

A NEW LIFE

Written by

Joseph J. Caruso

jjcwn@verizon.net

First Draft
Completed 08/30/20

Copyright (c) 2020 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced
for any purpose including educational purposes without the
expressed written permission of the author.

**EXT. OUTSIDE A SMALL TRENDY CLOTHING BOUTIQUE. LAKEWOOD NJ.
DAY. SUMMER 2018.**

JACK MORRIS, 55, 6-1, black hair. Walks towards a woman's clothing boutique, near Lakewood NJ. The boutique is run down and inviting. A small town boutique.

INT. INSIDE A CLOTHING BOUTIQUE, LAKEWOOD NJ DAY CONTINUOUS.

Jack walks inside the clothing store.

JACK

(To saleswoman)

I am looking for something for my daughter.

SALESWOMAN

Anything specific?

JACK

I don't. I don't think I really know. Her birthday is coming up and she is about to graduate from nursing school.

SALESWOMAN

Maybe a scarf? Some jewelry?

JACK

You know what. I think I should just look around for a while. I am lousy at buying gifts for women.

SALESWOMAN

OK. Just let me know if you need some help.

JACK

Thanks.

Jack walks to the back of the store, looking through clothing and shoes.

A young woman named SARA DAVIS, 22, 5'1, brunette, enters the store, she is carrying a box of cloths.

SARA

(To Saleswoman)

I understand you buy used clothing?

SALESWOMAN

Yes we do, if its in good shape.

SARA

My stuff is top notch. I have hardly worn some of this stuff.

Sarah puts the box on the counter. The saleswoman starts to look through the box.

SALESWOMAN

I think some of this looks good.

SARA

Great!

SALESWOMAN

Well, a few of things look too worn, and there are some holes. I don't think we can take all of this.

SARA

That's OK.

SALESWOMAN

For the whole box, maybe 300?

SARA

You're kidding.

SALESWOMAN

No. That is about what this is worth.

SARA

I probably paid close to 2000 dollars for all of that.

SALESWOMAN

But its used now, there are some holes. Some of it is worn.

SARA

I need more than 300 dollars.

Sara is now visibly upset, sweating and turning red.

SALESWOMAN

Maybe you can shop this around to other stores. We are not the only clothing boutique.

SARA

I have checked them already.

Jack notices the young woman and saleswoman talking and starts to walk towards the front of the store.

SARA (CONT'D)

Please. Can you give me at least 500 dollars! I paid 2000 dollars for all of this!

SALESWOMAN

I am sorry miss. I will lose my job. This is only worth 300 dollars at the most.

SARA

Please. Can you please look in the box again?

JACK

Miss. Are you OK?

SARA

Yes. I am trying.

JACK

Trying to sell some old cloths?

SARA

Yes.

JACK

Why are you selling them?

SARA

I need the money. Ever hear of student loan debt?

JACK

I sure have and when I was your age, I never would have been able to go to college with the cost of college today.

SARA

I can barely afford my crappy apartment.

JACK

So sorry to hear that.

SALESWOMAN

As I said you can try other stores. Maybe in New York City?

SARA
Thanks for your help. I will take
the 300.

The Saleswoman hands Sara, 300 dollars in cash. Sara turns
and starts to walk out of the store. Jack follows behind.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CLOTHING STORE. CONTINUOUS.

JACK
Miss. Wait. Can I talk to you?

SARA
What?

JACK
I have been where you are now.

SARA
Oh you have?

JACK
Yes. When I was 19, I was homeless
on a bus.

SARA
Homeless?

JACK
Desperate. Depressed. Suicidal. I
thought my life was one hundred
percent over. Sometimes when you
are young, its very hard to find
your way. To see any light at the
end of the tunnel. You're just in a
very deep hole and you cannot see a
way out.

SARA
That is true, but so what?

Sara looks like she is about to cry.

JACK
But, if you hang in there. One day,
becomes another one. Over time, it
can get better.

SARA
Right now. That is hard to see.

JACK
I know.

Jack takes out his wallet.

JACK (CONT'D)

You wanted 500 dollars in there.
Here is 300 dollars. Take it. Now
you have 600 dollars for your
clothing. Please take the money.

Jack hands the 300 dollars to Sara and a tear wells up in her eye.

SARA

Who the hell are you anyway?

JACK

Just some guy.

SARA

Just some guy?

JACK

A guy who understands where you
are. What you are feeling.

Sara takes the money and hugs Jack.

SARA

Thank you. Thank you so much.

Sara hugs Jack again and walks away. Jack looks at her as she walks away. Very close to losing his composure.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CLOTHING STORE (A NEW ANGLE) CONTINUOUS.

Jack starts to walk back to the boutique and notices another young woman, who looks to be the maid of a rundown cheap Motel across the street. She looks to be arguing with her boss. The argument gets louder as Jack continues to look at the two people yelling at each other. Jack stares at this young attractive woman who looks like she is down on her luck. He watches as the young woman is handed what looks to be a check and then she leaves the Motel, slamming the front door behind her. Jack sees her get into her car, with a baby in the rear seat.

JACK (V.O.)

Is she a single mother, down on her
luck? So many sad stories like hers
in this world. Nobody cares about
anybody anymore. I wonder what her
story is.

INT. NEW YORK CITY BAR NIGHT. 7 PM.

On a dark rainy night, a few days later, sometime in late Summer 2016.

Jack Morris, walks into the bar and sees his son David, sitting in the back room, next to a huge fish tank. DAVID MORRIS is 22, about 6 foot, brown hair, good looking. Jack smiles and sits down quickly at David's table.

Jack
Hi.

DAVID
Hi.

JACK
How we doing?

DAVID
OK. You?

JACK
I hate. I hate driving into this city. Especially at night.

DAVID
What about the Train?

JACK
I hate the Train even more than driving.

DAVID
Remember what you said?

JACK
What's that?

DAVID
Everything is here, all the jobs, the money.

JACK
And its hardest place to get to.
Life's irony.
(Pause)
So where the hell are you living now?

DAVID
Brooklyn.

JACK
Place decent?

DAVID
No.

JACK
Rat hole?

DAVID
Close.

JACK
How many roommates?

DAVID
Four. Three are late this month.

JACK
As I said to you on the phone,
follow your dreams. I have told
you and your sister this your whole
life. But. This is a big risk.
And I worry.

DAVID
I know. This is what I have always
wanted.

JACK
The dues. Getting from one gig to
the next. The rejection, the
bombing, the hecklers. Its tough.

DAVID
I had real good set the other
night.

JACK
Really?

DAVID
Yes. You should have seen me.

JACK
I have seen you.

DAVID
Only the from my cell phone.

JACK
The other job?

DAVID

Waiter.

JACK

I have always wanted more for you.
You know that. Life is tough, but
it doesn't have to be this tough.

DAVID

Want to talk about mom?

JACK

No.

DAVID

Why not?

JACK

Not able to yet.

DAVID

When?

JACK

(Long Pause)

It will happen. I don't know when.

DAVID

Lauren?

JACK

She is doing OK. Have you heard
that college is a fortune?

DAVID

I heard.

JACK

And you dropped out.

A waitress drops by, a young attractive woman in her
twenty's.

WAITRESS

Will you be ordering?

JACK

(Jack nods at David.)

Just 2 Miller Lights.

WAITRESS

OK.

They both look at her as she walks away.

JACK
Your type?

DAVID
I think she is everybody's type.

JACK
How is money?

DAVID
OK.

JACK
OK?

DAVID
OK. I make the rent and the bills.

JACK
You're 22 now. OK to live this way when you're young. But, believe me. This kind of life will get old real quick.

DAVID
Lets not mention that idea again.

JACK
Like we said on the phone. Give this 18 months and if nothing is really going on, its time to think about. Something else.

DAVID
There is nothing else for me.

JACK
Everybody needs a back up plan. You think there is nothing else because you are young, and in a hole.

DAVID
Not for me.

JACK
Jesus Christ. You have always been hard to reason with.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I was in a deep hole, and I eventually got out of it. I did not give up.

DAVID

That is what you always say. Jesus Christ.

JACK

Only because I hope he is listening in and will swoop over us and save the day!

DAVID

Another thing you always say.

JACK

What?

DAVID

Swoop.

JACK

Don't like swoop?

DAVID

You said I was good.

JACK

You are funny. So are so many other people. We all see the few. Jerry Seinfeld or Kevin Hart. So many never make it. We don't see that side of things. In 1989 Seinfeld was about to be cancelled, and made it because of luck.

DAVID

I don't want to be like everybody else. My own boss.

JACK

You have a boss in this business. Its called the owner of the club and the fickle audience. Or some fucking drunk in the crowd who hates himself and he wants you to hate yourself.

DAVID

I will try for a year.

JACK

Really?

DAVID

Reasonable time?

JACK

A year should be enough.

DAVID

Interview on tomorrow?

JACK

Yes.

DAVID

Nervous?

JACK

Very.

DAVID

You're following your dream too
Dad.

JACK

That is what makes me nervous.

DAVID

Good luck?

JACK

Thanks.

(Pauses with great
emotion)

I love you son.

David blushes embarrassed by Jack's comment and his emotion.

JACK (CONT'D)

Embarrassed?

DAVID

Yes.

JACK

Don't worry about it. Your sister has problems with that word too. And then there is your mother who I still do not want to talk about.

David looks at his father and smiles.

INT. LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - DAY.

Lakewood High School is an above average building, for upper middle class kids. Large mostly blue hallways, lockers, a gym, and a large cafeteria for about 500 students. Jack Morris, slowly climbs the flight of stairs to the 3rd floor and Principal Donna Muriel's office. He turns to the left and then enters the secretaries front office. Sitting at the main desk is the high school secretary, MARY SUTTON, 52. Mary is brunette, 5'4 and rather heavy set woman in her 50's.

JACK

Hello.

MARY

You Joe?

JACK

No, Jack. Jack Morris? Appointment at 2?

MARY

Yes, Jack, sorry. I thought you were Joe.

JACK

If it is helpful, you can call me Joe.

Mary smirks at Jack.

MARY

Unfortunately, and this is considered normal. The Donna is a bit late.

JACK

OK, no problem.
(Pause)
How late?

MARY

I don't know. You can sit there please.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)
 (Mary points to a chair in
 the corner.)

JACK
 Magazines?

MARY
 No. Sorry.

(Jack takes out his cell
 phone and heads for the
 chair.)

JACK
 The Donna?

MARY
 What?

JACK
 You called her, The Donna?

MARY
 She likes it sometimes when I call
 her, "The Donna". Only me, nobody
 else. She is a fan of Donald Trump,
 I think that is the reason.

JACK
 Thanks for letting me know. A fan
 of Donald Trump?

Mary smirks at Jack again.

Jack takes out his cell phone and looks at his messages and
 starts to play Chess. He looks up at the huge wall clock.

INT. SAME HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE, SOME 30 MINUTES LATER.

Principal DONNA MURIEL, 54, brunette, heavy set, briskly
 walks into the office. She offers her hand to Jack.

DONNA
 Hey. Are you Joe?

JACK
 Jack.

DONNA
 (Donna looks over at
 Mary.)
 I thought his name was Joe?

MARY

So did I. Some screw up with personnel. I will call them.

DONNA

No matter. Don't bother calling them. Any chance you also go by Joe?

JACK

If it cuts down on the paperwork?

DONNA

Are you a comedian?

JACK

No. Not really.

DONNA

Too bad, we could save some paperwork. Please come in.
(Donna points to her office)

Jack stands up and follows Donna into her office. Donna sits down at her desk and Jack sits across from her, looking nervous.

DONNA (CONT'D)

As you already know, this is a formality; you have the job. You have your certificate, that year of training.

JACK

Thanks. I am looking forward to this.

DONNA

Are you?

JACK

Yes.

DONNA

Are you sure?

JACK

Yes. Its something I have always wanted to do.

DONNA

This is something many people have thought they could do, or wanted to do, and when they actually do it, many get a sour taste... and then decide, they hate this.

JACK

That will not be me.

DONNA

The guy before you quit after only 3 months. He was also an IT guy like you, for as long as you, over 30 years. So how do you know you will not chuck this like he did?

JACK

Instinct.

DONNA

Teaching is a damn art form. Very few are good at it and extremely few are great at it. I tend to believe that if you were really good at this, you would have not developed software for the last 30 years.

JACK

Money.

DONNA

Money should have not been the issue 30 years ago, when you had the choice.

JACK

We were poor. I needed more money.

DONNA

We will find out soon enough.

(Pause)

I see you picked Chess.

JACK

Yes, for the after school extracurricular. Its my favorite hobby.

DONNA

You play online?

JACK
Yes.

DONNA
A lot?

JACK
Probably too much.

DONNA
So you will be taking the Chess club then?

JACK
That would be my best choice.

DONNA
Normally we start at 3:45 for all after school activities. So this is a yes?

DONNA (CONT'D)
Your personality testing was on the high side.

JACK
Meaning?

DONNA
Authority issues. Pete Donlon tells me you were independent, during most of your IT days?

JACK
Yes.

DONNA
Why?

JACK
More money. More autonomy.

DONNA
Are you going to be a pain in the ass?

JACK
What?

DONNA
A pain in my ass? You have heard the expression.

JACK
Why do you ask?

DONNA
Because you are now an employee,
relatively low paid teacher, after
years of making much more money and
being. Autonomous. As you put it.

JACK
My main thing now is Teaching kids.

DONNA
Just what the last guy said. To the
letter. He quit after 3 months. A
real quitter, a jerk. When push
comes to shove, most people coming
from your field, wash out!

JACK
I will not wash out.

DONNA
Another thing the last guy said.
Why do you think you can teach high
school computer science?

JACK
I know I can.

DONNA
Just because you wrote software for
30 years does not mean, you can
teach it to kids.

JACK
I will do my best.

DONNA
To be honest, because of the jerk
before you and a few years ago.
You're on a short leash with me.

JACK
Good to know.

DONNA
Also our faculty does not like guys
like you.

JACK
Why?

DONNA
Again, the last guy. The other
reason is money.

JACK
Money?

DONNA
They all think guys like you have
money, can retire and now think
they can do what they do.
Understand the resentment? Possible
hatred?

JACK
I would be the same.

DONNA
Get a mentor here. Preferably
someone who actually likes you, to
show you the ropes.

JACK
Is bullying a problem here?

DONNA
Its a problem everywhere. You must
have heard.

JACK
Both of my kids were bullied. My
son, especially. He has a learning
disorder, dyslexia.

DONNA
What does he do now?

JACK
Stand up comedian.

DONNA
You're kidding.

JACK
No.

DONNA
Where?

JACK
New York City. Brooklyn.

DONNA

That is. That is one hell of a long hard road ahead.

JACK

He is hell bent. Tried to talk him out of it.

DONNA

Your daughter?

JACK

In college. She wants to be a nurse when she gets out. She graduates in a few days.

DONNA

No show business?

JACK

Dear God.
(Long Pause.)
I hope not.

DONNA

As far as shootings.

JACK

God, you have not had one? I would have heard.

DONNA

No. But we have procedures. That will be in your guide book.

Donna hands Jack the high school guide book.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Read this thing. Cover to cover. If you have questions, you know where my office is. Any other questions?

JACK

Not right now. I will think of something and let you know.

DONNA

My e-mail is on the first page. Cell phone. Do NOT! Call my cell phone. Leave a message on the office phone, send an e-mail.

JACK

OK.

DONNA

One more thing. Evan Stevens.

(Pause)

Evan has Asperger's, he also has an IQ, that is extremely high. He is also your CS class.

JACK

Why not a special school?

DONNA

His parents. His parents want him raised like a normal kid. Despite our many arguments. References to the bullying earlier. They also do not have anywhere near enough money for a special school. That is why we are testing him to see if money is available for a scholarship, somewhere.

JACK

All of that makes sense.

DONNA

We do our best with this kid. We do our best with the sick kids who derive pleasure from his misery over being a genius. As I said from day 1 to his parents, Evan belongs in a special school. He has the kind of rare brain that could change the world. Elan Musk. Jeff Bezos. That level or greater.

JACK

Advice?

DONNA

Later. Get to know him and the situation. We are all still learning about this kid. 6 months of this so far. Do not try to be a hero. Do you hear me?

JACK

Yes.

DONNA

I will say it again. DO NOT TRY TO BE A FUCKING HERO!

JACK

I heard you.

DONNA

Good. Sorry for the foul language. Over time, you will find that its one of my favorite hobbies. Yours is Chess, mine. Horrendous non-stop cursing. That is all. Get out.

JACK

Thanks.

DONNA

Do not disappoint me. I can be your best friend or worst enemy. Its your choice. All you have to do is follow my rules.

JACK

Thanks for this meeting. I will do my best.

Jack gets up and leaves Donna's office and gives a slight smile to Mary as he leaves.

MARY

Good luck on Monday!

JACK

Thank you!

Mary has a smirk on her face, as Jack exits.

Mary

(Whispers to herself.)
No way that guy is lasting.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY. A SMALL ROOM, ACCESSIBLE BY A LADDER. SAME DAY - 4 PM.

Inside is EVAN STEVENS, almost 14 years old is intensely working on his laptop. Evan is 5'4, with black hair. Some impressive screens and high level C#, .NET and Python code can be seen as he tests and executes a huge and very complex application. Evan smiles as he looks over his work, very proud of the application he created. It is clear from Evan's super fast typing and computer skills, that he is a software developer with genius of the highest level.

LIBRARIAN

Evan. We are closing in about 45 minutes.

EVAN

OK. Thanks for letting me know.

**INT. JACK'S HOUSE - MORNING. 5 DAYS LATER. MONDAY MORNING
7:00 AM.**

It is the first day of Jack's teaching job. Jack's house is modern but conservative, lots of windows and light, some papers and books where they should not be. Jack enters the kitchen, looking nervous.

Jack's daughter LAUREN, 22, steps into the kitchen, drinking coffee.

JACK

Hi Kid.

LAUREN

Hi.

JACK

So, do you. Do you want to talk about that thing, you did not want to talk about last night?

LAUREN

It was a long drive from college. Not the right time.

JACK (CONT'D)

What you said last night.

LAUREN

Hard to talk about Dad.

JACK

Something you also said last night, and I am getting worried.

LAUREN

Its you first day of being a high school teacher. I don't want to upset you.

JACK

You wont.

LAUREN

I wont?

JACK

No. You wont. I promise.

LAUREN

I intend to graduate in a few more days, don't worry.

JACK

Well, I sure hope so. Being a nurse is.

LAUREN

I don't think I want to be a nurse.

JACK

What?

LAUREN (CONT'D)

I said I

JACK

I heard you. And Jesus Christ. And you drop this on me, on my first day of being a teacher?

*

LAUREN

But you said, you would not get upset!

JACK

Had I known this was what you would say, I would not have lied. My God. What do you want to do? Its been years of hard work in school!

LAUREN

I know.

JACK

Well?

LAUREN

I want to be an actress.

JACK

What?

LAUREN

A movie actress. Or TV. Netflix or something.

JACK

What the hell is going on? First your brother and now you! Did your mother and I raise you in fantasy land!

LAUREN

I just don't want to be a nurse anymore.

JACK

But you're young, think about it.

LAUREN

I have.

JACK

You have. For how long? 3 hours?

LAUREN

Dad. Years.

JACK

The odds of making as an actress
are so remote.

LAUREN

You said you would always support
us, no matter what you decided to
do.

JACK

In this case, I just don't know.

LAUREN

You don't mean that.

JACK

When it comes to fantasies of being
an actress. I draw a huge line.
Over there, by the TV.

LAUREN

Don't you think I am pretty enough?
You have always said how beautiful
I am.

JACK

Ever hear of money? Its how we buy
food around here. And your college
that.

JACK (CONT'D)

Cost me.

LAUREN

Cost you a fortune.

JACK

There are so many attractive young
woman who think that because of the
way they look, they can act.

LAUREN

Maybe we should talk about this
when you get home tonight.

JACK
Why not do both?

LAUREN
Both?

JACK
Be a Nurse and go on auditions.

LAUREN
There would never be enough time.

JACK
First your mother, then David, and
now you. I cannot believe this!

LAUREN
You will get used to the idea.

JACK
I doubt it.

LAUREN
You will.

Lauren goes over to her father and hugs him. Jack is visibly
overwhelmed.

JACK
Life is hard enough.

Suddenly Jack's cell phone RINGS and it startles the both of
them a moment. Jack answers the phone.

JACK (CONT'D)
Hello?

DONNA
Jack its Donna. You're late on the
first day?

JACK
What? I thought start time was 8:00
AM.

DONNA
Page 5.

JACK
Page 5?

DONNA
You did not read the entire hand
out I gave you a few days ago?

JACK
I thought I read it.

DONNA
Monday its 7:15. You are LATE!

Jack looks at his watch.

JACK
15 minutes, so, only 20 minutes
late? Sorry about this.

DONNA
You missed page 5.

JACK
Yes. Page 5. I will be there,
leaving now.

Jack hangs up his cell phone.

JACK (CONT'D)
Well, obviously I have to run like
a nutcase on Day 1. What else can
go wrong!

Jack looks at Lauren.

JACK (CONT'D)
Don't answer that.

Lauren smiles at her father as he rushes to the garage.

**INT. HIGH SCHOOL CONFERENCE ROOM. LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL. DAY
7:30 AM.**

Jack hurries into the conference room, that is filled with teachers and administrators both sitting and standing. It is 7:30 AM. Jack is 15 minutes late. They are all staring at him as he arrives. Some of the people at the table include PAUL HARMENZON, a balding 42 year old vice principal. CINDY HEDDON, a very attractive English teacher, 29, JOHN OWEN, a Chemistry teacher in his 60's. RACHEL SUMMER, the head of the Math department in her mid 50's.

Donna is at the front of the huge conference table, smiling.

DONNA
Right on time. Welcome to your
first day. That is starting off so
well.

JACK
Sorry everyone. I missed page...

DONNA
Jack did not read page 5 and because of that, did not know about the early Monday meetings. That I am sure most of you, hate.

PAUL
I love these meetings Donna.

DONNA
(Donna rolls her eyes)
Oh my God.

PAUL
No really.

DONNA
Jack, you are lucky. You did not, miss that much. This time. Let this be a one time mistake.

JACK
This will not happen again.

Jack looks embarrassed and his face is getting a little red.

JOHN
Not like the computer field, is it?

JACK
It is, and it isn't.

DONNA
Let that be the last stupid remark in this meeting OK? Cindy, you had some comments about last weeks meeting?

CINDY
We all agreed that we could try and combine our time sheets for regular and after school?

DONNA
Yes?

CINDY
I never got the combined form. The combo form.

DONNA

Why not?

CINDY

I don't know it was not in my mail box.

DONNA

Paul. I think that was your responsibility to distribute?

PAUL

I did.

DONNA

You did?

PAUL

(To Cindy)

I am sure I put it in your box.

There is some light sounds of muffled laughter in the crowd.

CINDY

I did not get it.

PAUL

You must have dropped it or something.

CINDY

(Somewhat angrily.)

I did NOT DROP IT PAUL!

DONNA

Paul. Just go over to her mail box and drop it there. TODAY. OK?

(To the group)

Who the hell else did not get this form?

Three people raise their hands.

DONNA

Those people too Paul? Who I am sure just lost or dropped their form somewhere.

PAUL

I will take care of this.

DONNA
 (Sarcastically)
 Nice work.

DONNA (CONT'D)
 Bullying in our school is a huge problem nationwide, and so far, we have not had a big problem here. I want it to stay that way. However, we have had several occurrences, mostly with Evan. Our policy is to observe and report only.

JACK
 Evan?

DONNA
 Later.

PAUL
 Observe and report.

DONNA
 Paul.

PAUL
 Yes?

DONNA
 I just said that.

PAUL
 Just want to make sure the group heard it.

DONNA
 Oh.

(Pause.)
 My God. Nobody told me that I hired 35 deaf teachers.

Jack tries to hide a smile and Paul sees him.

RACHEL
 So if there is bullying all we can report it to you?

DONNA
 Yes. Or Paul.

RACHEL
 Paul too?

DONNA

Yes.

RACHEL

Paul too?

DONNA

Yes! Are you one of my 35 deaf teachers?

(Pause.)

There is politics involved here. This has become bigger than just two or 3 kids who live to make some other child miserable. This problem makes me ill and it should all of you. Its a sickness in many people and its at its worst when they are young.

Paul makes another angry face at Rachel.

JACK

What if there is a fight of some kind?

DONNA

In the case of violence, you have to call over a security guard.

JACK

What if they are too far away?

DONNA

You can stand between them, but physical contact has to be avoided. Its the rule.

JACK

That might be hard to do?

DONNA

Is this your first day here sir?

JACK

Don't make waves?

DONNA

Bingo! However, its comforting to know that you are not deaf.

Paul smiles at Jack. Jack notices Cindy staring at him and smiling. Jack smiles back.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Paul.

PAUL

Yes?

DONNA

What is next on the agenda?

PAUL

Cafeteria budget changes and the mock training. If there is a shooting.

JACK

What?

PAUL

We have to train just in case.

DONNA

This is not the 1970's Jack. We are living in a new world. NRA and nobody gives enough of a shit. Its also a new State law.

PAUL

One hour this Thursday, at.
(Paul looks through some papers.)
2. 2 PM.

DONNA

Anything else?

PAUL

No. That is all for today.

DONNA

Paul, you and I will take care of the cafeteria budget issues offline.

JACK

What happens during the training?

DONNA

Also on page 5 dear. Try and read page 5? Do you have a phobia about the number 5?

JACK

(Embarrassingly.)
OK.

Paul smirks at Jack.

DONNA

OK. Meeting over. John, my office
in an hour?

JOHN

OK.

The entire crowd of 40 people stand up and slowly exit the huge conference room. Jack is one of the last to leave. Following behind him, is Rachel.

RACHEL

(To Jack while walking
behind.)

Follow me.

JACK

(Surprised and looks back
to see Rachel passing
him.)

OK.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY (CONTINUOUS)

Jack and Rachel both walk down a long corridor into an area that is marked Math department. They both walk into Rachel's office.

INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE (CONTINUOUS)

Jack looks around at the messy office, stacked with papers, graded tests, and what looks like every high school Math book, ever printed.

JACK

Nice office.

RACHEL

Sarcastic?

JACK

No.

RACHEL

Really?

JACK
 (With a smile.)
 A little.

RACHEL
 This job is a nightmare. Too many
 kids, too many problems. Too many
 kids who just don't want to work.
 (Looks at Jack and sits
 down at her desk.) SIT...

Jack sits down across from Rachel.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Do you want to be friends?

JACK
 Sure.

RACHEL
 I was friends with the last guy
 like you. He did not last.

JACK
 I heard.

RACHEL
 Donna told you?

JACK
 Yes.

RACHEL
 We all think, when we are kids, or
 in our 20's, when we fantasize or
 see a great movie about teaching.

Mine is.

JACK

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Stand and Deliver.

JACK
 Yes. That one.

RACHEL
 That is everyone's. Even the guy
 you are replacing.
 (Pause.)
 We all want life to be like the
 movies. Probably why we all go to
 the movies.

JACK

I think I do have a grasp on the reality of this job.

RACHEL

The last guy didn't. Which is why he quit after almost 3 months. Just ran out of here one day yelling, I CANT GET THROUGH TO THEM! It was a sad day.

JACK

Sorry to hear that.

RACHEL

Computer Science department is something we added only a few years ago. So far, it has not worked out. Donna heard some good things from your last client. Pete Donlon?

JACK

Pete is a great guy. I worked for him for 3 years, the best manager I had as an independent.

RACHEL

One reason why you got this job, was because of Pete's recommendation. There is some resentment from the other teachers here. You already know from our meeting that our Vice Principal, Paul Harmenzon is a total shit bag?

JACK

That was pretty clear.

RACHEL

Brown noser, back stabber. Wants to be Principal here. I have a better shot at being the first woman to do a head stand on Mars. AVOID THIS GUY! He is a dangerous person. The worst kind.

JACK

Seen many guys like this in my 30 year career in IT. Too many.

RACHEL

This bad? I doubt it.

JACK
You would be surprised. Worse. Much worse.

RACHEL
Are you nervous about your first class?

JACK
Very.

RACHEL
Good. If you were not nervous, that would mean there is something wrong with you.

JACK
I am not nervous about running the Chess club though.

RACHEL
Why not?

JACK
Don't know. I just love the game. I will love to talk about it with the kids.

RACHEL
Last Chess club guy. Some kid threw a queen at him. Dinged his forehead.

JACK
He was OK?

RACHEL
Yes, other than the 6 tiny dots in the middle of his forehead. He tells people its an acne scar. Divorced?
(Pause.)

JACK
What?

RACHEL
Donna tells me you are divorced.

JACK
About 2 years. Yes. But I don't like to talk about it.

RACHEL
Maybe one day?

JACK
Maybe. You?

RACHEL
Married 2 kids. One of them may
become employable.

JACK
I have 2 kids. Both in their 20's.

RACHEL
Marriage is not what you think it
will be either.
(Pause.)
Donna assigned me as your mentor
and supervisor here. You can ask me
anything. My door is always open.

JACK
Rather glad its you.

RACHEL
Its either me or Paul.
(Rachel smiles.)
That was a joke.

JACK
I knew it had to be.

RACHEL
As far as Evan. Did Donna tell you
about him?

Very Little.

RACHEL
We do not know exactly how high his
IQ is. We have ordered new tests
for accuracy. Evan has Asperger's
and at times, that is off the
charts. He is in your CS class.

JACK
What should I do?

RACHEL
Nothing. Treat him like the others.
He has had some bullying problems.

JACK
Donna told me.

RACHEL
His parents want him to be normal.
They cannot afford any special
school and this brilliant State of
ours will not help in this case. So
here we are.

JACK
Does he worry you?

RACHEL
He doesn't say much. Nobody has
gotten through to him.
(Pause.)
Cindy?

JACK
What about her?

RACHEL
I saw her looking at you. Your
type?

JACK
I would rather not say.

RACHEL
What are you 55?

JACK
Yes?

RACHEL
Donna told me.

JACK
Close with her?

RACHEL
Nobody is. But we talk.

JACK
As far as Cindy. Its my first day,
and I missed page 5.

RACHEL
OK, you have about an hour. Just
take deep breaths. Probably not a
good idea to drink too much coffee.
The first time is always the
hardest.

JACK
I will do my best.

RACHEL
So did the last guy.

They both laugh.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL 2ND FLOOR ATRIUM

Jack is standing, looking out a huge second floor window while drinking a cup of coffee - Jack is very deep in thought and looks very worried.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. LARGE OFFICE BUILDING. 10 YEARS EARLIER.

Conference room and an angry scene with one of Jack's many conflicts with an insane employee. It almost comes to blows.

END FLASHBACK.

John Owen walks over.

JOHN
Worried?

Jack is startled.

JACK
Yes.

JOHN
You will get used to it. I did.

JACK
After how long?

JOHN
It varies. For me it was about 2 months. I think it was after one kid got on my last nerve.

JACK
How long ago?

JOHN
I have been here 25 years.

JACK
Donna?

JOHN

A private issue. Not school related.

JACK

Any advice?

JOHN

Deep breaths. Oh and, don't drink coffee.

John smiles and walks away. Jack takes another sip of coffee while looking at John walk away.

JACK

I hope this all works out.

Jack drinks another sip of coffee.

INT. COMPUTER SCIENCE CLASSROOM. LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL. 1:10 PM.

Jack sits alone in the classroom, arranges some papers and writes Welcome To Computer Science 101 on the blackboard. Waits for his students to arrive.

The door opens, and 3 students walk in, followed by a group of 10 more, followed by another 5, totalling 18 kids. Evan Stevens walks in last. JULIE HARRIS, a pretty 16 year old girl takes her seat near the front. KENNETH SMITH, 16 years old, sits close to Julie. RICH WICKOFF, 16, sits near the back of the classroom.

JACK

Hello. Hi.

SOME IN THE GROUP

Hello.

JACK

(To Evan)

Hi.

EVAN

Hi.

JACK

(To all.)

Just take any seat. Spread around if you like. Not a big deal where you sit.

Jack waits until all are seated. He sees a few kids with cell phones.

JACK (CONT'D)

All cell phones have to be put away and turned OFF. Just like the movies, only I talk for 70 minutes.

JULIE

Is that how long this class is?

JACK

The class is about 70 minutes.

(Pause.)

OK guys. I am Jack Morris, and as you may know, this is my first day as a teacher. I was in the IT field for over 30 years.

KENNETH

30 years?

JACK

My first question to all of you is. Why are you here?

(Pause.)

I want to go around the room. I want to get a feel as to why we are all here.

RICH

To kill time?

Some laugh.

JACK

No.

JULIE

To learn how to code?

JACK

That is a good answer. Any other reason?

RICH

Learn computer science?

JACK

Think outside of the box.

KENNETH

To make a living? Make money?

JACK

That was the answer I was looking for. Make money. Without a decent education. Making a living is very difficult or close to impossible. We are here to learn how to get and keep a job. Not easy for anyone. It is the harsh reality of being alive. We all, or at least most of us, have to make a living.

RICH

Any chance my killing time answer still has a shot?

Louder laughter in the group.

JACK

(To Rich.)
Class clown?

RICH

Just a rumor.

JACK

(Pauses.)
Let me tell you guys about my career. Some of the highlights, the low-lights, I may touch on, later. I started programming interestingly enough because of Chess computers.

(Pause.)
I was a kid, like many of you. When I was 18 years old. I did not know what I wanted to do. I had no clue. In the early 1980's.

KENNETH

1980's? How old are you anyway?

JACK

I played a Chess computer named Boris at a mall a few times and only because of this machine and my fascination with Chess, I chose a software career.

(Pause.)
Another reason choosing this field turned out right for me, was going independent.

(Pause.)
I had my own corporation for most of my career. That meant that I had some control over my own destiny.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

For me, this was the solution to being an employee, that early in my career. Was not working for me at all.

KENNETH

Why wasn't it working?

JACK

A story for another day. Tons of bad luck. My career is a course in itself.

(Pause.)

As you may have heard. I will be teaching Chess after school. If you're interested, you can see the office secretary.

RICH

Have you played in tournaments?

JACK

Not for me. I am an online player. I will be showing you guys two of the best online sites in this class. Chess sites, that were developed using some or all of the technologies we will be learning in this class.

(Pause.)

When it comes to computer science. There is a tremendous amount to know. But do not be intimidated. We will be taking it slow and easy, no stress. No worries.

EVAN

What language?

Jack looks visibly stunned that Evan said something on his first day. The rest of the class looks over at Evan.

JACK

Two of the most popular are C# and Python. For this class, we may try to learn both. Both are great computer languages for many reasons. Thanks for asking Evan.

EVAN

What about Heuristic programming sir?

JACK

No need to call me sir. Jack or Mr. Morris will be fine. I had not planned on Heuristic programming for this class. Maybe a more advanced class in the future. I assume you have done some of this?

EVAN

Yes. I have.

JACK

We will talk about this, offline. OK?

EVAN

OK.

RICH

(To Jack)

He never talks.

JACK

Not something you have in common.

Some of the class laugh.

JACK (CONT'D)

There will be tests and quizzes in this class. Not because I am a fan of that method of learning, because if I don't test you, I won't have a job. Testing can be good, as long as its fair.

JULIE

How many tests?

JACK

Four I think is the rule. Enough to get an idea about how I am doing in my job.

Jack stands up from his desk and walks around.

JACK (CONT'D)

Have any of you heard about Alpha zero?

JULIE

No

KENNETH

No

JACK
Have you heard of AI. Artificial
intelligence?

SOME IN THE GROUP
Yes.

JACK
Just a few months ago. A few genius
developers at Google in London
England wrote an AI Chess program
that taught itself how to play. By
playing against itself 40 thousand
times. When it was done, the
program had advanced chess
knowledge. Amazingly, Alpha Zero
then defeated the best computer
Chess program in the world. A
program called Stockfish. In 100
games from the normal starting
position, AlphaZero won 25 games as
White, won 3 as Black, and drew the
remaining 72 games.

Jack smiles as he sees Evan's eyes light up.

SOME IN THE GROUP
Wow.

JACK
Wow is right. Its important to
remember that 20 years ago it was
thought impossible for any computer
to be programmed to beat a top
Grandmaster. Now, a Grandmaster has
no chance against any computer.

(Pauses.)

When I say AI software, this means
self-learning. What this means is
that there is no specific Chess
software code within Alpha zero.
Alpha taught itself to be the best
in the world, by playing itself 40
thousand times.

(Long Pause.)

Can anyone think about. What are
the long term implications of this
ground-breaking accomplishment?

LAUREN
More advanced Chess theory?

JACK
Yes, but there is more to this.
Anyone else?

KENNETH
Can beat any machine?

JACK
Right but...

EVAN
If Alpha Zero can teach
itself chess. What else?

JACK (CONT'D)
What else can it teach
itself?

Jack smiles at Evan as they make a connection. Evan smiles back.

KENNETH
Teachers pet.

JACK
Ease up on some of the comments OK?
Are you running for President?

The bell rings, for the end of the class. The group leaves, some of them ignoring Jack, some of them smiling as they leave. Evan walks by Jack last, and then stops and looks at Jack for a full minute before talking.

EVAN
They make fun of me.

JACK
I know son.

EVAN
They make fun of me. They hurt me.

JACK
I know. I am sorry. I had bullying
problems in school too when I was
your age. So did my 2 kids.

Jack starts to lose his composure.

EVAN
You did?

Yes I did. Evan starts to cry.

JACK
Please don't cry. It will all be
OK. I promise. You will be OK. I
will see to it.

Evan slowly walks out of the classroom. Jack sits down, exhausted and overwhelmed. There is a knock on the classroom door.

JACK (CONT'D)

Come in.

Rachel walks in and closes the door behind her. She sits in the front row of the classroom.

RACHEL

Well?

Jack is visibly shaken, almost about to lose his composure.

JACK

They make fun of me. They hurt me.

RACHEL

Evan?

JACK

Yes.

RACHEL

Please try to be careful here.

JACK

How do I do that?

RACHEL

There is a policy in place. You cannot afford to get too close.

JACK

I connected with this kid. Over Chess and AI of all things.

RACHEL

If you step on a trained counselor's hands or God forbid Donna's.

JACK

Watch out below?

RACHEL

You will get into trouble Jack. Trust me.

JACK

Happen to you?

RACHEL

Yes. Kids are cruel. Evan is both a genius and weird. There are going to be brick walls we will have to get over. His parents are also weird. This kid should not be in this school.

JACK

I told him about Alpha Zero.

RACHEL

Alpha Zero?

JACK

Google Software. It taught itself how to play Chess. Now its the best in the world. Evan knew the significance of this immediately.

RACHEL

If it can teach itself to play Chess, what else can it teach itself?

JACK

Exactly.

RACHEL

You bonded over that?

JACK

Just that. So what the hell do I do? Ignore the kid when he begs me for help in here?

RACHEL

You're only his teacher. Its not just policy. You don't have the training.

JACK

Jesus. Its my first day and already.

RACHEL

Just direct him to a counselor if it gets to be too much.

JACK

I did not sleep last night. Tonight, will be worse.

RACHEL
What about the class?

JACK
Its very early. Just some high level stuff. I have not decided about the computer language yet. Python or C#.

RACHEL
Both?

JACK
I think it will be C#. Right now, the industry is a wash. Python or C#. Depends more on where you live than anything else.

RACHEL
Why did you leave IT?

JACK
I reached my limit of code. Stress. And mostly. Bad people. Way too many of those. Stress and time pressure, brings out the worst in people.

RACHEL
Sounds like we have a lot to talk about.

JACK
We do.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Jack is in the kitchen, sitting at the bar, drinking coffee. Its 8 PM the same day. Lauren walks in.

LAUREN
I looked into getting a waitressing job today.

JACK
Where?

LAUREN
Around here, near the train station, so I can go into New York for auditions.

JACK
From educated Nurse to. Waitress.

LAUREN
Its what all actors have done to
get into the business.

JACK
Lauren. The odds. The odds for
Christ Sakes.

LAUREN
I always wanted to do this.

JACK
Since when?

LAUREN
Since forever.

JACK
Thanks for the heads up 15 years
ago.
(Pause.)
Then why college and nursing
school?

LAUREN
I was playing the odds, just like
you always told us.

JACK
No father, wants to see his kids
suffer. Rejection and suffering is
the acting business. 95%
unemployed. All the time. Yes you
are pretty enough. But.

LAUREN
Can I give it a year then?

JACK
A year?

LAUREN
Yes.

JACK
Its the same with David. Who by the
way, also waits tables in Brooklyn.
I agree with one year.

LAUREN
Are you upset with me?

JACK
No.

LAUREN
Mad?

JACK
A little. And no its not because of
the money.

LAUREN
I always want you to be proud.

Lauren walks over and she hugs her father.

JACK
I always have been proud. Of both
of you. It has not been easy.
David's learning issues, work, your
mother, the divorce. Why now? Why
not years ago?

LAUREN
Its really all because of you.

Jack steps back and looks at Lauren.

JACK
What? Me? Why?

LAUREN
All those bad jobs. The stress.
Insomnia. And all those bad people.
You worked so hard and.

JACK
What?

LAUREN
You never seemed to be happy.

JACK
That is not true.

LAUREN
Yes it is. You know its true. You
told all of us how bad it was for
so long.

JACK
Was I that bad?

LAUREN

I don't want to live my life and hold a job and be miserable, all the time. I want something better.

JACK

For millions of Americans and people in the world. Misery and making money, go hand in hand baby. Read the prospectus.

(Pause.)

A waitress?

LAUREN

A job to make money. So I can be an actress.

JACK

(Pauses.)

You know the risks. You do not know the hardships. Not yet. Do what you have to do.

(Pause.)

A year?

LAUREN

One full year. Starting Friday.

JACK

Why Friday?

LAUREN

Because I think that is when I could be hired.

JACK

You have a deal. Good luck baby.

They embrace again, this time Jack has a small tear running down his face.

INT. DONNA'S OFFICE LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The next morning, 8 AM. Both Rachel and Jack and sitting in Donna's office, waiting for her to arrive.

JACK

(Jack turns to Rachel)

What do you think this is about?

RACHEL

Oh God. Any number of things.

JACK
This happen a lot?

RACHEL
Often enough to make it. Annoying
as all hell.

Donna, briskly walks into her office.

DONNA
Sorry I am late. Actually no. I am
not sorry. Its not my fault this
place is a fucking zoo.

Donna sits in her office chair.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Want to guess what this is about?

No.

JACK

No.

RACHEL

DONNA
Its about Evan.

JACK
What about him? Is there a problem?

DONNA
Not with him. You.

JACK
What?

DONNA
Got a call from June, the boys
mother. She tells me that Evan
just met his favorite teacher AND
his BEST FRIEND at school.

JACK
Jesus Christ.

DONNA
I told you to back off this kid!

JACK
Wait a minute, we bonded over AI
and software. At the end of the
class he came by and told me.

DONNA
What?

JACK

That kids were picking on him.

DONNA

And what did you say?

JACK

I just said. I know son. That's all. I told him it would be OK.

RACHEL

Jack told me about this after his first class. I see nothing wrong with.

DONNA

Which is why you are not the Principal of this school. You are only supposed to be his teacher.

JACK

What do I say if he comes to me like that again.

DONNA

Send him to the school counselor.

JACK

That seems so inhumane. He is a scared kid, who needs a friend.

DONNA

But you are his teacher. Not his friend. That is the policy. Either follow it, or go back to your old profession.

RACHEL

What Jack said seems so trivial.

DONNA

It was not trivial. Please. Let this be our last meeting about this.

(Pause.)

Steve Lepish is our school counselor. Jack, set up a meeting with this guy. He will maybe be of some help with this.

JACK

OK. I will walk by his office.

DONNA

School e-mail is a better bet.
Don't walk by. Steve is so anal he
is actually a rectum.

Jack and Rachel smile.

JACK

OK.

There is a knock on Donna's door.

DONNA

Who is this? I am in a meeting.
Come in.

Evan's mother JUNE, who is mid 50's, 5'4, brunette and father
RICHARD, also mid 50's, 6'1 with gray hair walk into Donna's
office.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Hey guys, I don't remember we had a
meeting scheduled. Unless you 2 are
the new Principals of this school?

Richard glares at Jack.

RICHARD

Is this the guy?

DONNA

Jack is a teacher here.

RICHARD

Are you Jack?

Richard stands over where Jack is sitting, looking down at
him.

JACK

Yes, I am Jack.

RICHARD

How are you connecting with my son?
He never talks to any of us, or his
sister and then you walk into the
picture and your his best friend.
What the hell is going on?

JACK

I do not know.

DONNA

All that being said, you cannot just walk into my office without an appointment.

JUNE

Under the circumstances, we don't care about making an appointment.

DONNA

I make the rules here June. This is a high school, not a Burger King.

RICHARD

(To Jack, still standing over where he is sitting.)

What do you mean you do not know?

JACK

I don't know. We bonded over AI, chess and software. And please move away, you are standing too close.

Richard steps away from Jack.

RICHARD

You realize that, this makes no sense right?

JACK

The kid is a genius. We may never know what his motivations are. I am sorry I don't know the answer to your question.

JUNE

Can you at least help us? Help us to get through to him. He just ignores all of us, all the time.

JACK

Maybe talk about Chess?

JUNE

We tried that, nothing works. He is like a zombie. Until you came along. Now all he talks about is you.

DONNA

Isn't this a good thing? We have someone who got through to him. From there we can make progress.

JUNE

For us, progress is having a son.
This person who lives with us now,
is. I don't know what he is.

DONNA

We are still testing him. We will
know more soon.

JUNE

Well he ever be a normal boy?

DONNA

You both have continued to ask me
questions that you already know I
don't have the answers to. The best
solution is a private school for
special children. We have discussed
this so many times.

Richard glares at Jack and points at him.

RICHARD

Now because of this guy, Evan wants
to stay here forever. No chance at
a special school now.

DONNA

We don't know that.

RICHARD

You are supposed to be his teacher,
not his best friend.

JACK

Richard. This is not my fault.

RICHARD

Yes it is.

JACK

NO. It is not.

Richard starts to walk towards Jack and Jack stands up and
they meet face to face.

JACK (CONT'D)

If I were you. I would take a
breath. Take a look at what you are
dealing with. Know what I mean?

Richard backs off.

RICHARD

June. Lets get the hell out of here. These people could care less about Evan.

Richard and June quickly leave Donna's office.

RACHEL

Thank God for uplifting productive meetings with parents.

DONNA

Jack. Under the circumstances, I don't have a problem with how you handled that. That was not your fault.

RACHEL

We will find an answer.

DONNA

(Annoyed.)

Meeting over guys. Get out.

Both Rachel and Jack slowly stand up and exit Donna's office.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE OF DONNAS OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS.

RACHEL

Were you? Were you about to kick his ass?

JACK

I have been close so many times in my career. Rahway State Prison is the reason why I never acted on, what would have been justified violence. With this guy, it would not have been pretty, for him.

RACHEL

I have a heads up for you.

JACK

More Good news?

RACHEL

Steve Lepish is a total jerk. He could care less about any kid in here.

JACK

I should have known.

RACHEL

What?

JACK

Not to ask if you had good news.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY - LUNCH HOUR.

Rachel and Jack are having lunch. Cindy and Paul are sitting across an isle from them. Jack looks over at Cindy.

RACHEL

She has hurt some past boyfriends.

JACK

How do you know?

RACHEL

Through the grapevine. Women like that have power over men.

JACK

True statement.

RACHEL

How long have you been divorced?

JACK

2 years.

Jack looks back a second time, this time Cindy sees him looking. She smiles and looks away. Jack quickly looks at Rachel.

JACK (CONT'D)

She saw me looking.

RACHEL

Last time someone said something like that to me.

(Pause.)

I was 11.

JACK

I thought those two had issues.

RACHEL

Why?

JACK

The meeting yesterday.

RACHEL
You think that was an argument?
That was no argument. As far as I
know, they are just friends. If
there is a God.

Jack smiles and laughs a little.

Jack tries not to look at Cindy, as she sits with Paul an
isle and a few tables away.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Do you like this girl or what?

JACK
I haven't decided yet. Why do you
care?

RACHEL
I am your mentor here, remember?

JACK
That makes no sense.

RACHEL
So we are work friends right?

JACK
Right?

RACHEL
I can ask you about personal stuff?

JACK
Can I ask you?

RACHEL
Sure. How long were you married?
Why did you get divorced?

JACK
25 years. The other part, I pass.

RACHEL
You said I could ask.

JACK
If I had to pick one reason. It was
my career in the IT field. I have
this unique talent. For falling
into some of the most unjust
situations. Some of the worst
people, and
(Pause.)

RACHEL

And?

JACK

I brought my work home. I found out 2 days ago, that.

(Pause.)

Now even my own daughter wants to go into show business. She wants to be an actress. My son, is doing stand up in New York and lives in some walk-up with 3 roommates in Brooklyn.

RACHEL

How is this your fault?

JACK

I complained too much. They think having a real job is too much of a lifelong depressing nightmare, because of what I went through. They don't want the life that I had. I don't blame them.

Jack glances over at Cindy and Paul again. Rachel notices and is annoyed.

RACHEL

If I could unscrew your eyes, I would walk them over to her salad plate, next to the olives.

Jack smiles.

JACK

When you have a problem, especially at work, there is nothing your family or your friends can do or say. So the only answer is to just stop complaining.

Jack glances at Cindy again.

JACK (CONT'D)

She is rather good looking isn't she?

RACHEL

Let me get back to you, after I turn Lesbian.

JACK

Always this funny?

RACHEL

Reduces stress. What did your wife and family say, about the bad times?

JACK

I am so sorry Daddy. Sorry Jack. But after a while, especially from my wife. I was getting some noticeable eye-rolling. I should have taken the hint and stopped. It was the stress of the field. Beat the clock deadlines. Jealous employees. One looked like a Parrot.

RACHEL

A parrot?

JACK

Parrot. Exactly. Bird seed, the whole nine yards. He might have shit on the hood of my car for all I know.

RACHEL

Could he fly?

JACK

He looked like he could. There was a tiny bell on his desk. Another clue.

RACHEL

There is nothing easy about making a living. Especially not for teachers.

JACK

The good news is that when things were going well. I always lived way below my means. The stock market has been at times horrible, too many bear markets. But the good times have been good enough.

RACHEL

Your wife? Where is she now?

JACK

That I cannot talk about.

RACHEL

Why?

JACK
Maybe one day. Not now.

RACHEL
Something happen?

JACK
Outside the bounds of this
conversation. OK?

RACHEL
OK? Anytime you want to talk about
it.

JACK
One day.

Jack looks over to see Paul stand up and talk to some students. He walks up to two 15 year old girls sitting in a group.

PAUL
You girls are outside the dress
code. Your dress is too high.

GIRL #1
What?

PAUL
The dress code? You have heard of
the dress code?

GIRL #2
We have a dress code here?

PAUL
Yes. It was in your handout, your
freshman year. First day.

JACK
(To Rachel)
It was probably on page 5.

GIRL #2
Well, I never got one.

GIRL #1
I never got one of those.

PAUL
Really?

Paul takes out a tape measure.

JACK
What the hell is he doing?

Rachel looks over and starts to laugh.

RACHEL
Tape measure Paul, strikes again.

JACK
I cannot believe what I am seeing.

Jack looks over as Paul has the two girl stands up and he measures the length of their dresses to the top of their knees.

RACHEL
I wish I had the guts to make a cell phone video.

Rachel looks over at several students recording this tape measure incident on their cell phones.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
All over YOUTUBE tonight.

JACK
Where in the world do people like this guy come from? He reminds me.

RACHEL
Coworkers from your past?

JACK
Some as bad. Some worse.

RACHEL
When is your meeting with Lepish?

JACK
I asked for tomorrow. He did not return my e-mail yet.

RACHEL
Do not expect much or anything from this guy. He only cares about his own career, not helping kids.

JACK
Why the hell does he still have his job?

RACHEL
Tenure.

JACK
Figures.

RACHEL
The final tests for Evan are coming
up. This will be resolved soon.

JACK
Jack looks back over at Cindy who is still eating with Paul.
He looks away when she glances over.

RACHEL
Tread lightly there my friend.

JACK
Not a problem.

**INT. STEVE LEPISH'S OFFICE, LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - NEXT DAY.
1 PM.**

Jack knocks on Steve's closed office door. He waits a few
seconds, and then. Jack knocks a second time.

STEVE
Come in?

Jack opens the door and slowly walks in.

JACK
Hi.

STEVE
Hi. We had an appointment?

JACK
Yes. 1 PM. Today. The e-mail I
sent?

STEVE
I don't remember. I don't remember
that e-mail. Let me look.

Jack looks at Steve as he takes a long time to find and read
the e-mail.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Oh. OK. I see. Yes, its 1 PM. What
can I do for you?

JACK
We wanted to talk about Evan?
Remember?

Steve looks at the e-mail chain again.

STEVE
Yes. Evan. What about him?

JACK
Donna told me to see you. How we
should deal with him. Things I
should know?

STEVE
Other than his IQ, that may be
higher than 200. He has Asperger's.
The policy is, be his teacher. Not
his friend.

JACK
That is what Donna told us.

STEVE
Us?

JACK
Rachel and I.

STEVE
Rachel has been here long enough to
know the drill.

JACK
The drill?

STEVE
How we deal with special students.
Dealing with special students is
entirely my area of expertise.
(Pause.)
Donna told me that his parents are
not happy.

JACK
What?

STEVE
Evan thinks you are his friend.

JACK
That was not my fault.

STEVE

Why not?

JACK

He came to me. He said kids were picking on him. What am I supposed to say?

STEVE

You are his teacher. You teach. That is all.

JACK

I don't think that all of this is as easy as you make it out to be.

STEVE

Sure it is. Do you have training to be a teacher? A certificate?

JACK

Yes. Of course I do.

STEVE

So teach.

JACK

I have just explained what happened and yet. You choose to not listen to what I said. Why is that?

STEVE

I listened and then I gave my professional assessment of the situation.

JACK

Am I allowed to give my assessment of the situation?

STEVE

Sure.

JACK

You are. An asshole.

STEVE

Not the first time I heard that one.

JACK

And not the last.

Jack gets up to leave.

STEVE

Donna will be hearing about our meeting.

JACK

Go ahead. Asshole.

Jack leaves and closes the door behind him.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Jack walks into the kitchen from the garage, looks exhausted and puts his briefcase on the kitchen counter. Lauren is home early and is drinking coffee.

LAUREN

Hi. David is home.

JACK

Where is he?

LAUREN

In his old bedroom.

JACK

Is everything OK?

LAUREN

I don't think so. He doesn't look too happy.

JACK

Happy and this family. Normally is like trying to put two magnets together.

LAUREN

Me too?

JACK

What do you mean. Me too?

LAUREN

I got fired.

JACK

Fired?

LAUREN

Yes. Fired.

JACK

Why?

LAUREN
I dropped too many dishes.

JACK
Jesus. You would think there would be some kind of grace period for new waitresses and dish breakage.

LAUREN
Not this place.

JACK
You don't seem. That upset?

LAUREN
I will get something else. No big deal.

JACK
The trick here is. Do not put that 1 week job on your resume.

LAUREN
Why not?

JACK
Because you got fired in a week, that's why. When it comes to those who hire, this is a cruel world. People would rather believe the worst in everyone. It makes things easier, and cheaper. Most people do not care about helping a young person.

LAUREN
Maybe I can do something else other than waitress?

JACK
Like what?

LAUREN
Don't know yet. But it has to be something where I can also have time to audition.

JACK
Maybe you can juggle in the park?

LAUREN
Dad! Not a time to be funny.

Jack goes to the stairs and looks up to the upstairs landing.

JACK

David! Can you come down? It looks like we are having some kind of a family meeting. Probably not a good thing.

David comes down the stairs, wearing a bathrobe and holding a beer.

JACK (CONT'D)

(To David.)

Beer this early?

(Jack looks at his watch.)

Its only 5 PM?

(Pauses.)

You look like the owner of an all night laundry.

DAVID

What does that mean?

JACK

So what happened?

DAVID

I am sick of the stand-up thing.

JACK

What? Already?

David just sits down on the couch and does not answer.

JACK (CONT'D)

Your mother used to do that all the time and drive me crazy. The catatonic silent treatment. Again I ask, why?

DAVID

Its miserable that's why.

JACK

Hecklers, rotten smelly clubs? Disgusting owners?

DAVID

I don't want an I told you so speech.

JACK

I was not going to do that. I told you kids about my early days and how hard it was.

LAUREN
Your work life sucked too.

DAVID
It drove mom away.

JACK
No it did not drive mom away. She
cheated on me with some asshole.

LAUREN
But why?

JACK
What do you mean why?

DAVID
Why the asshole? Why did she cheat?

JACK
Well I would love to ask her, but
she is dead!

DAVID
And you said Karma when you heard.

LAUREN
Karma.

JACK
She leaves me for a lowlife and
then they fly off to Spain and in
one day, moron boy drives off the
side of a road! And you both want -
some idiotic high road words of
wisdom! Are you both insane?

LAUREN
But Karma Dad?

JACK
I am sorry if I not am up the
household grief standards, for
Christ sakes.

LAUREN
You didn't even go to the funeral?

JACK
She cheated on me. With a younger
and very stupid jerk! And I cannot
stand going to funerals. I have
plans in place, to not even go to
my own.

LAUREN

Are you ever going to forgive?

Jack stands at the bar and opens a bottle of Brandy.

JACK

Probably not. I didn't deserve this to happen. Not this way. Not this bad.

LAUREN

Nobody does.

JACK

How the hell did we all get off the subject anyway? We were talking about you two and trying to make a living. Only important if you want to buy food.

DAVID

We would rather not be miserable making money our whole lives. Like you were all those years.

JACK

Yes. Lets do that. Lets just blame me for every single one of the miseries in this family.

LAUREN

Like it or not. All those bad jobs you had. Had a big effect on us.

JACK

Don't do this to me OK. I did my best with all that bad luck. And most of the time I made a decent living.

DAVID

And working with a PARROT?

JACK

Oh yes, the famous bird from hell. Its not my fault I was forced to work with someone who looked like wild poultry.

David and Lauren both laugh.

JACK (CONT'D)

Laugh if you will. I have had more than my share of bad jobs. And bad people.

Jack looks at David.

JACK (CONT'D)

I was there the other night.

DAVID

Where?

JACK

At that crap club in Yonkers. The guy who threw the carrot.

DAVID

I bombed.

JACK

Show business. That is what it is like. Some people derive pleasure from the misery of others. That moron was one of those.

DAVID

How do you know what its like to be on stage?

JACK

I have read books, heard the stories. Its rough. It can take years and nothing may ever happen. Its a war making it in stand up, anywhere.

DAVID

What were you doing. Sitting in the back?

JACK

I wore a hat.

DAVID

That stupid MAGA hat you found in a dumpster?

JACK

I wanted to make sure nobody would bother me.

(Pause.)

You did not do that badly.

DAVID

I did horrible. That place smelled.
I cant work in places like that.

JACK

Its called starting at the bottom.
My first job. I made 8000 dollars a
year. McDonalds money. When you are
young, you pay a price.

LAUREN

Especially now. Global Warming,
Student Debt.

DAVID

Social Security will be gone.

JACK

Shall I take the blame for all of
that too?
(Long Pause.)
I expect the both of you to do two
things. Your best. And never give
up. David.

DAVID

What?

JACK

You should get back on that horse,
and back to Brooklyn. I mean, did
you think your new life would be
living here. With me? Forever?

DAVID

That did cross my mind.

Jack looks at Lauren.

JACK

And you?

LAUREN

I am not giving up. I will find
another job.

JACK

How is money?

LAUREN

Money is OK?

JACK

If you use student loan money,
you're paying interest on
everything you buy.

LAUREN

I know. You told me that many
times.

JACK

So you have unincumbered money?

LAUREN

Yes Daddy. Unincumbered money.

JACK

OK then. Lets eat.

Jack looks at David.

DAVID

What?

JACK

You are back on the bus tomorrow.
We said one year. Its been 3
months. Give this a real shot, or
you will regret it for the rest of
your life.

DAVID

One last shot Dad.

They all sit down for dinner.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Dad.

JACK

What?

DAVID

Thanks.

JACK

OK. Can we eat now?

DAVID

Who is paying for all this food?

JACK

What are you a comedian?

They all laugh.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CONFERENCE ROOM. LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL.

Another 7:15 AM morning meeting. Jack is early this time and most of the other teachers are sitting and waiting for the start. Jack looks at Cindy again, who is at the other end of the table. As they make eye contact, they both smile. Donna Briskly walks in.

DONNA

Good morning everybody.

Several respond with Good morning.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Paul.

PAUL

Yes.

Donna looks around the room for Paul. He raises his hand.

DONNA

Paul!

PAUL

Here.

DONNA

No more measuring girl's skirts in the Cafeteria.

PAUL

Its the dress code here.

DONNA

I am the dress code here. We talked about this. If you like carrying around a tape measure, measure your dick. There is a 25000 hit video on YOUTUBE because of that stupid spectacle you pulled the other day.

(Pause.)

I don't like repeating myself. Find another hobby.

Several in the conference room giggle and laugh.

DONNA (CONT'D)

In the future I will have less fun at your expense. If you follow the rules.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Tomorrow we have a practice shooting drill. I suggest all of you familiarize yourself with your employee manuals. Jack, this is on page 11.

JOHN

Oh God. That again.

DONNA

Its not the 70's or 80's. This is a State mandate.

JOHN

Last time was a nightmare. It traumatized some of my kids.

DONNA

I know. What do you want me to do?

JOHN

I don't see the need for this level of frequency.

DONNA

State Mandate. Do you want the number for the State of New Jersey Education Department?

JOHN

No.

DONNA

Bring problems to me that I have control over. I am in charge of this school. That is all I am in charge of.

(Pause)

I think that is all for today's meeting. Unless anybody has anything?

The group starts to stand up from their chairs, taking their belongings with them.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Jack.

Jack looks at Donna.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Jack?

JACK
Yes?

DONNA
Did you call Lepish an asshole?

JACK
What?

DONNA
You heard me.

JACK
Twice.

DONNA
You called Lepish and asshole
twice?

JACK
Yes.

DONNA
Good show.

Some in the group laugh as they slowly leave the conference room.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL 2ND FLOOR ATRIUM

Jack is drinking coffee and looking out the huge atrium windows. He turns around and sees Cindy coming toward him.

CINDY
Hi.

JACK
Hi.

CINDY
That was funny, you calling Lepish
an asshole.

JACK
It was. And he is.

CINDY
Very.

JACK
Our Principal is.

CINDY
Strange. Off key? Different.

JACK
Understatement.

CINDY
We all like it that way. Otherwise things would be boring. Paul is also a big fat jerk. Brown noser.

JACK
Why did you have lunch with him the other day?

CINDY
Keep your enemies closer?

JACK
Many like him in my career.

CINDY
IT?

JACK
Yes. You heard?

CINDY
How old are you?

JACK
55. You?

CINDY
Almost 30.

JACK
Married?

CINDY
No. I heard you were divorced. Sorry what happened after.

JACK
What?

CINDY
After.

JACK
What do you mean after?

CINDY

After the divorce. Your wife and boyfriend were killed in a car accident?

JACK

Where the hell did you hear that?

CINDY

The Internet?

JACK

That is on the Internet? How?

CINDY

Don't know. I found it easy enough.

JACK

Does anybody else know?

CINDY

Donna knows. Rachel. We found out 2 days ago.

JACK

Did you tell them?

CINDY

I didn't have to. They knew when we talked.

JACK

By now the whole world knows.

CINDY

Why is this such a big deal?

JACK

This is not something I want known about. I am new here. Remember?

CINDY

Sorry. Are you really upset?

JACK

This whole year has been a nightmare. My kids are a disaster.

CINDY

Two right?

JACK

My God, is there anything you don't know about me?

CINDY
Do you find me attractive?

JACK
What?

CINDY
You heard me.

JACK
You are aggressive aren't you.

CINDY
I know what I like.

JACK
Yes.

CINDY
Yes, you find me attractive?

JACK
Yes. You find me attractive?

CINDY
I would not be standing here.

JACK
OK. What now?

CINDY
Coffee?

JACK
Where?

CINDY
Does it matter?

JACK
No.

CINDY
Tonight? Pete's coffee place? 6?

JACK
OK. See you then. I actually know
where that is.

Cindy smiles. Looks back and walks away.

JACK (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ. I did not see that
coming.

INT. CHESS CLUB CLASSROOM. NEXT DAY. 4PM

Jack walks into the classroom, with some students sitting around and playing Chess on some standard Chess sets and cloth boards. One student is ALAN VELASQUEZ, 16, long black hair, earrings. Other students are standing around watching games.

JACK
Hi.

SOME IN THE GROUP
Hi.

JACK
I am Jack. I will be teaching this
Chess club after school.

ALAN
We heard.

Some other students walk into the room. Including Evan.

JACK
(To Alan.)
And you are?

ALAN
Alan.

JACK
Alan who.

ALAN
Velasquez.

JACK
Can you play?

ALAN
I can play. Can you?

JACK
I can play.

ALAN
Master?

JACK
No, I just play online. For fun.
Never interested in the 4 hour
tournament games.

ALAN

Why not?

JACK

Not my style. I am more of a 3
minute blitz guy.

Alan takes out this Chess clock and presses his button and
plays pawn to queen 4.

JACK (CONT'D)

You want to play me?

ALAN

Scared?

Jack sits down and starts to play. Then play's his pawn to
queen 4. The entire class stands around the Chess board to
watch the game.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Boring queen opening?

JACK

Might be.

ALAN

We will see.

They play about 10 moves and rather quickly Jack's position
is much better. Alan plays quickly and nervously, knowing he
is in trouble and down to 1 minute of time.

JACK

One minute.

ALAN

I see that.

JACK

Where do you play?

ALAN

All around. Mainly here.

All the other Chess club students gather around to watch the
game. Jack makes a sharp move, setting up a brilliant
combination. Alan looks at him.

ALAN (CONT'D)

You think your a grandmaster or
something?

JACK
No. Just a guy with too much
experience.

Alan looks at the board and sees that he is lost. And turns
over his king. Some in the room clap.

ALAN
You found that rather fast.

JACK
Too much time playing online.

Evan comes over.

EVAN
Can I play you?

JACK
Of course you can. Have a seat.

Evan plays white and immediately moves his pawn to king 4.

JACK (CONT'D)
King pawn opening?

EVAN
Yes, my favorite. Bobby Fischer's,
also favorite.

JACK
Jack responds, and 6 moves are
quickly played.

Evan makes a strange move, something that Jack has never seen
before.

JACK (CONT'D)
What is this? Out of the book so
soon?

EVAN
Something I thought of.

JACK
Invented? Very interesting young
man.

The crowd gets a bit too close.

JACK (CONT'D)
Hey guys, back up a little bit.
Unwritten rules of chess. No
talking and never stand too close.

The crowd backs up. Evan makes another strange move.

JACK (CONT'D)

Wow. What are you planning? I have never been here before.

Evan is moving almost immediately, now about 18 moves into the game.

JACK (CONT'D)

Some unusual ideas son. Kind of like Alpha Zero?

EVAN

Muse.

JACK

Your muse? Alpha Zero?

EVAN

Yes.

Around move 30 Evan is winning with a better position. Jack makes another move. Evan counters with a move that is an obvious error.

JACK

Did you mean to? You can take that back if you want.

EVAN

No. That is OK.

JACK

Are you sure?

EVAN

Sure.

JACK

OK.

Jack wins a piece and based on the position, essentially has the game won. Some 5 moves later, Evan lays down his king. Evan puts out his hand. Jack accepts it.

EVAN

Good game.

JACK

Good game. Thank you.

Jack whispers in Evan's ear.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Did you throw the game? Did you
 lose on purpose?

Evan smiles and stands up. Jack stands up and addresses the class.

ALAN
 (To Evan)
 Not so smart after all, are you?

JACK
 Everyone. Everyone take their
 seats. Alan, sit down, that is
 enough. Go stand over there. No
 taunting in this class.
 (Jack points to the corner
 of the room.)
 I am Jack Morris. The new Computer
 Science teacher. This is the first
 year we will be going to other
 schools to compete. Interest?

About 5 students raise their hands.

JACK (CONT'D)
 I think we need 7.
 (Pauses)
 The best online sites, are
 Chess.com And liChess.com. I
 recommend everyone signing up and
 practicing there whenever you can.

Jack notices some commotion in the back of the room. Several students are talking. Two older boys including Alan are gathering around Evan. One boy stands over Evan and shoves him.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Hey! What the hell are you doing?
 (To Alan)
 Move over there!
 (Jack points to the other
 side of the room.)
 MOVE. MOVE OVER THERE.

Jack walks towards Alan slowly, because he does not move.

JACK (CONT'D)
 What did I say?

ALAN
 Move?

JACK

And you don't move. Do you want to get expelled from this school?

ALAN

Move me.

JACK

What?

ALAN

Move me.

Jack gets nose to nose with Alan.

JACK

You sure you want me to move you? Do you want to be embarrassed in front of everyone kid?

Alan, slowly backs away and walks to the corner of the room.

JACK (CONT'D)

At a minimum, I will be talking to the Principal about this being your last day in the Chess club. From there, I could care less. Not my job.

Jack walks over to Evan and puts his hand on his shoulder.

JACK (CONT'D)

I am sorry son.

Jack looks very upset as he sees Evan shaking. Jack walks to the front of the room.

JACK (CONT'D)

You have no ability to put yourself into the place of someone who is suffering and then ask yourself.

(Pause.)

Its a question. How would I feel if, I were this kid?

(Long Pause.)

What did you jerks gain by threatening a kid like that? Other than sadistic pleasure?

The entire group looks at Jack, and nobody answers.

JACK (CONT'D)

This is the last time this happens in any of my classes.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

(Pause.)

Everybody in every class I teach,
including after school, will show
respect to all your classmates.

(Pause.)

Is that understood?

Several in the group nod their heads.

JACK (CONT'D)

Given that this is the first class
I am calling this early.
Everybody, just get out.

The group slowly leaves the room. Evan follows the rest and
is the last one walking towards the door. He walks up to Jack
and puts his hand on his face.

JACK (CONT'D)

I am sorry there are people like
this in the world. I will do my
best to.

EVAN

I will clear you.

JACK

What? What do you mean?

EVAN

Story on the Internet?

JACK

Yes. But how did you?

EVAN

No problem. It will all be gone
tonight.

Evan walks out of the classroom as Jack looks on, amazed.

JACK

Clear me? How does he know how to?

**INT. SEEDY COMEDY CLUB IN BROOKLYN NEW YORK. SATURDAY NIGHT.
11:00 PM**

The MC walks on stage. A stand-up comedy veteran, Jason
Green, 29 years old.

MC

OK, how is everybody doing?

There are some sounds of random noises as most in the crowd is mostly drunk

MC (CONT'D)

Next up is a new up and coming young comic on the circuit. From New Jersey and now Brooklyn, give it up for David Morris!

Random noises and applause from the audience.

DAVID

Hello! I am David, from a really crappy apartment, how are you?

More random noises from the audience.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I could never be in the Taliban and here is why.

(Pause)

I would actually try to participate in a Taliban meeting. How do you know that there are 72 virgins? You have never been dead right?

(Pause.)

(Pause.)

And the head guy would shoot me in the face. My membership in the Taliban would be over in 2 minutes.

Some in the audience laugh.

DAVID (CONT'D)

All popular expressions bother me. Since I have started this comedy career, NOT EASY, I have lost count the number of times I have heard someone say, crushing it. Meaning you did good. Nobody says you did good anymore.

More in the audience laugh. David takes out a small piece of paper and starts to read it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Crushing it, bothers me. Did a naked fat guy sit on a grape somewhere and all the people around him thought this was a good thing?

(Pause)

I for one feel sorry for the fucking grape.

More people are laughing. David's set is going well.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Why is crushing it popular? Why not just say, good job, whatever happened to GOOD JOB! Now it has mutated into sitting on a grape.

More laughter.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Someone started the stupid remark, but why do we all buy into it? How about some originality? How about not using any of these expressions? Now that would be original.

(Pause.)

Anybody here remember the Adventures of Superman TV series from the early 50's?

A few say yes in the audience.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Here is my impression of George Reeves, the star of the Adventures of Superman. Getting a call from his agent in 1952, after being an unemployed actor for about a year.

David puts his hand up to his ear, to represent a phone.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Yes. Yes, this is George. Hi Rick. No, nothing new, no prospects or even an audition in about 3 months. Told you that already.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Superman? What do you mean Superman? I don't read comics. TV series? No movies? TV is not on my high list right now. I know I haven't worked in. Yes, beggars cant be choosers. OK. So what is this series? Superman, the man of steel? For TV, can they do special effects for a super hero? I mean what about a disguise? It would have to be convincing. Glasses? What do you mean glasses?

(Long Pause.)

You're kidding. That is the stupidest thing I have ever heard.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Nobody is going to believe this.

(Pause.)

So, I take off my glasses and I am Superman, and put them back on and, nobody recognizes me? This show will be on the air one episode. My career will be dead forever. No I have not seen the costume. A cape? Tights? Red panties?

(Pause.)

Did you say, red panties? No way I am wearing tights and red panties on national TV. Forget it. No way man.

(Pause.)

How much? Really? For a TV show? Can we lose the panties? The stupid glasses idea?

(Pause.)

Are you sure about the salary?

(Pause.)

Can we please lose the red panties?

(Pause.)

You already asked?

(Pause.)

I'll take it.

More laughter in the audience. David finishes his set and the audience stands up and applauds.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Great crowd, thank you! Thank you!

MC

How about that guy. That was David Morris. Good job. YOU CRUSHED IT!

The audience laughs even more. David rushes off stage and into the mens room. He looks into the mirror trying to keep his composure. His life is now, forever changed. One of those once in a lifetime moments - impossible to forget.

DAVID

I did it! I did it!

David starts to cry, completely overwhelmed.

INT. COFFEE SHOP. SOMEWHERE NEAR LAKEWOOD NJ. NEXT DAY. 6:00 PM.

Jack is standing inside a trendy, but old looking coffee shop, adapted from what looks to be a barn.

As Jack looks out the window he sees Cindy get out of her car and walk across the street into the coffee shop. Jack smiles as he sees Cindy enter the building.

JACK
Hi.

CINDY
Hi.

JACK
How are you?

CINDY
How are you?

JACK
Good.

CINDY
Good.

JACK
Awkward?

CINDY
For sure. Lets not be awkward.

JACK
I have not been on a date like this. Since. College? I actually don't remember.

CINDY
Like riding a bike?

JACK
That is what they say. Would you like some food?

CINDY
Food and coffee? Why not? Looks like they have. Lots of.

Cindy looks at the menu on the wall.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Lots of. Horribly overpriced sandwiches and cookies.

JACK
Yes they do.
(To the cashier.)
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I will have the ham and cheese,
that cookie, with. Yes that one.
And just a regular coffee.

CINDY

Same thing, but I will have the
chicken salad sandwich.

Cindy and Jack, wait in line and check out. Jack tries to pay
for both orders.

CINDY (CONT'D)

Jack. You don't have to pay for
mine. That is OK.

JACK

No problem.

CINDY

No, its not really a date. Its just
coffee.

JACK

OK. I think I will lose this
argument.

CINDY

Yes you will. Lets sit over there.

Jack and Cindy, sit next to a window, with a scenic view of a
lake.

JACK

Nice choice.

CINDY

I have been here before.

JACK

Another coffee date?

CINDY

No. Just some teachers from school.
Its nice here isn't it?

Jack looks out the window.

JACK

Yes it is. Great scenery. Great
lake.

CINDY

Lakewood. It makes sense.

JACK
Should be a lake somewhere.

They both laugh.

JACK (CONT'D)
I have to say, I am surprised.

CINDY
About what?

JACK
About this date, you asking me.

CINDY
I find you interesting.

JACK
Why?

CINDY
All the baggage. Calling Lepish an asshole. In no particular order.

JACK
My kids?

CINDY
Don't know anything about them. 2?

JACK
A boy and a girl. Both in their early 20's and both. Finding themselves.

CINDY
Who is not finding themselves in their early 20's?

JACK
True. I was a disaster.

CINDY
Me too.

JACK
I have so many stories.

CINDY
That is what I sensed about you.

JACK
What do you mean?

CINDY

That pain. That I see in your eyes.
Its there now.

JACK

I didn't realize it showed that
much. You think contacts would
help? Two eye-patches?

Cindy smiles at Jack.

CINDY

I have a sixth sense about this
stuff.

JACK

Really?

CINDY

I think I do.

JACK

I don't want to overwhelm you with
too much baggage, both bad and
good. I would rather talk about you
anyway. And Evan.

CINDY

What about him?

JACK

He tells me, right after
yesterday's first Chess club
meeting that he will clear me.

CINDY

Clear you?

JACK

That story about my wife, my
divorce, Spain. Clear it from the
Internet.

CINDY

He knows how to do that?

JACK

Yes.

CINDY

Wow.

JACK

What is his IQ anyway?

CINDY

I think only Donna knows. And maybe. Lepish. I hear from Rachel that they are giving him a whole battery of tests.

JACK

Lepish is involved?

CINDY

Yes. That guy, who could care less about any kid in this school.

JACK

Another creep, like too many in my former profession.

CINDY

There is probably nothing you can teach Evan, that he does not know already.

JACK

Poor kid was being bullied. So I cut the class short.

CINDY

We have idiot bullies all over the place in this school.

JACK

Empathy is the solution. What if that were you? What must this be doing to him? He is a small kid. Bullies make themselves feel powerful by destroying another human being.

CINDY

It is possible that Evan looks at you like his protector? Maybe even his father?

JACK

Possible.

(Pause.)

I met his father and from our short meeting - he sure does not seem like a good one.

(Pause.)

How long have you been a teacher here?

CINDY

About 8 years. First job out of college. Rider.

JACK

Good school.

CINDY

Where did you go?

JACK

NJIT.

CINDY

Like it?

JACK

I wanted to get the hell out and start making money. Its 4 years of course after course and the truth is, 2 1/2 years is more than enough time to get a college degree.

CINDY

Considering the cost. The student loan debt. Four years is too long.

JACK

Looks like we agree on everything.

CINDY

Everything?

JACK

Lets say, for the sake of our first date. Everything.

CINDY

Its not a date, its just coffee.

JACK

How about a real date. A dinner?

CINDY

Are you asking me out?

JACK

Yes.

CINDY

Let me think about it. While I eat this cookie.

Cindy smiles at Jack as she eats her cookie.

INT. JACK'S COMPUTER SCIENCE CLASS. NEXT DAY. 10:30 AM.

Jack is standing in front of the blackboard.

JACK

Given that this is the second day of this class, I have decided that we will be learning C# as our language of choice, and then if there is time or inclination. Python later in the semester.

JULIE

Why C#.

JACK

C# is Microsoft and is used with something called Dot NET. Dot NET came out in 2001 and it is huge. DOT NET and Visual Studio covers just about everything. Depending on where you live and the companies near you, Microsoft technology or Python, with machine learning and Data Analytics are the two biggest technologies right now.

There is suddenly a very loud intercom sound, an announcement is coming.

DONNA

This is your principal. As per all of your training and conversations with your teachers, we will be having a practice emergency drill starting right now. Everyone please follow the instructions of your teachers.

JACK

OK everyone. We talked about this last time. Everybody stand up. We will be walking to the safe room area. No talking, stay in line.

Jack turns off the light in his classroom and they all follow him down the hall and to the left. Other groups of students follow Jack and his class down the hall. They all enter a large room with several large doors. Jack's class goes into the room on the far right, the room is dark, and Jack closes and bolts the huge metal door as they all sit in the back of the room on the floor.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Everybody just sit down, and stay
 quiet.

KENNETH
 But this is just a drill?

JACK
 I just said quiet and you talk?
 Learning how to listen is a big
 part of life Kenneth.

Jack looks at Evan, making sure he is OK. Evan makes his way
 towards Jack and sits down next to him. Jack puts his head
 in his hands, not believing the reality of drills like this.
 Evan looks at Jack, with great concern.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (Quietly to himself)
 What has this world come to anyway?

INT. DONNA'S OFFICE LAKEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL. NEXT DAY, 9 AM.

Rachel and Jack are waiting for Donna in her office. Both
 look nervous.

Rachel turns to Jack.

RACHEL
 What did you do?

JACK
 Nothing. What do you mean, what did
 I do? My job?

RACHEL
 Something must have happened. Being
 summoned like this. Again?

JACK
 She is overreacting about
 something. Maybe the Chess club
 incident?

RACHEL
 What Chess club incident?

JACK
 Some bullies and Evan.

RACHEL
 Did you confront them?

Donna briskly walks into her office and sits in her chair.

DONNA

Unfortunately. Here we are again.

RACHEL

What do you mean, again?

DONNA

That idiot at the Chess club, told his parents what you did, and then they called me.

JACK

What did he say I did?

DONNA

You got face to face with him.

JACK

After he threatened Evan.

DONNA

Doesn't matter. You cannot get face to face or physically challenge any student in this school. It is policy. Isn't that clear?

JACK

You had to be there.

DONNA

No. The point is, you cannot get face to face with any kid. For any reason.

JACK

He was belligerent with me, and threatened Evan.

DONNA (CONT'D)

I am not getting through to you am I?

RACHEL

Jack. Don't push this. You're going to lose.

DONNA

Listen to her Jack. Do you want to continue to work here?

JACK

Yes of course.

DONNA

I do not like getting calls from parents about any of my teachers. Now its two sets of parents, pissed off about one my teachers. And a brand new teacher at that! Did you have this kind of track record when you were an IT guy?

JACK

I had my issues with the wrong people. Lets say that.

DONNA

You obviously have problems with authority. Let me make this clear. This is my fish pond here. You are just a carp swimming in my pond. I make the rules. Not you. Got that?

JACK

A carp?

DONNA

Carp!

JACK

I got that.

DONNA

Another meeting like this Jack and odds are. You are out of a teaching job. Good luck getting another teaching position, after lasting a few weeks on your first one.

JACK

I understand. I am new. Learning the ropes.

DONNA

Not an excuse.

RACHEL

Aside from this. Jack has been doing very well?

DONNA

OK is what I heard.

RACHEL

I have heard very good feedback from everyone.

DONNA

Still doesn't matter. When you do not follow policy.

RACHEL

Anything new on Evan?

DONNA

His parents still tell me he thinks you are his best friend ever. Not good.

JACK

That was not my fault.

DONNA

Evan is off the charts. He just scored.

(Donna grabs several official looking test papers.)

The highest IQ ever recorded in world history. We had to test him 5 times, with different tests because the numbers were not making sense.

Donna looks at some papers on her desk.

DONNA (CONT'D)

265.

JACK

265?

RACHEL

265?

DONNA

It is the highest ever recorded. There was a boy born in 1999, Ainan Celeste Cawley, a Singaporean child prodigy.

Donna continues to look at the documents on her desk.

DONNA (CONT'D)

He scored 263. Evan is 2 points higher.

JACK

What is this kid, doing in this school?

DONNA

My thoughts exactly. Then add the bullying problems.

RACHEL

Is there any way we can get his parents in here, and then find funding from the State to get him into a special school? There is nothing we can teach him here anyway.

DONNA

We have been down that road. And now the kid wants to stay here, because of Jack. We will try again. We now have all the test numbers so it is likely the State will come forward with financial help.

JACK

I sure hope so.

DONNA

I suggest that you teach him with the rest of the students and offer some extra credit work on the side. Don't tell the other students.

(Donna looks directly at Jack.)

This kid saved your job Jack.

JACK

I am getting that impression.

DONNA

Use your imagination. Chess, AI. You have my permission to teach him privately and in class. Challenge him. Lets see what this kid can do.

JACK

265 IQ. I will do my best. He is one hell of a chess player.

DONNA

Find out what he is creating, what he is coding. This could be bigger than we think. It is one thing to be a genius. Its another thing to be a prolific genius.

RACHEL

He is probably coding and creating every waking hour, from what I know.

JACK

I saw something on his machine,
that could be. It could be his own
operating system.

DONNA

What do you mean?

JACK

Linux, Windows. He might have
created his own computer operating
system.

DONNA

At 14 years old.

JACK

There was a kid who invented Linux
years ago, he was 21. Some kid from
Finland, Linus Torvalds. Chess and
AI are his other interests.

DONNA

Jack. Find out whatever you can,
and let me know.

JACK

I will.

DONNA

Meeting over. Get out.

Jack and Rachel leave Donna's office.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE DONNA'S OFFICE. CONTINUOUS.

JACK

How in the hell did I go down the
drain this fast. All I did was be a
human being. Clearly. Not in the
job description.

RACHEL

This is politics over humanity. Not
how I would handle this.

JACK

I really don't think.

(Pause.)

That I can be a high school
teacher. I can't turn my back on a
kid who needs a friend. Even if I
am his teacher.

RACHEL
Would you go back to IT again?

JACK
No. I think I am done working. I have paid more than my share of dues. There has to be something else I can do. Even if that is nothing.

RACHEL
Don't throw in the towel so soon. Lets see how this plays out.

JACK
If this goes south. Then so will I.

RACHEL
Jack.

JACK
What?

RACHEL
No matter how this turns out. You are a likeable guy.

JACK
You're a nice guy yourself.

Jack and Rachel walk side by side down the hallway.

RACHEL
Cindy?

JACK
We dated. Coffee. A two days ago.

RACHEL
You see a future?

JACK
Like everything else. Who the hell knows. God knows why she is interested. I am a disaster and so is my job.

RACHEL
Maybe she thinks. She can save you?

They both smile and continue to walk down the hallway.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY. 3 PM, ONE DAY LATER.

Jack walks into the school library and talks to the front desk clerk.

JACK
Have you seen Evan Stevens?

CLERK
Are you Jack?

JACK
Yes.

CLERK
He told me to tell you to meet him way in the back of the library. You have to climb the ladder.

JACK
Ladder?

CLERK
Yes, you cant miss it, its small and it leads to a small upstairs room that he likes, because he can be very private.

JACK
OK. In the back, this way?

Jack points to the back of the library.

CLERK
Yes. Just keep walking.

Jack walks to the back of the library, and after some looking around, finds a small ladder and starts to climb to the small room on the next floor. Jack knocks on the door.

JACK
Evan?

EVAN
Mr. Morris?

JACK
Yes, its me.

Evan opens the door.

EVAN
Thanks for coming.

JACK

I am anxious to see what you have been working on.

EVAN

I am sitting over there.

Evan points to his laptop and chair in front of a small desk.

EVAN (CONT'D)

Did you see that I cleared you?

JACK

Yes. Thank you. How did you do that?

EVAN

Some easy hacking, no problem.

JACK

Well, thank you. I have no idea how something personal about me could have gotten on the Internet.

EVAN

Too many bad people?

JACK

That would be my guess. Enemies from my past career? Who knows.

EVAN

Sorry about your career. Bullying. Like me?

JACK

In a way. Yes. It was the price I had to pay to make more money. As a contractor for most of my career, I just had no choice.

EVAN

So sorry.

JACK

Don't worry son. I am past it now.

Evan looks at Jack for 30 seconds.

EVAN

No sir. You are not.

JACK

You are right.

Jack looks at Evan's screen.

JACK (CONT'D)
Is this your own OS?

EVAN
Its an OS Engine for back-end AI
and macro generation. Its really
just a front end driver to house
the AI and macro engines.

JACK
So three parts, OS, AI and Macro?

EVAN
Yes. Instructions that I can create
to run the OS. The instructions are
run through the AI part and tell
the OS what to do, through macros.

JACK
That is amazing son. How long have
you?

EVAN
About a year now.

JACK
What do you have the OS do? What do
the macro's do.

EVAN
Potentially anything. But right
now, making money through social
media, Pinterest, Amazon, affiliate
marketing. All organic traffic.
Because of volume it can automate
traffic generation continuously, 24
hours a day. Like Alpha Zero - it
learns. It gets better when it
executes.

JACK
Is it making money?

Evan pulls up his bank account and logs in. The balance is
\$985,302. Jack looks at the bank account and visibly
stunned.

JACK (CONT'D)
Oh my God. Do your parents know
about this? Does anybody know?

EVAN

Only you sir. I will never show my parents, you are the only one I trust. Its close to 100,000 a month. And growing.

JACK

I am absolutely amazed by what you have done. You have created an automated online affiliate generation application, with unlimited money making capability. Using Artificial Intelligence.

EVAN

Yes.

JACK

What is next with this?

EVAN

I will use the money for charity, helping people. The AI module can be extrapolated for more capability. I am looking into trading options next.

JACK

Just like Alpha Zero?

EVAN

Alpha Zero was the inspiration for this application.

JACK

You are one hell of a genius. Did you know that your IQ is now the highest ever recorded?

EVAN

They never told me.

JACK

Well, I just told you, and I will probably get into trouble for that too.

(Pause.)

I am trying to think about, all this money. What charities did you have in mind?

EVAN

I want to invent my own. For the poor.

(MORE)

EVAN (CONT'D)

People who are so unhappy and have horrible jobs. Life is so unfair Mr. Morris. Someone has to swoop in and help them.

Jack is once again visibly stunned.

JACK

Young man. You are wise way beyond your years. I will have to tell the Principal.

(Pause)

Did you just say, swoop in?

EVAN

Yes.

(Pause.)

If you tell, the Principal might take all the money.

JACK

How?

EVAN

She might think, because I used school equipment. This is not mine.

JACK

Knowing her. She will make all of this as difficult as possible.

(Pause.)

You are one very special young man.

EVAN

Thank you sir.

JACK

I should be calling you sir.

Jack holds out his hand. Evan shakes it.

EVAN

I want to help desperate people.

JACK

So do I son. Starting with you.

Jack starts to lose his composure and hugs Evan.

EVAN

I think you are like my real Dad.

JACK

What do you mean real Dad?

EVAN
My Dad. Has never been. My Dad.

JACK
Another thing we have in common.

INT. SCHOOL CONFERENCE ROOM DAY. MONDAY 7:15 AM

Several teachers enter the conference room, for the weekly meeting. Most are carrying briefcases.

As they all sit down, Donna barges into the conference room.

DONNA
This meeting will not be happening today, I will reschedule.
(Points to Jack, Rachel and John)
You, you and you Jack, follow me to my office.

Several of the teachers stand up, taking their belongings.

PAUL
Donna?

DONNA
Yes?

PAUL
I am not invited?

DONNA
No. Not for this one.

PAUL
Why not?

DONNA
Because I am the Principal of this school and you are not.

PAUL
I am the Vice Principal.

DONNA
Paul.

PAUL
Yes.

DONNA
Want to stay the Vice Principal?

PAUL
Yes.

DONNA
Sure?

PAUL
Yes.

DONNA
You are not invited. You are
welcome to listen at my door with a
glass however.

Several teachers laugh.

DONNA (CONT'D)
Never question my authority within
this group again.

Donna leaves the conference room with Jack, John and Rachel.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM. CONTINUOUS

Jack and Rachel follow behind Donna and John to her office.

RACHEL
(To Jack.)
Do you have any idea what the hell
is going on?

JACK
No. I wish I did. Donna did not
look good.

RACHEL
I know.

INT. DONNA'S OFFICE 5 MINUTES LATER. CONTINUOUS.

DONNA
Everybody just sit down. This is
not going to be a fun meeting.

Jack, Rachel and John sit facing Donna.

RACHEL
So, what is going on?

DONNA

I have some bad news. Evan is in a coma at Lakewood Hospital. He was attacked by someone, the police do not know who yet.

JACK

Is he going to be OK?

DONNA

He is in an induced coma because of the head swelling. The doctor told me they are hopeful, but they do not know yet.

JACK

Its those bastards who have been harassing him. Velasquez.

DONNA

Do not jump to conclusions. Nobody knows the situation yet. This is a highly unusual kid, anybody could have attacked him. We are not living in a kind world.

JOHN

What is the prognosis?

DONNA

Extreme caution. Intensive care, is all I know.

RACHEL

It is not easy to be a genius in this world. Or different.

DONNA

The problem with Evan has always been that he has been too different. Not his fault. More his parents. Wrong school, bad decisions. Too many bad kids in this school. I am to blame. I should have refused to take him in, day one.

JACK

Is that all? I have to go to the hospital.

DONNA

No, it is not all, and no you cannot go to the hospital.

JACK

Why not?

DONNA

You are not family. His parents do not want you there. I will fire you if you go there? Is that enough?

JACK

What are we supposed to do?

DONNA

Nothing. Wait for the police to get back to us. And wait for the hospital to let us know the latest.

JACK

We cant just sit here. There has to be something we can do. Something I can do.

DONNA

You can surprise me and follow my orders for a change. Did you have this problem in your former field? Never listening to the people in charge.

JACK

Excluding present company. I did have problems with authority, mainly because they were lousy at their jobs.

DONNA

Excluding present company?

JACK

Yes.

DONNA

Just keep walking that high wire.

Jack is visibly upset thinking about Evan. Rachel puts her hand on Jack's arm to comfort him.

DONNA (CONT'D)

There is something else. I got an anonymous check in the mail this morning made out to cash, for 250 thousand dollars.

RACHEL

What?

DONNA

The police are investigating this too. I called them as soon as I got the check.

JACK

I think that might be from Evan.

DONNA

So how does a 14 year old kid get this kind of money?

JACK

He showed me his social media generator last week in the library. It is off the charts, amazing genius. He had an almost 1 million dollar balance in the account.

RACHEL

You have to be kidding me.

JACK

I have never seen anything like it. An OS, that automates Internet traffic Search Engine Optimization and marketing using a macro and AI engine. Its always on and generating income. Automatically.

DONNA

So as far as we know its working now?

JACK

Right.

DONNA

Do his parents know about this?

JACK

He only told me. He hates his father.

JOHN

You also look a bit like him.

JACK

I have a connection with this kid that I do not understand. I am in awe of his genius. His coding skills are at a level far higher than I have ever seen.

DONNA

This is all out of our hands. Does anybody have anything else?

RACHEL

Are you going to cash the check?

DONNA

Right now its in my wall safe as evidence. And that was a damn stupid question.

RACHEL

Sorry.

INT. LAKEWOOD HOSPITAL DAY. 3 HOURS LATER. 1 PM.

Donna is talking with 3 police officers, in the lobby of the Hospital. Evan's parents are standing next to Donna. OFFICER WELLS is 6'1', with black hair and very muscular. OFFICER HELFAND is 5'10', slim with gray hair.

OFFICER HELFAND

We think its this Velasquez kid along with 2 of his friends. This is based on some local conversations.

RICHARD

Its definitely that lowlife creep. Evan has had problem with that kid since he started at this high school.

OFFICER WELLS

Sir. As I told you before, we don't have any witnesses or proof yet. We cannot go around arresting random kids.

JUNE

Why is it taking you so long to arrest someone?

OFFICER WELLS

We are looking for Velasquez right now. We called his parents and they do not know where he is. Neither do we.

RICHARD

Very suspicious that he disappears right? Right?

OFFICER HELFAND

Yes it is. And as I told you before, please calm down.

RICHARD

Don't tell me to calm down. This is my son in a fucking coma in there!

OFFICER HELFAND

I could arrest you. Do you want to be arrested?

RICHARD

For what? Caring about my son?

Jack and Rachel walk down the hallway and join the group. Awkward and violent stares start between Jack and Richard.

DONNA

Well. Thank you. Once again for following my orders - to perfection. Are you two lobbying to get your asses fired out of my school?

RACHEL

We couldn't stay away. We care about this kid.

RICHARD

(Looking straight at Jack.)

What the hell is he doing here?

DONNA

He is leaving. As of right now. Go away, the both of you. This is not your business.

RICHARD

Yes. Get the hell out of here.

Richard gets eye to eye with Jack.

JACK

Officer. If I were you. I would convince Rambo, to back the hell off.

OFFICER WELLS

Sir, back away. We don't need a big scene today.

Richard slowly backs away.

RACHEL

Can we just stay in the waiting room? We are both so worried.

DONNA

June?

JUNE

Yes, I guess they can stay.

RICHARD

June?

JUNE

They are just going to sit and wait. What is the harm?

RICHARD

I am in no mood for this. And where is this doctor, its been an hour?

DONNA

(To Rachel and Jack)

The doctors put Evan in a coma, because of the brain swelling, 40 minutes ago.

JACK

Is he going to be OK?

DONNA

We just don't know yet.

Officer Wells receives a call from his station.

OFFICER WELLS

We will be leaving now, we will keep you posted on whatever we find out.

DONNA

OK. You both have my card?

OFFICER WELLS

Yes ma'am.

(To Richard and June.)

We have your numbers.

JUNE

Please. Please, find out who did this!

OFFICER HELFAND

We will. We will contact you soon.
I am sorry ma'am.

INT. WHITE HOUSE POLICE STATION NEXT DAY. 2 PM.

Officer's Helfand and Wells are sitting in a police station conference room. Two young boys, Alan Velasquez and BILLY THOMAS, 16 are walked into the conference room by another officer. They sit across from officer Wells and Helfand.

BILLY

I didn't do anything.

ALAN

Shut up.

BILLY

I didn't do anything. And you shut up.

OFFICER WELLS

Enough of the entertaining banter.
Unfortunately for the both of you.
Someone just called in. Ever hear
of a cell phone video?

ALAN

What?

OFFICER HELFAND

A woman just happened to be looking
out a window when you both beat up
that innocent kid. And one of you,
or both of you, kicked him in the
head.

(Reads his notes.)

More than once.

BILLY

I didn't do that.

OFFICER HELFAND

We didn't ask you if you did. And
what happened to.

(Using a mocking whiney
tone.)

I didn't do anything.

BILLY

I didn't.

OFFICER WELLS

Cell phone videos, do not lie. Regardless of which one of you fucking lowlife kicked this genius kid - in his head. The charges will be the same for both of you. And if he dies, we will be charging you as full adults. Say goodbye to the rest of your childhood and most of your adulthood.

Alan starts to cry, and so does Billy.

OFFICER HELFAND

Not so tough now. I have always been fascinated by bullies like you morons. Is it because he is a genius, far smarter than the both of you combined? Going places? Will probably make a great deal of money. Change the world? And you two assholes will be sweeping McDonald's parking lots.

BILLY

I did not do anything.

OFFICER HELFAND

Keep saying that. And we will just play the video during your trial.

(Pause.)

Was the temporary high worth it? Worth where you are now? Think about it.

Both officers stand up and leave the conference room and walk towards their cubicles.

INT. OFFICER CUBICLE AREA A FEW SECONDS LATER.

Officer Wells opens up an e-mail and plays the video.

OFFICER WELLS

Seeing shit like this makes me sick. I am actually getting nauseous.

OFFICER HELFAND

That last kick looks like attempted murder to me.

OFFICER WELLS

This video is going to the prosecutor.

Suddenly, Evan's parents, June and Richard rush into the police office.

JUNE

I heard you caught them!

RICHARD

Are they here?

OFFICER WELLS

Does it matter if they are here or not? You are not getting anywhere near either of them.

RICHARD

Its Velasquez and his lowlife friend Billy, right?

OFFICER WELLS

Yes that is them. We have a cell phone video that I just e-mailed to the prosecutor.

JUNE

Oh! My God! Oh God that is such good news.

RICHARD

That is great. Great job guys. I want to see that video!

OFFICER WELLS

No. I will not allow you to see it.

RICHARD

Why not?

OFFICER WELLS

Because it is evidence and its violent. Trust me. You both do not want to see it.

JUNE

The news on Evan is good. The swelling is going down. They think we might be OK.

June breaks down and starts to cry. Richard hugs his wife and they embrace.

OFFICER HELFAND

For the both of you, we are happy about the good news, but there is no reason for you to be here now.

RICHARD

I just want one shot at that kid. One punch in the face.

OFFICER HELFAND

Their parents are coming right now. And comments like that will get you arrested. You both should leave now.

OFFICER WELLS

You seem to have a listening problem Richard. If you fly off the handle we arrest you. Its that simple. Now the way out of here is that way.

(Officer Wells points towards the back door.)

RICHARD

OK. We are leaving.

Richard and June head towards the back of the Police station and slowly leave the building.

OFFICER WELLS

Now that was easy.

OFFICER HELFAND

Thank God this kid will be OK. A huge waste if he died.

OFFICER WELLS

I am not looking forward to the other parents. And here they come.

The parents of Alan and Billy come storming into the police station. DAVID and MARIA VELASQUEZ and HARRIET and JOE THOMAS run towards the two police officers.

OFFICER HELFAND

There is no running in this police station. Slow down.

JOE

What the hell is going on with my son?

DAVID

I got a call at my office. No way Alan did this.

OFFICER WELLS

We have a cell phone video.

MARIA

What?

OFFICER WELLS

The video shows both of your son's kicking Evan in the head. It is now evidence sent to the Prosecutor, so we will not be showing it to you.

MARIA

No. Yes, what? A video of my Alan?

JOE

I cannot believe it.

DAVID

Who is that other kid?

OFFICER HELFAND

The only good news is that Evan is looking like he might be OK. His brain swelling has gone down. Had he died we would have prosecuted both of them as adults.

DAVID

What?

OFFICER HELFAND

Right now it looks like attempted murder. We will keep you all posted.

JOE

Isn't there something you can do? They are just kids!

OFFICER WELLS

They both kicked a 14 year old boy in the head, more than once. A kid? That is what a killer would do.

OFFICER HELFAND

Lawyer up.

OFFICER WELLS

Lawyer up guys. That is your only course of action. Good luck.

JOE

(With great sarcasm.)
Thanks for the help.

OFFICER WELLS

You're welcome.

JOE

Can we at least see the boys?

Officer Wells points to the back of the floor. All four parents turn and walk away towards the interrogation room.

INT. LAKEWOOD HOSPITAL. NEXT DAY. 8 AM.

Jack and Rachel are standing over Evan's bed. Jack is close to tears.

RACHEL

Here we go again. As both our jobs are hanging by a spider web, outside that window.

Rachel points to the window behind Evan's bed. A spider can be seen climbing a web.

JACK

How is Donna going to find out we are here?

RACHEL

Oh. She will find out. Believe me.

JACK

I don't care about my job anymore. Only this kid. Its like he is my own son.

RACHEL

I didn't know you felt that strongly.

JACK

I do. Look at him. He does look like me.

RACHEL

He does.

JACK
Evan. What is PI, 20 digits.

EVAN
20?

JACK
20.

EVAN
3.1415926535
(Pause.)
8979323846

RACHEL
(To Jack.)
Is that right?

JACK
How the hell should I know? Evan.
Fischer's 20th move. Game 6, 1972
against Spassky.

RACHEL
E4?

Jack smiles with a tear in his eye, knowing that Evan will be OK. Jack looks at Rachel.

JACK
That one I know. He is OK. Thank
God.

RACHEL
You are one tough young man. The
two scum who attacked you are in
custody will be charged as adults.

EVAN
Keep them away from me!

JACK
Evan. Don't worry. They will never
hurt you again.

Jack starts to cry.

JACK (CONT'D)
Don't worry. They are going to
prison where they can never hurt
you again.

Jack hugs Evan as Rachel looks on. Rachel starts to lose her composure.

RACHEL

They will never hurt you again.
Don't worry.

EVAN

Why do they hate me so much?

JACK

That is a question bigger than even your exceptional brain. Sick people Evan. They are jealous of you. You are going to change the world. They are nobody's.

(Pause)

The software engine you created, is still making money Another 60,000 dollars the last 5 days.

EVAN

60,000?

JACK

Yes.

RACHEL

(To Jack.)

60K?

JACK

Yes.

RACHEL

Wow. What are we going to do with all that money?

JACK

Donna got your 250 thousand dollar check.

EVAN

Did she cash it?

JACK

Its in her safe. She is not going to cash it.

EVAN

Why not?

JACK

You're a minor. The number one thing is to get better. How do you feel?

EVAN

Headache. But I am OK. I want to sleep. For a long time.

JACK

We will leave you now. You are going to be fine! We promise.

Evan starts to cry and Jack hugs him again.

EVAN

I love you.

JACK

I love you too son.

EVAN

Really?

JACK

Yes. Really.

RACHEL

We all love you Evan. You will change the world one day. I think you have already.

Jack and Rachel slowly back out of the room.

JACK

We will come back tomorrow OK?

EVAN

Why did they let you in here?

JACK

We broke in.

Evan smiles.

RACHEL

We are probably both fired already. Not that we care anymore.

Evan smiles again and laughs a little.

JACK

Great to see you laugh. Tomorrow OK?

EVAN

OK.

Jack and Rachel walk down the Hospital corridor holding hands. As they are about to turn a corner, they look at each other and embrace.

JACK

That brilliant child has been ridiculed and bullied his entire life. Now, all we wants to do is help people.

RACHEL

Maybe that is the truest sign of his genius.

JACK

His humanity.

EXT. MODERN OFFICE BUILDING, LAKEWOOD NJ. DAY. 2 YEARS LATER. MONDAY. 8 AM. PRESENT DAY.

Jack is standing in front of a very large office building, looking at his watch. As he looks off to the right, across the street, he sees his two children Lauren and David. He smiles and waves as they make their way across the street.

JACK

Hi!

DAVID

Dad. How are you?

LAUREN

Dad. You look great.

JACK

So do you. Both of you. Ready for a new day of good work?

LAUREN

I sure am.

DAVID.

Me too.

Jack, David and Lauren make their way up the winding stairwell inside the huge Atrium. As they walk upstairs, there is a giant company logo that says, "SWOOP" and a small caption underneath, "Engine of Hope, We Help Hopelessness." They continue to walk into the main part of the office complex and then into a large conference room. Several people are there, including Cindy and Donna, John and Rachel. Jack hugs Cindy before taking his seat at the head of the conference room table.

JACK

Wow, everyone right on time. It must be another Monday!

JACK (CONT'D)

Is he a little late?

DONNA

One small software issue, he will be here in a few minutes.

JACK

Great.

Jack sits down at the head of the conference room table and takes out several papers from his briefcase.

JACK (CONT'D)

We are still, after one full year of operation - the very definition of a non profit organization. In one year, 80 lives have been saved. Single mothers, kids who would have otherwise died because some insurance company refused to pay for an operation. Families almost homeless, 20 year old's just trying to start out, trying pay their college loans and get that first job. I am also proud to report that all our charitable contributions were made anonymously. Always a top priority.

Several in the group applaud.

RACHEL

Jack, did you find her?

JACK

Yes. She moved to West Virginia. Unfortunately she was still having hard times.

DONNA

Who?

JACK

A young woman I saw working in a run down Motel about two years ago. She was being yelled at and fired by some Motel manager. My instincts told me that she was probably a struggling single mother.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

I saw her child in her car. She was recently turned down by her medical insurance company for an operation for her son. Money, over the life of a child. Her name is Karen, she was working in a diner as a waitress. I sat in the back.

Jack hooks his cell phone into the overhead projector.

JACK (CONT'D)

I am sitting in the back. There, next to the window. I hid my cell phone across the room, so I could catch this whole moment.

The video shows the woman being handed a yellow envelope by the manager of the Diner.

KAREN

What is this?

MANAGER

I don't know. Some guy came by about an hour ago, and told me to give this to you. I don't know what it is.

The young woman opens the envelope.

KAREN

What. What is. What is this? Its 250. 250 thousand dollars?

Karen almost faints from her disbelief.

MANAGER

Are you OK Karen?

KAREN

Yes. I think so. Can I take the day off?

MANAGER

Yes sure. Is that 250,000?

KAREN

Yes.

(Pause.)

I think I have to go cash a check.

Karen slowly leaves the Diner and in the back, Jack can be seen smiling. Karen takes one long last look at the Diner and walks away.

JACK

This is what we are all about.
People on the edge. Depressed with
no hope. No money. No future. In a
deep hole they cannot see their way
out of. We will help where we can.
We will never be able to save
everybody. Now we are in a health
Pandemic, the worst in 100 years.
What we will continue to do here,
has never been more important.

Several in the conference room have tears in their eyes. Some
applaud.

JACK (CONT'D)

We have work to do, and our job, is
to find the desperate and hopeless.
And then, save their lives.

Evan enters the conference room carrying his laptop.

EVAN

We swoop in and help the good
people.

JACK

That is the name of our company
Evan!

EVAN

That it is.

Every one in the conference room stands up and applauds as
Evan enters the conference room. We see a small tear in
Evan's eye as he looks at Jack.

Fading to black.

THE END