

Sidewalks

By Curtis Rainey

FADE IN:

EXT. DIANE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Small. A clean-cut property. Suburban area.

NEVE (O.S.)
You ruin everything!

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DIANE (34) - youthful, average-looking, empties a CAKE into the trash. We see the cake fall on top of an empty wine bottle.

DIANE
It was a surprise birthday party,
Neve! All you had to say was thank
you?! Act shocked!

NEVE (17) - a skinny girl with West Coast good looks, takes birthday banners off walls. She looks bored --

NEVE
I'm seventeen, not seven, mom.

Diane faces her daughter.

DIANE
Where's all this ungratefulness
coming from? Your father --

Eyes wide, Neve shakes her head, turns around.

NEVE
Don't bring dad into this, he'd at
least understand me.

Diane snaps --

DIANE
You think you're all grown up now,
right? You think because you're
seventeen you can take on the
world?
(BEAT)
Well, go on! Walk out the door and
try!

Neve walks up to her mother.

DIANE (CONT'D)
You're turning into a spoilt,
ungrateful brat!

NEVE

I hate what you've did to this family and I just... hate that dad's gone! I wish...

Neve's eyes are watery.

NEVE (CONT'D)

Why couldn't you have gone instead of dad?!

Diane's mouth drops.

She instantly SLAPS her daughter across the face!

Neve clasps her cheek, gasps, looks right into her mother's eyes.

A silent, cold look filled with hatred --

DIANE

I didn't mean --

NEVE

Screw you!

Neve storms out of the kitchen. Diane covers her mouth, can't believe what's she's done.

A door is SLAMMED O.S. --

FADE TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Neve crying outside her house. On her phone to someone.
- A door opens. Neve stands on a doorstep. She is met by the concerned face of LISA (17). Lisa pulls her friend into a hug.
- Neve sleeps on a couch in a dark living room.
- Lisa and Neve loom outside an old CONVENIENCE STORE. In the window a sign reads "HALF-PRICE ALCOHOL!"
- In a skate-park, Neve and Lisa along with a lot of other TEENAGERS drink and dance and go nuts.
- LATER Neve finds herself being chatted up (M.O.S) by DAN (19), an athletic handsome type who offers her some beer. Neve laughs at whatever he says.
- A new day. Neve, Dan and Lisa sit in her living room watching TV. However, Neve and Dan are more interested in watching each other.

- With a smile on his face, a soaking Dan gives Neve a piggy-back down a street as it rains.

- MOMENTS LATER they stop and kiss.

- A bedroom. Darkness. Dan and Neve kiss. Remove their clothes. They lie on top of each other.

- Neve wakes up in the same bedroom. Morning sun spills in through a window -- the next day. She's alone in the bed and Dan is nowhere to be seen...

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

FADE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A simple two-storey in a pretty neighborhood.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway lies in darkness, save the light which spills out from an open doorway.

NEVE (O.S.)
No... no... please...

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM

Neve sits on a toilet in pyjamas with her head in her hands.

Her hair covers her face.

NEVE
(In despair)
No... no!

The box of a PREGNANCY TEST lies a few feet away.

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Diane is at a sink.

She brushes her teeth in front of a mirror. She leans under the faucet, fills her mouth with water, rinses, spits. She's done. Diane places her toothbrush into the holder...

Beside Diane's toothbrush in the holder, is a second one. It's pink. Looks like it hasn't been used in a while.

Diane watches it for a moment, before she turns and leaves.

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENT LATER

A clock hangs on a wall -- it's almost midnight.

Diane throws a cold and uneaten microwave dinner into the trash.

With a cloth in her other hand, she wipes down the counters.

For a second, she glances up --

A framed PHOTOGRAPH of Diane and Neve as they smile hangs on the wall. She smiles. Seconds later, it's gone. Back to tidying up. The memory's broken.

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM

Back with Neve. She's now slouched down against the wall.

She cries and cries. Her knees are pulled up to her chest.

NEVE

Fuck!

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Neve enters into what is clearly a typical girl's bedroom.

She paces for a moment before she passes by a mirror. Neve's eyes are red. She pauses, watches her reflection, then she pulls up her pyjama top to expose her stomach.

No bump. Yet. Neve rubs her skinny belly.

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The hands on the clock TICK by. It's quarter-past midnight.

Dianne sits at the table. She's on her old home cordless.

DIANNE

(Into phone)

I haven't heard from her.

A moment --

DIANNE (CONT'D)

She's been staying over at Lisa's place. But I know that Lisa and her mom are in Toronto this weekend, so Neve's alone... I'm guessing...

A moment --

DIANNE (CONT'D)

Because she doesn't want to see me.
I thought when she walked out, it
was... some strop, that she was
angry. But she hasn't called or
contacted me in, like, five months.

Another moment -- Diane sighs. Rubs her forehead.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

Because she's still my daughter.
If space is what she needs, then
she's getting it. I have time.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM

A digital-clock on a dresser reads -- "00:28"

Neve pulls a duffel-bag filled with clothes apart. As she empties the contents all over the bedroom floor --

A PHOTO flutters out amongst the clothing from the duffel.

It lands on the floor. Neve notices. She gets on her knees. She reaches her hand forward. Lifts the photo --

The same photo of Neve and her mother that's in Diane's kitchen.

Tears well up again in Neve's eyes. She looks at the photo.

A memory right in her hands.

EXT. SIDEWALK - LATER

Neve walks down a sidewalk. She still wears her pyjama bottoms, but covers her top half with an oversized hoodie.

She stops outside a house. Glances up at it. She then approaches the MAIL-BOX on the front lawn.

From the pockets of her hoodie Neve produces the positive pregnancy test. She opens the mail-box. Puts the test inside.

Neve then walks off again down the sidewalk.

EXT. DIANE'S HOUSE

Hands in her pockets, Neve sits across the street on the sidewalk facing her house.

She glances up at her home, eyes glassy. For a moment, she does nothing but watch, then --

With a sigh, she gets up. She pauses. Reluctant Neve then takes a step forward and begins to walk towards her front door.

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Diane turns a light off in the kitchen before she walks out into the empty hallway. She approaches the stairs which are close-by when --

KNOCK... KNOCK... -- dull, slow. Diane turns her head. An eyebrow cocks.

She approaches the door cautiously. Looks through the peep hole. In a flash, she unlocks the door. Throws it open.

Neve stands outside.

NEVE

Mom...

A moment --

DIANE

You think you can just come back?

NEVE

I...

DIANE

You cut me out of your life? You don't speak to me for five months?

(BEAT)

I know I was out of line, but did I deserve this?!

Neve is speechless. Diane shakes her head.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Life's not as easy as you think, huh? That's why you're back, right? That's why you're back here, back with the mother... that you wished was dead?

NEVE

Mom... I'm sorry!

DIANE

Our problems are not going to all of a sudden get better with an apology!

NEVE

(Blurts it out)

I'm pregnant!

Still. Silent. Diane doesn't speak. Doesn't move.

Neve runs forward. Collapses into her mother's arms. Tears flow. They don't stop.

NEVE (CONT'D)
I'm pregnant...

Neve clings to her mother. Diane rubs her daughter's head.

INT. DIANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

A lamp shines, the only source of light. The mother and daughter duo are on the sofa. A box of tissues lies on the floor.

Neve lies across the sofa, head on her mother's lap.

NEVE
I'm so sorry I left...

She wipes her face with a tissue.

DIANE
Lets... just be happy you're
back...

NEVE
Are you disappointed?

Diane smirks, rubs her daughter's head.

DIANE
When I fell pregnant with you, I
was your age, so to say yes would
make me a hypocrite, wouldn't it?
(BEAT)
There's nothing better than
bringing a life into this world.
It's the best experience a woman
could ever go through. When you
see your child's face... the love
you feel... it's indescribable.
It's the best feeling ever.

Neve holds her mother's hand.

NEVE
Thank you.

DIANE
What for, honey?

A smile from Neve.

NEVE
For, just, giving me this
unconditional love.

DIANE
That's what mothers do.

Diane puts her hand on Neve's belly. Neve closes her eyes.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. DIANE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lawn furniture and toys scatter the front-yard.

Neve (now 21) walks down the sidewalk, a smile on her face.

Diane (now 38) comes out of the house and walks down the pathway to meet her daughter.

DIANE
All set?

NEVE
The house is ready. We can move in
this weekend.

Diane pulls Neve into an embrace.

DIANE
God, I'm going to miss you guys.

CLOSE ON Neve's face. Big grin.

NEVE
I'm going to go crazy without you.
You don't even understand, mom.

They part. Diane looks O.S. -- her smile grows.

DIANE
I'm going to miss that angel,
especially, I hope you know.

FURTHER DOWN THE SIDEWALK

BAILEE (4) - an adorable girl with curls and a cute smile can be seen. She's wears a party hat and a pink badge with "4" on it.

Bailee bends down and draws on the sidewalk with big chunks of multi-colored chalk.

NEVE
She's going to miss you too.

SECONDS LATER

Neve and Diane appear over Bailee.

NEVE (CONT'D)
What did you draw, honey?

Bailee points down at the sidewalk.

She's drawn a messy, but adorable picture of a family, like only a four year old could draw. Terribly bad, but immensely cute.

Bailee, Diane, A MAN and Neve are all represented by smiley stick figures. A sun sits above them.

BAILEE
That's all of us. Me, grandma,
daddy and you.

As Neve lifts her daughter into her arms Bailee throws her arms around Neve's neck, hugs her tight. She looks back down at the drawing on the sidewalk.

NEVE
That's beautiful.

She looks at her daughter. Blissful and happy.

NEVE (CONT'D)
I love you, sweetie.

FREEZE ON Neve's happy face, before --

FADE OUT.

THE END