

GAY BEAR

screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

INT. TEACHER'S OFFICE - DAY

A TEACHER looks over a research paper. This is MR. AARON MORT, a grey-headed, frown-faced, and thick-browed old man who looks like he's going to burst into a fire of hate and discrimination. He wears his narrow reading glasses far down on his nose while he peruses the article.

A STUDENT sits across the desk from Mr. Mort. This is JOSEPH MEDVED, but everyone just calls him JOE. He's skinny and fit, with a thick dark combover and muscular crossed arms.

Joe taps his leg as he awaits the teacher's diagnosis.

Mr. Mort clears his throat. Joe sits up, anticipating.

The teacher continues reading. False alarm.

Then, the paper slowly descends to the desk. Joe sits up again.

MR. MORT

Good. It's good.

JOE

What do you think?

Mr. Mort looks at Joe. He just told him.

MR. MORT

I can see why Miss Renarda could be a little upset by it. But very good, grammatically speaking.

Mr. Mort starts picking up the clutter on his desk.

MR. MORT (CONT)

Well, that should do it. If you have any questions, just let me know. Miss Renarda won't be in over the weekend. Family problems.

JOE

Shame.

Mr. Mort chuckles.

MR. MORT

You'll be all right. It's just a weekend, and a Monday.

(pause)

Say, don't you have plans this weekend? With Al and Nate?

JOE

Yeah. We're heading out tonight. Going camping.

MR. MORT

Is that right? Where you going?

JOE

A little place in the mountains, just south of that town by the lake.

MR. MORT

Okay. You mean the campsite down there?

JOE

Oh, no sir. It's not a mapped location. Al wanted to try out his new tent. Thought we'd go full wilderness. No rules to follow and stuff.

Mr. Mort looks a little concerned.

MR. MORT

No rules, huh? You don't plan on breaking the law, do you?

JOE

I don't think so. Nothing serious, I don't think.

Mr. Mort looks at him serious.

JOE (CONT)

Well, we're not going to go all Töckfors or anything, armed robbers in the woods. None of us drive a station wagon anyway.

Mr. Mort smiles and shakes his head.

MR. MORT

You and your crime stories.

JOE

You know me.

MR. MORT

Yeah. That's why you're on the school watchlist.

(chuckling)

I still laugh about the one last year, about that girl breaking into Principal Berger's office?

JOE

Oh, yeah. I almost forgot about that one. Yeah, I wrote that she was only going in to get her silly putty, not the one hundred-dollar bill on his desk.

MR. MORT

Honestly I don't care. She committed a crime.

JOE

But then she got hit by the nerd on the bicycle right after that, remember?

Mr. Mort smiles.

MR. MORT

I'm just glad to know you have a properly-aligned moral compass.

JOE

But don't forget about the one where the kid threw pineapples at people from a community Christmas tree.

MR. MORT

Oh, that - you're right. I didn't get that one.

JOE

Neither did I.

MR. MORT

But you wrote that one.

JOE

I know. I was partying when I came up with it, and then forgot what I was writing halfway through.

MR. MORT

That's the problem with drinking too much.

JOE

It wasn't that. I don't even drink. I just stayed up too late the night before, and tried to finish it before class. I don't even remember how that one ended.

Mr. Mort helps guide Joe to the door.

MR. MORT

I don't either. I definitely had been drinking too much. But you need to go, so I can lock up. Principal Berger is already gone, and you're lucky, too. I could have this paper turned over to him.

JOE

Thank you, Mr. Mort.

MR. MORT

Bye, now.

Mr. Mort closes the door in Joe's face.

EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Joe walks down the hallway, somber at first. Then, he bursts into a dance as he makes his way to the exit.

He passes a bulletin board displaying names and pictures of POPULAR STUDENTS. He glances at the pictures. One catches his eye, and he stops.

INSET:

"HONORABLE MENTION: OLIVIA KRASOTA"

Joe looks at the picture closer.

INSET PICTURE: A VERY ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE with penetrating eyes and a narrow, Slavic nose. She smiles with aggressive innocence.

JOE

(smiling, flirtatious)

Aw, you would be on this board. Little hottie, you.

He continues looking at the picture.

JOE (CONT)

If only you were ever single. . .

A CLACKING DOOR down the hall. Joe jumps. He continues down the hall.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Joe exits, walks into the parking lot.

ALAN PITTS (18, black young man with a broad grin and short hair, looks like a basketball player) and NATHAN GRAVLING (poorly executed teenaged Elvis Presley) wait for him in a dirty Ford Mustang Convertible. Alan's driving.

ALAN

Come on, Joe! You said it was only going to be a couple minutes! It's been like an hour!

NATE

Yeah, we gotta get there before it's dark, you know?

Alan REVS the engine.

Joe runs up and hops the door into the passenger seat.

JOE

Yeah, I know, sorry. I'm here, so let's go.

The car pulls away with a POWERFUL ROAR.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

Joe sits shotgun, Nate sits in the back looking between.

JOE

Hey, did you guys see Liv made it on the board again?

NATE

Liv? Olivia, like, Krasota?

ALAN

No, I didn't. But I don't doubt it.

JOE
I know, right?

ALAN
Yeah, dating every guy that talks to
you gets you places, huh?

NATE
Which Liv?

ALAN
Speaking of which, why haven't you
tried talking to her? You've been
obsessed with her ever since she got
here.

JOE
I have not! I just - I think she's
cute, but - she's never single, you
know?

NATE
Krasota, or Scharidy?

JOE
Krasota!

ALAN
The pretty one!

Nate sits back, annoyed.

Everyone sits silent for a few moments.

NATE
They're both pretty, I think, Al.
Just in different ways. Everyone's
pretty.

Joe and Alan look at each other, exchanging a look.

EXT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY

The Convertible pulls to a stop in front of the house. Joe jumps
out and heads for the front door.

ALAN
Hurry! We've got about five hours of
daylight left, and I want to go
fishing in the morning!

NATE

(to Alan)

You can still go fishing in the morning. It's not like the weekend stops when the sun goes down.

ALAN

(to Nate)

We have five hours of daylight. It takes two hours to get there, probably three to set up camp. Don't be a know-it-all.

Their voices TRAIL OFF as. . .

INT. MEDVED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Joe enters the house.

JOE

Hey, Mom! Just grabbing my stuff.

A GIRL looks over the back of the couch in the Living Room. EMMA MEDVED (10), Joe's little sister.

EMMA

Mom's not here.

JOE

What are you doing, then?

EMMA

Watching TV.

JOE

Where's Mom?

EMMA

She's at the Voisines' house.

JOE

Why?

EMMA

I dunno. Go ask her.

Joe comes into the Living Room.

JOE

What are you watching?

EMMA

My shows.

Joe watches.

CLOSE ON TV: Two cartoon characters fight. One stabs another in the chest, and blood gushes humorously from the exit wound in the back.

Joe reaches for the remote controller.

JOE

You know you shouldn't watch that.

Emma slaps his hand away.

EMMA

No!

JOE

What would Mom say? Or Dad?

EMMA

I'll change it when she gets back.

JOE

Change it now. If you know they won't like it, don't watch it.

EMMA

You're not the boss of me.

A CAR HORN outside.

JOE

Ah. I gotta go. But you better change that.

He leaves the room.

Emma looks at the remote, then back at the TV.

EMMA

Where are you going?

JOE (OS)

Camping. Remember? Al and Nate and me are going to the lake.

EMMA

Does Mom know about that?

JOE (OS)

Yeah, remember? I told her and Dad at the table the other day.

Emma fingers the remote.

EMMA

Was I there?

JOE (OS)

Yeah. You wouldn't eat your carrots. Remember?

Emma picks up the remote and points it at the TV. She changes the channel.

EMMA

When are you coming back?

Joe re-enters, carrying a load of gear.

JOE

Tomorrow night, probably.

EMMA

Oh.

Joe looks into the Living Room. He sees the channel has been changed.

JOE

Good girl. I'll see you later.

EMMA

Bye, Joe.

Joe slams the door shut behind him.

EXT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY

Joe drops his supplies into the trunk.

NATE

Is it all going to fit?

ALAN

Yeah, it should.

Joe pushes the cargo down as he pulls the lid down on top of it. He pushes down until it latches.

ALAN (CONT)

No, Joe, you gotta slam it. Latching
doesn't mean anything.

Alan punches a button on the dashboard. The trunk pops back
open. Joe reels, then SLAMS the lid shut.

ALAN

Yeah, that's it!

NATE

That's not opening!

Joe walks around the car and gets in the passenger side.

JOE

Let's get outta here.

The car accelerates quickly, the occupants WHOOPING and
HOLLERING.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The boys singing along to a Country Song BLASTING OVER THE RADIO.

They pass a sign declaring the CITY LIMITS.

ALAN

We're home-free, boys! Just like
America should be!

They all continue HOOTING and SHOUTING as the song ENDS.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The boys are setting up camp. Joe is working on the Tent with
Nate, while Alan works on building a fire. Alan stikes a match
and holds it to some wood.

JOE

Where did you get that wood, Al?

ALAN

From a tree.

JOE

You just pulled it off a tree?

ALAN

Yeah.

JOE

Al. You have to use dried wood.
That's all still got sap in it.

ALAN

I've got needles at the bottom.

NATE

I have some paper you can borrow.
From my notebook.

ALAN

No, this has to be an authentic fire.
I have to use nature.

NATE

Poison ivy is nature.

Alan strikes another match and holds it to some dried needles.
Smoke, then out.

Joe locks a part of the tent into place.

JOE

Okay, there we go. Nate, go get the
pins.

NATE

Pins?

JOE

Yeah, the - those yellow things in the
trunk.

Nate walks over to the car, parked a short distance from the
site.

Joe sees a pile of tent pegs on the ground nearby.

JOE (CONT)

Oh, wait, here they are! Nevermind.

Nate slowly makes his way back to the campsite.

NATE

Hey, guys, are you sure we're supposed
to be out here? I mean, what if
there's wild animals or something?

Joe and Alan give Nate a stupid look. Alan strikes another
match; it blows out right away.

ALAN

Uh, this is the wild. There are going to be animals out here.

NATE

I know, but I mean like, what about bears and stuff?

JOE

Bears, wildcats, raccoons, wild dogs -

NATE

I heard about a girl that got eaten by a raccoon once.

ALAN

No. Raccoons don't eat people.

NATE

Or, maybe it was killed her. Yeah, I think it killed her.

JOE

Come on, Nate. Just enjoy getting to do this. It's not a common practice anymore.

Nate hesitates, but moves over to Alan's fireplace. Alan strikes another match. He holds it to the base of the pile. It goes out.

ALAN

Where's your paper, Nate?

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A fire is blazing now. Alan, Joe, and Nate sit around, looking into the flames.

ALAN

You remember that story about the girl getting kidnapped by her grandpa, for like five days? And they found her and her grandpa behind a farmer's feed barn or something?

JOE

Oh, yeah, I remember that! What was it - three years ago? Someone did a current event report on it in class.

ALAN

Yeah, I think it was Alice.

NATE

It was Alice Harper. She said she was friends with the girl's cousin.

JOE

I remember Alice Harper.

(to Alan)

You remember Alice Harper?

ALAN

I think, kind of. Was she the blonde who always wore a headband, kinda nerdy?

NATE

(defensive)

No, she was pretty. Really pretty.

JOE

Oh, did you have a thing for her, Nate?

NATE

No. I just saw her different.

JOE

I gotcha. Like, being smarter than everyone gave her credit for?

NATE

Yeah. That, and she was pretty.

Alan throws a log on the fire. Sparks fly everywhere, upward, floating into the starry sky.

ALAN

(watching sparks)

What about you, Joe?

JOE

What about me?

ALAN

Tell us about who you think is pretty.

NATE

(to Alan)

We already know.

ALAN

I know. I was hoping he'd tell us.

Joe blushes. He picks up a stick and starts poking the fire.

ALAN (CONT)

So, how about it? Let's talk about. .
. Olivia Krasota.

Nate elbows Joe, who drops the stick.

NATE

It's just us, man.

ALAN

Yeah. Not going anywhere. I promise.

Joe hesitates, then breathes.

JOE

Livvie is. . . really. . .

NATE

Just say it.

ALAN

Don't be embarrassed. We all have our
crushes.

NATE

Yeah. It's just us.

Joe cringes.

JOE

She is amazing. I just know I could
never get a date with her, much less
be her boyfriend - if even for just a
day. She's the kind of girl guys
dream about, and I know she knows it.
Half the guys she dates are bigger,
meaner. They're jerks to her, and she
does what any girl with poor-choice
boys do, and just makes excuses for
bullying.

Nate and Alan look at each other.

ALAN

She didn't defend Max. He got kicked
out of school for bullying.

JOE
She dated Max?

ALAN
Just for a little bit.

Joe settles again, thinking.

JOE
She's practically accepting every
guy's invitation to date. I don't
think I could do that.

NATE
Well, that's good.

Nate chuckles to himself. Alan gives him a condescending look.

ALAN
So, what's stopped you from asking?

JOE
I just. . . I don't know.

ALAN
Okay, okay - so she's accepted
practically every guy's asking her
out, like you said. What's stopping
you from asking? You're afraid you'll
be the only guy she'll say 'no' to?

JOE
Honestly, I have no idea.
(rethinking)
Actually, I think it's because she's
always dating, and I'm afraid that
when I ask, she's going to say she's
already got something going with
another guy.

Alan shrugs.

NATE
What if, she's ditching each guy when
the next guy asks?

Joe and Alan give Nate a humored look.

JOE
If that were the case, I'd ask her
tomorrow.

ALAN

Then do it! I'll hold you to it.

JOE

No, don't do that. I don't even know if I'll see her tomorrow.

ALAN

Monday, then. I'll hold you to it that, when you pass Livvie in the hall on Monday, you ask her if she wants to go out.

JOE

Where am I supposed to take her?

ALAN

Anywhere! That's part of dating. You take her someplace, you pay, and then you drop her off.

NATE

You don't have to kiss her. I read something about that.

ALAN

Yeah, you don't have to. It helps, but it's not required.

JOE

This is getting out of hand. I'm headed to bed.

Joe stands up, stretching.

JOE (CONT)

And, honestly, I don't even know her that well.

ALAN

You don't - you. . . That's what the dating part is about. Getting to know someone.

JOE

Yeah, I guess.

NATE

Does she know who you are?

JOE

Yeah, of course. She says hi to me

every time I pass her in the hall.

Alan throws up his arms.

ALAN

Wow. Just. Wow.

JOE

What?

ALAN

Subtle hints, man. You're missing the vital signs. Maybe you don't deserve her.

JOE

What are you talking about?

NATE

She wants you.

Joe gives Nate a weird look.

ALAN

Okay, that was a little weird. But really, man. She's throwing you a ball.

JOE

Really?

ALAN

Yeah! The ball's in your court.

NATE

Yeah, hit those balls back.

JOE

Aw, Nate!

ALAN

Oh, come on!

Nate looks at them, oblivious to his wording.

Joe unzips the tent.

JOE

Well, I'm going to bed. Good night, y'all.

ALAN

All right. I'll probably be done here in a couple minutes. I'm fishing for breakfast.

NATE

I'll watch the fire. Keep the wild animals away.

Nate picks up a stick and pokes the fire.

NATE (CONT)

Did you ever hear that story about the kid that got dragged out of his tent by a mountain lion?

JOE (OS)

Nate. Shut up.

Nate falls silent. He watches the darkness around him. He looks up, following the light of the sparks, upward into vastness of space.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (DAWN)

The fire is smoking. The site is still. A mist hangs over the water. This is a backwoods morning.

Rustling in the tent. The door unzips; Alan emerges. He walks to his car and pulls out a fishing rod and a tackle box.

EXT. RIVER - DAY (DAWN)

Alan wades into the water a little ways, sets his rig, and casts. The mist is thick, but the PLOP splash is visible through the grey.

Alan slowly reels.

INT. TENT / EXT. WOODS - DAY (DAWN)

Joe blinks awake. He listens.

LIGHT, DEEP-VOICED PANTING.

Joe slowly rises.

The PANTING grows LOUDER.

Fear mounts in Joe's eyes. He ascends high enough to see through the screens in the top of the tent.

JOE SEES: An ADOLESCENT BLACK BEAR meanders toward the campsite.

Joe freezes. He knees Nate, sleeping soundly.

NATE
(grumbles)
What?

JOE
(whisper)
Shush! A bear.

NATE
Huh?

JOE
(whisper)
Uh. Bear. . .

Nate's eyes open wide.

NATE
Where's Al?

JOE
I dunno.

NATE
Where's his gun?

JOE
I dunno.

NATE
Is it big?

JOE
I dunno.

Nate gets impatient. He rises to look out.

NATE
Let me see.

Nate's eyes grow wider when he sees the creature, looking at a cooler.

NATE (CONT)

I forgot to put it farther away. Like
I read in that camping magazine.

JOE

What do you mean?

NATE

The food. He wants to eat.

Nate gasps.

JOE

What.

NATE

Al's gun. It's in his car.

They both look to the car, in the opposite direction.

Nate picks up his phone.

JOE

What are you doing?

NATE

I want to film this. In case anybody
finds us.

JOE

Don't be silly - it's a black bear.
You can scare them off, easy.

NATE

Famous last words.

Joe gives him a look.

Nate presses his screen.

NATE (CONT)

Okay, I'm recording.

JOE

What do you want me to do?

NATE

Go scare him off.

JOE

No! He'll probably just leave. Just
stay calm.

NATE

You just said you can scare them off
easy.

JOE

Yeah, but that doesn't mean I actually
want to do it!

NATE

Go!

Joe rolls his eyes. He goes to the tent door. He slowly and quietly unzips it.

They both hold their breaths as the zipper reaches the bottom.

Joe looks back. Nate holds his phone up, still recording. Joe exits slowly.

OUTSIDE THE TENT: Joe steps out, careful not to make a sound. He swallows hard. He looks back - sees Nate through the screen in the top of the tent. Nate gestures.

Joe blinks long as he re-focuses on the bear. The Bear flips over the cooler, spilling its contents.

Joe takes a deep breath.

JOE

Hey! YOU!

The Bear looks up, surprised. It makes a GROWLING GASP as Joe charges him.

JOE (CONT)

Get away! Get outta here! Go!

The Bear MOANS in surprise, and bolts a short distance. It turns and looks back. Joe pursues again. The Bear HOLLERS and bounds away.

NATE (THROUGH THE MESH): Sighs in relief. He sits down, begins replaying the video.

JOE: Walks back to the tent.

JOE

You said the gun was in the car?

NATE

I think. Unless he took it with him.

JOE
Where is Al?

The Bear MOANS from a distance. Joe looks.

The fog is thick, but the Bear's PANTING is heard APPROACHING.

JOE (CONT)
Nate?

The Bear EMERGES, pursuing Joe. Joe takes off.

NATE: Sits back up, shock and horror filling his gaze.

Joe SCREAMS at the Bear. The Bear continues pursuit. Joe turns and hits it in the muzzle.

JOE (CONT)
Get away! No!

The Bear shakes its head and ROARS. Joe takes off running again, SHOUTING and SCREAMING.

NATE: raises his phone, still in a frozen state, films the scene with a shaking hand.

Joe turns around and swings a fist at the Bear. The Bear snaps at him, clenching its teeth. It ROARS again. Joe SCREAMS.

EXT. RIVER - DAY (DAWN)

Alan has a headset on, listening to a song that makes him swing his hips while he reels his line slowly in.

He stops humming the song to himself, hears something. He takes off the headset.

DISTANT SHOUTING. Someone's in trouble.

Alan reels in his line quickly. Suddenly, the line goes TAUT.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY (DAWN)

Joe jumps and grabs a tree branch. He swings his legs up in time for the Bear to miss.

The Bear circles below, like a shark waiting for a man on a raft to make a mistake. Joe holds on tight, attempting to prevent that mistake.

The Bear goes to the tree's trunk. It begins to climb.

Joe waits until it has gained height before jumping down. He runs the opposite direction, toward the tent. He turns in time to see the Bear fall backward off the tree and come after him.

Joe SCREAMS again.

EXT. RIVER - DAY (DAWN)

Alan holds up a twelve-inch Trout. It flips on the hook.

ALAN
I gotta go, buddy. Stay here a
minute.

More SHOUTING in the distance. Alan looks, places the fish in the water, and wades out of the river. He leaves the rod leaned against a tree, and runs.

The rod jitters a little.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (DAWN)

Joe dodges into the tent. His torso makes it in.

NATE
Don't lead him in here!

Joe looks at Nate with anger.

The angry look is suddenly replaced with shock.

Joe gets sucked out of the tent's doorway.

NATE: slowly and carefully approaches the tent door, looking through.

THE BEAR has Joe by the groin. Joe SCREAMS in agony as the Bear drags him backwards across the ground.

The Bear sits on the smoldering campfire, and ROARS in pain without letting go of Joe.

JOE
(crying)
Let go of me! No!

The Bear lets go for a brief moment, and Joe rolls over. Joe tries to crawl away on his back, keeping the Bear in sight. He

tries kicking, but misses.

The Bear lunges again, going straight for the same area. It CHOMPS down.

Joe's SCREAM CRESCENDOS, rising in pitch until it reaches notes nobody should be able to reach under normal circumstances.

Suddenly. . .

BOOM!

The Bear gives a shocked look and loosens its grip on Joe's crotch. Joe crawls away, WIMPERING in exhausted pain.

ALAN stands near a tree, behind the Bear, aiming his Handgun right at the Bear's butt. He looks past the now-lifeless clump of fur on the dirt and sees Joe, with his legs wide apart, blood streaking the ground as he pulls himself along.

ALAN

Oh, man. . .

Nate watches through the tent door, phone still up.

NATE

Oh, man. . .

Joe stops crawling when the pain is too much. He starts crying.

JOE

Oh, man. . .

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

Broadcast Staff and Anchormen (TWO MEN and ONE WOMAN, dressed professional) alike watch the screens in the Newsroom studio setup.

ON THE SCREENS: The LOW-QUALITY VIDEO recorded by Nate is played.

NATE (OC, VIDEO)

Don't lead it in here!

Joe's face goes to horror in the shaky footage. The Tent Flap falls back just a little, and the bear's grip is revealed in a blur.

The Anchorwoman (JAIME TURSIOPS, 30s, fluffy light-brown hair) reacts to the haunting image.

JAIME

(gasping)

Whoo. I - As a woman, I don't have what you guys have, but I'll admit, I really feel for you there.

The Older Anchorman (TODD SLOAN, 50s, graying combover, skinny) shakes his head.

TODD

Yeah, in all my years, I've never seen anything quite like it.

(to the studio cameras)

As we've said, just moments ago, these images were sent to us via Twitter by.

. . .

(trying to read)

"UrsaMinor, Six, Nine." As we see, three boys had a haunting experience with a black bear that invaded their campsite in the early morning hours of the thirteenth -

The Younger Anchorman (ANDREW SPORKAAM, 30s, athletic and expressive) cuts in.

ANDREW

So, just yesterday morning.

(to a journalist)

Do we have any idea who these guys are?

The Journalist standing beside a Camera gives a "negative."

ANDREW (CONT)

We are on that right now. I'm sure we would all like to know, how these boys are doing after their ordeal.

(glances at a clock)

I'm Andrew Sporkaam, with Jaime and Todd. We'll be right back.

Everyone holds, the OUTRO MUSIC ENDS.

Everyone breaks pose. The Camera Operators take off their headsets and do a hand gesture as they walk off the set. The Anchors fidget with their paper work.

TODD

Oh, man. . .

JAIME

I know. I can't believe that.

Andrew gestures to the Journalist. The Journalist approaches.

ANDREW

Is there some way for you to find the original source of the posting?

JOURNALIST

Yeah, we have him. Just waiting for a response about the incident.

ANDREW

So, "UrsaMinor six-nine" is not the original poster?

The Journalist shakes his head.

ANDREW (CONT)

Who was it then?

Andrew stands, walks with the Journalist off the set to the Break Room, where the Camera Operators are pouring coffee.

JOURNALIST

It was, um, one named "Gravling-nine, Nate-two"?

Andrew gives a weird face.

ANDREW

Graveling?

JOURNALIST

(correcting pronunciation)
Grayvling.

ANDREW

Interesting. Well, keep trying to reach him. I want to know if that kid is all right. So does our following.

(to the Camera Operators)

Pour me a cup, would you?

OPERATOR 1

Sure thing, man.

OPERATOR 2

(to Operator 1)

Dude, that guy's lucky if he still has two of them. . .

OPERATOR 1

Right?

ON THE SET: Jaime and Todd look over their next reports.

JAIME

We're not going to top that bear story today.

TODD

Yeah, I'm not going to be over that for a while.

JAIME

My feet hurt.

Todd chuckles.

TODD

Yeah. Black bears can get aggressive. Especially when they're hungry.

JAIME

Didn't you hunt one one time?

TODD

Well, I wasn't hunting him, but I shot him for protection. We were going for Whitetail, and it decided to charge us.

Andrew walks back on set with a black coffee.

ANDREW

Are you guys seeing the feed on our web page? Markus just showed me.

Todd pulls out a laptop and opens it on the desk. Jaime joins him in looking. They both look shocked.

TODD

This is just two minutes?

ANDREW

(sipping coffee)
Yeah.

JAIME

This is huge.

Todd gets slightly frustrated with the computer.

TODD

It's frozen.

Andrew looks over to a booth. A MAN with angry-looking features laughs behind the glass. He gives a thumbs-down.

Andrew smiles.

ANDREW

The site just crashed.

The other two anchors look at him, then the man in the booth. Andrew smiles as he sips his coffee.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Joe slowly opens his eyes. He adjusts to the light in the room, looking around.

He looks down his body, checking his features. A LARGE CAST covers his pelvic region, spreading his legs awkwardly out to the sides. He sighs.

A GENTLE KNOCK on the open door. He looks up.

NURSE

Your friends are here to see you.

Joe swallows.

JOE

Okay. . .

Alan and Nate enter.

ALAN

Ho, dude.

NATE

Whoa.

JOE

Hi, guys.

They slowly approach.

ALAN

Man, I'm so sorry. I can only imagine what it all looks like under there.

NATE

Yeah. . . Hamburger. . .

Joe and Alan look at Nate.

JOE

I think I heard the doctor say
something like it's deep penetrations,
from the teeth. Like, four stitches
per hole.

Alan cringes.

ALAN

Sounds awful.

JOE

Yeah.

ALAN

Where are the deepest ones?

Joe gestures on the cast to locations in the lower stomach.

JOE

One here, I think. Another one here.

ALAN

So nothing at your. . .

Alan gestures generally at his own special region.

JOE

I don't know what's going on down
here. I'm kinda hoping it bit far
enough up that it didn't hurt anything
down here. Otherwise I'll be peeing
like a broken sprinkler for the rest
of my life.

NATE

On the bright side, you get more
coverage on a wall.

Joe and Alan look at Nate.

NATE (CONT)

But. . . you'd have to sit down. So
you don't. . . You know. . .

Joe decides to ignore the direction.

JOE

So, what about the bear? Where is it now?

ALAN

Oh, he's off wherever. After the animal control people took it they started studying it.

Nate pulls out his phone.

JOE

And?

ALAN

Apparently I blew up its appendix. They had to put it down.

JOE

So, dead?

Alan nods.

Joe shrugs.

JOE (CONT)

I guess that's good. Keeps it from attacking someone else.

Nate looks up from his phone.

NATE

You guys, the video has over a hundred thousand views now.

Joe and Alan look at him.

ALAN

What video?

NATE

The video.

JOE

What video?

Alan grabs Nate's phone.

Joe watches Alan's face go to terror.

ALAN

Why did you post this?

NATE

Because Joe said I could. Remember?

FLASHBACK -

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Joe on a stretcher, being rushed to the Emergency Operations Room.

DOCTOR

Stay with me, Joe. Everything will be all right. We've got you.

Joe moans in pain as a nurse accidentally catches her foot under a castor wheel. The stretcher jolts.

DOCTOR (CONT)

Careful!

Nate appears in the cluster of people in the rush.

NATE

Hey, Joe, I know this is, like, a horrible time, but is it okay if I post the video, just to raise awareness and stuff?

Joe gives him a disgusted look, which quickly goes to pain as the nurse accidentally kicks the wheel again.

JOE

I don't care!

Nate stops and watches the crowd of technicians keep rolling down the corridor.

NATE

Thanks, Joe!

END FLASHBACK -

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Joe smirks.

JOE

Yeah, I guess I kinda did, huh?

NATE
(defending self)
Yeah. You did.

Joe rocks his head against the bedpost.

JOE
A hundred thousand views?

NATE
Yeah. And a journalist from some news
station wants to talk with us about
it.

Joe makes a face.

JOE
This is so weird. I'm going viral
over almost getting castrated. . . by
a bear.

Alan starts laughing.

Joe starts laughing.

Nate watches the video on his phone.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Alan and Nate walk out the front doors.

ALAN
Dude, I can't believe you posted that.

NATE
Why not? People need to know that
bears are dangerous.

ALAN
Everyone knows bears are dangerous!

They come to Alan's Mustang. Alan unlocks the doors and gets in.
Nate looks at his phone as he gets in the passenger side.

ALAN
Let me see your phone.

NATE
Why?

ALAN

I just want to see the video.

NATE

Don't delete it.

ALAN

I won't. Just -

Alan grabs the phone away from Nate and plays it through his social media app.

Alan gives weird face to Nate.

ALAN (CONT)

"Bears are dangerous. Be careful camping out there"? What kind of text is that for a video like this?

NATE

I don't know. I couldn't think of anything else to write.

ALAN

But, "be careful camping out there"? You may as well post this to YouTube and call it "Bear Takes Life By Butt and Balls."

Nate looks at him blankly.

NATE

But Joe's still alive.

Nate rolls his eyes.

ALAN

I really want to feel like you know what I mean.

Alan pulls out of the parking lot.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Joe is still drowsy. A nurse knocks softly at the door.

NURSE

Mr. Medved. Your family is here.

Joe braces for crying and emotions.

MELINDA MEDVED (45, still very attractive brunette), EDWARD MEDVED (50, tall and stoic with business executive cleanliness), and Emma enter the room.

Melinda is crying already.

MELINDA

Oh, my goodness! Oh, my goodness!

JOE

Mom, I'm all right.

EDWARD

Oh, son. . .

EMMA

Whoa, Joe.

Edward remembers Emma, covers her eyes. She gently pushes his hand away.

JOE

Mom. Dad. I'm okay.

MELINDA

Is your pelvis broken? Will you ever walk again?

JOE

Yes. I don't think anything's broken except the skin.

EDWARD

How's your. . .

Edward gestures to his special region, unspecifically.

JOE

I-I'm not really sure yet. The teeth were just around my lower stomach, so I guess we can hope none of that's messed up.

Emma pushes her father's hand away, again.

EMMA

You mean your privacy?!

EDWARD

Emma!

JOE

Hey!

Edward turns to Melinda, who's wiping away tears with a tissue.

EDWARD (CONT)

We should have left her in the car.

MELINDA

She cares about her brother!

Emma leans in to Joe.

EMMA

What did it feel like?

JOE

What did what feel like?

EMMA

The bear biting you.

Joe thinks about it for a moment, recounting the fateful moment. He winces.

JOE

Really weird. A lot of pain, but -

(realizing)

I shouldn't tell you that.

Melinda takes Emma's hand, heads toward the door.

MELINDA

Let's go, honey. We'll see him when
he comes home.

Emma looks at her brother as she goes along.

Edward waits until they leave the room. He looks at the cast, then at Joe.

EDWARD

How did this happen?

JOE

I tried to scare it away from the
tent, and it attacked.

EDWARD

And the boys just stood by and
watched?

JOE

Nate did, yeah. The whole thing's on video. He posted it yesterday, I think.

Edward looks shocked.

EDWARD

He posted it?

Joe gives an understanding look.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

The Set is bustling with activity as the Production Crew takes their places. The Camera Operators put their headphones on.

Jaime, Todd, and Andrew get their papers organized.

EXECUTIVE

All right, one minute!

Andrew gestures to a Journalist.

ANDREW

(whispering)

You got anything yet?

JOURNALIST

No response yet. I wrote another email after you said to keep trying, but he must be at work or something -

ANDREW

Okay, that's okay. Just keep checking.

A Production Executive comes up to the table, in front of the cameras.

OPERATOR 1

Sir, I can't get my focus if you're there.

EXECUTIVE

(to the Anchors)

You guys, this bear story is an exclusive - we're the only ones with it right now. You all know how low our ratings have been. This could be

(MORE)

EXECUTIVE (CONT)

our story! You need to find the kids that filmed this, and get them out here now!

ANDREW

We're trying, sir. They're just out of touch right now.

OPERATOR 2

We're filming, sir!

OPERATOR 1

Cameras are going live in a couple seconds.

A SET DIRECTOR counts down, hopeful of the Exec's self-removal.

SET DIRECTOR

Live in five, four, three, Two!

The Executive director moves. He turns back and looks at Andrew.

TODD

(to cameras)

Welcome back. We have some news on a local -

EXECUTIVE

(to Andrew, whisper-yell)

Get in touch with them!

Todd looks off set, at the Executive, distracted. Jaime and Andrew look at him.

The Executive looks embarrassed, continues off set.

TODD

(to cameras, hesitant)

Welcome back. . . Some news on a donut shop's recent creation of a banana pudding-filled fudge and sour-dough donut has people in a rage. . .

JAIME

Yes, they do. Donut Dealers can't seem to make enough of them to keep people happy. From personal experience, I can say this thing is a sensational game-changer for pastry-lovers.

Andrew turns his attention to the rest of the crew.

ANDREW

Yes. Donuts. Beautiful and
frightening at the same time.
Beautiful in flavor, frightening in
their demand.

Todd and Jaime look at him. He looks back, then keeps going.

ANDREW (CONT)

And these banana-sour-fudge pastries
are the talk of the town as of late.

JAIME

Indeed they are.

OFF SET: the Journalist looks doubtful as he types a message on
his phone. He sends it.

The Executive enters, goes to the coffee machine.

EXECUTIVE

How's your day going?

JOURNALIST

Good.

The Executive looks at him.

EXECUTIVE

You're one of the interns, right?

JOURNALIST

Yes, sir.

The Executive smiles.

EXECUTIVE

You helping Andrew?

JOURNALIST

Yes, sir.

Suddenly, his phone makes a sound. He checks it.

The Journalist jumps up from the table. He turns to the window
looking into the Set. He makes a gesture to Andrew.

ON SET: Andrew sees the Journalist gesturing. He winks and nods,
returns to being an on-air anchor.

TODD

So if you ever have the chance, drop in on Donut Dealers and try one of these new fudge banana donuts.

JAIME

Up next, we have your seven-day weather forecast, followed by traffic watch. Stay tuned, we have developing stories we know will keep you up-to-date.

OUTRO MUSIC PLAYS. Music ENDS.

The Anchors sort through their materials. Andrew waves at the Journalist, who approaches.

ANDREW

What do you have for me?

JOURNALIST

He responded.

ANDREW

What did he say?

JOURNALIST

He says, he forgot to ask his friend if it was okay to be on the news?

Andrew frowns.

ANDREW

He called to tell you that?

JOURNALIST

No, just a response under my comment on his video.

ANDREW

So, the victim is doing all right, then?

JOURNALIST

I didn't ask that. . . Should I ask that?

ANDREW

Why not.

JOURNALIST

Okay. I'll go work that out then.

The Journalist walks away, focused.

Jaime elbows Andrew.

JAIME

What was that? "Beautiful,
frightening donuts"?

TODD

Yeah, I was thinking, is there
something I'm not picking up on here?

ANDREW

No, sorry. I was still confused about
David.

The Executive (DAVID LEV) enters with a cup of coffee.

EXECUTIVE / DAVID

Yes, I'm sorry. I'm just excited by
what that bear attack story is doing
to our viewership the past day and a
half.

TODD

Yeah, it's doing something.

DAVID

Are you kidding? They crashed our
page twice already over this story!
You guys really need to get on this
thing - this could do some incredible
things to our ratings.

ANDREW

We're trying to reach out to the three
boys for an interview.

Jaime and Todd are looking at the laptop.

JAIME

Original video. "Bears are dangerous.
. . Be careful camping out there."

Todd chuckles.

TODD

What?

ANDREW

What?

JAIME

That's what it says.

Andrew comes behind them to look at the screen.

ANDREW

Okay. A little cheesy. But they're teenagers. They're always trying to be creative.

The others shrug.

INT. GRAVLING HOME - DAY

Nate comes through the front door.

MRS. GRAVLING (OS)

Nate?

NATE

Yeah?

MRS. GRAVLING (OS)

How's your friend?

NATE

He's okay.

Nate takes his shoes off and walks into the living room. He falls onto the couch backwards over the armrest.

His phone RINGS. He answers.

NATE (CONT)

Hello?

(pause)

Yeah.

(pause)

Oh. Yeah. Okay.

MRS. GRAVLING (OS)

Who are you talking to?

Nate pulls the phone away from his face.

NATE

(shouting)

I'm on the phone.

He brings the phone to his face again.

NATE (CONT)
I can probably, yeah.
(pause)
Eighteen. Yeah.
(pause)
No, my mom would let me.
(pause)
Okay. Bye.

Nate hangs up. He looks at the phone.

NATE (CONT)
(shouting)
Hey, Mom? I'm probably going to be on
the news.

MRS. GRAVLING
That's great, honey. Have a good
time.

Nate sits up and starts texting.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Alan drives.

His phone goes off. He checks the message.

He looks up between digits as he dials a number.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Joe sits in the bed, eating a Jello substance. A Nurse is doing
some routine housekeeping.

Joe's phone VIBRATES on the counter. The Nurse and Joe both look
at it. Joe nods to the Nurse, and she brings it over to him.

Joe answers.

JOE
Hello?

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Alan in the car.

ALAN

Hey, Joe, sorry to bother you. But a news station just called Nate, asking if they can interview us about the weekend.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Joe hesitates.

JOE

Um, well, I'm kinda laid up right now. So. . .

ALAN (PHONE)

Yeah, I understand. Do you want us to cover for you? I mean, it'll still be you we're talking about.

JOE

I guess that might be okay.

ALAN (PHONE)

You're okay with that? We can tell them no, but it sounds like they really care about this thing.

JOE

Yeah, I think it's fine. Go do it.
(thinks)
When is it going to be?

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Alan driving, has phone held in front of face. He checks the text.

ALAN

Sometime this week?

JOE (PHONE)

Okay. Yeah, that's fine. Just let me know when, so I can watch it. I'll probably still be laid up all week, so I might not get to go to school.

ALAN

Oh, it'll be in the evening, sometime. Nate and I are going to school.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Joe nods.

JOE

Okay.

ALAN (PHONE)

Hey, I'll talk to you later. Just pulled into my driveway.

JOE

Okay. Bye.

He hangs up.

The Nurse looks at him.

NURSE

I saw the video.

JOE

Oh, yeah? What did you think?

NURSE

Really scary.

(holds back a giggle)

I'm sorry. The part where you scream kind of threw me off a little. I know it's not funny.

Joe grows curious.

JOE

Can I see it again?

The Nurse looks around. She pulls out her Smart phone and opens the Twitter app. She brings it over to Joe, watches it with him.

We HEAR the sound of a bear GROWLING and carrying on, and JOE SHOUTING, and then SCREAMING into the FALSETTO PITCH.

Joe looks dusturbed and humored.

JOE

I don't remember doing that.

The Nurse turns away, laughing, unable to contain herself, yet feeling embarrassed.

Joe takes the smart phone into his own hands as the Nurse collapses in laughter. Joe smiles, chuckling.

INT. NEWS STATION - NIGHT

The INTRO MUSIC plays. The Todd and Jaime sit at the broadcast desk, comfortably adjusted.

The INTRO MUSIC ENDS.

TODD

Welcome back. I'm Todd Sloan.

JAIME

And I'm Jaime Tursiops.

TODD

And tonight, we have some special guests with us, to discuss a hot topic to which they are immediately connected.

JAIME

That's right. The teenagers whose video has gone viral after being posted three days ago, are here with us to discuss what happened while this event unfolded. Andrew Sporkaam is on Stage "B" with the stars. Andrew?

ON ANOTHER SET: Andrew is across the Studio with Alan and Nate.

The Stage Director points over to him.

ANDREW

Thanks, Jaime. Here I am with Alan Pitts and Nathan Graving.

Nate reacts to the mispronunciation. Andrew turns to the boys.

ANDREW (CONT)

Based on what we see in your video, this had to have been a terrifying experience. What were each of you thinking when the bear first attacked?

ALAN

Well, I was actually down by the river trying to catch breakfast when I first heard anything.

ANDREW

So you weren't there when it first approached your campsite?

ALAN

No, sir.

ANDREW

And, how about you, Nathan? What was your experience.

NATE

Um, Joe woke me up first and told me to be quiet. So when I looked outside, I knew we might be in trouble.

ANDREW

What was the first thing you thought to do?

NATE

I don't know. I was shocked, most of the time. I just pulled out my phone like when you want to tell people you love them, and they can't be there, but they can find your phone and watch the video.

ANDREW

So, you thought for sure you might die.

NATE

Yeah.

ANDREW

In the video, you tell your friend -

NATE

Joe.

ALAN

Joe.

Andrew smiles.

ANDREW

. . . Joe, that you want him to go chase it off. What brought you to that conclusion?

NATE

Well, Joe said you can scare bears off pretty easily, so I thought it would work, but it didn't.

ANDREW

Looks like it came back. So what was your thought when you saw it chasing your friend?

NATE

I just kept filming, because I knew the police or somebody might want to see what happened.

ANDREW

That's very brave.

(to Alan)

And courageous for you to know how to end the desperate situation. What round did you use to finally kill the bear?

ALAN

I used a nine-mil. Actually, I didn't kill it, even though I was trying to. I mean, he was attacking my friend, so I had to do something.

ANDREW

What kept you from trying to scare it off instead?

ALAN

I go hunting with my dad sometimes, and he tells me stories about how bears don't run if they're already aggravated. I also didn't want it to drag Joe off with it, since that would just be a bigger problem.

ANDREW

Understood. Looks like the right choice. So, your friend -

ALAN

Joe.

NATE

Joe.

Andrew chuckles.

ANDREW

Yes, sorry, Joe. Joe wasn't able to join us. How is he doing?

INT. MEDVED HOUSE - NIGHT

Joe sits on the couch, legs spread and supported on the footstool. He watches the TV.

Emma sits next to him.

ALAN (TV)
He's doing all right. He's home now.

NATE (TV)
He can't walk yet.

ANDREW (TV)
Poor guy. I'm sure he's just happy to be alive right now.

ALAN (TV)
Yeah.

Emma looks at Joe.

EMMA
You can walk. Right?

JOE
I can hobble. And roll.

They turn their attention back to the television.

INT. NEWS STATION - NIGHT

Andrew looks at the Cameras.

ANDREW
What an incident. A small camping trip turns into a wildlife encounter they are likely never to forget. Todd and Jaime, back to you.

The Stage Director turns and points to Jaime and Todd.

Andrew whispers to the boys, who follow him.

INT. BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Andrew closes the door.

ANDREW
Do you guys want some coffee?

ALAN
No, thank you.

NATE
Sure.

Andrew starts pouring a cup of coffee.

ANDREW
I'm sure you guys have been following your video's success, and you're probably aware of some of the comments people are posting to it, but I thought it'd be fun to get you guys' response to a few I've seen after your video was re-posted several times.

NATE
Yeah, I saw a couple of the re-Tweets. I don't mind.

Andrew hands Nate a cup of coffee.

ANDREW
(to Alan)
Are you sure you don't want some coffee?

ALAN
Yeah. Thanks though.

Andrew pulls out a laptop and opens it. He types a few things, then turns it toward Alan and Nate.

They look over the content for a moment.

Alan reacts with a laugh to one.

ALAN
"Bee-Jay Bear"?

Nate is shocked.

NATE
Augh.

ANDREW
Yeah, we were concerned about that one too.

ALAN

(reading)

"What appears to be a juvenile male black bear was only having a moment of specio-gender confusion when he was killed for not asking politely before making a move."

(looking up, shocked)

What?

NATE

That's weird.

ANDREW

We didn't. . . we had no support for that one.

NATE

(slightly offended)

It's got more views than mine does.

ALAN

And some of these comments underneath

-

(reading)

"Poor Bi-Bear, just trying to say hello." "Dirty rainbow care bear, having fun." "Bare bear come on too strong."

(to Andrew)

These are ridiculous!

Andrew nods.

INT. MEDVED HOUSE - NIGHT

Joe makes his way steadily down the hallway to his room, legs spread wide.

JOE'S BEDROOM:

Joe falls onto the bed. He breathes.

His phone RINGS. He answers.

JOE

Yeah.

ALAN (PHONE)

Joe, you need to see what's trending on Twitter.

JOE

You know I don't have Twitter.

ALAN (PHONE)

Well, get someone to show you. It's crazy right now. Crazier than we thought. Your bear attack? Someone reposted it, claiming it was a male bear trying to be super-friendly with you.

Joe makes a face.

JOE

Come on. That's weird.

ALAN (PHONE)

It's true though!

JOE

A gay bear? Al, he was attacking me, not expressing himself. Don't make light of this.

ALAN (PHONE)

I'm not making light of it! The news guy just showed us some Tweets and comments, and people are taking this to a whole new level.

Joe sighs. He shakes his head.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Joe rides up in Melinda's minivan. He opens the door and pops open a wheelchair, slides in.

MELINDA

Have a great day, honey.

JOE

Thanks, Mom.

He pulls the sliding door shut and rolls himself to the ramp.

Alan comes up behind and pushes Joe's chair.

JOE

Oh, thanks.

ALAN

Sure thing. Glad you decided to come today.

JOE

Why?

ALAN

Just because you've been out for a while.

JOE

It was like three days, man.

ALAN

Sure felt like a lot more than that.

Joe shrugs.

JOE

Yeah, Okay.

Alan looks around.

ALAN

Hey, look. There's Liv.

Joe looks over. Then he remembers.

JOE

Al, not today.

ALAN

Hey, you made a promise. Balls or not, you gotta keep it.

JOE

Everything's still down there, stop joking about it. You're starting to sound like Nate.

ALAN

Oh, come on. Remember what I said?

JOE

Yeah, I remember what you said -

LIV (OS)

(from a distance)

Joe!

Both boys freeze, look toward her.

LIV approaches.

JOE
Hi. . . Livvie. Liv.

LIV
Joe. I heard what happened. I'm so
sorry! It sounds so painful. Are you
doing okay?

JOE
Yeah, I'm. . . doing great. Coming to
school today.

Liv smiles.

LIV
That's good! Hey, do you want to do
lunch today?

Joe looks surprised.

JOE
Sure. Yeah. Okay.

LIV
Great. I'll see you at eleven?

Joe thinks.

JOE
Eleven works for me.

LIV
Okay, see you then!

She walks away, looks over her shoulder one last time, smiles.

Joe sits in shock. Alan stands in surprise.

ALAN
Rock. On.

JOE
The door's over there, Al.

Alan snaps out of it and heads for the school doors.

INT. SCHOOL, CLASSROOM - DAY

Joe sits in his wheelchair, using a board over his armrests as a

table. He takes notes.

The teacher, STACIE RENARDA (20s, very cute and smiley, with wavy dirty-blonde hair), stands at the front, writing a sentence on the blackboard.

RENARDA

So, if we circle the verb first, we can find our subject easier. If I circle "jumped," who can tell me who or what the subject is?

Joe raises his hand.

RENARDA (CONT)

Yes, Joe.

JOE

Sorry if I don't stand.

RENARDA

Oh, that's okay. You can just answer.

JOE

Okay. Uh, the "Fox".

RENARDA

Right. And why not include the "Lazy" and "Brown"?

JOE

Because those describe or modify the subject, and aren't affected by the verb.

Renarda smiles.

RENARDA

Good.

(hesitates)

How are you, by the way?

Joe nods, looks down.

JOE

Good. Just a little sore still.

The Class shifts, murmurs some silent humor.

Renarda fights the temptation to ask more questions. She smiles and turns back to the board.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joe wheels himself through the cafeteria, looking for Olivia. Not seeing her, he goes to the line.

LIV

You want me to help you with your plate?

Joe turns around.

JOE

Um. . . sure, if you want.

MOMENTS LATER:

Joe and Liv sit at a table by themselves, eating.

LIV

I felt awful when I heard. I think Chelsie told me first.

JOE

I didn't even think Chelsie knew I existed.

LIV

Oh, she does. She's friends with Nate.

(takes a sip of juice)

Anyway. I didn't know what to do. I felt really bad about it.

JOE

Why?

LIV

I don't know. I guess because I thought - I don't know.

Joe takes a bite. Chews. Swallows.

JOE

Honestly, I didn't think people would be this nice about it.

Liv gives him a look.

LIV

What do you mean?

JOE

Well, I mean, it doesn't seem like that many people would care. I'm not that well-known.

LIV

Joe, everybody knows who you are.

JOE

Now they do, because I'm the kid that got his - I mean, got attacked by a bear.

Liv continues to give him a look.

LIV

No, they knew you way before that.
(leaning in)
Joe, you're like, the cutest guy in the school.

Joe looks at her.

JOE

Um. . . thank you?

LIV

No, I mean it. You're a topic every time I go to a slumber party with my friends.

Joe looks confused.

JOE

Why am I just now hearing about this?

Liv shrugs.

LIV

I don't know. It's been going around for a while now. You should have heard something.

JOE

Nope. This is the first time.
(thinking)
You're not just telling me this because you think I'm a eunich now, right?

Liv looks at him in shock.

LIV

No! Of course not!

She starts laughing. She touches Joe's hand.

LIV (CONT)

I'm just surprised you haven't heard it before.

Joe smiles. He contemplates something.

JOE

Can I ask you something else?

LIV

Sure.

JOE

Would you like to go to the Donut Dealers on Friday night and get a coffee or something?

Liv looks at him, then thinks. Then, finally -

LIV

Okay.

They smile.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

David and Andrew walk into the break room.

DAVID

Well, Andy, looks like we've got another problem on our hands. We've got our ratings through the roof with this bear story, but now we have all this discussion on our feed about the bear being gay. Where did that come from?

ANDREW

Sir, that's people. We didn't start that.

DAVID

I know. But now we've got people all over our backs about not being supportive of the bear's orientation

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT)

and whatever. I don't think that's good for our reputation, to have an obsession from our followers about one incident where nobody died -

ANDREW

The bear died.

DAVID

. . . right, but no people loss. I mean, what is it going to be, another Harambe situation?

ANDREW

No, not Harambe.

DAVID

What then?

ANDREW

I don't know. Just not Harambe.

Awkward silence.

DAVID

Well, whatever. We need to do something to address this.

Andrew thinks for a moment.

ANDREW

What do you suggest?

DAVID

Well, okay - we have one side, claiming that if we go with the gay-bear story, we're going to offend the alternative lifestyle community, because it's dead. But if we go for anything else, we're likely to get called out for showing a bear getting shot.

ANDREW

The bear was attacking. You shoot animals that attack.

DAVID

Well, PETA will be on that.

ANDREW

Who cares?

DAVID

I care, the Execs care, and, when you get fired, you'll care.

ANDREW

So you're saying we may have mis-broadcast something?

DAVID

I'm saying, that if we don't fix this, we could be in for a lawsuit for making light of the killing of a gay bear.

Andrew gives David a look.

ANDREW

The bear wasn't gay.

DAVID

How are you going to tell that to half a million people, who've already responded to a video claiming it was?

ANDREW

I don't know. I'll think about it.

DAVID

Think fast.

Andrew nods, walks out.

INT. SCHOOL, CORRIDOR - DAY

Joe rolls down the hall. Two HIGH SCHOOL BOYS pass him, chuckling to themselves.

JOE

What's up guys?

BOY 1

You got molested by a bear, right?

JOE

(rolls eyes)

Not molested, no. Attacked, yes.

BOY 2

Dude, that video? Hilarious. I cried laughing when you screamed.

BOY 1

Come on, man. That's rude.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE

No, it was funny. I didn't even remember doing it.

BOY 2

What were you guys doing out there anyway?

JOE

Camping. What else?

BOY 1

Flirting with nature?

The boys laugh as they round a corner. Joe smirks, then chuckles to himself.

INT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY

Emma watches TV.

The BEAR ATTACK FOOTAGE plays on the screen.

REPORTER (TV)

Ouch. Now we have protestors claiming that, because the bear was male, he was only trying to be friends with what he thought was another bear.

The Reporter stands in front of a MOVING SCREEN, which displays FOOTAGE OF PROTESTORS holding signs promoting their cause.

REPORTER (CONT) (TV)

This footage was recently captured at a rally in Alabama, and not just one sign, but several, made references to "Queer Nature".

IN THE FOOTAGE: One sign reads -

"SHOOT ME, I'M BEAR GAY"

Another reads -

"BLOOD NUTS TOO MUCH TO BEAR"

THE REPORTER frowns, trying to understand the last one.

REPORTER (TV)

Um. . .

Emma is too innocent to get any of the humor. She stares blankly at the TV, changes the channel.

The Front Door opens, and Joe waddles his way in.

JOE

I'm home!

EMMA

Hi, Joe.

Joe pulls his wheelchair through the door, sits in it. He breathes heavily.

JOE

What are you watching?

EMMA

My shows.

Joe rolls into the Living Room, next to the couch.

EMMA (CONT)

You were on TV again.

Joe sighs disgustedly.

JOE

I'm starting to wish Nate never posted that.

EMMA

Did you know they said the bear was gay?

Joe looks at her.

JOE

Yes. It's not true. He felt threatened, so he just bit what he could.

Emma settles and changes the channel again.

ON THE TV: The protesters march with signs. A Field Journalist interviews an Animal Activist.

FIELD JOURNALIST (TV)
What do you have to say about all
this?

ANIMAL ACTIVIST (TV)
I jutht wanna thay, that it wath wrong
tuh, kill an innuthent animal. He
wath jutht trying to expueth himthelf,
and he wath killed for expuething
himthelf. That'th wrong.

The Activist keeps walking. The Field Journalist turns to the camera.

FIELD JOURNALIST (TV)
So, there you have it. These people
have accepted the adolescent black
bear into their loving arms,
posthumously.

Joe reaches over to Emma.

JOE
Give me the changer.

Emma hands him the controller. Joe changes the channel.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

The three Anchors sit at the News Desk on Set.

TODD
So for your weather update. On your
commute home this afternoon, we've got
some rain accumulating just Southeast
of us, expected to build into
something a little bigger, with mild
to moderate precipitation, possibly
some strong winds.

JAIME
And as for your evening commute, an
accident was reported on I-75 about
fifteen minutes ago. If you choose
alternate routes, be aware that
protesters may be slowing some traffic
down in the surrounding areas.

A MAP on the screen shows circles around locations with heavier street coverage.

ANDREW

That's it for now, on the top of the hour. I'm Andrew Sporkaam.

JAIME

Jaime Tersiops.

TODD

And I'm Todd Sloan. Thanks for tuning in.

The Stage Director counts down with his fingers to them.

The ON AIR LIGHT turns off.

STAGE DIRECTOR

And Cut! Great job. Be ready in fifteen minutes for next crew.

The Anchors organize their desk, sorting paperwork.

David comes over to Andrew.

ANDREW

Well, one good thing. Sounds like we're strong in viewership.

DAVID

That's part of the problem.

ANDREW

Part of it?

DAVID

Yeah. The other part is that some viewers are getting frustrated we're not answering to the demand of covering these protests going on right now.

Jaime looks over.

JAIME

Those are annoying. I almost didn't make it to work on time today, because of one.

TODD

Did they egg your car?

JAIME
(confused)
No? Why?

TODD
Go look at my truck.

DAVID
You've got the station logos all over
your car, Todd.

ANDREW
I have a sticker in my window.

JAIME
Did you get egged?

ANDREW
No, a homeless guy pooped in my
driveway last night though.

They all look at Andrew.

Andrew shrugs.

ANDREW (CONT)
The neighbor's dog ate it.

They all react, disgusted.

TODD
Oh, come on.

JAIME
I did not need to know that.

Andrew stands, walks with David off the Set.

DAVID
Have you thought about how you're
going to address this issue about the
bear?

ANDREW
The more I think about it, the more I
think it's something we should just
not report on. It'll die off.
People'll lose interest, the idea will
lose support, and everything will fall
back to the way things were.

DAVID

Andy, there's got to be a way that we can keep the ratings up and not overdo this bear incident.

ANDREW

I'm trying not to overthink it.

DAVID

Yeah. I know. You're underthinking it.

They enter the BREAK ROOM. Andrew goes to the refrigerator, pulls out a Pepsi.

ANDREW

Listen. You and I both know that we lost ratings because we spent time on incidents outside our region. We're a local station, reporting local things. When we report extra-regional things, people stop watching because it doesn't apply to their interest.

DAVID

"Extra-regional"?

ANDREW

Well, yeah. . . Like Jupiterians reporting on Uranus' atmosphere.

DAVID

People care about the environment!

Jaime walks in with Todd. Todd takes a water bottle from a cooler on the floor and sits down. Jaime sits at the table with a laptop.

JAIME

You guys still talking about this bear thing?

ANDREW

No. Now we're on Climate Change.

TODD

Oh, that's a good topic.

David looks at each of the Anchors.

DAVID

You know, we need to find some things that the local residents really want to hear about.

JAIME

Like Donut Dealers?

David shrugs.

TODD

Or the protests?

DAVID

I don't want to hear about the protests.

TODD

No? I thought we were a news station, reporting what people wanted to hear about.

DAVID

I don't think our target audience wants to hear about protests.

ANDREW

That's actually a good point. Remember the last election? The coverage we got sent people over to the Weather Channel, to watch nature montages.

JAIME

Yeah.

Todd sighs.

TODD

But people are eating this up. I mean, just three boys, one bear, and two days, we have a hot button issue in the midst of a . . . of a - what do we call this?

DAVID

A hot mess.

TODD

Yeah. In Andy's driveway.

JAIME

Please no.

TODD

(to Andrew)

By the way, you're sure it wasn't yours?

ANDREW

My what?

TODD

Your turds.

JAIME

No!

Andrew shrugs.

ANDREW

Pretty sure. I always go in the backyard.

Jaime packs her computer and walks out.

JAIME

You guys are disgusting.

Andrew looks after her, grins.

ANDREW

(shouting)

It's a dirty world out there!

David looks down at the floor, thinking. He sighs.

INT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY

Joe sits on his bed, struggling to put his socks on. He stops for a moment, thinks.

He studies the cast. He undoes the straps, loosens the casing. He takes off the bandages.

THE INJURIES: just a few fresh scars, days-old wounds. The teeth marks around his stomach are stitched shut.

Joe throws the cast aside and stretches down, pulling on his socks more easily.

MOMENTS LATER:

Joe stands, pulls on his pants, slowly. He looks in the mirror on the back of his closet. He stretches to one side. A little sore, but he doesn't make a sound.

He tries stretching the other way. The same result.

Joe smiles. He's healing.

THE LIVING ROOM, MOMENTS LATER:

Joe walks to the door.

JOE
Going to school!

MELINDA (OS)
Okay! Have a good day!

Joe stands for a moment.

JOE
Aren't you taking me?

Melinda walks in.

MELINDA
(surprised)
You're walking.

JOE
Yeah. I got a date tonight. Thought
I should start practicing.

Melinda nods.

MELINDA
Good call. Is Alan not coming by?

JOE
I don't think so.

MELINDA
Okay. Let me go get the keys.

She walks into the kitchen.

JOE
You're the best, Mom!

MELINDA (OS)
I know.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Melinda's Minivan pulls up in front of the school.

MELINDA

All right. Have a good day. Are you sure you don't need crutches or something?

JOE

No, Mom. I'm okay.

MELINDA

Okay.

Joe gets out, struggles to stand. He manages, closes the door, and steadily walks toward the school doors.

The two boys stand outside, watching.

BOY 1

Had to get Mommy to drive you to school, huh?

JOE

Yeah, gotta mooch off people after bears bite your balls.

The boys laugh.

BOY 2

But it's your mom, though.

JOE

Viral videos don't get you tons of friends.

BOY 1

Apparently they get you dates, though.

Joe stops.

JOE

You know about that, huh?

BOY 1

Who doesn't?

Joe looks at him. He enters the school.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Joe struggles through the line of kids buying their food. Liv walks up.

LIV
Joe!

JOE
Hey, Liv.

LIV
You're walking!

JOE
A little. Don't stop pitying me yet though. My sides are still sore, so I can't do my hot pelvic moves.

Liv laughs.

LIV
That's okay. Hey, do you want to join me and my friends for lunch?

JOE
Who are your friends?

LIV
Shannon and Chelsie.

JOE
Oh. Uh, sure.

LIV
Great!

She points to a corner of the cafeteria.

LIV (CONT)
We'll be over there.
(turns to Joe)
Do you need any help?

JOE
I'll manage.

Liv smiles, walks away.

Joe smiles to himself.

Alan comes up.

ALAN

Hey, man. I didn't know if you were coming today. I could have dropped by and got you.

JOE

Nah, it's all right. My mom dropped me off.

ALAN

Who are you sitting with?

JOE

Liv. And a couple of her friends.

Alan punches Joe in the shoulder.

ALAN

There ya go! You sly dog!

JOE

Hey, you were there. She approached me first.

ALAN

I know. You win a girl by getting your -

JOE

Okay, okay. That's enough.

ALAN

Cleaning up your act, huh?

JOE

No, it's just getting old. It's not funny anymore.

Alan nods.

ALAN

Yeah, I gotcha. Well, let me know how tonight goes. Donut Dealers, right?

JOE

Yeah.

ALAN

Awesome. Have fun.

Alan walks to a table where Nate has already begun eating.

NATE
Is he joining us?

ALAN
That guy is one lucky dog.

NATE
What happened?

Alan sits down.

ALAN
Joe is going on a date with Olivia
Krasota.

Nate looks at Alan.

NATE
Yeah. . . I told you that.

Alan looks over at Joe.

JOE (FROM A DISTANCE) orders and pays for a meal. He walks across the dining hall to the girls' table. They greet him as he struggles to sit.

ALAN shakes his head, impressed.

ALAN
That lucky dog. . .

Nate, undistracted, bites from his sandwich.

EXT. NEWS STATION - DAY

Jaime gets out of a small Electric-Hybrid Car. She pulls out a drink holder of Coffees and kicks her door shut. She walks inside.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

IN THE BREAK ROOM: Todd and Andrew put on makeup for the cameras.

TODD
I'm telling you, I think they should start calling it "Cream-Sour-Fudge-Nut."

ANDREW

It sounds weird, though. It has to be something easy.

TODD

Like what?

ANDREW

Like - I don't know - "Nana-Fudge-Sour-Doughnut."

TODD

Now, how is that easier than "Cream-Sour-Fudge-Nut"?

ANDREW

Well, it's banana filling. Your title makes it sound like it's a whipped cream-injected chocolate sack.

TODD

Eh, fair point.

Jaime enters.

JAIME

Afternoon, fellas. Brought you something.

ANDREW

Jaime! You're the best.

TODD

Yeah. Hope this isn't payback for yesterday's enjoyment.

Jaime gives Todd a hard look.

JAIME

Don't remind me.
(topic switch)
Is David here yet?

ANDREW

Nope.

TODD

He just messaged me. Caught in traffic.

Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW

I'm telling you, he's missing this protest thing.

TODD

He said it wasn't a protest.

ANDREW

No?

TODD

Uh-uh, I asked him.

ANDREW

What is it?

TODD

Just some stupid guy on a moped telling people that aliens are coming.

A beat. They all freeze, look at each other.

Andrew jumps up.

ANDREW

Is the news truck ready?

JAIME

What?

ANDREW

Somebody tell one of the camera guys to get the news truck ready.

TODD

Why? What's -

ANDREW

We want to get people's minds off this gay bear deal, right? Here's a chance to change the topic.

JAIME

Settle down. This isn't that big. He's probably going to get arrested, and then there's no story.

TODD

Yeah, don't waste your time.

Andrew looks at his wristwatch.

ANDREW
(to Todd)
How long has he been stuck in traffic?

TODD
Oh, probably. . .

Todd looks at the clock on the wall.

TODD (CONT)
Fifteen minutes.

ANDREW
No, it has to've been longer than
that. He's never this late.

Todd squints, trying to understand the significance.

JAIME
I'm sure it's not that big of a deal.

ANDREW
I still want to go out there.

Andrew opens the door to the set. A crew is already starting to set up. Andrew turns to Todd and Jaime.

ANDREW
Desperate times, desperate measures.

Andrew closes the door.

Jaime and Todd look at each other.

TODD
What?

Jaime rolls her eyes.

EXT. NEWS STATION, BACK LOT - DAY

Andrew and a Field Cameraman walk to a News Van.

ANDREW
I want to see if we can get this while
we have the chance.

CAMERAMAN
What's the rush on it?

ANDREW

You know how people are obsessed with this bear deal, from last weekend?

Andrew unlocks the Van, gets in.

CAMERAMAN

Oh, yeah. That was fruity.

ANDREW

Yeah, well, there's still an uprising about it. We're going to change the topic.

CAMERAMAN

Okay. But, is this sensational enough? People do stuff like this all the time.

ANDREW

Like what?

CAMERAMAN

Like, say they were abducted, raped, and thrown back to Earth.

ANDREW

Well, let's hope this guy's different.

Andrew slams the driver door shut. The Cameraman runs around to the Passenger Side and gets in.

The Van rolls toward the Parking Lot Exit.

A LINCOLN Sedan pulls in.

CAMERAMAN

That's Mr. Lev.

ANDREW

Ah, shoot.

They watch David's Car pull into a space and park.

Andrew's heart sinks.

David gets out, looks at the News Van. He walks over.

Andrew rolls the window down.

DAVID

Where you going?

ANDREW

Just thought we'd try to get the Moped
Alien guy.

David waves his hand negative.

DAVID

It's not worth it.

Andrew looks disappointed.

ANDREW

That's what I was afraid of.

David sees Andrew's feeling.

DAVID

You know, I was thinking about what
you said. Yesterday.

ANDREW

What was that?

DAVID

Why don't you go park this thing, and
we'll talk.

Andrew pulls the vehicle around to the back.

David walks into the Station.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

Andrew sits at the news desk with Todd and Jaime. He looks more
serious than any time before, and the others in the room feel it.

A Journalist hands Andrew a manila folder. He opens it and looks
at the papers. He's unimpressed. He picks up the stack and
tries to line them up evenly.

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Mic check, please? Jaime?

JAIME

Yeah - check, check, one-two-three.

Andrew slams the edges of the papers on the table. Jaime jumps.

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Whoa. Can you do it again?

JAIME

Okay. One-two-three, check?

Andrew lays the papers down. One unaligns itself, floats off the table.

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Okay, good. Todd?

TODD

This is Todd Sloan, checking mic -

Andrew slams his palm on the table.

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Holy smoke! What -

JAIME

It's okay - It's just Andrew.

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Andrew? Can you keep it down?

Andrew leans down to get the paper.

ANDREW

Yeah, sorry.

The Journalist reaches down and picks it up, holds it out to Andrew. Andrew takes the paper and sits back up.

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Okay, Todd. Again?

Todd eyes Andrew.

TODD

Checking here, is Todd Sloan, on Mic One. . .

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Good. Andrew?

ANDREW

Okay, Hey, this is Andrew Sporkaam. Just reporting on nothing that concerns our audience, in attempt to get them off a topic we no longer wish to discuss -

SOUND OPERATOR (OS)

Okay, that works.

Jaime and Todd look at Andrew. Andrew looks up.

JAIME
(compassionate, quiet)
Are you all right?

ANDREW
I don't know yet.

The Camera Crew brings the cameras close, setting up for the opening shot.

STAGE DIRECTOR
All right, here we go in five, four,
three. . .

He gestures "two," and the INTRO MUSIC BEGINS. He points at the Anchors, who smile on cue.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Joe walks out, slowly descending the stairs. Alan and Nate wait in the Mustang Convertible.

ALAN
You wanna ride?

JOE
Sure. Give me a minute.

Joe carefully steps down the last step.

Liv comes from behind him, touches his shoulder.

LIV
See you tonight!

Joe smiles, looks at her.

JOE
Yeah, see you!

She smiles back, winks.

Alan sees, but doesn't sound off right away.

Joe finally makes it to the car. He gets in.

ALAN
Joe makes it with the Ladies!

JOE

Yeah. It's interesting, the things that work out after injuries. You lose one thing, you gain another.

NATE

You got balls, man.

Joe rolls his eyes. Alan doesn't respond.

NATE (CONT)

(unsure)

You do, right?

JOE

(irritated)

Yes. They're still there. I think I've told both of you more than once, the bear's mouth went around everything, not through it.

The Car begins to move.

ALAN

So, do you think you can drive yet?

JOE

I'll test my limits at home. All this walking kinda made me sore.

NATE

Getting kind of testy?

Joe looks back at Nate. Alan looks in the rearview mirror.

JOE

(to Alan)

What do you think? Should I get a cab or something?

ALAN

No, that'd be kinda weird.

JOE

Yeah. And I don't think I want to make her drive. That's even weirder.

ALAN

I don't know about weirder, but it's not customary.

NATE

Aw, nuts!

JOE

Aw, come on!

ALAN

Nate, stop!

Nate looks at both of them in surprise.

NATE

What?

JOE

We know what you're doing.

NATE

No - I forgot to pick up something
from my locker. For the weekend.

Everyone sits in silence for a moment.

ALAN

I'll drive you back to school after we
drop off Joe.

NATE

Okay.

Alan thinks for a moment.

ALAN

(to Joe)

Do you want me to drive you guys?

Joe looks at Alan.

JOE

You'd do that, huh?

ALAN

Yeah, of course. I'm going to the
wash this afternoon, I can do the
whole detail thing.

(a pause)

I'll wait outside and stuff, like a
real chauffeur. I'm not going to
charge.

Joe thinks.

ALAN (CONT)

It's a date, man.

Joe shrugs, nods.

JOE
Sounds good to me. Thanks.

ALAN
You bet, pal.

EXT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY

The Mustang pulls up in front. Joe slowly gets out.

JOE
I'm just glad we're not camping this time.

ALAN
Not to discredit your experience, but it could've happened to anybody.

NATE
Yeah, we just got lucky.

JOE
I don't think I'd call it "lucky."

NATE
Well, you got lucky.

Alan and Joe give Nate a disapproving look.

JOE
(to Alan)
I'll see you tonight. Thanks for the offer.

ALAN
Do you have her address?

JOE
Yeah. I'll give it to you tonight.

ALAN
Sounds good.

He drives away. Joe watches after the car for a moment, then slowly, carefully walks toward the house across the lawn.

INT. NEWS STATION - DAY

The OUTRO MUSIC ENDS. The Anchors adjust their paperwork. The Camera Crew pulls the cameras back.

David walks onto the set.

DAVID
What happened there?

The Anchors look up at him.

DAVID (CONT)
Andy?

Andrew looks down, thinking for an answer.

ANDREW
Only thing I could tell you, sir, is
that I think we're spending too much
time on stuff people don't care about.

DAVID
And not spending time on things people
do care about?

Andrew nods, sheepishly.

David stands for a moment, then gestures to Andrew.

DAVID (CONT)
Walk with me.

Andrew stands, and they walk toward the Break Room.

DAVID (CONT)
You're getting a little short with the
crew, and I can see concern in both
their eyes.
(gestures to Jaime and
Todd)
What's going on?

They stop outside the Break Room door.

ANDREW
I'm just. . . I think I'm. . .

David studies Andrew's face. He lightens with understanding.

DAVID

It's been a long week. You look exhausted.

ANDREW

No, I'm fine. I just - I want to find something meaningful.

David rests his hand on Andrew's shoulder.

DAVID

Two days' paid vacation. You deserve it.

Andrew looks up.

ANDREW

This isn't like a . . . probation thing, is it?

DAVID

No, no, no. It's just to give you a break. You need one. I've put a lot on your shoulders.

Andrew smirks. He looks over at the Set.

ON THE SET, Todd and Jaime discuss something with Interns.

DAVID (CONT)

Leave it. Todd and Jaime can cover. You just go. We'll be all right.

ANDREW

Okay. Thank you.

They shake hands. David pats Andrew on the back.

DAVID

Have a great weekend.

Andrew walks to the exit; David walks back to Set.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY (EVENING)

Alan wears Aviator Sunglasses as he drives, listening to a talk show on the RADIO.

TALK HOST (RADIO)

One question I've been meaning to ask for a couple days now - and you listeners respond to this however you want - but this new thing from a week ago, this sensational thing about a young man being attacked by a bear. Does anyone ask anything about the young man? Do we even know his name? Have we even talked to him about what he thinks of this whole thing?

Alan notices something ahead. He slows down.

TALK HOST (RADIO) (CONT)

(laughing)

I mean, this video - this viral video - has made this guy famous. They have memes now, and he's even had Peter Griffin's face photoshopped onto him in one video I've seen. But nobody knows this guy. When are we going to start caring more about the people in these dire circumstances, than we care about what gender orientation of the bear?

A gathering of people holding signs. CHANTING. One guy, a HIPPIE, points up at the sky.

Alan looks up.

Just a SMOOTH-EDGED CLOUD, almost lenticular, with orange and pink smeared into the grey.

TALK HOST (RADIO) (CONT)

This poor guy is now an icon, and maybe he doesn't even know it.

(shuffling papers)

You know, this is just part of what's wrong today. We don't even care about our own species. Okay, okay, we care enough to make jokes and make fun, but do we care enough to protect our own kind?

Alan keeps driving through the crowd, who continue to stare at the cloud.

TALK HOST (RADIO) (CONT)

I think it's really about time we start asking ourselves, Should we? Should we be mocking the pain of others? Should we actually be supportive of the attacking party? Do we even know all the details regarding the issue?

Alan keeps going.

THE GROUP keeps looking at the cloud.

The Hippie speaks to them.

HIPPIE

That's how they enter! That's how they're coming! They're going to save us from this place! Yes! Here they come!

EXT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY (EVENING)

Alan pulls up. He TAPS THE HORN.

INT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY (EVENING)

Joe pulls on a brown vest and looks in the mirror. It goes well with the plaid shirt and kahki pants.

He hears the HORN. He looks out the window. He walks slowly to the door.

IN THE LIVING ROOM: Emma is watching TV again. Joe crosses to the Front Door.

JOE

Don't watch anything bad, all right?

EMMA

Where are you going?

JOE

On a date. I'll be back later tonight.

EMMA

Woo! With who?

Joe tries to put on his shoes.

JOE

A girl.

EMMA

Duh.

JOE

It's all right. Just a date. I said
I'll be back tonight.

EMMA

Yeah. . .

Joe gives her a look. He slips his shoes on, giving up on
reaching down and fitting them.

Joe leaves. Emma turns back to the TV, changes the channel.

EXT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY (EVENING)

Alan sits waiting in the car. Joe makes his way to the passenger
side.

ALAN

What time did you say?

JOE

Yeah, I know. Sorry. It's just
harder to get stuff on when
everything's sensitive.

ALAN

It's all right. I think we're still
ahead. As long as we can get by that
group.

Joe slides into the passenger seat, closes the door.

JOE

Group?

ALAN

Yeah, some protesters or something,
down the way.

Alan pulls away.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - CONTINUOUS

Alan drives. Joe rides, still trying to get his seatbelt on.

ALAN

You know you're a celebrity now?

JOE

Tell me something I don't know.

ALAN

There's an alien uprising in town.

Joe finally gets his seatbelt. He looks at Alan.

JOE

Alien uprising? Like, Mexicans?

ALAN

No, like space aliens.

JOE

I don't know anything about it.

ALAN

I think it started a couple days ago.

But the clouds, like that one -

(points to Lenticular
Cloud)

. . . is supposed to be aliens coming
to save some of us.

Joe GRUNTS. It's not really that interesting.

EXT. KRASOTA HOUSE - DAY (EVENING)

The Mustang pulls up. The boys look at the house.

ALAN

Is that it?

JOE

I think so. It's the right address.

Joe gets out, slowly. Alan puts the car in Park.

INT. KRASOTA HOUSE - DAY (EVENING)

Liv runs to the door. She wears a nice Evening Gown, her hair up, and a lot of makeup.

LIV

He's here! I'm going out!

No answer. She shrugs and walks out the door.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY (EVENING)

The Soft top is up now, keeping everything quiet. Joe and Liv sit in the back, while Alan drives and tries to remain absent.

LIV
So Donut Dealers. You ever been?

JOE
Once, a long time ago. Before they had the re-opening.

LIV
This'll be fun!

Joe looks at her. He smiles.

JOE
Have you ever been?

LIV
A couple times, yeah. It's been good everytime. We won't be disappointed.

Joe looks at Alan.

JOE
Hey, Al, have you ever been?

Alan turns his head, just a little, not enough to see them. He tries to act mysterious.

ALAN
Not recently.

Joe nods, then smiles at Liv.

EXT. STREET - DAY (EVENING)

Andrew drives his Car along the road.

He sees protesters standing in a park. He pulls in.

AT THE PARK, Andrew gets out. He hears the CHANTING, and the HIPPIE shouting about the aliens.

HIPPIE

Come on down! Take us away! We don't
need these people to save this planet!
We want to go with you!

Andrew approaches a protester.

ANDREW

What is this about?

PROTESTER

Oh, it's just, we're trying to contact
the Aliens.

ANDREW

Why?

PROTESTER

Because, they're going to take us
away, so that the world can rot with
people who want to destroy it.

Andrew shakes his head. He studies the Hippie.

HIPPIE

If they don't come to us, we can go to
them! We have our ways to get to
them, just as they have ways of
getting away from us!

(to the sky)

Don't worry! We will do what you ask!
We're not a demanding people!

Andrew makes a face. This could get weird.

HIPPIE (CONT)

Let's tell the people! Others should
come with us! Spread the word!

Andrew's face changes. This could be interesting to report on.

EXT. DONUT DEALERS - NIGHT

The sun has just gone down; the sky is a navy-blue gradient. A
single-digit number of stars have appeared above.

Alan stands leaning against the hood of his Mustang in the
parking lot. He holds and looks at a brochure with tire tread
marks on it.

CLOSER: It's a note -

"THE SKY IS FALLING; ARE YOU READY?"

Alan opens the pamphlet. He reads the inside.

A car SCREECHES into a parking space. Alan looks up.

Two Geeky-looking Teens get out and walk toward the restaurant entrance.

TEEN 1

Dude, I so wanna burn that kid's bike.
He drives it everywhere! He thinks
he's so cool.

TEEN 2

Yeah, man. What a loser, right?

The First Teen looks over and sees Alan watching them.

TEEN 1

(to Alan)

What'chu looking at, punk?

The Second Teen follows the First's gaze. Alan nods, waves.

ALAN

Nothin', dude.

The Teens react. Nobody responds that politely. They keep walking.

Alan turns his attention back to the pamphlet.

INT. DONUT DEALERS - NIGHT

Joe and Liv sit in a corner booth.

JOE

And so, that's - I think that's why I
ended the story like that.

LIV

(laughing)

Why? Because he was trying to find
answers?

JOE

Well, because he wasn't being patient.
And partly because curiosity kills
not-just-cats.

Liv laughs.

LIV

You are so funny! Why are you so
funny?

JOE

"It's a gift. . ."

LIV

No, no. For real. You are really
funny. Why don't you do stand-up or
something?

JOE

Well, entertaining you is different
from entertaining a crowd.
Everybody's different.

LIV

Yeah, but you could still make a lot
of people laugh. I'm laughing. Some
people say I'm hard to make laugh.

JOE

I've heard there are three things we
need to do in the world.

Liv waits for the answers.

JOE (CONT)

Live, laugh, love.

Liv looks at him suspiciously, a growing smile.

JOE (CONT)

Make Liv, Make Laugh, Make Love.

Liv gasps. She laughs.

LIV

Joe! I didn't know you were dirty!

JOE

You know what's surprising?

LIV

What?

JOE

Those are bases. Most people think I
can only make it to second base now.

Liv smiles at him, mischievously.

EXT. DONUT DEALERS - NIGHT

Alan now reads a water-stained booklet. He peels the pages apart
to continue reading.

The FRONT FLAP -

"CLOUD-GATE: THE DELUSION"

Three Girls exit the establishment, chattering and teasing.

Alan looks up.

One of the girls winks at him.

Alan smiles. He turns his attention back to the booklet, but
glances back up for a second look.

GIRL 1

Hey, cutie.

Alan chuckles.

GIRL 2

She said hey. To you, babe.

Alan looks up, a little surprised.

ALAN

Hey to you too, girl. Girls.

The First Girl smiles at him.

GIRL 3

What'cha reading?

ALAN

Just some thing I found.

GIRL 2

Did you steal it?

Alan gives her a fake-offended look.

ALAN

No. It was just lying there, on the ground.

GIRL 1

What'cha doing tonight?

The other girls giggle.

ALAN

Chaperoning.

GIRL 1

Sounds boring.

ALAN

Nah. I'm chauffeuring for a friend.

The girls "Whoa" at a big word.

GIRL 2

Have fun.

The First Girl winks at him. They all go to a Small Sedan and start getting in.

GIRL 3

(overheard, from distance)

Aren't you going to get his number?

GIRL 1

(whispers)

Shut up!

Alan watches as the car pulls away. One of the girls waves. Alan waves back. He turns his attention back to the booklet.

INT. DONUT DEALERS - NIGHT

Joe and Liv in the booth. Liv is still laughing at Joe.

JOE

And then I just threw the thing as far away from me as possible.

LIV

Did you get stung?

JOE
 Yeah, right in the armpit. I was like
 -
 (imitating severe pain)
 "Aagh!"

The Geeky Teens sit a couple of tables over. One of them sees Joe. They turn to each other, discussing something OUT OF RANGE.

JOE (CONT)
 . . . and I couldn't lower my arm for,
 like, three days. I was so sore after
 that.

LIV
 Wow! That's brave, to throw a wasp's
 nest.

JOE
 Well, it didn't go very far. It
 landed next to my friend's bike, so he
 got some of it too -

One of the Teens comes over to the table.

TEEN 1
 Hey, man, sorry, but you look so much
 like the guy in that video. You know,
 the bear one?

Liv looks at Joe. Joe looks at Liv, then at the Teen.

JOE
 That was me.

TEEN 1
 (excited)
 Are you serious?
 (to Teen 2)
 Yo, this is the guy!

Joe and Liv look at each other, not sure what's happening.

TEEN 1 (CONT)
 Can we take a picture with you?

JOE
 Um. . . yeah, I guess.

Joe stands. The Other Teen comes over. He hands his cell phone to Liv.

TEEN 2
Hey, could you - ?

Liv takes the phone, holds it up.

TEEN 1
Crotch grab, do the crotch grab!

The two Teens perform the dance move while making horribly distorted faces. Joe just stands in the middle, awkwardly doing nothing.

TEEN 1
Thanks, man! You're awesome.

TEEN 2
Yeah. Sorry if that hurt, but it made the world a better place.

The Second Teen grabs his phone from Liv.

The Teens walk back to their table. Joe sits.

LIV
You okay?

JOE
Yeah. It's just so. . . weird.

Liv touches his hand. Joe looks at her. She rests her head on her other hand, smiling at Joe.

Joe senses something.

EXT. DONUT DEALERS - NIGHT

Alan, still leaning against his car, now holds a book.

FRONT COVER -

"ALIENIC CULTS: A MEMOIR"

Some people with PROTEST SIGNS with pictures of aliens reaching out to miniature stickmen walk by on the sidewalk.

They CHANT -

PROTESTERS
(in partial unison)
*Na mas pie Stono-rano! Na mas pie
Stono-rano!*

Alan looks up, watches them with concern.

A GIRL with really short hair and a camouflage baseball cap runs up to him.

GIRL

Hey, did you get one of these?

She hands Alan a pamphlet like the one he was reading earlier.

ALAN

Yeah, I had one of those.

GIRL

Well, then take this one and give it to the next person.

The girl lays the pamphlet on the hood of the car and walks away, to the next restaurant patron in the parking lot.

Alan watches carefully. He looks up at the cloud.

THE CLOUD has spread out, become thin and less visible in the darkening sky.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

The Hippie's following has become a decent size. They encircle the Hippie, now standing at the top of a playground slide. He CALLS OUT into the night sky -

HIPPIE

Don't leave us here! Please, come get us! Don't leave us in this place!

IN THE BACK ROW of Protesters, Andrew stands watching, phone in hand.

ANDREW

(into phone)

I'm not kidding! You guys get out here! This could break news!

(listens)

No, I'm dead serious! There's a huge gathering out here! Hello?

He looks at the phone.

HIPPIE

(in the distance)

We give ourselves to you! We will not
be a burden!

Andrew puts the phone to his ear again.

ANDREW

(into phone)

So you aren't coming?

(listens)

See, that's what's wrong with us!
We're not reporting interesting
things! That's why we can't get our
ratings up!

Someone nearby, a WOMAN, falls backwards, like a board. She
lands flat on her back.

Some of the protesters around her give attention.

Andrew looks as they try to revive her. His phone lowers to his
side.

PROTESTER 1

Forget it, she's gone.

PROTESTER 2

She's gone? They've taken her!

Others around note the woman, now lifeless.

Andrew slowly backs away. Are these people crazy?

WHUMP. A MAN falls behind Andrew. He turns to look. The
protesters around the woman point in the direction of the Man.

PROTESTER 2 (CONT)

They're taking us! It's our time!

Andrew backs out of the group, trying to remain invisible. He
bumps into someone on his way out, drops his phone.

THUD. Another person collapses somewhere in the crowd. The
Protesters begin CHEERING with uncertainty.

HIPPIE

(in the distance)

The time has come! They take our
spirits!

Andrew is disturbed.

Another person GASPS, then falls. Some protesters catch him.

Andrew turns and begins to walk away, frightened. He realizes he no longer holds his phone. He turns and looks.

The Crowd is growing frantic. No way is he going back in there.

He turns, keeps walking.

Another Person falls.

INT. DONUT DEALERS - NIGHT

Joe and Liv are getting up from the table, gathering their things.

LIV

Thanks for this. I'm having a really good time with you.

JOE

Oh, well, my pleasure. I hope Al's okay.

LIV

Yeah.

JOE

Is there anything else you want to do tonight?

LIV

What did you have in mind?

Joe smiles.

EXT. DONUT DEALERS - NIGHT

Joe and Liv walk out the front doors. They make their way across the parking lot to Alan's car.

Alan has a stack of various sources sitting on his hood.

JOE

Hope we didn't keep you waiting too long.

ALAN

Nah, just long enough to watch the world turn inside out.

Liv giggles.

JOE

Yeah, sorry.

ALAN

Either one of you know anything about the Cloud Gate deal, or whatever?

Liv and Joe look at him. They take note of the stack of books and documents behind him.

LIV

Cloud Gate? Isn't it that pseudo-religion, with the spaghetti guy?

ALAN

Pastafarianism? No, this is a new deal. Apparently there's a gathering downtown tonight. They gave me this brochure.

Joe takes it, looks at the paper. Liv joins him.

JOE

Huh. Never heard of it. Sounds weird, though.

ALAN

Oh, it is.

Liv and Joe look at each other.

Alan takes his stack of materials to the trunk and throws them in. He closes it and opens his door.

ALAN

Hop in.

Joe and Liv crawl into the back seats.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE / EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Alan drives. Joe and Liv sit in the back, holding hands.

Joe and Liv take glances at each other. Joe slowly slips his arm around her waist. Liv complies, puts her hand on his knee.

ALAN

They were over here when I saw them
last.

(looking around)

Looks like some are still here.

No response. He turns to look.

JOE AND LIV are making out.

Alan turns his attention forward, grinning.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

The Mustang pulls to a stop in a parking space. Alan steps out,
but doesn't leave. He looks around.

THE HIPPIE stands atop the slide, staring up into the sky.

HIPPIE

And so it's true. The Leader is the
last to go. . .

He closes his eyes, falls forward. He FACEPLANTS on the metal
slide, his body gliding down into the woodchips at the bottom.

ALAN is shocked. He runs to the playground.

As he makes his way toward the slide, he looks around him.

Bodies. Human bodies everywhere.

Visibly shaken, Alan backs up and dashes clumsily back to the
safety of his car.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Joe and Liv break from their session. They look at Alan, who
only looks forward.

All are breathing hard, all for separate reasons.

EXT. PARK - DAY (DAWN)

Andrew prepares himself while his camera crew gets the equipment
set up.

A Police Investigation Team swarms the scene. They check bodies,
bag the confirmed deceased.

Andrew's phone RINGS.

ANDREW

(into phone)

Hello?

(listening, then angrily)

Yeah, you know what? We could have been here when they were still living! What kind of reporting will this look like, huh? Everybody's still stuck on the gay bear thing, while this cult just ended itself!

(brief pause)

Calm down? Calm down! Really? You're the one who said this wouldn't go anywhere! Remember? Now they're all dead!

Andrew slowly adjusts, noticing his crew are all watching him. He sighs.

ANDREW (CONT)

(into phone)

All right. All right. Okay. I'll get what I can.

(listening)

All right. You too. Bye.

He hangs up, looks at his crew.

CAMERAMAN

What do you want us to do?

ANDREW

I guess start filming the bodies. The hippie leader is over by the slide.

One of the cameramen goes around the perimeter of the playground. Another goes directly into the center, past the CRIME SCENE tape.

An Officer looks up from a body he's inspecting. He holds his hand up.

OFFICER

Hey, don't touch anything. You're better off behind the tape.

CAMERAMAN

Okay. Sorry officer.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY (DAWN)

Alan wakes up. He looks around.

They're still at the park. He sees the police cars, the News Truck. The playground taped off.

Someone TAPS on the Passenger window. Joe and Liv sit up straight - frightened, as if caught red-handed.

It's an Officer.

Alan reaches over and unlocks the door. The Officer opens it.

OFFICER
(demanding)
What are you doing?

The occupants all look surprised.

ALAN
Just sitting here.

OFFICER
The park isn't open yet.

He shines a flashlight in each of their eyes.

OFFICER (CONT)
Have you been here all night?

Alan looks guilty.

ALAN
. . . Yeah.

OFFICER
So you can tell me what happened. Can you step out, please?

Alan opens his door and gets out. The Officer walks around the car and stands in front of Alan.

OFFICER (CONT)
Okay. What happened here?

ALAN
Um. I think it was some sort of cult. I have some documents in my trunk, if you want to see -

OFFICER

Maybe in a minute. First I want you to tell me what you saw.

ALAN

I saw a guy faceplant on the slide.

The Officer raises an eyebrow.

ALAN (CONT)

Yeah, I didn't make sense of it either.

Joe leans out of the car.

JOE

We're not in trouble, are we, officer?

The Officer looks around. He shrugs.

OFFICER

I dunno. Weird stuff happening around here the last couple weeks. Last week we had a guy get castrated by a bear. You heard about that?

JOE

Oh, that was me.

The Officer looks at him.

OFFICER

You?

JOE

Yeah. It didn't castrate me, though.

OFFICER

That was you?

JOE

(second-guessing)

Uh-huh. . . ?

The Officer looks down and chuckles to himself.

LIV

(from inside car)

Do you want to see?

Joe looks at her, shocked.

The Officer thinks. He waves his hand.

OFFICER

No, that's all right.

(to Alan)

You guys get out of here, though.

Otherwise I will write a ticket.

Alan nods and gets back into the car.

EXT. PARK - DAY (DAWN)

Andrew is finally ready to speak to the camera. His camera crew runs some meters on lights and other features, test the antenna.

SIGNAL OPERATOR

Okay, they're ready in five, four,
three. . .

He gestures, points.

Andrew smiles.

ANDREW

Hello, and good morning. I'm
currently at the downtown park, seeing
what currently investigators are
describing as a mass-suicide of a
crowd who just a few hours ago gave
themselves for the cause of departing
for a better world. . .

EXT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY (MORNING)

Alan's Mustang pulls up. Joe sits shotgun.

JOE

Thanks for the lift, Al. I really
appreciate it.

ALAN

What are friends for, man?

Joe shrugs. They shake hands.

JOE

Sorry if we were bad company for a
while.

Alan laughs.

ALAN

Hey, at least it wasn't a bear this time.

Joe gives him a look and gets out.

JOE

I'll probably take a nap this afternoon, so you can probably just go play basketball without me.

ALAN

Who said anything about playing basketball?

JOE

Isn't that what you do on your Saturdays?

Alan looks at him curiously.

ALAN

No.

JOE

Oh. Well, whatever you do, you can do it by yourself.

Alan watches Joe walk to his front door, a little faster than the day before.

Alan shakes his head. He drives off.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Alan drives along, listening to a Country Song. He sings along.

He notices something on the side of the road. He stops singing and slows down.

It's NATE.

Alan rolls his window down.

ALAN

Nate?

Nate turns around.

ALAN (CONT)

What are you doing?

NATE
Just walking.

ALAN
Why? Where to? You want a ride?

Nate stops, thinks a moment.

NATE
Sure.

He comes to the passenger side and gets in.

Alan looks at him.

ALAN
What are you doing?

Nate looks like he's been attacked by a ghost, as opposed to having only seen one.

NATE
I went to a rally. A really creepy
guy was giving these to people.

He holds up a small plastic bag of yellow dust.

Alan's eyes grow wide.

NATE (CONT)
Everybody was putting it in their
water bottles, like it was Splenda, or
that water-flavor stuff. . .

ALAN
Let me see that.

Alan takes the bag from him. He examines it.

ALAN (CONT)
You didn't take any of it, did you?

Nate shakes his head weakly.

NATE
I didn't like the smell.
(continuing story)
And then people who drank it started
falling over. I got scared, and left.

ALAN
Was there a hippie guy there?

NATE

Yeah. He was the leader or something.

ALAN

I know. I read all about it. Come on, let's go to the park.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Andrew is still reporting live from the scene.

ANDREW

So, as you see, investigators are still completely clueless to the cause of the deaths, other than that it is connected to the fairly newly developed cult that has been called Cloudgate, or "Exo-gienno" movement. Their leader has been identified as a corpse, found at the bottom of a slide, on a playground. Back to you Jaime.

Andrew lowers the microphone.

ANDREW (CONT)

Okay, time to pack up. This show is over. Nobody's interested in this.

The Mustang Convertible appears and speeds across the parking lot to the news truck.

The Media Crew stops moving.

Alan and Nate get out.

ALAN

We have some information you or the police may want to look into.

He produces the bag. He hands it to Andrew, who looks closely at it.

ANDREW

What is it?

NATE

It's the stuff they gave us.

ANDREW
 (gestures to playground)
 The stuff they gave you?

Nate nods.

Andrew stands, processing for a moment. Then, he jumps into action.

ANDREW (CONT)
 Set that camera back up! Let's give them a signal, we have a survivor!
 (to Nate)
 You, come stand with me. I'm just going to ask you a few questions, all right?

NATE
 (nervous)
 Oh, okay?

The Crew arranges, sets, waits.

SIGNAL OPERATOR
 They're on commercial break. Back on in five.

The Crew relaxes. Andrew starts talking to Nate about the interview.

INT. MEDVED HOUSE - DAY

In Joe's Room, he falls back on the bed, smiling. He closes his eyes.

JOE
 What a night. . .

He leans over and grabs a journal. He takes a pen, begins writing in it.

INSET:

"LIVVIE AND I. . . "

Joe closes his eyes, reliving the moments. He GRIMACES as his lower torso shifts on the bed. He keeps writing.

In the LIVING ROOM, Emma watches TV again. She changes the channel.

Jaime and Todd are at the News Station table.

JAIME (TV)

We have new information regarding the incident that occurred late last night. A teenaged boy, the only survivor of the cult's ending, is with Andrew on the scene. Andrew?

The Scene switches to Andrew at the Park.

ANDREW (TV)

Thanks, Jaime. Here we have the only survivor of the Alienic cult to tell us his personal experience, being a part of a movement that ended with the death of most of its followers.

He shows Nate.

ANDREW (TV) (CONT)

Nathan Grave-ling, what can you tell us about what you saw last night?

Nate reacts to the mispronunciation of his last name.

NATE (TV)

Well, it was creepy. These guys started handing out these little packets of powder, and a lot of people were putting them in their drinks and stuff. . .

Emma recognizes Nate.

EMMA

Joe! Your friend's on TV. Again.

Joe walks stiffly into the room. He looks at the TV.

JOE

Nate?

EMMA

That's your friend, right?

JOE

Turn it up a little.

Emma obeys.

ANDREW (TV)

So I'm assuming it was pretty scary,
seeing people drop like flies?

NATE (TV)

(disturbed by lightness)

Yeah. . . It was really scary. A girl
near me screamed and tried to grab me.
And so I left.

Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW (TV)

Wow. What a frightening ordeal. I'm
glad you made it out okay.

(gesturing Nate off the
screen)

We'll be back with more information as
soon as we can. Jaime?

INT. TEACHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Joe sits across from Mr. Mort, who reads a document. Joe smiles
more than the first time he was in here.

Mr. Mort clears his throat. Joe sits up, attentive.

Mr. Mort keeps studying the document. False alarm. Joe relaxes.

The document slowly lowers to the desk. Joe sits up.

MR. MORT

This is. . . this is explicit. But
you say this all actually happened?

JOE

(smug)

Yessir.

MR. MORT

It's interesting to hear about, but it
doesn't seem like something you
should, you know, brag about in high
school.

Mr. Mort picks up the document again.

MR. MORT (CONT)

Couldn't have picked a better car to
do it in though.

Joe gives him a confused look.

JOE

Camping with a convertible?

Mr. Mort chuckles.

MR. MORT

If this was your camping story, I'd hate to hear about what happened last weekend.

Joe reaches over and grabs the document from him. Horror comes over Joe's face.

MR. MORT (CONT)

I also don't think it's going to go over well with Miss Renarda. Her being single and all, she may not fully understand the poetic significance -

JOE

Mr. Mort, this is the wrong document.

Mr. Mort raises his eyebrows.

JOE (CONT)

I - sorry, I can't. . . I'm not. . . This wasn't supposed to be printed.

MR. MORT

Well. . . If that's not the right thing, then you're going to have to get docked. Just bring the right one tomorrow, and I'll bump you down five points. If you bring it later than that, it's a full letter grade.

Joe stands, shoves the document into his pants pocket.

JOE

Yes, sir, I'll bring the right one tomorrow.

Joe leaves the office.

Mr. Mort sits back in his chair. He chuckles to himself.

MR. MORT

(reminiscent)

Ah, high school days. . .

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Joe walks through the corridor. Some students still loiter or chat. He passes the Bulletin Board, glances at it. Something catches his eye. He stops.

INSET:

"STUDENT OF THE WEEK: JOSEPH MEDVED"

Joe stands and looks at it. He smiles. He turns and keeps walking.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Several students are still gathered in clusters. Joe walks to the parking lot.

Alan pulls up in his Mustang.

ALAN
You need a ride, man?

JOE
Sure.

Joe gets in the car.

JOE (CONT)
Where's Nate?

ALAN
Oh, he said he's got a date, or something.

JOE
A date?

ALAN
I know, right?

JOE
With who?

Alan shrugs.

ALAN
He didn't say.

JOE
Probably embarrassed to say.

They both laugh. Alan revs the engine, and the Mustang rolls off.

INT. MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Joe pulls out his document. He reads it to himself.

Alan looks over.

ALAN
How'd your meeting go today?

JOE
All right, I guess.

ALAN
Is that the paper?

JOE
No. It's a personal thing.

Alan smirks.

ALAN
About Friday night?

Joe nods, smiling.

The Mustang slows to a stop at a RED LIGHT. Alan looks over at Joe. Alan's smile disappears as he looks PAST JOE. . .

A SMALL SEDAN. Liv is driving; Nate sits shotgun. They flirt with each other as a HOT SONG plays on the radio.

Alan's expression changes to one of surprise. Joe sees this, follows his gaze. Joe looks shocked.

Nate sees them first. He looks scared, then smiles nervously. He waves.

Liv follows his gaze, looks guilty when she sees Joe. She smiles and waves.

The light turns green. Off they go.

JOE
What. . . ?

Alan chuckles, reaches over and pats Joe on the back.

ALAN

It's all right, pal. Looks aren't
everything.

The Mustang follows the Sedan, accelerating ahead and off into
the distance.

FADE OUT.

THE END