

Shared Scars

Original Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

SERIES OF SHOTS

A.HIGH SCHOOL EXT -- STUDENTS walking into the school.

B.SCHOOL HALLWAY -- STUDENTS are taking books out of their locker

GINA (17 sweet face, beautiful and kind. Daughter of Italian catholic parents. She fears her father very much, so she doesn't date. As she's putting some personal items in locker, ALEX (19) school jock, Puerto Rican, a bully, yet loved by all girls for his great muscular physic, comes behind her, puts his head on her shoulder. He speaks slowly, with a sexy smile, but there's great pain in his heart due to the lack of real love and affection in his upbringing.

ALEX

Hey beautiful... How's my girl?

GINA

I'm not your girl, Alex.

ALEX

Yes you are. You just don't know it yet. How was your summer? Why didn't you call me?

GINA

I told you I was going to Florida to be with my grandparents.

ALEX

Shit... You're right. I forgot.

GINA

You were probably too busy with Linda or who knows what other girls.

ALEX

Hey you're the only one I've been after for over a year now. So, when are we going out?

MELANIE (17) Latin girl, Gina's best friend.

MELANIE

If Gina is smart, never.

ALEX

(enraged)

Why don't you mind your dam business!

MELANIE

Gina is my business and you know it!

GINA
Hey! Guys cool it! What's going on
between you--

ALEX
Gina, Melanie is just Jealous because
we are done.

MELANIE
I broke up with you remember? It's
been over a year now.

ALEX
Hey, who's counting?

LINDA (17) the sexiest girl, school tramp. Blonde, great
body, not very bright, but knows how to use her beauty.
Alex's current sex partner. AS she passes them.

LINDA
(squeezes his ass)
Hi Alex!

Alex goes after her.

ALEX
Hey Linda wait!

MELANIE
See, Gina? The guys is ho.

GINA
I wished you would tell me what really
happened between you two.

MELANIE
It's in pass. Lets go first period
is starting.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN CLASSROOM -- MORNING

There are about twenty STUDENTS in John's classroom. There
are students from every background but mostly minorities:
Hispanics, African Americans, three whites, four Greeks and
three Italians.

JOHN FLANAGAN - (30s), English teacher. He looks younger
than he is, very attractive, honest face. John has been an
English teacher at this Queens New York High School for over
10 years now. John loves his job, cares deeply for all his
students success and most of his students love him as well.
He knows many of them from junior year. John is very strict
as far as respect among his students. He is a great listener
and an a great communicator.

BELL RINGS as JOHN walks in quickly. Behind him are Gina
and Melanie who go seat next to each other. Alex and Linda
are already in their seats as OTHER STUDENTS.

JOHN

(facing the students)

Good morning everyone! Hey! Quiet!

(silence)

Thank you. Welcome back ladies and gentleman to your last year of high school. You're all seniors now. Congratulations on getting this far!

JEROME(17) Black. Sad, angry eyes. He's a caretaker to his sick mother.

JEROME

(making fun of Alex)

Yo' Alex, lets hope this is your last year here finally!

LAUGHTER from STUDENTS at Alex for they know his repeating the 12th grade thanks to Mr. Flanagan, who left him back the previous year and Alex hates him for that.

ALEX

Fuck you all!

JOHN

Cool it guys! As I was saying congratulations to all of you on this your senior year and I trust and have faith, that all of you will graduate. That includes you Mr.Rodriguez. My name is John Flanagan and I will be your English teacher and this will be your homeroom for many of you. Over here on the board I have put up the rules of conduct for this classroom.

WE see in the blackboard the header "RULES OF CONDUCT" then 1.Self Respect 2.Respect for others 3.Punctuality.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And already many of you have violated rule number two. So I hope that from this moment on, you respect one another. If any of you have not learned these basic human values by now, you will learned them and practiced them in here everyday.

Short pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

In your desks are some of your reading materials and I also want you all to read a book by an author of your choice, after I approve it of cause, every three months. I want a book report on it.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Now copy your homework while I take attendance. Say here, when I call your names, if I don't call you it's because I know many of you from last year. Now lets see: Gina Cavelli!

GINA

Here!

John continues calling student names while some students whisper among themselves.

ON: Alex to Jerome.

ALEX

(whispering)

This mother fucker hasn't change.

JEROME

You should know, thanks to him you are stuck here another year.

ALEX

Yeah and he is going to regret it.

Linda turns to ANGEL (17) a beautiful, dark hair, sad brown eyes, introverted. LISA (17) Hispanic, butch lesbian and proud of it. John helped Lisa with the rejection she first encounter after coming out. Lisa wants to protect Angel from Alex and Linda.

LINDA

Hi Angel, Lisa? Angel how was your summer?

JOHN

Angel Diaz!

ANGEL

Here! It was fine.

LINDA

Hey listen I--

ALEX

Hey Linda. I didn't know you were into sissies now.

JOHN

Lisa Gonzalez! Oh there you are. Hi Lisa?

LISA

Hi teach! Oh you are Mr. big macho Alejandro.

ALEX

Not as macho as you, Lisa...bro!

LINDA

Ignore him guys, he's just jealous.
Angel, you wanna go to the movies
this Saturday night?

ANGEL

Can I let you know by Thursday?

Lisa stares at Linda with suspicion.

JOHN

Linda Holt! Linda!

LINDA

Here! Okay Angel.

JOHN

Can you all be quiet in the back!
Jerome Thomas!

JEROME

Here!

After a brief moment JOHN gets up.

JOHN

Okay so for tomorrow I want you all
to write an essay of no more the 100
words about things or people that
inspire you. Or you can also write
about some event or life changing
experience, dreams or fears that you
might have and would like to share.
I hope all of you have the courage
to come up and read your essays out
loud. I believe that we can all
learn from each others experiences
and at the time this will bring many
of you closer together. As I'm sure
many of you have a lot more in common
than you think.

ALEX

(sarcastically)

I don't think so.

JOHN

(approaching him)

I know so and I will prove it to you
Mr. Rodriguez.

As the teacher walks away ALEX whispers.

ALEX

Fuck you.

GEORGE (17) Hispanic, overweight, abandoned by his mother and being raised by his grandmother and father. Trying to embarrass Jerome who goes by J.T. about his mother's AIDS.

GEORGE
Hey J.T.? Maybe you should write about your mama's disease and--

JEROME
(grabbing George)
Listen you fat fuck! Why don't--

JOHN
(overlapping)
Hey! Hey!

JEROME
...talk about your mama? And how she left you and your little brother to go live la vida loca down at A.C.

GEORGE
Eat shit!

JOHN
Okay enough! Mr.Thomas, go back to your seat. Mr.Lopez, apologize!

GEORGE
I--I'm sorry J.T. My bad.

ALEX
Hey, I'll talk about my mama. I'm just like her and proud to be!

JOHN
I will not! I repeat! I will not tolerate another act of disrespect!. I will personally suspend the next student who breaks the rules of this classroom. It's that clear? Mr. Lopez?

George nods, except Alex.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Mr.Rodriguez?

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Alex I asked you a question? It's that clear?

ALEX
(smiling)
Crystal.

JOHN

You know. You just keep pushing me to give you more and more homework, so here it comes--

All STUDENTS start to complain.

STUDENT

Oh come on teach!

STUDENT 2

That's not fare!

MELANIE

It had to be Alex with his big mouth!

ALEX

Shut up!.

John remains silent for a minute until they all say what they had to say.

JOHN

Now that you all said what ever you wanted to say, I will tell you what your assignment is and none of you have to worry. On the contrary it's easy, fun, but most importantly is life changing. You'll have until the end of November to complete it. All you need is a small piece of wood with no markings in it, five small nails and something to hammer with. Then I want you to take a nail and for every bad, nasty, offensive, negative, hurtful thing that you've done to someone, today is great example, I want you to hammer a nail into the piece of wood.

MELANIE

Alex, you're need a whole box of nails.

The WHOLE CLASS laughs.

JOHN

Quiet! I said only five nails. And don't put them all the way into the wood because I then want you to go back to the persons you've hurt and do an act of kindness. From a heart felt apology, to giving them a gift, taking them out, doing a shore if it's an adult or parent, etcetera, etcetera.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

For every act of forgiveness or remorse that you show to the same persons you hurt, you're going to remove a nail one by one until you get to everyone of the five people.

GEORGE

Then what do we do with the piece of wood?

JOHN

Put it away and after the Thanksgiving break your bring it into class.

ALEX

I don't know what the hell this is going to teach us but--

GINA

I think I know.

JOHN

I don't want you discussing this among yourselves. This is not a group task. It's only between you and the persons you've hurt and all they need to hear or see from you is true remorse and repentance. In simple terms: that you are TRULY sorry. In November you will all find out the purpose of this life changing task and I will give you your grades on it. I will tell you all this...

Short Pause.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's my ultimate goal that by the end of this school year you will ALL have develop a moral compass as well as a guilty conscience when you hurt or reject one another, whether you do it on purpose or not. We all need more of this in the society we all live in, where so many don't care about other peoples feelings except except their own.

ALEX

Why should I care. No one cares about my feelings.

JOHN

Well that's what this task is all about and by the end you will realize
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

to what extent your actions can hurt someone else's feelings and the lasting effects of those actions. Which is why you feel the way that you feel Mr. Rodriguez. You are a victim who's become a victimizer.

ALEX

What ever man.

JOHN

Any questions...? I'll give you five minutes to write it down.

EXT. THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE PROJECTS -- AFTERNOON

Jerome walks into his apartment building after school. SOME CHILDREN are playing and riding bikes outside this New York City housing complex know as THE PROJECTS.

INT. JEROME'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Jerome enters the small 2 bedroom apartment. WE first see the small living room decorated modestly. The small kitchenette can be seen from the living room. There's a huge mess in the sink. HE enters the kitchen and notices that no food has been cooked. HE just stand's there afraid and helpless. He notices his AIDS stricken, mother, asleep in the bedroom. TAMIKA (40s) black. She looks older than her age.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

Angel is in his bedroom, at his parent's home in Astoria Queens, writing the essay that Mr.Flanagan had ask all students to write. Angel's hand shakes, fear over takes him as he starts to write the title of his essay. CRISTINA (30s) Angel's mother, Puerto Rican. Enters the bedroom. She wears hardly any make up because of her 'macho mentality' Puerto Rican husband. Her husband doesn't even let her work.

CRISTINA

Mi hijo. Dinner is ready.

ANGEL

I'll be right out, mom.

CRISTINA

How was your first day of class? As a senior now!

ANGEL

It was cool. But I got a lot of work ahead of me.

CRISTINA
 (kissing him)
 I'm so proud of you! Just come to
 my room when you're ready to eat.

Cristina exits. Angel just sits there, pondering of what to
 or not write on his essay.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Alex who also leaves in the projects, enters into the small
 living room of the modest apartment where he lives with his
 single parent mother. MILLIE (30's) sexy lady, works nights
 and weekends at a local bar as a bartender. Alex approaches
 his mother's bedroom hears a MAN'S VOICE. She opens the
 door.

MILLIE
 Oh hi baby? Are you hungry?

ALEX
 Not really.

MILLIE
 There's arroz con gandules in the
 stove. Just warm it up and--

ALEX
 (upset)
 Forget about me and go back to what
 you were doing! Oh you're going to
 deny--

MILLIE
 I have nothing to hide. I'm a grown
 woman who works hard and gives you
 everything that you--

ALEX
 Everything? Are sure ma? Look, the
 hell with you both! I got homework
 to do!

MILLIE
 Alejandro!

Alex locks himself in his room and Millie goes back to her
 room.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

In Alex small bedroom where we can see posters of playboy
 center folds hanging on the walls as well as Yankee greats,
 baseball players. Sexual sounds from his mother's bedroom
 can be heard. The 19 year old turns stereo on, loud enough
 to flood out any noise coming from his mother's bedroom. He
 takes out the piece of wood. HE takes a nail and hammers it
 into the wood because of the way he spoke to his mother.

ALEX
 (resentful)
 This one is for the way I spoke to
 you ma and I don't regret it dear
 teacher.

He Sits in bed brainstorming, with pad and pen, of a title
 and topic for the essay that his detested English teacher
 gave him as homework assignment.

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Title: like mother, like son. By
 Alex Rodriguez. Yes!

INT. TAMIKA'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

Jerome puts a spoon full up to his mother's Tamika mouth and
 she complies with a smile.

TAMIKA
 Thank you baby. You know, you make
 a great nurse...J.T.? I'm sorry
 about the mess and about--

JEROME
 It's okay mama. I'll take care of
 it. All I want you to worry about
 it's yourself and your health.
 (handing her pills)
 Here take your pills... Mama, why
 didn't you take them earlier?

TAMIKA
 I--I forgot.

JEROME
 (scared)
 Mom, you can't forget about something
 this important. This medicine it's
 what's keeping you alive! Don't you
 know that AIDS kills? It killed
 him.

TAMIKA
 Of cause I know baby and I promise
 you that it wont happen again.

JEROME
 Good. Now eat up.

TAMIKA
 J.T. I'm sorry that I got AIDS and
 I'm sorry that--

JEROME
 Mama, you have nothing to be sorry
 for. It was that man's fault.

TAMIKA

That men was your father and he was
always there for--

JEROME

No he wasn't! He wasn't here for us
the day he decided to fool around
behind your back and bring that
disease into our home! Taking away
his life from us and risking your
life at the same time!

TAMIKA

J.T. please you need to forgive-

JEROME

(hurt, angry)

No! Never. He ruined our lives
forever. You loved him so much and
look what he did to us.

TAMIKA

I forgave him and so should you.

JEROME

(resentful)

Mom, I'm sorry.

TAMIKA

Baby I know you're worried, but I
want you to always remember this
psalm from the bible. Psalm 46 says:
"God is our refuge and our strength,
an ever present help when we are in
trouble" You got that baby?

After a short pause.

JEROME

Mom are your doing okay? The medicine
is helping you, right?

TAMIKA

Jerome, you are the best thing in my
life. I'm very proud of you and you
are going to achieve what ever it is
that you want in life. Don't let
nothing stop you and don't lose hope,
or faith in yourself. Promise me
that.

JEROME

I promise. I'm going to be doing my
homework you know where.

TAMIKA

The fire escape. Enjoy it because
you know soon the cold nights begin.

JEROME

Maybe later we can watch a movie together, okay?

TAMIKA

What ever you want. I'm all yours.

He covers her. She takes his hand and kisses it softly. He looks at her for a few seconds. She closes her eyes.

Jerome puts the trade in the sink, walks out to the fire escape and sits there with pen and paper as he sadly looks down at the street. TWO DRUNK man are fighting and cussing at each other. He looks towards his mothers bedroom and sees her asleep. Fear over takes the young 17 year teenager as he sees his whole world crumbling in front of him as his mothers life drifts away and there is nothing he can do but cry in silence. He begins to write the title of his essay:

P.O.V. JEROME -- ON THE PAD:

"IN THE DARKNESS OF MY HELL" BY JEROME THOMAS

INT. TEACHER'S LUNCH ROOM -- MORNING

John is seated eating a bagel with cream cheese and having tea. FRANK (25) a substitute teacher is serving himself a cup of coffee and speaks to John as he does this.

FRANK

How's Tony doing?

JOHN

He's fine.

FRANK

So I hear you got some real winners again this year, John.

JOHN

(a bit annoyed)

What do you mean by real winners?

FRANK

I was speaking ironically John. What I mean is you have some real losers and some tough kids, like that Rodriguez kid you held back last year. I have him in my math class and...you know what I mean.

Frank sits.

JOHN

Frank, first of all I don't believe in labels and you know that. These are all students to me.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Second, I have great faith and hope in all of them, even though some of them don't have hope in themselves. Yes some are more of a challenge to me than others. But, those are the ones I enjoy more teaching and turning them into successful men and women. I've done it in the pass and I will continue doing it.

FRANK

John, you are to good for this school.

JOHN

This is my vocation. This is what I choose to do. No matter how tough it gets I'm not going to give up on them. I care for all of them, they know it and deep inside they're grateful.

(getting up)

Gotta go, but one more thing. Its because of teachers like me that I'm a teacher today.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN CLASSROOM -- DAY

The class is already in progress.

JOHN

Everyone! Please pass forward your homework. I will start grading it. Continue reading the next chapter of "Catcher and the Rye"

ALEX

(whispering)

How many fucking times do I gotta read this shit?

JOHN

Did you say something Mr.Rodriguez?

ALEX

No teach, nothing, I was saying, what a pleasure it is to read this book...all over again.

JOHN

Well it should be like the first time for you, considering that you failed all the test and assignments that I gave you last year on this story.

All the STUDENTS LAUGH.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Quiet! And I assure you that you will pass this class with straight A's this time around.

ALEX

(sarcastically)

I'm sure that I will. Especially on yesterdays assignment. It was personal.

JOHN

(eye to eye with Alex)

You and everyone here should make every assignment very personal, Mr.Rodriguez. Your future depends on it.

ALEX

Our future? Men, you are dreaming.

JOHN

And what's wrong with dreaming?
Men!

ALEX

Read my essay and your see.

JOROME

Come on Alex, cool it. We got work to do here.

JOHN

(still focus on Alex)

No, let him speak. I really want for all of you to take this first week, not only to express yourselves in writing, but also verbally.

(short pause)

I really want to get to know you all better.

ON Angel. He Likes that his teacher said this.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I don't want any one of you holding back anything out of fear or embarrassment.

ON LISA. She smiles as John looks at her briefly.

ALEX

Did you hear that sissy boy?

JOHN

One more outburst of disrespect from you Mr.Rodriguez! And your be visiting the principals office.

MELANIE

I told you all! He's going to need a whole box of nails for the wood assignment.

JOHN

Okay that's enough! Do I have all the essays?

LINDA

Angel, where is your essay?

ANGEL

It's okay.

JOHN

Begin reading!

ON CLOCK. It's 10:30am as John begins to read and grade some of the essays. Clock again is now 11:25am

THE BELL RINGS.

JOHN (CONT'D)

For tomorrow I want some volunteers to read your own essays out loud to the whole class! See you later in homeroom! Mr.Diaz! I need to speak with you!

ALEX

Hey, no problem with me sharing. Everyone here knows my life.

GIRL

Yeah, what? That you are a 'papi chulo?

Melanie hears this and looks at Gina with a: "see, I told you so" look. Gina heads out.

ALEX

Hey, mami you know it. Gina! Wait I need to talk to you!

Alex chases Gina out the door as all students exit except Angel Diaz, who stayed at his seat. John approaches him and pulls up a chair in front of Angel.

JOHN

Mr.Diaz, why didn't you turn in your essay?

(silence)

Did you do it?

ANGEL

(barely audible)

Yes, I--I.

JOHN
Did you forget it at home?

ANGEL
No. I..I have it.

JOHN
I'm sorry son. You said you have
it?
(angel nodes)
Then why didn't you turn it in?
Angel, you can trust me. What is
it?

ANGEL
I--I really don't know how I dare to
put on paper what happen to me eleven
years ago.

JOHN
(now John understands)
Well, maybe this is the best thing
you've done. But, eleven years ago
you were only six, seven years old.
What bad thing could have happened
to you that you are so afraid--

ANGEL
(frighten)
I was never to say anything to anyone
for the safety of my mother.

JOHN
Son, I'm not forcing you to reveal
something you are not comfortable
with. But, if you want to keep this
confidential, I give my word that no
one will know. Look, what ever it
is, you need to leave it in the past
where it belongs. None of us can
change the pass Angel, but we can
change our present in order to improve
upon our future.

ANGEL
Do you promise not to tell my parents?

JOHN
Angel you were only seven and--

ANGEL
Do you promise?

JOHN
I promise.

ANGEL
(handing John the
essay)
Here.

JOHN
Thank you for your trust. Angel,
what ever it is that's bothering you
talk it out with your parents, your
family, your doctor. I will always
be here for you, don't ever forget
that, okay?

ANGEL
Thanks. I gotta go.

John reads the title of the essay.

JOHN
(shocked)
Oh my God.

INSERT - Essay's title "The Day I was Molested" by Angel
Diaz.

INT. ANGELS LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

The phone on the side table of the sofa is ringing, but no
one is home. The answering machine comes on and Jose's voice
comes on.

JOSE
(v.o)
Hi. You've reached the Diaz home.
We are not in. At the tone leave us
a brief message.

The front door opens and JOSE DIAZ (35)a cop and Angels father -
walks in - in uniform. He decides not to pick up the
receiver.

JOHN
(v.o)
Hello Mr. and Mrs.Diaz, my name is
John Flanagan. I'm your son's Angel
English teacher and I need for one
or both of you to come see me at the
school at your earliest convenience.
I need to talk to both of you about
something that concerns your son.
PLEASE come see me anytime between
8:00am and 5:00 pm Monday to Friday.
Thank you.

JOSE
(disgusted)
Oh please. Get a life mister!

Jose presses the erase button and as he walks away WE HEAR the MACHINES INNER VOICE: "message erased".

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Alex is on top of Linda humping her to loud MUSIC. They are both about to climax at the same time in loud, moaning, screaming in full satisfaction verbal sounds.

He gets up puts on his briefs, lowers the music and goes for a joint.

LINDA

You know, you are a fucking animal.
You are sexy, you are hot, but you
don't know how to make love.

ALEX

Hey bitch! What do you call what we
just did?

LINDA

Screwing, sex, that's all. Don't
you believe in love making?

ALEX

(lighting the joint)
How can I believe in something I've
never learned or felt. Right now
all I can say is that this..is my
love.

(takes a deep puff)
And you know why?

LINDA

No, why?

ALEX

Because it makes me feel so--so good.

His mood changes to serious, sad, angry.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It takes away my pain, my anger, my
rage.

LINDA

What are you talking about?

ALEX

Forget it. You could never understand
it. We live in two different worlds.

LINDA

That's what you think.

ALEX

Here take a puff... Lets fuck again.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

Its now Monday morning 2nd week of the senior year for all of John's students. Gina is in front of the class reading her essay out loud to the class.

GINA

I love my parents very much, don't get me wrong, I just wish that at times they would be a bit open minded, so I could talk to them about my feelings, about dating boys my age, about life in general. They want me to fear God and what God would do to me if I disobey them or if I do something that God might not approve of. But the real truth is that I fear them, my dad mostly, more than I fear God. It's a whole different world from theirs that I'm growing up in. I only wish that they would understand and embrace that soon. I know Jesus understands and loves me no matter what...

GIRL

I hear you girlfriend and I know exactly what you're going through.

MELANIE

Give them time Gina.

JOHN

Good Gina. Thank you for sharing. As you can see many of your classmates share your concerns and are going through the same things with their parents.

GIRL

Oh, yes honey. I sure am.

LISA

Word!

GEORGE

Hey Gina, at least your parents stuck with you. They didn't walk away and left you, like my mother did to my little brother and me.

LISA

Also remember that God is the only one who knows our hearts.

GINA

Thanks Lisa.

JOHN
Good guys. Who wants to go up next?

ALEX
I'll go. I got no fears.

MELANIE
I know that.

JOHN
Okay Alex, you're on.

LISA
(to Angel and Melanie)
Oh boy. I can only imagine what he wrote about.

MELANIE
Sex. What else.

JOHN
Silence please! Lets all give our full attention and respect to Mr. Rodriguez.

ALEX
Okay...Tittle: Like mother, Like son. My mother keeps telling me that the older I get, the more I look like my--my bastard of a father. I can't say notin' about that for I never met the man. He left my mom before I was born.

He now stops reading from his essay and starts speaking his mind. His inner rage takes over him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
This days, I'm more and more like my sex addicted mother. Yes, for when it comes to sex--she's never satisfied and neither--

JOHN
(upset)
Mr.Rodriguez-

ALEX
(ignoring John)
--am I. I come home in the afternoon and where is my dear mother? In her bedroom with--

John and Alex overlap each other in crescendo

JOHN
Alex, I'm warning you!

ALEX
--a different man--

TACHIA (17) black, kind. Likes Jerome.

TACHIA
Mr.Flanagan, we don't need to hear
this shit!

ALEX
(enraged)
Yes! You all need to hear it!

JOHN
(screams)
Hey!

ALEX
'Cause is my truth. My life!

JEROME
Alex bro, please!

LISA
Yo' man how can you say such things
about your own mother?

ALEX
Why Lisa? What about your mother?

LISA
Look, maricon don't you talk--

ALEX
Me? A *maricon*? You must be talking
about your buddy Angel. The other
dike in this class!

JOHN
Mr.Rodriguez!

LISA
(grabbing him)
You mother fucker! Take it back!

ALEX
Get off me you lesbo!

JOHN
(grabbing alex)
Stop it! Lisa, please sit down!
(to Alex)
You, outside! I said outside! The
rest of you, copy your homework!

Alex doesn't move. He just stares at his teacher with the most profound hate. They lock eyes for a moment. John grabs him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Come on! Move it! Outside!

They both leave struggling with each other. The whole class is shocked by all that has happened. ON: Melanie, she looks at Gina, who lowers her head.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

JOHN

What is wrong with you? What were you thinking?

ALEX

I was just telling the truth!

JOHN

Whose truth? Yours? Let me tell you something, you know nothing about Lisa and Angel. You were just being hurtful, mean and rude!

ALEX

Come on! She's a dike and he's a fag! And you know it!

JOHN

(grabbing him)

I'm going to say it for the last time! I want you--no! I order you to respect everyone in here!

ALEX

Get off me!

JOHN

Not until you listen to me for once in your life!

After a short pause, JOHN releases Alex.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You have no respect for no one, not even your own mother. Who the hell do you think you are expressing yourself about your mother in the way that you did in there? Didn't you learn anything from Gina's essay? She spoke about her parent's, but not in the way that you-

ALEX

I spoke the truth! Whether anyone liked it or not! I spoke my truth! I got nothing to hide! Do you...?

Brief Pause.

JOHN

Well, it--it was wrong! No one liked it, including myself. There are many ways to say things and especially in a public forum and yours is not acceptable! (Brief pause) I want you to read the essay as you originally wrote it! Which I approved and gave you a B grade, or else you need to rewrite it!. But, rewrite it from your heart, not your head...! Look, I want you to focus on your future and--

ALEX

(bitter)

I have no future.

JOHN

Yes you do. Every student in here has a future and the positive outcome of that future begins right here with an education and hard work, on your behalf as well as mine. I'm doing my part and I need you to do yours!

Alex looks at his teacher moved.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm not giving up on any of you until you walk out of here with a diploma! And--and even more important than that, until you all develop a sense of self-worth...! Now let's go back to class and I want you to apologize to everyone, but specially to Lisa and Angel. And when you get home I hope you know what you need to do to your piece of wood. If--If you're truly sorry you can put two nails in it and then remove them.

BOTH enter the classroom.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

JOHN

Listen up everyone! Mr. Rodriguez has something to say to all of you and to you Lisa and Angel specially.

ALEX

I...I'm sorry. Sorry Lisa. Angel.

LISA and ANGEL don't even look at him. ALEX goes to his seat and GINA smiles at him proudly as he passes her.

JOHN

It's obvious that many of you have a great deal of hostility, rage, anger locked inside of you. You not only displayed it in here, but in many of your essays.

(pause)

This is bad, but at the same time is good. Because I strongly believe that our problems serve as a test to our character. It tells us where we are weak. But you all need to find strength in your weaknesses! Another good thing about all this is that you all, whether you like it or not, you all have that in common. I said I proved you wrong Mr. Rodriguez, and I have. You all feel that the world has failed you in the past, you revolt against your own present lives! Your goal should be to use those hurtful, scary feelings to push you to succeed in here and out there!

JEROME

That's easy for you to say, sir. You don't come from where we come from or live the life that--

JOHN

I don't want to hear that. You need to stop dwelling about where you are now and start envisioning where you are going from here on! Your troubles, J.T. as bad as they may seem can never compare to those of others who came before us. I'll prove it in this your next reading assignment.

John lifts up a small book and shows the class the title:

"The Narratives of Frederick Douglass"

JOHN (CONT'D)

Frederick Douglass was a man who bid all the odds in a time where all the odds were against him. In the age of slavery, he had no voice, no Negro ever did. This is his harrowing story as narrated by HIM! Have any of you heard of Frederick Douglass before today? I didn't think so. I bet you all know who Tupak or B.I.G was or who 50 cent, Jay Z and Eminem, are.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
(they all nod)
Of cause you do. Well none of
these...what should I call them?

ALEX
(sarcastic)
Rap-artist comes to mind.

JOHN
Rappers! How could I be so naive!
None of those, have gone through
what Mr. Douglass went through or
will ever have achieved what he did
against all odds. Many of you need
to start rethinking who your real
heroes are and more important who
they were. For they caused changed
that open doors to all of us... I
assure you that you will get to
know this great men and his true
life story and It will change your
way of thinking about your own poor
little lives.

Bell rings.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Those of you who don't have copies
yet, please pick one up on your way
out! Thanks you to those of you who
had the courage to share your essays
with your class! Good work!

TACHIA
Yeah Alex, thank you!

ALEX
Anytime sweetie.

TACHIA
(to Jerome)
I don't know how you could be his
friend.

JEROME
We both come from the same place.

JOHN
Mr.Rodriguez! You are to rewrite
your essay by years end and maybe
you will get an A on your rewrite!

ALEX
Sure. Come on J.T. bro, we got
practice.

JEROME

Give me a minute.

Lisa goes over to Angel and whispers on his ear.

LISA

Don't believe Alex's forgiveness.
Be very careful with him and his
girl Linda. Cuidate mucho, papa and
if you need to talk, call me. Here
is my cell.

She leaves him a note.

ANGEL

(confused)

Thanks.

LINDA

Bye Lisa! Angel did you decide if
you want to go out to the movies
Saturday?

ANGEL

Oh yeah, sure.

LINDA

Great! I'll call you Friday with
the details. Bye!

JEROME

(to John)

Mr. F. I'm sorry if I was rude I
just--

JOHN

You were not rude son. By the way,
I read your essay and I can only
imagine what you're going through.
But please don't give up on yourself
and if there's anything I can do for
you, don't hesitate in asking.

JEROME

(moved)

Thank you sir.

Angel slowly approaches the teacher after everyone has exit.

ANGEL

Sir? Do you have a moment?

JOHN

Sure. I read your essay. I gave
you an A. You are a very good writer
did you know that?

ANGEL
That's what I hope to become.

JOHN
Great.

ANGEL
Too bad I can't share this A with my parents.

JOHN
Angel, I'm truly sorry and believe me I know exactly how you feel.

ANGEL
(confused)
You do...? I--I don't think so.

JOHN
The worst part of all that experience has been keeping it locked inside of you all this years. That's why I think it was good that you put it all down on paper. But I think, you need to see a professional.

ANGEL
I fear the memory of that day will never go away until that men...

JOHN
That man is your uncle and he needs to be out away. He will if you tell.

ANGEL
I hate him! I wish he was dead. I feel so guilty about every--

JOHN
You need to stop feeling guilty. It was not you fault. None of it!

ANGEL
Then why did he have me do those things to him? Why me?

JOHN
You were an easy pray and innocent child.

ANGEL
(with great difficulty)
Yeah but..I...I didn't run away or asked him to stop...I even think that--that I enjoyed it. Oh, God no!

Fear and panic overtake him.

JOHN

No, no! Don't you think that! He touched you in a very sensitive private part and your body just reacted normally. But, that doesn't make it right. He raped you in every sense of the word.

ANGEL

But now I'm going on 18 and I have this--this feelings, this thoughts and doubts about my...I don't know if I'm a homosexual or--

JOHN

Angel listen to me. If you are gay or not has nothing to do with what that animal did to you.

ANGEL

You know, I still remember when I was six years old, my dad slapping me across the face and telling me: "you better start acting like a man and not like that little faggot friend of yours!" That friend was a neighbor, my own age who was kind of feminine. So, I think my uncle saw something on me that I didn't even realize and he--

JOHN

My God Angel. How much hurt have those who are suppose to protect you inflicted on you. None of this is your fault. That man should be in jail and you need to accept yourself no matter what you are.

ANGEL

(agitated)

No! Never! Never!

JOHN

Son, you are only seventeen. Give it time. Tell your parents to call me so--

ANGEL

(frighten)

No! No, please! You promised!

JOHN

Calm down and let me finish. I can speak with them in general terms as a concern teacher without telling them what you feel or what happened to you.

ANGEL

(in great fear)

You don't know my father. He's a policeman, but he's even a worst cop at home. I don't want my mother to get hurt! I rather die before she finds out any of this!

JOHN

Angel, don't say that. My God, that man really scared you!

ANGEL

"Your mom must never know" he said. "She will kill me and go to jail for a long time" I know she will do it if I confess.

ANGEL breaks down in tears. Short pause.

JOHN

Please let me help you. Son, I--I know what you--

ANGEL

(grateful)

You--you have already helped me a lot by listening. Please, lets not talk about this ever again.

JOHN

But son, if you think you're gay--

ANGEL

(mood change)

I said, I don't want to talk about any of this anymore!

JOHN

Very well. I'm here for you.

Angel smiles.

ANGEL

I'll be all right. Thanks for the A. It means a lot to me.

JOHN

You earned it and don't forget to keep writing.

JOHN just sits, worried.

INT. ANGELS DINNING ROOM -- EVENING

It's Saturday evening. Cristina is serving dinner to her husband Jose and to Angel, who's all dressed up and ready to go on a date with Linda, her sister and sister's boyfriend.

CRISTINA

You want more, mi hijo?

ANGEL

No mom, thanks. I'm stuffed.

JOSE

Hey son, you gotta eat. You looking kind a slimmer lately.

ANGEL

I'm fine dad.

JOSE

Well, you don't look it. Come on, tell me what is it? Is it pussy problem?

ANGEL

No!

JOSE

No girlfriend yet? You know you are almost eighteen. No one?

ANGEL

(uncomfortable)

I don't know...maybe.

JOSE

Hey, at your age I was dating 3 girls and I was fucking two of them at the same time.

CRISTINA

Jose, let him eat!

JOSE

Will you stay out of it! Come on mi hijo, you can tell me. If you ain't getting any. Then it's gotta be Manny, that's making loose wait.

ANGEL

What?

JOSE

Manny, la mano. Hand job, you know?
(gestures masturbation)
That alone will make you lose weight like crazy!

CRISTINA

Jose, please! You're disgusting!

ANGEL

Gotta go dad. I do have a date tonight.

JOSE

Aha! What did I tell you Cristina! So how it she? Big teats?

ANGEL

(sarcastic)

I haven't seen them yet. But if I do tonight, I'll give a report in the morning. Bye mom.

CRISTINA

Dios te bendiga mi hijo. Be careful.

Angel leaves as Jose proudly speaks of his son.

JOSE

Well at least he is finally dating. I was beginning to worried.

CRISTINA

Worry about what?

JOSE

(sarcastic and cold)

You know very well. About whether he is a maricon or not!

CRISTINA

Oh Jesus, I can't believe you would--

JOSE

Oh come on! Don't tell me you haven't thought about it?

CRISTINA

No, I haven't!

JOSE

Well I have. That's the last thing I want. A fag for a son.

CRISTINA

Excuse me. I going to watch my novela.

She exits the room angry.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY'S THE VILLAGE PIER PARK -- NIGHT

Angel is walking alone, thinking about many things in his life, but mostly about his homosexual feelings.

He witnesses OTHER GAYS his own age walking holding hands and kissing without shame in public as if all this was normal to them but never to Angel. TWO cute GAY TEENAGERS cross Angels path and one of them flirts to him.

GAY TEEN

Hi, cutie pie.

Angel timidly smiles and keeps walking. He stops and turns around, not sure if they mean him.

GAY TEEN (CONT'D)

Yes baby. I was talking to you angel face. Bye!

Angel walks afraid of what he is actually feeling.

He runs and runs into the closest subway station.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Alex is in bed watching a porn video and touching himself, but not yet masturbating. His cell phone rings.

ON PHONE. Linda.

ALEX

What's up bitch? How did your date with sissy boy go?

LINDA

(o.s)

The little creep didn't show up!

ALEX

And what did you expect? The kid has pussy phobia. Now, if you had a dick--

LINDA

(o.s)

You pig! I'm telling you I'm not giving up on him. I want him to come out of his little closet once and for all.

She hangs up and he smiles.

But as he is about to masturbate the door bell rings.

ALEX

Crap! Who the hell?

He gets up and WE follow him, only in his underwear, to the living room.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He opens the door angry. But his face lights up when he finds GINA standing there.

ALEX

Gina! Shit, what a surprise!

GINA

(blushing from seeing
him undressed)

I'm sorry...maybe this is not the
right time.

ALEX

No! Please this--this is a great!

GINA

God! You are naked!

ALEX

Gina, is just flesh. And I'm not
naked. Wow you're here!

(taking her hand)

Come on in.

He drags her in and closes the door.

INT. ANGELS LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

ANGEL walks in. He sits in the dark, living room. He Closes his eyes and the first thing he recalls is his UNCLE ANTONIO'S voice on the day of the molestation.

ANTONIO

(v.o in Spanish)

Don't be afraid little Angel. Give
me your hand. Come baby.

INT. ANGELS LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

ANGEL

(shaking his head)

Ha!

Angel rushes into his bedroom.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Gina are in the sofa drinking wine and eating ships and dip. They are both a bit drunk.

GINA

(laughing)

Good wine. What am I saying. I
never had wine before.

ALEX

Well, now you know what you've been missing.

GINA

I'm always afraid of everything because of my parents.

ALEX

Well, tonight I don't want you to be afraid of anything.

GINA

Are you sure your mother is not coming back soon?

ALEX

There you go again with the fear. She doesn't care about me.

GINA

Jesus, I find that hard to believe.

ALEX

It's the truth. Actions speak louder than words. We hardly see each other.

GINA

Do you hate your mom?

Short Pause.

ALEX

I hate what she's become. But who am I to judge? I'm just like her. I don't know how to love either.

GINA

Why?

ALEX

I don't know what love feels like.

She looks at him a bit shocked and sadden at the same time.

GINA

I can show you if you let me.

ALEX

I don't know if I wanna. Love can be painful.

GINA

Have you..? Been hurt by love?

ALEX

Can we just enjoy this moment before it passes us by. We don't know if we'll be here tomorrow.

GINA

As far as worrying about tomorrow, you're right. The Bible says that, why worried about tomorrow if we have enough to worried about today.

ALEX

I have never read that book, but is nice to hear that someone smarter than me and more important agrees with an idiot like me.

GINA

That man sees all of us as important. His love for us is unconditional. His name is Jesus and He died for all of us.

Alex smiles happily for a moment and they just sit, looking at each other.

ALEX

You say such beautiful things, that-- like..I've never heard before.

He starts caressing her face and hear.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I was feeling real lonely tonight, you know being the weekend and all.

GINA

I was too.

He begins to kiss her cheeks and then her lips. She lets him at first but then gets up, rushing to the door with her back to him. He gets up behind her. She trembles as she feels his hard, warm naked torso pressed against her.

ALEX

You are shaking! Are you okay?

GINA

(turns to him)
I'll be fine.

He starts kissing her lips softly and this time she lets him. He stops and looks into her eyes.

BRIEF PAUSE.

ALEX

Tell me if you want me to stop.

She kisses him, takes his hand and starts walking him towards the bedrooms but stops not sure which one is his. He takes her hand and walks her into his bedroom.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He puts on music and starts undressing her as he kisses her.

WE can now see through the window the night is clear with a full moon shining, filtering into the two lovers in bed. The clock in his night table shows 10:15pm.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

ON CLOCK - 11:10 PM. Alex in front of his bedroom window smoking. Gina is getting dressed in the dark background. She walks over and wraps her arms around him.

GINA

A penny for your thought.

ALEX

I didn't think...that you..

GINA

That I was a virgin?

ALEX

Well...yeah.

GINA

You seemed...shocked.

ALEX

Yeah, I didn't think...

GINA

(smiling)

You didn't think that there were any virgin girls left in New York?

ALEX

Yeah.

GINA

How does that make you feel?

ALEX

I don't know.

GINA

I would think you would be proud.

ALEX

Never been proud of anything.

GINA
(kissing his shoulder)
Mm..I hope I can change that.

He turns to her, smiles happily and proud. He holds her against his chest taking a deep breath, taking in her aroma of lost innocence inside of him.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

It's Monday morning of the same month of September. John has assigned many of his students to read out loud passages from "The Narratives of Frederick Douglass".

In this scene each STUDENTS dialogue is overlap by other students picking up where the previous student lefts off in the passages.

JEROME
(reading)
Douglass, was born into bondage and sold repeatedly in slave markets of the south/

GINA
..south because he secretly taught him/

ALEX
..self to read and write, a crime...punishable by death...

Short pause as this last statement causes them shock.

LISA
This is one is one of the most eloquent indictments of slavery ever recorded

TACHIA
Douglass writes: "I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen my authentic record containing it/

JEROME
(almost in tears)
..by far the larger part of the slaves knows as little of their ages as horses...as horses know theirs/

GEORGE
..and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant.

Sequence is over as John begins lecturing

JOHN

"It was the wish of most masters to keep their slaves ignorant" Ignorant! This was just another way of enslaving blacks. But as you will see later on, Mr. Douglass, taught himself secretly to read and write. He knew that knowledge would be his road into freedom and he would pursue an education even if it cost him his life!. Without knowledge he had no voice and he was invisible. He rather die trying, than giving up! And you all thought you have it so bad.

SOME of the STUDENTS lower their heads in shame, not grateful for all that they have here in America at the present

BELL RINGS.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We will continue on this tomorrow as you read on. Good job everyone!

All STUDENTS walk out. ON ALEX -- puts his arm around Gina as they walk together.

ON - Linda and Melanie, they see this and don't like it.

INT. BOYS GYM LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

ANGEL is getting dressed after gym class. As he is tiding his shoes a naked, wrestling team jock, name GREG (17), walks in naked from the shower and starts getting dressed just a few feet from Angel.

POV -- ANGEL) WE see young mans muscular body from top to bottom.

ALEX notices what Angel is doing and slowly from behind, whispers into his ear.

ALEX

You like that big dick sissy boy?

Angel runs away.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You fucking faggot!

(to Greg)

Greg! Did you catch him, man?

GREG

Who?

ALEX

That fag! Sissy boy Angel Diaz. He was checking you out, bro!

GREG
Is he cute?

ALEX
What?

GREG
Cause I'll fuck him, if he's cute.

Alex looks at Greg in disgust shocked.

ALEX
What? You're fucking with me right?

GREG
Hey man, what's the problem a hole is hole... Why are you looking at me like that?

ALEX
Come on Greg, the guy is a fag!
He's a disgrace to my race and to all real men!

GREG
(grabbing Alex)
Hey! Listen man! I don't know about you, but I'm sure of who and what I am. So stop being such a Homo pho' and leave that kid alone. I saw him and he's got enough shit to deal with to have bullies like you picking on him!

ALEX
What the fuck!

GREG
(poking Alex)
Why--don't you--pick on someone your own--fucking size.

ALEX
Okay man! It's cool. Wow.

Alex leaves shaking his head with Greg's eyes fixed on him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Angel is by his locker putting some books away as Linda approaches him.

LINDA
Angel? What happened Saturday?

ANGEL
I'm sorry. I wasn't feeling well.

LINDA

I see. Well listen in three weeks it's my birthday and I'm having a small party at my house. I would love for you to come. My house is on 30th Avenue, so--

ANGEL

I'm in Astoria also. So cool.

LINDA

Now, are you sure you're coming?

ANGEL

Yeah, I be there.

LINDA

Great! I'll give you all the details next week.

ANGEL

Okay. See ya.

Angel runs as Alex approaches her.

ALEX

What did the queer tell you about Saturday?

LINDA

That he got sick.

ALEX

Yeah right.

LINDA

But I have another plan. A private party at my house with a surprising guest.

ALEX

Uh, can I come?

LINDA

Are you crazy? He'll run away if he sees you there!

ALEX

You never know he might fall for me. Guess what just happened? I caught him in the locker room checking out this naked guy from the wrestling team. But of cause the little fag run away as soon as I approached him. And you know what Greg, the guy said? That he'll fuck him if he's cute. He then went off on me defending sissy boy!

LINDA

Alex, now days no one is as homophobic as you are. I've had sex with other girls and I'm not a lesbian.

ALEX

Oh..You have? Why didn't you ever invited me?

LINDA

Oh.., so its okay for you to participate when is two girls? But not two guys and a girl.

ALEX

Hey, as long as the other guy is no queer. That's just fine with me.

LINDA

You are such a New Yorkrican machista. Anyway, I really want to help Angel and that's why when he comes to my fake, private, birthday party, he is going to once and for all come out of his little closet and he'll have no one else to thank, but me.

ALEX

Good. I hate him. Him and Lisa have put us latinos in shame, and it's time to fix his ass up for good.

INT. JEROME'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Jerome enters his apartment. We follow him into his mother's bedroom.

INT. TAMIKA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

JEROME

Mama...Mom?

He stops talking when he notices something is not right with his mother.

ON TAMIKA -- She is in bed with her eyes wide open, pupils dilated. She is holding a picture frame of Jerome, her and his father.

As Jerome approaches her, he finally realizes that his mother is dead. There's a letter right next to her.

JOROME

(CRYING)

Mama...ma...oh mom...

HE takes the letter and sits next to her still, passive, serene body. HE starts to read her letter addressed to him.

We see Tamika as her son imagines her here.

TAMIKA

My dearest good son Jerome: you are the best thing that happened to me. I don't think I be here, physically, by the time you come home and in a way I'm glad because I don't wanna see you suffer anymore for me. I just want you to keep studying hard. I want you to go to the best college of your choice. I left you enough money in my Life insurance. Your aunt Ruthy and your uncle will take care of everything. Please love and respect them both. Son, a mother's life lives on through the hearts of her children and right now I'm inside of you in your beautiful, wonderful, big heart, forever until we meet again...

Jerome starts to break down in tears, but he continues reading.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Please be strong. Your mama needs to rest now and go home to be with our Lord. Jerome, I beg you to please seek the Lord...Accept Christ as your personal savior and everything in your life will be all right. Love you always, your mother...

HE picks up picture frame and sees that is of him with his mother when he was six. Also in the picture is his father. HE looks at it for a moment and notices that he feels no more anger inside for the man he feels murder his mother. Crying he passes his hand over his father's picture.

Jerome starts crying like a little child as HE lies down next to his mother in a fetal position.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Gina, George, Angel, Lisa, Linda are seated when ALEX walks in with MELANIE right behind. ALEX goes straight to GINA.

ALEX

Hey baby, you wanna go out this weekend?

GINA

Sure. Remember you owe me a movie.

ALEX
I owe you more than that
(he kisses her)
We'll talk at lunch time.

MELANIE
Gina, can I talk to you for a moment?

ALEX
(sarcastic)
Hi, Mel?

MELANIE
Gina please.

GINA
(to Alex))
We'll talk later.

Alex goes towards his seat, but gives Angel a dirty look and to his ear he whispers.

ALEX
Don't think I forgot what happened
in the locker room. You little fagot!

Angel just stares at him with hatred. Lisa overheard.

LISA
Why don't leave him alone?

ALEX
Wow. Congratulations sissy boy.
You got yourself a body guard.

GINA
Alex, please!

LISA
Dam bully.

Alex sits.

MELANIE
(to Gina)
You did it. You fell for him..

GINA
Melanie, please!

MELANIE
Do you have any idea what you are
getting yourself into?

GINA
I'm living! Living for the first
time in my life without any fear.

MELANIE

You know something Gina? Fear is a good thing when it comes to girls like you.

GINA

What do you mean?

MELANIE

I mean that fear protects good girls like you from serpents like him!

John walks in and Melanie just decides to ignore her best friend.

JOHN

Good morning everyone! Please take your assign seats! And do the assignment on the board as I take attendance.

(John notices Jerome's out)

Has anyone seen Jerome Thomas today? Alex, you two are friends. Do you know if he's sick?

ALEX

We live in the same building sir and well his mother...she died yesterday.

JOHN

Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

TACHIA

Oh God, poor J.T.

JOHN

Is he alone? Or--

ALEX

No, his aunt flew in from Georgia.

JOHN

Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez. I'll get a card so all of you can sign and I'll send flowers from all of us.

TACHIA

Thank you Mr. Flanagan that's really nice of you.

JOHN

I'll check up on him tonight.

Gina raises her hand.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Yes Miss Cavelli.

GINA

Can we have a moment of silence for those of us of faith to pray for Jerome?

JOHN

Yes. You go right ahead, I'll join you.

ALL students vow their heads. ON - Alex - he looks at the teacher he so much hates in a different light.

MUSIC -- "Amazing grace" song plays to the next scene.

INT. JEROME'S APARTMENT BEDROOM -- EVENING

Jerome in his bed with his hands behind his head looking up. The door opens.

JOHN

J.T. son?

JEROME

(surprised, but content)
Mr. Flanagan! What are you doing here?

JOHN

I wanted to come and give you my condolences in person. I'm so sorry son, for your lost.

JEROME

Thank you sir.

JOHN

The whole class send this card.

JEROME

Which you purchased I'm sure.

JOHN

They all prayed for you at Gina's request. So I think little by little I'm reaching my goal and hearts are changing. But how are you holding up?

JEROME

I don't know...It's strange but, I feel relieved for her. The last year she, even though she kept quiet, she was suffering a lot. But...she was holding on for me.

JOHN

You've been a great son and a good care giver. You should be proud.

JEROME

She was good to me. She made mistakes, but she was always there for me. I just wish I could have had her a little longer...but.

(short pause)

Mr. Flanagan, I have to leave New York. I don't want to but...

JOHN

I understand, your aunt just told me. You're going to be fine. Just, please keep studying hard and go to college.

JEROME

I will. I will never forget you... You have taught me so much in so little time. You...are a great teacher and an even better human being.

They look at each other for a moment and then Jerome hugs his good teacher tight crying as the SONG: "YOU RAISE ME UP" by Josh Grobin plays on.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) John gets in his car looking up sees Jerome in window.
- B) EXT. LAGUARDIA AIRPORT --DAY. Delta flight taking off.
- C) INT. AIRPLANE -- DAY. Jerome sadly looks out the window.
- D) New York City Skyline from above.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

With a romantic SONG by MARC ANTHONY playing ALEX and GINA are dancing in the dim lid living room. Alex tries to kiss Gina passionately and aggressively as he is use to, but Gina stops him. He tries again and SHE PUSHES him back and makes him control himself while dancing. She finally takes his hand and starts kissing it softly. HE doesn't know what to make of all this but he likes it. HE tries to speak and SHE covers his mouth. He doesn't realize that she is trying to teach him how to make love without crazy sex. She REMOVES his SHIRT. SHE starts to kiss his chest. HE seems confused but wildy turned on now. HE starts to breath heavy and realizes for the first time in his life, the girl is in control and he likes it a lot. SHE works her way down to his navel then up to his biceps, kissing them softly. This just kills him, HE can't control himself and makes a loud sound of pleasure.

ALEX

(almost crying)

OH!

GINA
 This is love...love making. Not
 sex. Now you know the difference?

ALEX
 (out of breath)
 HA! No shit! Thanks, thanks a lot.

Gina smiles in contentment and satisfied.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Two weeks later. Angel is at Linda's front door ringing the bell, holding a small gift wrapped.

LINDA
 Hi! You made it!

ANGEL
 Happy birthday. Here.

LINDA
 (kissing him)
 Oh, thank you. You shouldn't have.
 Come in. No one is here yet.
 (closing the door
 devilishly)
 But, it's still early.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER.

Jose, enters his son's bedroom. He walkS around looking at the posters his son has in the walls. HE like's the one of Cristina Aguilera and Jlo. He smiles when he sees Cher's. He then goes over to the desk and picks up the piece of wood with 2 nails and 3 holes without nails.

JOSE
 What's this shit for?

He then picks up the book of Frederick Douglass and reads the back cover.

JOSE (CONT'D)
 (sarcastic)
 Another slave story. Like we need
 it.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

She is serving a glass punch then with her back turn to Angel, she open's a small bottle of vodka and pours it all into the glass she brings over to him on the sofa.

LINDA
 Here.

ANGEL

Oh no, thanks but I already had three cups of that punch and...I'm feeling--

LINDA

Don't be silly this hardly has any alcohol.

ANGEL

Well, my head is telling me differently.

LINDA

What you need to do is eat. Have a snack. Here take the punch.

(looks at her watch)

I don't understand. I invited at least 10 more people.

ANGEL

Did you invite..Alex?

LINDA

Are you crazy? We don't speak anymore. He's with Gina now.

ANGEL

Where are your parents?

LINDA

They're away for the weekend. I rather celebrate without them, they can be a pain.

(doorbell)

Oh great! More company. Drink.

She opens the door and a beautiful handsome blond, blue eyes 22 year old name TOMMY is standing there. He is a long time, loud, queer friend of Linda and her family.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Oh Tommy!

Whispers in his ear as they hug.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Remember bitch, its my birthday.

TOMMY

(real loud and queenlike)

Happy birthday baby! Here is your gift...

(whispers)

...open it later ho, its just an empty box. I already gave you a birthday gift 4 months ago.

LINDA
 (smiling)
 Oh thanks Tommy! Come in, darling!
 I want you to meet Angel.

She holds Tommy by the hand and sits him in the sofa next to Angel who's a bit drunk by now.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 Angel this is Tommy.

Angel immediately is taking by the young man's beauty.

TOMMY
 (real perky)
 Hi! Tommy. Nice to meet you!

ANGEL
 (timid, but a bit
 drunk)
 Hi.

Tommy shake hands and Angel doesn't realized he is holding him a bit too long.

TOMMY
 I think you two have been celebrating
 a bit too early, honey.

Angel realizes he is still holding his hand.

ANGEL
 I--I'm sorry.

TOMMY
 Its okay. Too much punch?

ANGEL
 (smiling)
 Yeah! I think so.

Linda is happy her plan is working. SHE smiles as she knows that Angel has fallen for Tommy and her plan its just began.

LINDA
 Punch Tommy?

The two guys are locked at each others eyes.

LINDA (CONT'D)
 Hello! Any punch, sweetie?

TOMMY
 (without looking at
 her)
 Yeah, sure...

SHE walks away and smiles with devilish delight.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Cristina walks into Angel's room and finds Jose seated in the desk, in the dark.

CRISTINA

What's going on?

JOSE

Nothing, I was just...here, thinking.

CRISTINA

You were snooping.

JOSE

Snooping? This is my house. This is my son's room. I'm concern and so should you.

CRISTINA

I have nothing to be concern about. Angel is the best son any mother could ask for.

JOSE

(sarcastic)

Maybe he's...TOO good. Don't you think?

CRISTINA

What is that suppose to mean?

JOSE

You know our saying in Spanish, 'no hay peor ciego que el que no quiere ver. Serve me dinner. I'm hungry.

Translation: "there is no worst blind than that one, who doesn't want to see"

Jose walks out leaving his wife with that thought.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Linda is dancing with Tommy to loud music. Angel is seated, still feeling a bit dizzy from the alcohol, but he feels happy never the less. He feels uninhibited for the first time in his life.

LINDA

Come on Angel. I love this song!
Dance with me!

TOMMY

(sitting down)

Oh yes please man, I need a break.

ANGEL

I don't know if I can...my head is spinning.

LINDA

So what, let yourself go and spin with it! Tom, help him up.

LINDA and TOMMY both grab Angel and get dancing. SHE starts moving in a sexual away around and close to him. ANGEL starts to dance clumsy.

LINDA (CONT'D)

There you go. Uh aha! I love this song don't you? Come on Tommy.

Tommy gets up and Linda gestures for him, to get behind Angel. HE does very discreetly at first. Angel is now into the music with his eyes closed holding Linda'S hands. Next, Tommy and Linda have him sandwiched in to the beat of the music. But in an instant Angel feels Tommy's penis getting hard close to his rear end, It triggers:

QUICK FLASHES -- INT. UNCLE'S ROOM -- DAY.

--Antonio standing behind seven year old Angel, pressing his hard penis against his head.

--Antonio is kissing seven year old angel's ear.

BACK TO SCENE

ANGEL snaps out of his trans of joy and panic, shame and rage over take him. HE pushes Linda and Tommy away from him. HE looks at them in pain and disgust. ANGEL opens the door and rushes in a enrage. TOMMY rushes after him.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

TOMMY

(grabbing him)
Hey! Hey bro wait!

ANGEL

Don't touch me!

TOMMY

What's wrong? We were just having a little fun. What's your problem?

ANGEL

A little fun? Do you think I'm stupid? What were you trying to do?

TOMMY

Come on! We were all having fun with each other.

ANGEL
Oh really? With each other? Or
with me?

TOMMY
Look, you need to get out of your
closet sister!

ANGEL
(enraged)
Fuck you!

Angel notices Linda by her door.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Fuck you both! I didn't come here
for this shit! And you don't even
know me so don't--

Tommy feels really sorry for the kid and honestly tries to
help him.

TOMMY
I've been there! Where you are.
So, trust me. It gets better.

ANGEL
(grabbing him)
You asshole! You don't know shit!

TOMMY
Hey! Hey, calm down okay? Come
back inside and we can talk.

ANGEL
(pushing him, crying)
You have no idea... what--what I--

Angel runs away. Linda runs out to Tommy truly worried for
the first time about Angel's feelings.

TOMMY
(concerned)
Poor kid. He is so scared.

LINDA
I've never seen this side of him.

TOMMY
I empathize with him. I was where
he is emotionally not to long ago.
But, the rage in his eyes. What
happened to him?

LINDA
(afraid)
I don't know. Tom, I feel terrible.

TOMMY

He wants no help. He's hurting and the worst part is, that rejection is going to come from those he loves and cares most. I'm out of here.

LINDA

You can spend the night if you--

TOMMY

No, thanks. Please, apologized for me when you see him again.

Tommy gets in his car and drives away. Linda ashamed and worried for Angel, slowly heads back inside.

INT. ANGELS LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Angel comes in and as he is heading to his bedroom, Cristina comes out of her room and greets him.

CRISTINA

Angel, mi hijo. Did you have fun?

ANGEL

What?

CRISTINA

The party? Your girlfriend?

ANGEL

Ma, I have no friends. I'm very lonely.

CRISTINA

Oh honey. How could that be. You're a beautiful young man!

ANGEL

Maybe that has been curse.

CRISTINA

Angel!

ANGEL

I'm very tired mom. I'm going to stay home on Monday okay?

CRISTINA

What happened? Talk to me.

ANGEL

Not now. I'm too tired. I had too much to drink at that...that stupid, awful party!

CRISTINA
 (kissing him)
 Okay. I'll call your school. Stay
 home.

She holds his face.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)
 Angel, you are my life, don't ever
 forget that.

ANGEL
 And you are mine, mom. You're the
 only one I can trust in this...this
 ugly world.

CRISTINA
 God! Why are saying that?

ANGEL
 Night ma'.

He enters his bedroom. Cristina saw a sadness and pain in
 his eyes she's never noticed. She enters her bedroom.

INT. CRISTINA AND JOSE BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jose is in bed, but awake, over heard part of mother and son
 conversation. Cristina lays Down.

JOSE
 I'm telling Cristina, things are not
 right with that kid.

CRISTINA
 That kid is your son!

JOSE
 He's going through some shit and I
 hope for his sake that it is not
 what I'm thinking.

CRISTINA
 He's a teenager. We all went through
 it.

JOSE
 I hope I'm wrong, for his sake.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

He's seated in bed, meditating in anger and anguish about
 all that happened tonight at Linda's. Rage and anger build
 up in him and he starts breathing fast, biting his lips and
 making a fist. He takes out his diary from under his mattress
 and starts writing.

ANGEL

I can't trust no one. I open my heart and soul to others and what do they do? They use me, betray me! Now Linda knows... Soon everyone will know. Oh God! Not mom!

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- LATER

ALEX is in his room in bed alone reminiscing of all the great feelings that Gina left him with. He hears the front door open and close.

ALEX

Mom? Its that you?

MILLIE

(a bit drunk, o.s)
Yes baby.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

ALEX

Why are you home? Its only 11:30.

MILLIE

I wasn't feeling well, so I said fuck it! I'm going home!

ALEX

Ma, I think you had a little too much to drink. What happen? You forgot that you are the bartender and not a customer?

MILLIE

What ever...I'm just tire of that job, night after night. Oh! I don't know, mi hijo.

ALEX looks at his mother for the first time in many years with love and compassion. HE approaches her. She is barely standing and takes her hand and puts it around his shoulder. HE notices how tire she looks and realizes for the first time how hard she works to provide for him.

ALEX

Come on ma, let me tuck you in.

MILLIE

Que?

ALEX

Callate. Just do as I say. You are tired and a bit drunk. Hold on to me.

SHE complies and as they are walking together she looks at him with a happy smile and even gets emotional.

MILLIE

I don't know what's gotten into you,
but thank you...I needed this papito.

ALEX

Me too mommy. Come on I'll rub your
neck. I owe you.

MELANIE

I owe you baby and I hope you can
forgive me.

ALEX

I do ma and I hope you forgive me
too.

She puts her head on his shoulder as they both walk across the living room and into her bedroom.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

HE takes out the piece of wood that has four nails on it and one hole. HE removes one more nail.

EXT. QUEENSBORO HIGH SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Next day, GINA is outside the school alone. It's been over an hour since all classes ended. MELANIE exits the school and notices Gina.

MELANIE

Gina, are you okay?

GINA

(worried)

I'm waiting for Alex. He's in the
gym, practicing.

MELANIE

You two going out?

GINA

No. I need to talk to him.

MELANIE

Gina? What's wrong girlfriend?

GINA

(teary)

I--I don't know if--if I should tell
you since--

MELANIE

Gina, come on! We're like sisters.
What's wrong? Even though I think I--

GINA
It's worst than what you think.

Long pause.

MELANIE
Gina, what is it?

GINA
(whispers)
I think I'm pregnant.

MELANIE
What? Gina, shit! How could you
let this happened?

GINA
We love each other.

MELANIE
If he loves you, he would've at least
protected himself!

GINA
He did! We only did it once.

MELANIE
Gina, he didn't. He lied. He never
does. He only cares about himself.

GINA
No, that's not true!

MELANIE
Oh Gina... Look, you first need to
tell him what you suspect. See his
reaction, then go and buy a home
pregnancy test. You have money?

GINA
I...seven dollars?

MELANIE
Not enough. I think...Here take
this twenty and don't be afraid or
ashamed! Talk to the bastard
straight. I'm here for you, okay?

GINA
(crying)
Thanks. Really thank you. I'm--I'm
so scared.

Melanie hugs her hard, but then notices Alex approaching and
backs away quickly.

MELANIE

Call me later tonight after you get tested.

Gina agrees and Melanie rushes off.

ALEX

(kissing her)

Hey, what was all that hugging about?

GINA

Nothing, we just love each other very much. She is my best friend.

ALEX

Yeah and my worst enemy.

GINA

I wonder why.

ALEX

You know very well why.

Brief pause.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Gina, what's going on?

GINA

I'm not sure yet... But I think I'm pregnant.

ALEX

What? Shit! Shit!

GINA

That's all you can say?

ALEX

Fuck! What the hell do you--

GINA

(slapping him)

You son of a bitch!

ALEX

That I am. You always knew it... Now the reality is that neither of us are ready to be mommy or daddy. I know, I'm not!

GINA

Then why did you lie to me and pretended to have protected yourself?

ALEX

I did wear a condom!

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

But, everyone knows that condoms are not 100% percent safe and if you were so concerned, why didn't you...Anyway if you are, which you are not sure, I'll help with the...You just need to get rid of it.

GINA

I can't believe the things that you are saying. I loved you so much and Christ! You don't care. Mel was right. You only care about yourself!

ALEX

Gina, please! I can't be a father right now. I don't think I could ever be one.

(holding her)

Lets talk about--

GINA

Don't touch me! You were right, love does hurt us, specially when it comes from someone who doesn't know the meaning of the word!

ALEX

Gina?

GINA

(disgusted)

I don't want you near me or in my life ever, ever again!

She runs away from him.

ALEX

Gina! Wait! Shit! Shit! Shit!

INT. OUTSIDE ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

Cristina knocks, worried for her son has been in his bedroom since Saturday night and it's now Monday afternoon.

CRISTINA

Angel, Its almost 5:00 PM and you haven't even eaten lunch!

ANGEL

(o.s)

Mom, please I'm tired! I just wanna sleep a little longer!

CRISTINA

But Angelito, you've been in that room since Saturday night! Its Monday!

ANGEL

(o.s)

Ma, I beg you! Just let me sleep.
I'll come out for dinner!

CRISTINA

All right son.

INT. GINA'S HOUSE - OUTSIDE BEDROOM -- NIGHT

HELEN (37) Gina's conservative, catholic mother knocks at the door hard. MUSIC is playing.

HELEN

Gina? Honey dinner is ready? Gina
are you okay sweetheart?

HELEN opens the door and Gina is not in the room.

She turns off the stereo. Gina's cell PHONE BEEPS. Helen picks up the smart phone.

INSERT - GINA'S PHONE - 6 missed calls. Missed call: Melanie and Missed call: Alex.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Alex?

She starts worrying more. WE FOLLOW HER to the bathroom as she slowly opens the door.

INT. GINA'S BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

HELEN

Gina, are you--?

Helen see's Gina's legs first on the floor as she opens the door in shock. ON GINA: her mouth is foaming.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Gina! Oh God! Robert! Robert!
Our daughter!

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

Students are walking in. ALEX walks and MELANIE chases after him to question him about Gina.

MELANIE

Alex! Alex wait!

ALEX

What do want?

MELANIE

Did you talk to Gina?

ALEX

(upset)

We talked yesterday outside. You saw us and I'm sure you already know what we talked about. I'm also sure you keep poisoning her.

MELANIE

You don't need any help in that department. Anyway, I'm worried. I've been calling her cell phone since last night and I keep getting voice mail.

ALEX

So? What do you want from me?

MELANIE

(getting angrier)

I don't know what you told her yesterday, but I can almost guess it and I hope for your sake that she's okay.

ALEX

(in her face)

You need to mind your own God dam business and--

MELANIE

(shouting)

She is my business! She's my best friend and a good girl, not like the ones you are use to!

ALEX

Are you speaking for yourself?

MELANIE

It takes one to know one.

ALEX

You need to butt out bitch!

MELANIE

(louder)

Not until you leave her the fuck alone! Asshole!

GEORGE

Yo' guys cool it!

ALEX

Shut up fatso before I--

John walks in and catches Alex on George's face.

JOHN
Hey! What's going on?

MELANIE
Mr. Flanagan, you have a minute?

ALEX
You better keep your big mouth shut!

JOHN
Hey! George sit. What's going on here? Jerome is gone. Angel is out sick and... Where is Gina?

John looks at Melanie and reads her worried face.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Copy your homework! Melanie outside.

Melanie and John step outside the classroom

GEORGE
Yo' Alex man. What's going on bro?

ALEX
Nothing Georgie, just bitches problem. I'm sorry for yelling at you. I--I don't anymore nails in wood.

GEORGE
You're good with me bro.

LINDA
Jerome gone. Gina and Angel out. We are losing everybody guys.

ALEX
(resentful)
We are fucked. All of us. What else is new?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS.

JOHN
But, you haven't told me. What makes you think that Gina is in some kind of trouble or not okay?

MELANIE
I'm sorry sir, but its a private matter. She has been going out with Alex and...he is no good for--

JOHN
Don't say that, unless you are sure.

MELANIE

I am sure, trust me. I know him very well. He hurt her and she is a good girl. Something happened to her because she is not answering her phone! We were suppose to talk again in last night after...

JOHN

After what? Melanie?

MELANIE

I can't tell you that sir.

JOHN

I will call her parents. I Assure you that I will get back to you soon. Lets get back inside.

MELANIE

Thank you Mr. Flanagan.

JOHN

No, thank you for being such a good friend to Gina.

INT. REGISTRATION OFFICE AND RECEPTION -- MOMENTS LATER

John is on the phone in front of a counter. PHONE RINGING at Gina's home. The answering machine comes on.

ROBERT

(v.o)

You've reach the Cavellie's residence, we are not home--

JOHN hangs up and starts dialing another number from Gina's emergency contact sheet.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Most STUDENTS are quietly doing an assignment. Alex is on top of his desk worried about Gina. MELANIE approaches him.

MELANIE

(whispers in his ear)

I swear if anything happen to Gina--

ALEX

(enraged)

Why don't you leave me the fuck alone already!

TACHIA

Yo' Alex man! You really need to start hammering those nails--

LISA
Don't talk to her like that! Can
you see she's worried for her friend.

ALEX
Listen, queen butch!

LISA
(grabbing him)
Listen, pendejo! I'm tired of your
shit!

TACHIA
Come on guys! Lisa, cool it!

JOHN enters.

They ALL seat quietly.

ON MELANIE -- she reads John's face. He is serious and
somber. HE doesn't make eye contact with Melanie.

MELANIE
What--what's wrong Mr. F.?
(almost in tears,
approaching him)
Sir, did you get to speak with anyone?

JOHN
Bad..bad News.

MELANIE
No...no.

JOHN
Gina...she--she tried to commit
suicide last night and--

MELANIE
No!

JOHN
...she's in critical condition.

OVERLAPPING.

MELANIE
(crying, to Alex)
It's all you fault! You asshole!

ALEX
No. No!

MELANIE
...are you happy now?

ALEX
(in panic walking)
No! Shit no! NO!

Alex runs out and John follows him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

JOHN
Alex! Alex, Wait!

He stops. Ashamed, he faces John.

ALEX
(with guilt)
I--I never wanted to hurt her. Not intentionally. I didn't want this... I swear.

JOHN
I know son, but it happened. And intentionally or not you know in your heart, that you had something to do with this.

ALEX
I did.

JOHN
You need to go see her. She's at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Astoria. Let me get you a pass and take all the time you need. We will work something out if you have to miss class for a few days.

ALEX
(holding back tears)
Thanks...

JOHN
Give me a second.

JOHN enters the classroom.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A) Alex running into hospital.
- B) Alex exits elevator and walks into I.C.U.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- MOMENTS LATER

Gina is hooked up to I.Vs and a breathing machine. Both her parents are kneeled praying with eyes closed. ALEX walks in slowly and approaches Gina's bed. HELEN notices him first.

HELEN
Excuse me, but who are you?

ALEX
I...I'm Alex, Gina's boyfriend.

HELEN
So, you're him. You're the one who caused this?

ALEX
Lady I--

HELEN
And the father of--

ALEX
What?

HELEN
Oh, come on! You're going to deny it! No wonder my daughter try to kill herself.

ALEX
Yes, I am the father of her baby...
How it she?

ROBERT
Look at her! How do you think she is? Listen young man, I don't know how my daughter, a good catholic girl, got involved with someone like you and what's worst, how did she let herself get pregnant. But this is not the time or place to discuss that. We don't know you. I don't even think my daughter knew you either, so--

ALEX
You're wrong.

ROBERT
I don't think she knew what kind of person you are. But we don't want you here right know.

ALEX
Sir, I just want to be with her and--

Alex and Robert face each other. Alex in a defying manner.

ROBERT
(menacing)
Please leave now. We will deal with you on a later date.

Brief pause.

ALEX

(studying robert)
Gina told me about you. She feared
you... Did you know that?
(smiles)
But you don't scare me. Not'ing
scares me. So, I ain't leaving.

ROBERT

You ain't leaving?

HELEN

For God's sake son! Please leave.

After a brief pause and feeling sorry for Helen, ALEX speaks in a soft, but determined tone.

ALEX

I will leave this room, but I will
be out there... Your beautiful, kind,
honest, sweet daughter, is not only
the mother of my child but my first
true love and...my future wife.

ROBERT

That..remains to be seen.

Both men stare at each other for a brief moment. Alex Tries to get close to Gina and Robert grabs him by arm.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I said leave this room! You insolent
punk!

HELEN

Robert, please don't make a scene!
Young man, I beg you!

Alex stares at Robert's hand on his arm and with a vicious look on Robert, who then releases him. Alex nods to Helen in compliance to her supplications and a sadly looking at his girl, retrieves from the room.

ROBERT

Come on Helen, lets continue praying.

HELEN

You know he's right. Gina is afraid
of you.

ROBERT

Helen, I said lets continue praying
for Gina, which is what she needs
most from us right now.

HELEN

No. She needs us! She needed our love and understanding and we didn't give to her!

ROBERT

Helen, shut up and pray!

HELEN

I'm going to the chapel to pray...to pray for you.

Helen exits. Robert sits, realizing Helen is right.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Alex is in a chair outside the I.C.U. when Helen passes.

INT. CRISTINA AND JOSE BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Jose gets up. ON CLOCK: 11:00 PM. WE follow him to:

INT. ANGELS HOUSE HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

When Jose passes the guess bathroom he hears a MOANING SOUND coming from inside. Concerned for Angel, he opens the door quickly. Angel jumps up from the filled bath tub, dropping a magazine outside the tub. He grabs a towel and covers his lower extremities.

JOSE

(embarrassed)

Son, I'm sorry--

ANGEL

Dad! Couldn't you knock--?

JOSE

I'm sorry I thought something was wrong! It's okay. We man have needs. I'll leave alone.

(picking up magazine)

Here...

(something catches his eye)

What the...what the fuck is this?

Jose starts turning the pages.

ANGEL

(panic)

Dad--dad, please!

JOSE

(turning pages)

What the fuck is this shit?

ANGEL

Dad, I...I--

JOSE

Tell me! Is this what you are?
(hitting him with
magazine)

Is this what you like? Are you one
of this guys? Answer me! Answer
me! /

ANGEL

Dad stop! I--I don't know--

JOSE

You don't know? These are man sucking
and fucking each other. Faggots!

ANGEL

Dad, please! I don't want mom to--

JOSE

(hitting him harder)
Be at least men enough to admit it!
Let me see? Remove the towel.

Jose grabs the towel. Angel is now bleeding from his lip.

ANGEL

Dad, no!

JOSE

(removing the towel)
Give me that fucking towel!
(sarcastic)
I see nothing wrong with your dick.
As a matter a fact, you got your
fathers dick.

(grabbing his face)
That dick...is to screw girls and to
make babies and your ass is for
shit! Not to get fucked, like
this queers!

ANGEL

(disgusted, crying)
Shut up! Shut up!

CRISTINA

Jose, what's going on? Oh my God!
Did you hit him?

JOSE

Look what your son--

ANGEL tries to get the magazine back, but his father pushes
him back, knocking him down.

ANGEL

No!

JOSE

Stay away. See Cristina? Look at this! Puro maricones!

CRISTINA

(looking away)

Stop it! I don't want to see that!

JOSE

(grabbing angel by neck)

Tell me kid, have you been fucked yet?

CRISTINA

Jose! Please, you're hurting him!

JOSE

(pushing her)

Cristina, puneta!

ANGEL

(enraged)

Don't you fucking hurt her! Or I'll kill you!

JOSE

Wow! So you are a big tough men when it comes to defending your mommy. But you haven't answer my question! Have you been fucked?

ANGEL

No! Now leave me alone!

JOSE

(very slow, stern)

I don't know how you started with this shit or how long. I don't know if this is a phase, a life style, an experiment or what ever the fuck they want to call it! But you will stop this behavior right now! Do you hear me? Because...

(to his face in disgust)

..I rather see you dead, than a faggot!

CRISTINA

(in tears)

No! Stop it! Angel don't listen!

JOSE

Cristina, please shut up!

(MORE)

JOSE (CONT'D)

(to Angel)

You and I will finish this conversation tomorrow and I will search your room for any other faggot material. So, if you got more, get rid of them or I promise you, I'll make you eat it!

Angel covers himself staring at his father with great hate and sorrow. Jose looks at him disgusted. As Angel leaves the bathroom he looks at his mother ashamed.

ANGEL

(whispers sobbing)

I'm sorry ma. I'm so sorry...

CRISTINA

(in pain)

Ay, Angel. Sweet Jesus.

Angel exits.

JOSE

Leave Jesus out of this. I knew it! I knew this all the time, but I didn't want to face the truth. My only son, un marica.

CRISTINA

Stop calling him that!

JOSE

That's what he is. But, he is still young. I'll straighten him out, even if I have to bit it out of him!

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

HE IS in his bed, still naked with his legs up to his chest and his chin on his knees. Just sitting there in a trans, with a serious, empty look. All that keeps playing in his head is his fathers last words.

JOSE

(v.o)

I rather see you dead than a faggot!

Then he hears Alex's voice.

ALEX

(v.o)

You like that dick? You little faggot!

Overlapping with Tommy saying:

TOMMY

(v.o)
you need to get out of your closet
sister!

All three VOICES play on his head at the same time until HE violently covers his ears for a couple of seconds until there is total silence suddenly. HE then hears his parents arguing in their room.

JOSE

(o.s)
Who knows how many people already
know about him!

CRISTINA

(o.s)
Lower your voice, please!

JOSE

(o.s)
I bet you even his teachers know.
Or at least the one who called here
does.

CRISTINA

(o.s)
What teacher called here?

JOSE

(o.s)
Some male teacher called about four
or five weeks ago and left a message
for us to call him, that he needed
to talk with us about him!

CRISTINA

(o.s)
And now you tell me!

JOSE

(o.s)
No te preocupes. I'll take care of
this problem myself. This is a family
matter. Lets go to sleep. I got an
early shift.

Angel picks up his cell. He scrolls through his cell phone contacts and presses to call. After three RINGS:

LISA

(v.o)
Angel? What's wrong sweetie?

ANGEL

I'm sorry, did I wake you?

LISA

(v.o)

No. It's only 11:20, I don't go to bed until midnight. What's up? Are you okay sweet?

ANGEL

No, Lisa. I'm not okay... I need a favor.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Alex is asleep in a chair. Melanie approaches him and sits next to him quietly. After his head falls on her shoulder he wakes.

ALEX

Well?

MELANIE

Well, what?

ALEX

Why are you doing here?

MELANIE

Excuse me, but have you forgotten that Gina is my--

ALEX

I mean, why are you next to me?

MELANIE

Honestly? Because Mr. Flanagan asked me to. He just left.

ALEX

You know, you were right, if she had listened to you not of this... Its all my fault.

MELANIE

She believed that you needed someone like her in your life and she wasn't going to give up on you... Do you love her? Do you truly love her?

ALEX

I don't know. All I can say is that I love her the way she taught me to love and I'm hurting. I'm really hurting for the first time in my life...This is why I didn't want to fall in love or know what really loving someone felt like.

MELANIE

You love her. 'Cause that girl truly knows the meaning of the word and now...So do you, thanks to her.

Brief pause.

ALEX

I'm sorry Mel and thanks.

MELANIE

Sorry for what? Thanks for what?

ALEX

For everything and for being here.

MELANIE

Now you can remove another nail from your wood and so can I.

ALEX

(falling asleep)

I--I gwest we're even now...we're even and it feels good...

MELANIE

We are, thanks to that great teacher.

His eyes close from exhaustion and his head falls over on Melanie's shoulder. She looks at him teary eye, relieved.

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

John seated by window talking with Lisa.

JOHN

Its okay Lisa. Don't worry about it. I'm still up... I'll do my best to--

LISA

(o.s)

But, Mr.F. are you going to tell him?...that you...

JOHN

(short pause)

I will. It might help him...Okay, no problem... Thanks, bye.

ANTHONY (27) handsome, lawyer, approaches John with a cup of tea.

ANTHONY

Here, drink this. It'll relax you.

JOHN

Tony, I'm losing them one by one and there's nothing I can do...

EXT. JOHNS HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

POV ANGEL -- Anthony takes John's hand kissing it, then they kiss in the lips.

ON Angel -- shocked by what he's seeing. HE backs up slowly, sadden, confused, angry, deceived.

POV Angel -- John walks to window. ON Angel -- Running away.

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Anthony wraps his arms around John in front of window.

JOHN

I don't know what to do about this poor kid. You know, he reminds me so much of myself when I was his age: afraid, confused, introverted, shy... He should have been here already. I'm going to call him.

EXT. ANGELS NEIGHBORHOOD LOCAL STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

He is walking back to his house when CELL RINGS, ignore it.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT

Helen walks by the nurses station and notices Alex, alone asleep in a chair on the hallway. WE follow HER into the I.C.U where there's a nurse writing down noted on Gina's vitals.

HELEN

How is she?

NURSE

The same. Why don't you go, rest. I will call you if--

HELEN

I'm okay. Listen, has that young man left the hospital at all?

NURSE

I just came on, but the other nurse explain to me that he wants to remain there until we tell him that your daughter is out of danger. Hey, that's what I call real love.

The NURSE exits and HELEN looks at Alex with a amazement.

INT. ANGELS LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

ANGEL walks in and Cristina who's been waiting, confronts him.

CRISTINA
(hugging him)
Oh, Angel. Thank God!

ANGEL
Mom, we already spoke on the phone.
I needed to take a walk.

There is still that seriousness in HIS look , a cold, aloof look in his eyes.

CRISTINA
Angel, your father didn't mean what
he--

ANGEL
Yes he did. But its okay, don't
worry... I'll be fine.

CRISTINA
What do you mean?

ANGEL
(hugging her tight)
I love you ma. I've loved you more
than anything in this world and I'm
so sorry. I never wanted you to
suffer because of me.

CRISTINA
You have nothing to apologized or be
ashamed about! Angel? I will always
love you no matter what. You hear
me?

ANGEL
I know. Go to bed ma.

CRISTINA
Angelito, are you sure you're okay?

ANGEL
(fake smile)
I will be. I don't want you worrying
about me ever again. You've been my
one and only friend in a world filled
with bad, ugly, horrible people.

CRISTINA
(concern)
Angel! Why are saying that? Mi
hijo, what is it? You are not
yourself tonight. I know you.

He just looks at her and closes his eyes tired. HE hugs her and goes to his room. Cristina just stands there worried.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He sits in his bed staring ahead, serious. He takes out his diary from under his mattress, stares at it briefly and starts to write.

INT. JOHN AND ANTHONY'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

John is standing by the window worried. Anthony gets up and wraps his arms around him.

JOHN
I'm sorry. I'm keeping you up. I'm so worried.

ANTHONY
You have nothing to apologize for. I'm here for you.

JOHN
Thanks Tony. I don't know what I would do without you.

ANTHONY
Nothing, because you're stuck with me for another ten years.

JOHN
Just ten?

ANTHONY
Well, at that time we can renegotiate.

JOHN
Sounds good to me Mr. defense attorney.

ANTHONY
Now, why don't you come to bed and let this attorney caress your back. That always puts you to sleep.

John complies and they both lay down.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He is seated in his bed, fully dressed with black jeans, a dark t-shirt, a light jacket, black with a hooded over his head. Outside the moon is bright and the sky is brisk.

INT. CRISTINA AND JOSE BEDROOM -- MORNING

The alarm goes off. Its 06:00 A.M. Jose shuts alarm off and turns to Cristina, who is in a deep sleep.

JOSE
Honey. Cristina! I'm going to take
a shower. Breakfast in 30 minutes?

She ignores him. Jose takes a pair of clean underwear from dresser then enters the bathroom. In the bedroom door which is half close, WE SEE his belt with the holster holding his gun.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE, SECURITY CHECK POINT -- MORNING

John walks in with a small bag with two coffees and his briefcase. RAMON (30s), heavy, hispanic guard is at the check-point.

RAMON
Good morning sir. As always you are
the first one here-

JOHN
No, Ramon you are. Here I got a
coffee just like you like it: black
and sweet.

RAMON
Thank you sir. You are spoiling me.

JOHN
Not at all, its my pleasure. Have a
great day Ramon.

RAMON
Thank you! You too.

INT. CRISTINA AND JOSE BEDROOM -- MORNING

Jose now in uniform angry back in bedroom as Cristina awakens.

JOSE
Honey, you're just getting up? Come
on its 6:15!. I gotta be out of
here in 20 minutes!

CRISTINA
Ya! No fastidies mas!

He walks over to the bathroom door to get his belt and gun. He notices the gun is not in holster. Starts to worry a little, rushes to closet lock container opens it, empty. Turning to his wife with fear in his eyes..

JOSE
Did you hide my gun?

CRISTINA
Why would I hide...Did you check the
closet?

HE runs to Angel's room.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

Jose, what's going on?

He comes back to the bedroom. In shock.

JOSE

Angel is gone.

CRISTINA

What? It can't be. Its to early for...Jose? What are thinking? Oh my God! No! Oh no!

JOSE

(whispers)

I gotta call the station.

CRISTINA

Oh Jesus no! You don't think that--

JOSE

He took the gun to school. I'm sure. They gotta stop him!

HE runs to the phone.

CRISTINA

(crying)

Oh my God! No No No! NO! NO!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE, SECURITY CHECK POINT -- MOMENTS LATER.

POV SUBJECT CROSSES THE SECURITY CHECK POINT AND IT BEEPS, BUT RAMON IS NOT AROUND. SUBJECT WALKS PASS A BATHROOM WHEN THE DOOR OPENS AND RAMON STEPS OUT.

RAMON

Hey you! Where are you going? School not open!

SUBJECT stops, quickly turns and we see Angel's face. Emotionless he takes out gun and shots Ramon down. He runs upstairs.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

John who heard the shot rushes to the window, but everything is calm outside. As he turns towards door, Angel is standing there with the gun pointed at him. John backs up slowly. A just stares at him sad and ashamed at the same time.

JOHN

Angel, what have you done? What are you doing with that gun?

Brief Pause.

ANGEL

Why didn't you tell me?

JOHN

What--what do you mean?

ANGEL

I saw you and that men kissing.

JOHN

What man...? Oh, Angel, that's Tony his my--

ANGEL

So, you are a homosexual.

JOHN

Yes, I am gay. But--

ANGEL

You are a homosexual! There is nothing gay in homosexuality! We both know it! We are forced to hide, lie, defend ourselves even against our own fathers--

JOHN

Angel, its not all--

ANGEL

...and forced live in constant fear and shame. You know its true!

JOHN

Angel listen to me, it gets better.

ANGEL

(content)

But...I found a solution to both our problems. We--we won't need to hide any longer...

JOHN

Angel, lets talk--

ANGEL

We will both be free and find peace. They're all going to get what they want...

(crying)

starting with my own father... But so are we.

JOHN
 (approaching him)
 Angel, please! You don't know what
 you're doing! Give me that gun.
 Lets sit down and--

ANGEL shoots John under the shoulder, hitting part of his
 lung. JOHN falls on his knees, out of breath. Angel puts
 the gun to his temple.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Angel...ple--please don't do
 it..don't! Don't!

Jose's last words to his son, echo in Angels head.

JOSE
 (v.o)
 I rather see you dead, than a fagot!
 I rather see you dead! Dead! DEAD!

ANGEL
 (smiling in tears)
 I'll be all right now.

JOHN
 (screams)
 Angel, no! No! NO!

BLAST! He falls down as JOHN falls down at the same time.
 On the floor, both face each other. John is crying and
 gasping for air as he looks at Angel amazed of how serene,
 almost happy with a slight smile on his lips and eyes as HE
 takes his last breath. JOHN'S eyes begin to close slowly.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM -- MORNING

A team of doctors are trying to revive Angel by shocking his
 chest and with every medication possible.

DOCTOR
 Charge to 300! Clear!
 (shock)
 Lets call it. Time of death 0800.

NURSE
 (o.s)
 Mrs. Lopez!

CRISTINA
 (o.s)
 I gotta see my son!

NURSE
 (o.s)
 Mam' the doctors are still-

The doctor comes out from behind the curtain.

DOCTOR
It's okay. Mrs. Diaz?

CRISTINA
Doctor how is my son?

Jose next to Cristina, looks behind the doctor and sees Angel's lifeless body and face covered in blood as a nurse cleans him up.

JOSE
(shocked)
Angel!

DOCTOR
I'm sorry. We did all that we could.
By the time we got him, he was already gone.

Cristina walks slowly over to her son.

CRISTINA
(in a trans)
Angelito...oh God. My sweet, sweet
Angel! My baby...oh my baby!
(to Jose)
Are you happy now? This is what you
wanted. Wasn't it?

JOSE
(kneeling down)
No! I...oh, no!

CRISTINA
(screaming)
You murder him! You murder my baby!
(over her son)
My sweet beautiful baby...oh...Oh
God! Oh God...

Jose takes his son's hand, crying in guilt.

JOSE
(whispers)
Son, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry...

Cristina with no mercy towards her husband.

CRISTINA
Out. I want to be alone with my
son. Get out! Get out! Get out!
(hitting him, crying)
Get out!! Get out! Oh! Oh! Oh!
OHHH!

Pushing and hitting him, he exits. She just stays there caressing her sons face, hair, kissing him as the nurse closes the curtain to give her time and privacy.

The scene ends with the MOTHER'S CRY ECHOING through the hospital hallways.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

Anthony is pacing back and forth nervously waiting for a doctor to give him news about John's condition. All that he can think of is the phone call from Frank who told him about the shooting.

FRANK

(v.o)

Tony, there's been a tragic incident in our school. John was shot and it's in very critical condition on his way to Elmhurts hospital in Jackson Heights.

The words: "John was shot" repeats twice in his head as a DOCTOR in operating room attire approaches Anthony.

DR.JOHNSON

Hi, I'm Dr.Johnson and you are?

ANTHONY

My name is Anthony Desantis. I got a call that John-

DR.JOHNSON

Excuse me, but what I need to know is your relationship to the patient.

ANTHONY

He..he's my partner.

DR.JOHNSON

He sustained a shot in the chest that hit part of his lung and collapsed it.

Anthony's eyes start to water, as fear over power his hearing and the doctor's words begin to fade slowly.

DR.JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I can't tell you anything further for we are about to start surgery and I need to get back. As soon as I'm done, I will come out and....

SILENCE. Anthony shakes the surgeon's hand.

As the Doctor walks away Anthony sits down in shock, crying, lonely in the cold hospital hallway.

SERIES OF SHOTS - Anthony walks inside hospital chapel.

A) Anthony lights candle and kneels down and prays.

B) I.C.U. Gina's bed. Alex's head is on Gina's hand.

C) Elmhurts Hospital hallway. John on stretcher is taken to I.C.U. post surgery. Anthony follows.

INT. I.C.U ELMHURTS HOSPITAL -- EVENING

Anthony is seated by John's bed holding his hand, praying. JOHN opens his eyes but he can speak because is intubated. HE squeezes Anthony's hand and wants to speak.

ANTHONY

John, calm down. You were shot.

HE nodes.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You can't speak now... I know you have a lot of questions.

After a brief moment Anthony tries to guess John's question.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

What is it that you want to know?
John, your student Angel Diaz shot--

John blinks twice.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

He--he didn't make it Johnny. I'm sorry.

John starts crying.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

John, don't cry. Please you need to get better. I need you Johnny.

Anthony lays his head on the bed. John caress Tony's head.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT

Alex is asleep in the chair with his head on Gina's bed and her hand is on his face. By now she's only on oxygen. Gina's parents walk in. Robert touches Alex waking him. ALEX stands up to exit the room, but Robert holds him with a smile. ALEX not sure, looks at Helen and she smiles kissing him. GINA opens her eyes.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

Its two weeks since Angels passing. Cristina is in her son's room for the first time since then. Some of his clothes are already packed in boxes labeled: church donations: pants and shirts. She starts taking the bed apart when she notices a book sticking out from under the mattress. She lifts the mattress and finds her sons diary plus the essay he wrote for John's class.

She seats to read and is first shocked by the essay's title:
 "The Day I was Molested". There's an A inside a circle.

CRISTINA

Oh my God!

Begins to reading.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

The day I was molested, I was only-
 (in tears and shock)
 ...seven years old...

ANGEL

(v.o.)

My mother and I went to visit my
 aunt and uncle. Mom went out with
 aunt Carmen shopping and we were
 alone. He took me to his dead son's
 room. My cousin had die that year
 and uncle Antonio asked me if I
 wanted to see my cousin's airplane
 model collections, which I always
 liked. I agreed excited.

FLASHBACK - INT - COUSIN'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Angel at seven years old in the room with his uncle ANTONIO
 (29) Puerto Rican, handsome, dark hair, moustache. WE now
 see parts of the molestation as ANGEL narrates it.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

(v.o)

The first thing I remember was him
 getting behind me and he started
 pressing his penis against the back
 of my neck. He then began kissing
 and sticking his tongue in my ears.
 By this time his penis was hard
 against my neck. He then asked me
 to lay down in bed with him that he
 was very depressed because of his
 son's death. By this time he only
 had on his underwear. He told me to
 lay on top of him and took my hand
 and asked me to caress his penis and
 said:

ANTONIO

(in Spanish)

Don't be afraid Angelito. Touch it,
 caress it.

ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- DAY - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

CRISTINA

Oh Jesus!

Cristina continues reading, hearing her son's voice.

ANGEL

(v.o)

He had flip me over and my face was in front of his penis. He put down my shorts and started breathing warm air into my penis, and asked me to kiss his, that it was okay.

CRISTINA

(enraged)

Bastard! How could you? A baby!
My baby!

SHE continues reading.

ANGEL

(v.o)

I was so scared and confused, my heart was raising and if felt like it was going to explode out of my chest. He kept telling me that I must never tell anyone about what he had done, specially to my mother, for she would kill him and go to jail forever...

CRISTINA

You are right about that brother in law! You son of a bitch!

INT. JOHN AND ANTHONY'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

John is in bed reading some get well messages and cards that his student send with his co-worker Frank.

FRANK

I feel envy. Those kids really love you and miss you, John.

JOHN

I missed them too, Frank. You have no idea. But, I keep forgetting to ask you, how is Ramon doing?

FRANK

Who's Ramon?

JOHN

God Frankie, don't you know anything? The security guard that got shot!

FRANK

Oh, his fine! Working already. But, how are you doing?

JOHN

I can't stop thinking about that day and about that poor kid. If only I would've acted sooner or if he never had come here and seen Tony and I--

FRANK

John, he was a disturbed and traumatized kid. His parents should have taken action sooner and ignored it all, including your phone call.

Anthony enters with a tray of lunch.

ANTHONY

Excuse me Frankie, but the patient our needs to eat his lunch.

FRANK

Wow, I wish my girlfriend treated me like this when I've been sick. You're a lucky man Johnny boy! I'm gonna go. Guys have a great thanksgiving. You, come back to work soon.

JOHN

The police is still investigating me. So, I don't even know if I'll have a job to go back to.

FRANK

You're going to be fine. Bye Tony.

Frank exits.

ANTHONY

I started the Christmas tree. You wanna come down and help me decorate it?

JOHN

No. Take that tray. I'm not hungry.

Brief silence.

ANTHONY

John, what's wrong?

JOHN

He thought I was afraid, like him, of others finding out about my sexuality. I should have spoken to him about me sooner!

ANTHONY

You need to stop blaming yourself! You were only his teacher.

(MORE)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

You couldn't have predicted this!.
If anything is his parents who should
have seen the signs of depression
and anxiety! Plus that gun he used!
His own father's gun!

(pause)

You are both victims here! You need
to get your life back, so that you
can get back to doing what you love
most.

JOHN

(defeated)

I don't know if I'll ever teach
again...I don't know Tony.

EXT. QUEENS LOCAL POLICE STATION -- EVENING

A taxi parks in front and Cristina gets out running inside.

INT. JOHN AND ANTHONY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

ANTHONY walks in with a worried look.

JOHN

What's wrong?

ANTHONY

That kids mother is downstairs.

JOHN

What kids mother?

ANTHONY

The kid who shot you.

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Cristina is seeping tea.

CRISTINA

It wasn't until today, when I was
cleaning my son's bedroom that I
found his diary and the essay he
wrote for your class, when I realized
what my poor son was going through
since the day that animal raped him.

JOHN

He made me promise for your sake not
to say anything. However, I did
leave you a message once I had read--

CRISTINA

I know. My husband never gave me
the message.

(MORE)

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

Angel feared that I would kill that bastard and he was right. I would've killed that animal with my bare hands! I'm so sorry my son did this to you... But what I don't understand is why? I know for a fact, and is in his diary, that he was fond of you...

(opens the diary)

He writes here, the night before the shooting. "I decided to free myself and my good teacher Mr. Flanagan from the ones in this world, who want to hurt us and keep us in hiding and in shame. Today we will both be free, free at last"

(to John)

I don't understand...

JOHN

Angel came to visit me here that night, but he never rang the bell. HE saw Anthony, my partner, and I in a affectionate moment...

CRISTINA

I still don't understand?

JOHN

I never told him about my sexual orientation. I didn't want to influence him in any way. Plus, that's a part of my life I prefer to keep private. But Angel, in his tormented, confused mind, assumed that I was going through some of the same inner chaos that he was going through and that I was afraid of being outed. So, he wanted to liberate us both from that burden.

CRISTINA

When his father found out, that last night, he beat him up and told him that...that he rather see him dead than a faggot.

JOHN

(closing his eyes)

We have all heard those words from the ones we love most. Statements like that stay with you forever and the scars that they leave in our hearts never heal. Eighteen percent of gay teenagers suffer from depression and gay teens are six times more likely to commit suicide

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

due to stressful life events and burdens. He was really afraid of you finding out about what his uncle did and like most pedophiles, that men used the scary tactic to keep Angel quiet.

CRISTINA

The bastard is finally where he belongs. His wife called me today from P.R. and told he was arrested for molesting some kids in the neighborhood and these kids were not afraid to speak... I'm leaving to testify on behalf of my son and to make sure that, the monster gets the maximum jail time.

JOHN

I hope for Angel's eternal piece that you find strength and happiness again.

CRISTINA

I just wish he had confided in me.

JOHN

Sixty percent of teens don't tell their parents what they're going through. Its not easy for any of us to tell the persons we love most that we are not what they expect us to be. Rejection, humiliation is our biggest fear and it was Angel's, especially from his parents. That statement his father made, was the trigger.

CRISTINA

(crying)

I know...

JOHN

I'll tell you something that might sound strange... But I believe for Angel suicide was a victory. I saw it in his eyes as he was taking his last breath...on the floor facing me...

(crying)

He seemed..happy...at piece.

CRISTINA

Thank you for telling me this. I can see how hard is for you to recall that moment.

JOHN

I love all my students as if they were my own children.

CRISTINA

They are lucky to have you. Now you will be able to go back to them. That's why I wanted to see you. First, to apologize for all we've put you through and second, I just came from the police station. I gave the detectives the diary and the essay my son wrote. I also told them what my husband did to Angel. He killed our son...you, the guard and Angel himself, are all victims of what that bastard in Puerto Rico did... But, you will be cleared of any wrong doing effective immediately.

INT. JOHN AND ANTHONY'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

ON: TV. A young female REPORTER is gather by a crowd of students of John from pass and present, in front of the board of education. John is watching.

REPORTER

(from T.V)

I'm here in front of the board of education where many students from pass and present, of John Flanagan, the high school teacher who was shot and wounded by a student over three weeks ago. The Student who then shot himself. The chief investigator we are told is going to address the media with new developments in the case. But right now Mr. Flanagan's students and parents are here in support of their teacher who has been under investigation, and want him back in the classroom as soon as possible. Now here are some of the students who wish to send their beloved teacher and the board of Ed a message. Hi, your name?

MICHAEL

My name is Michael Rizzo, I was a student of Mr. Flanagan in 2012. Mr. Flangan sir: just want you to know that me as well as other ex students of yours, are here in show of support. You made a difference in my life not only as an educator but also as an outstanding human being and we all know you are innocent.

Anthony enters the room.

GINA, MELANIE/LISA

We miss you! Get well soon sir! We love you and we need you back!

ALEX

Just like you never gave up on me, I'm not giving up on you sir! I'm going to be a father. I need you to help me graduate and I won't make it without you!

REPORTER

There you have it folks. A very strong sentiment of support here at--

John turns the T.V. off.

ANTHONY

John those kids need you and you need them. They know how much you care about them and their future like no else those!

JOHN

Okay enough! I'm tired.

ANTHONY

Tired or depressed?

JOHN

(breaking down)

Have you forgotten what I've been and still going through? In a split second I nearly lost my life, I lost my sanity, my reputation... I've lost what I love to do most which is to teach...

ANTHONY

I know.

JOHN

Have you ever been shot? Or worse, have you ever witnessed a child you cared for, blow his brains off in front of you?... I'm not a lawyer. I'm not like you.

HE puts his hands over his face.

ANTHONY

What is that suppose to mean? Forget it! You're right. I'm sorry. Call me if you need anything.

Anthony exits. John lets it all out.

INT. CRISTINA AND JOSE'S LIVINGROOM -- MORNING

The next morning Thanksgiving day Jose is in the sofa asleep, drunk. Cristina crosses the living room and drops down two suitcases by the front door. Jose wakes up.

JOSE

So...that's it? You're leaving, end of discussion.

CRISTINA

There's nothing further to discuss between you and I. You killed the only thing that was keeping us together..

JOSE

I was only trying to protect him.

CRISTINA

Protect him?

JOSE

Yes! From shame and humiliation...
From AIDS!

CRISTINA

You call what you did and said to him protection? Its from you that he needed protection. You executed him before he even had a chance to defend himself. I would've preferred he had died from AIDS but with the love and support of his parents around him. You murdered my son and I'll--

JOSE

Our son!

CRISTINA

(crying)

No, my son! A father is suppose to advice, understand, love and accept a son no matter what. Not humiliate and hurt him the way you did. Angel was afraid not only of us finding out what he was, but he was afraid of himself and of what he was feeling, which was all normal.

JOSE

(sarcastically)

Normal?

Cristina goes after her husband holding back tears, in deep anger.

CRISTINA

Yes, normal, for a teenager in search of his true self and his sexuality. But you, his father, instead of supporting him, talking to him and telling him that no matter what, he was always going to be your son! You beat him up and said the words...the words...that pulled the trigger!

JOSE

(cursing her in Spanish)
Callate ya! Puneta!

CRISTINA

I'm finished here. I got a plane to catch and another murderer to convict-your brother. You will be getting divorce papers as soon as..that animal is put away.

JOSE

So..you're never going to forgive me?

CRISTINA

(cold, to his face)
Never.
(in Spanish)
Nunca.

CAR HORN SOUNDS as these stare at each other for a moment in hate and despair, for the last time.

CRISTINA exits.

JOSE picks up the bottle of vodka and smashes it against the front door.

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

The next day Anthony is finishing decorating the Christmas tree. He walks over to the stereo and inserts a CD of BRYAN ADAMS and John's & ANthony's favorite SONG comes on: "Heaven". Anthony sits on a chair admiring his work of art, his Christmas tree, which is now all decorated except for one item, the angel that goes on top. Moments later, John is at the bottom of the stairs. He smiles, picks up the angel and shows it to Anthony.

JOHN

I think..this is all that's missing now?

ANTHONY

(taking it, smiling)
This..and you.

Anthony takes the Angel placing it on the tree. John walks over to the dimmer, dims all the lights as Anthony turns the Christmas lights on.

JOHN

You did a beautiful job, as you do every year.

ANTHONY

Thank you. My favorite holiday, our favorite song.

JOHN smiles nodding inviting Anthony to dance. They slowly dance, speaking softly to each other's ears

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I missed you.

JOHN

I missed you more... Thanks for being here.

ANTHONY

Always.

They kiss. The SONG: Heaven, plays into next scenes.

EXT. THE CAVELLIE'S HOME -- NIGHT

We see their home beautifully lid with Christmas lights as snow flakes fall and through a window in the dinning room we can see Gina, her parents, Alex and his mother, all seated at the table getting ready to eat. They all hold hands and vow their heads to give thanks on this thanksgiving day. MILLIE takes Alex's hand and kisses it and HE smiles happy.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

JOHN and ANTHONY are also praying before dinner.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

Five days later, on Monday, all of John's students are seated quietly waiting for their beloved teacher to return to work today for the first time since the shooting. There's a big welcome sign with balloons and on the board WE see in graffiti letters the words: Self-respect, Respect for others, Perseverance, Believe, Hope, Knowledge, Freedom, Empowerment.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

POV -- subject walking towards the classroom. The door opens.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROM -- CONTINUOUS

All of the students faces drop as they see standing in front of the door, Frank the substitute and not their beloved teacher John Flanagan.

FRANK
Good morning all! Sorry I'm late-

ALEX
Yo'! Where is Mr. Flanagan?

FRANK
I...I don't--

LISA
Listen teach. If our teacher is not coming back today as we were promised, we are all walking out!

ALL
That's right! Come everyone!

THEY all start getting up and towards the door.

FRANK
But, guys wait!

The door suddenly opens and John is there smiling.

JOHN
Where do you think you are all going?

LISA, MELANIE and GEORGE hug John as other STUDENTS CHEER and scream:

ALL
Welcome back Mr. Flanagan!

JOHN smiles looking at Frank.

JOHN
Okay, everyone settle down! You're making Mr. substitute teacher here jealous!

They ALL CLAP.

FRANK
Welcome back John. I'm really moved by how much they love you.

JOHN
Its a two way street Frankie. You give so you can receive.

As FRANK opens the door standing there is JEROME.

FRANK
John? Is this one yours?

JOHN
Oh my God, J.T!

ALEX
Yo' homey welcome back!

Frank exits and Jerome enters.

JEROME
I had to come back. I missed New York too much.

JOHN
Hey, that happens to all of us who grew up in this beautiful city. But what about your aunt and uncle?

JEROME
My aunt got a teaching job in the city and we got a beautiful home here in L.I.C. My uncle is also here.

JOHN
Well, there is your seat. Its still empty waiting for you.

Jerome walks over and seats next to his girl Tachia.

TACHIA
Welcome back. I missed you.

JEROME
I missed you too.

John stands in front of the class, thinking of what to say next to his students after all that has happened in the last month. He takes them in one by one in gratitude, love, and pride.

JOHN
Before we begin...I want to thank all of you for what you did. The acts of love and support by all of you and your parents, I'll never forget. We have all endured a very tragic event where an innocent life was lost and many others were affected by it.

(pause)
I pray and will pray everyday that something like this never happens again and I thank God that none of you were hurt.

LINDA and ALEX lower their heads in shame.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Which brings me to the assignment I gave all of you at the beginning of the school year.
(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

The assignment of the wood and the nails, which you were reminded by Mr. Morales, to bring in today. Take it out and I don't care if you completed it or not, that wasn't the purpose.

JOHN walks around and sees that many have no nails on the wood and others like Alex and Linda still have three nails on theirs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I can see many of you removed most, if not all of the nails. Now my question to all of you is... What do you still see on the piece of wood?

GEORGE

I see..holes from the nails.

JOHN

Yes, but they're not exactly holes that's too ambiguous. Pass your fingers through the wood and tell me what do you feel.

Linda starts sobbing.

GINA

I know sir.

JOHN

I know Gina. But I need...
(walking over to Linda)
Linda, I know that you know.

LISA

Of cause she knows and so does Alex.

JOHN

Lisa, please no more. Linda, I see you still have three nails in your wood. Do you care to share?

SHE can't stop crying. ALEX gets it know.

ALEX

I--I also have three nails...If I may?

JOHN

Go ahead.

ALEX

One nail represents..Angel, another is the school guard and the third is...you sir. I never got to apologize. As far as Angel..I'll never even get the chance to say: 'sorry kiddo.'

JOHN

That's right son, but what about the holes left by the nails after you removed them because you apologized, what do they represent? Linda?

LINDA

These holes represent the scars left behind by the pain we caused..and no matter how much good we do, they will always be there. Scars that killed Angel and I feel so bad for using him, embarrassing and hurting him like I did.

LONG SILENCE as THEY all get it. Many cry with Linda including ALEX.

JOHN

That's exactly right. So the only way to stop this is to never hurt or reject someone just because we don't like them or they're different. Angel was rejected by his own father and by some of you. There aren't many emotions in life, if any, that have the depth that rejection has. The feelings of being rejected, especially by someone that you love are very painful emotions and they scar us forever. These are scars that we have shared. I see true regret from all of you for the first time since our first day when you were all hurting one another without a guilty conscience. This is why I gave you this assignment. Maya Angelou, a great poet once said: "when we know better, we do better." Now that you all now better you need to do better by you and by your fellow human beings. This will always be my goal and biggest struggle, but at least with all of you I've succeeded even though a life was lost yet so many others were changed for the better. You all get an A... Now lets move on to--

Jerome raises his hand exited.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Jerome?

JEROME

Before we go on, I would like to share with you and the class a passage from Frederick Douglass. Mr. Douglass writes about a friend. Quote "...thank heaven, I remained but a short time in this distress situation. I was relieved from it by the humane of Mr. David Ruggles, whose vigilance, kindness and perseverance, I shall never forget. I'm glad of an opportunity to express, as far words can, the love and gratitude I bear him." You Mr. Flanagan, sir..

Song, "You Raise me Up" by Josh Groban starts playing

JEROME (CONT'D)

..through your vigilance, kindness, perseverance, love and passion for teaching..you have inspired many of us and changed our lives forever for the good. You raised us up each day by teaching us how to be kind, to have self respect and respect for others regardless of our differences. You pushed us to strive and to believe above all in our selves and for that, I'm grateful.

GINA/MELANIE/LISA

(together)

I'm grateful. Thank you. Thank you.

ALEX

(moved)

Thank you sir and I'm sorry to you and to all of you for hurting you. I was hurting too and took out on you all.

JOHN

(proud and moved)

I can see in your eyes, for the first time, true repentance Mr Rodriguez and that gives me great joy. Thank you Jerome. Oh, gratitude. My favorite word.

John takes a deep breath.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We must now move on!

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

We have a lot to catch on! Today we
begin reading this play..

(showing them)

..its Shakespeare's Hamlet. Hamlet
a man who became, like many of us,
his own worst enemy and who's own
vulnerability made his life a living
hell...

FADE OUT.