmy Carter can win
 reelection or if Ronald Reagan will
 be going to the Oval Office. But we
 have been polling around the
 country in the key states, NBC News
 and the Associated Press, and what
 we're learning in the key states is
 that--makes us believe Ronald
 Reagan will win a very substantial
 victory tonight. Very
 substantial..."

The CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL:

131 INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

131

The ENTIRE FAMILY, HUDDLED AROUND the TELEVISION. IRVING
 slices a PICKLED TOMATO. ESTHER is a bit in her own world,
 folding clothes on the kitchen table...

TED GRAFF
 Wasn't he an actor? Doesn't he
 have to be like a senator first?

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ
 (seeing Reagan on
 television)
 No. He's just an actor. A stupid,
 stupid man. Tough on the
 criminals, tough on welfare, tough
 on Iran. Okay, he's a tough guy, a
 cowboy. And now it looks like he's
 getting the senate, too...

Paul ambles over to the kitchen table. SEES THE STACK OF
 CLOTHES. He takes one of the articles of clothing--

PAUL GRAFF

This's one of my favorite shirts.

ESTHER GRAFF

You've grown out of it, buster--
sorry to tell you. Off to
Goodwill.

(beat)

Shh--looks like Carter's going to
talk.

IRVING GRAFF

He's gonna get up and say bullshit.
It's all the same. This one's a
schmuck, that one's a schmuck. No
point in watching.

ESTHER GRAFF

SHHHHHHH.

Esther wants to HEAR CARTER'S CONCESSION SPEECH.

ESTHER GRAFF (CONT'D)

Carter.

Jimmy Carter steps on the podium.

JIMMY CARTER

"I promised you four years ago I'd
never lie to you. So I can't say
it doesn't hurt."

ESTHER GRAFF

I just hope we don't have a nuclear
war now...

PAUL GRAFF

I'm going up to do my homework...

AUNT RUTH

He does his homework now? Is this
Paul Graff we're talking about?

ESTHER GRAFF

Yes. He's made a lot of progress
lately. He really has--I had a
feeling he would...

GRANDMA MICKEY RABINOWITZ

Well, he's finally where he should
be, after all this time.

132 INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

132

Paul enters his room. Opens his attache case, starts taking out his books. He STARES for a MOMENT in the GLASS of a PICTURE ON HIS WALL.

IN THE REFLECTION, GRANDFATHER AARON, SITTING IN A CHAIR!!!!

GRANDPA AARON seems to be arranging his toy CAR COLLECTION in orderly fashion.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
You should put all these things
away...make room...

PAUL looks down at his books. Then looks to the REFLECTION AGAIN. His GRANDFATHER is seated in a rocking chair:

PAUL GRAFF
Grandpa...? I've been really
missing you a lot.
(beat)
You...you said you had something to
tell me.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
It's hard to fight. Isn't it.

PAUL GRAFF
(beat)
I tried.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ
How do you think you did?

TEARS FORM in PAUL'S EYES. He starts to shake his head.

GRANDPA AARON RABINOWITZ (CONT'D)
You'll have a lot more chances.
And it will happen, again and
again. It won't be easy.

ANGLE ON PAUL as he TOUCHES THE GLASS, where the reflection of his grandfather was. SPINS AROUND, FAST!

THE CHAIR is empty.

133 EXT. THE FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - FOREST HILLS GARDENS - DAY 133

CLOSE SHOT on a SIGN, an OUTDOOR EVENTS BOARD behind GLASS, Black with WHITE PRESS-ON LETTERS: "5pm FOREST MANOR THANKSGIVING DANCE"

135 OMITTED

135

136 INT. GYM - MOMENTS LATER

136

THE FOREST MANOR TEACHERS and STUDENTS. The F-M students are boisterous, irrepressible. Paul is among them.

A MAN'S VOICE. IT IS FRED TRUMP. Paul listens with focus:

FRED TRUMP

Happy Thanksgiving tomorrow, first of all. It was always my favorite holiday--but not because of the food, mind you. No, I remember the good time, the family, the friends. And this is a wonderful tradition we have, that our family has sponsored over the years. The annual Forest Manor Thanksgiving Dance. It's a time to come together, be grateful for all we've been given and all the positive things in life. Now this year, I must say, something just feels a little extra special. Because we have a new president, a new beginning, a return to America's rightful place in the world. I know speaking for myself personally I couldn't have more hope than I do at this very moment in our future.

(beat)

So. When I look out, and I see all these beautiful, handsome kids, clean-cut... You're ready to face the world--you're being taught all the right things. And you'll be the *leaders*. Leaders in business, finance, politics, all aiming to keep our country good and strong.

Paul STOPS LISTENING. He TURNS and EXITS as Trump continues:

FREDERICK TRUMP (CONT'D)

Just...WOW. Kids, you got your whole life ahead of you. Enjoy it. And most of all, HAVE FUN tonight!

The STUDENTS LET OUT an EXCITED SCREAM.

137 EXT. THE FOREST MANOR SCHOOL - YARD

137

Paul walks out and GRABS a SODA in a LARGE COOLER.

BREAKING THE MOMENT: TOPPER comes out and calls after Paul:

TOPPER LOWELL

Hey! Baba! A bunch of us, we're going back to my house for a party after this. Wanna come?

PAUL GRAFF

Maybe... Like, what time?

Just then: a new song, from the house.

TOPPER LOWELL

Holy shit, listen! The Sugar Hill Gang--your favorite! So? You coming, ya bastard?

PAUL GRAFF

Actually...I don't think I can. I forgot, I have some stuff I gotta do.

TOPPER LOWELL

Arrright, your loss!

VERONICA BRONFMAN

Paul, what're you doing out here? Come on back in before we go! Come dance for a bit!

They retreat back inside; Paul is by himself, standing there.

After a beat, Paul walks AWAY FROM the SCHOOL. The WIND kicks up a bit. As he WALKS, LOOKING BEHIND HIM, we CUT TO IMAGES that play ALMOST as his POV:

1. DOLLY SHOT: the CAMERA DOLLIES AWAY FROM HIS EMPTY CLUBHOUSE, at DUSK. 2. DOLLY SHOT: the CAMERA DOLLIES BACK, WIDENING: AN EMPTY PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM. 3. DOLLY SHOT: the CAMERA DOLLIES AWAY FROM THE EMPTY GRAFF DINNER TABLE.

Back to: ANGLE ON PAUL, as he walks away from Forest Manor. We ARE IN LONG SHOT NOW. The LEAVES twirl and spin as he disappears from view, into the distance.

FADE OUT. The TITLE FADES IN over WIND SOUND: "ARMAGEDDON TIME"

The End.