PUSHED

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FADE IN:

SUPER: SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS. 15 YEARS AGO.

EXT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT

Excess rain flows down a curb.

Orange cones and caution tape surround a gutter drain, the grate damaged from some past school prank.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE ROOM - DAY

Two teen girls, RHONDA and ALISON, scuffle in. DANIELLE keeps watch at the door. Danielle, nervous, motions the other two to hurry up.

Rhonda and Alison beeline to a cabinet. Rhonda opens it. The noise gets another worried look from Danielle. Alison calms her down. Rhonda smiles as she reaches -

A glass jar with stacks of dead grasshoppers immersed in a yellowish liquid.

Squeamish, Alison gets a baggie out of her pants pocket. Rhonda frowns as she twists off the lid. Both girls nearly tip over the jar as they snatch up three bugs

And stuffs them in the Ziploc.

Alison hustles towards lookout Danielle. Rhonda gets halfway across the room when she sees the dissected grasshopper on the teacher’s desk.


ALISON
Forget it. We got what we came for,
Let’s go!

RHONDA
That’s one already opened up! It’s perfect!

DANIELLE
(low)
Want to get caught? Jesus Christ!

Rhonda pulls out a few pins out of the grasshopper. Alison tugs Rhonda’s left arm.


ALISON
Forget about it. Got to go!
DANIELLE
Put the jar back!

Rhonda breaks Alison’s hold.

Rushes back. Puts the jar up. Closes the cabinet.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

CARMEN, a petite 17 year old girl with wire frame glasses, spins her locker combination. In spite of her height and bookworm look, she could beat half of the other girls in any cheer leading tryout.

Alison, Rhonda and Danielle watch -

ALISON
(giggle)
Clueless Carmen.

DANIELLE
“Look at me, I’m so cute Beauty Queen”

Carmen opens her locker.

A blown up condom filled with yogurt with a small slit at the end. On top of two small yellow balloons. All taped together.

On the inside of the locker door, in black marker

DO YOU LIKE THAT?

Carmen shakes as she reaches. Gets one of her textbooks. Between the cover and inside front page, a dirty tampon.

Disgusted, Carmen goes towards a trash can, ditches the tampon. A smudged lipstick message for her inside the book

SLUT

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

Carmen, seated alone, swoons when she spots DAVID, who has an entourage of friends.

CARMEN
Hello, David.

David walks by, waves and smiles. JESSICA (16) close behind David, gives Carmen a angry glance.
Carmen takes a bite out of her sandwich.
She gags, spits it out.

Alison, Rhonda and Danielle chuckle. They give each other hi-fives as Carmen bolts out of her seat.

BATHROOM - STALL

Carmen vomits over a toilet. She takes a breath. Looks down into the swirl of mayonnaise and half-eaten grasshopper.

Jessica smacks her in the back of the head. Cameron’s glasses plop into the toilet.

JESSICA
Feeling any better?

Jessica grabs Carmen’s hair.

JESSICA
Stay away from my boyfriend, skank, or you’ll get what’s coming to you.

Let’s Carmen go.

CARMEN
David’s not your boyfriend.

Jessica shoves Carmen.

JESSICA
What was that? What did you just say to me?

CARMEN
Leave me alone!

Jessica flushes.

Carmen panics. Fishes her glasses out.

JESSICA
No problem, bitch.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE - DAY

Carmen, teary eyed and pale, looks into the eyes of the PRINCIPAL (mid 40s) a heavy set man who doesn’t carry a big bat for enforcement, but it wouldn’t be a shocker if he had one somewhere close by.
PRINCIPAL
This has been going on for how long?

CARMEN
Couple of weeks. I thought they were my friends.

MONTAGE - INTERCUT
Jessica, Alison, Danielle and Rhonda speak to the Principal at different times in the day.

ALISON
I don’t know what her problem is. We did haze her a little bit when she moved here at first, but nothing serious.

DANIELLE
That’s gross, we didn’t do it.

RHONDA
She’s making that up.

PRINCIPAL
Well someone did it. And some specimens were taken from the classroom.

ALISON
“Specimens?”

DANIELLE
Wasn’t us.

RHONDA
I know her family just moved here a month ago and all. Maybe she has a hard time adjusting.

PRINCIPAL
What do you mean?

RHONDA
She’s kind of a loner.

DANIELLE
Maybe she took the bugs.

PRINCIPAL
Why would she do that?
ALISON
For attention.

PRINCIPAL
The bugs have traces of formaldehyde on them. She was nearly poisoned.

JESSICA
I never laid a hand on her. She’s a liar.

PRINCIPAL
We went through her locker. Her books.

JESSICA
I had nothing to do with any of that. Maybe those other girls did, I don’t know. Maybe she’s making that up too.

PRINCIPAL
You had nothing to do with stuffing yogurt in a condom, taping it to the inside of her locker?

Jessica laughs a little.

JESSICA
Someone actually did that?

PRINCIPAL
This is serious.

BACK TO SCENE

PRINCIPAL
I’d like you to try to avoid these girls as much as possible.

CARMEN
You don’t believe them, do you?

EXT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Jessica, Rhonda, Alison and Danielle hang out around a partially rusted car.

JESSICA
Carmen Winst is so dead. Dumb skank nearly got me suspended.
DANIELLE
Slut ought to know when to close
her hole and when to open it.

ALISON
I know the bitch’s e-mail.

Rhonda stares at the battered storm grate.

RHONDA
How far does that go down?

INT. JESSICA’S ROOM - NIGHT

Seated in front of her computer, Jessica writes an e-mail. Rhonda and Alison look on. Danielle is more interested in Jessica’s pictures and achievements that adorn the walls.

JESSICA
Mud on her cheerleading uniform? I
can’t write that. Someone will know
it was us who did that, like an
admission of guilt.

RHONDA
Write shit. Dogshit in her coat pocket.

JESSICA
Yeah. I like that.

DANIELLE
You didn’t make the squad this
year?

JESSICA
I was out, the skank got in.
(to Rhonda)
Who should I send this to?

RHONDA
Everyone.
(beat)
What are you doing?

JESSICA
“Carmen Winst is a dead rat”

RHONDA
Shorten it.

JESSICA
What?
RHONDA
She thinks just because she’s new
and Daddy has a good job, she
thinks she’s better than the rest
of us. Carmen WinstDEAD.

JESSICA
Carmen Winstdead falls into the
storm drain -

RHONDA
The sewer. Sleeping in shit.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Danielle cranks her neck over, spies on Carmen, who looks
tired, eyes red, suffers from a bit of nausea. Rhonda taps
Danielle on the shoulder.

RHONDA
Stop it.

DANIELLE
She doesn’t look good. She alright?

Students eyeball the clock. Close books, notepads.

RHONDA
Who cares?

The FIRE ALARM roars out. Some students jump out of their
chairs even though over half the class appear as if they were
expecting it. MRS. SIMMONS (30s) speaks over the noise.

MRS. SIMMONS
I want everyone to go in a single
file into the hallway, go to the
east entrance. It’s only a drill.

EXT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT

Students lined up as far as the eye can see. Teachers count
heads. Danielle and Rhonda fail at hiding their smiles.
Rhonda under Mrs. Simmons view, flips Carmen off.

Carmen spots them, weaves herself ahead and disappears into
the crowd. A SCREAM.

DAVID
Oh my God! She fell!
MRS. SIMMONS
Who?

DAVID
Carmen Winst! She was just standing right there -

Students, Jessica among them, clear out of the way. Knelt down beside the open grate and toppled cones, David freaks.

DAVID
She slipped and fell right in!
Someone call 9-1-1!

Jessica has her hands up, shakes.

DAVID
What did you do!

JESSICA
I didn’t do anything! I never touched her! I swear to God!

Mrs. Simmons steps up, peers down.
Her hand goes over her mouth.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL – PRINCIPAL’S OFFICE – DAY
Jessica, visibly shaken.

PRINCIPAL
Her parents have been called. So have yours.

JESSICA
It was an accident.

PRINCIPAL
She just walked right to it and fell in herself.

JESSICA
Ask anyone you want. I never touched her. Not after the other day!

PRINCIPAL
Think I’m a tough case, wait until the police ask questions. Then you’ll see how tough it gets.

JESSICA
Nobody touched her.
INTERCUT

Rhonda, Alison and Danielle, in the same chair, different times of the day.

PRINCIPAL
You girls were harassing her. You expect me to believe you four had nothing to do with it?

ALISON
I was nowhere near her. I was on the other side of the school during the drill.

PRINCIPAL
Some students have talked about a chain letter e-mail they got last night, which we will be looking into.

RHONDA
Chain letter?

PRINCIPAL
So it was just coincidence.

DANIELLE
I have no idea what you’re talking about. What e-mail?

PRINCIPAL
Don’t play games with me, young lady. Don’t take me for a fool.

BACK TO SCENE

JESSICA
Nobody pushed her. Nobody did anything. I didn’t do anything.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL – HALLWAY

Jessica embraces David.

DAVID
She didn’t make it.

JESSICA
She killed herself, didn’t she?
DAVID
She looked sick. Got dizzy. She tried to grab my arm.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Danielle and Alison stare at a white car adorned with flowers and a cardboard message

MISS YOU CARMEN

INT. JESSICA’S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

In a nightie, Jessica washes her face. She waits a few moments, stares into the sink’s abyss.

BEDROOM

Jessica turns off the light, lies down.

COMPUTER
You’ve got mail!

Jessica gets up, heads to her desk. Opens the e-mail.

INSERT MESSAGE

SHE WAS PUSHED

BACK TO SCENE

Jessica’s eyes follow the message. In brief glimpses -

BULLIED

THEY LIED

HER FACE RIPPED OFF

BODY LAID IN FILTHY SEWER

INT. RHONDA’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rhonda’s face turns pale as she reads her e-mail message.

RHONDA
Pass this on to ten people or Carmen’s ghost will kill you in the dark sewer where she died.
INT. ALISON’S HOUSE - MORNING

Visibly shaken, Alison puts on her jacket. Takes her backpack.

INT. DUNCAN HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY

Alison walks past Carmen’s locker. Carnations taped to the door along with a note with a sad face.

She goes to her own locker.

Spins the combination.

Opens the door. The dissected grasshopper, crucified with tape on the inside door greets her over a partially torn N Sync pinup.

Down the hall, Rhonda screams, her locker open.

INT. COUNSELOR’S OFFICE - DAY

David, lethargic and withdrawn. The School COUNSELOR (male, 40s) seated across from him.

David shakes as he hands over a printed e-mail message.

DAVID
It’s been making the rounds with my classmates.

COUNSELOR
I heard. Any idea how this started?

DAVID
I don’t know. But I tried to save her. Nobody pushed her. She didn’t kill herself. It was an accident.

COUNSELOR
That’s what the police ruled. Oh, I see it. That’s new.

DAVID
It says I’m going to die for not taking this seriously. I’ve been taking it seriously for the past six months. I been on pills, having nightmares, Had to break up with my girlfriend. Now this.
COUNSELOR
Just some kids being mean, playing a prank.

DAVID
Some prank, this is the fifth one I got this week. I’m supposed to be team basketball captain, and I can barely keep it together. I don’t know who to talk to, who to see.

COUNSELOR
We are looking into this.

DAVID
She was nice to me. I never did a thing to her. Now I’m getting the blame for not saving her.

COUNSELOR
No one is blaming you.

COUNSELOR’S OFFICE – DAY
Rhonda, crazed, ready for medications herself...

RHONDA
They pushed her...

FADE OUT.