PANAMA

by

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FADE IN ON BLACK:

“Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.”

- Oscar Wilde

INT. - LUKE WILSON’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Focus on an alarm clock: 6:29 am...6:30 am the alarm blares. A hand comes into frame and shuts it off.

INT. - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The shower is going. Through the steamy curtain we can see the silhouette of LUKE WILSON. He is humming an obscure but easily recognizable tune while he showers.

INT. - KITCHEN - LATER

Dressed in a nice pair of black slacks, a white dress shirt and blue tie LUKE grabs a bowl from the cabinet. He then makes his way over to the cabinet above the sink opens it and browses for some cereal. The choices seem limited but they make do.

He pours cereal into his bowl and then makes his way to the refrigerator. After seconds of searching the inevitable ensues...no milk.

INT. - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The living room, small and spotless. Just seen is a single sofa and television. LUKE sits on the couch watching the morning news while spooning dry cereal into his mouth. His expression is unpleasant to say the least.

EXT - LUKE’S DRIVEWAY - LATER

LUKE, now with a briefcase in hand, walks up to his beat up, ridiculously small (compact) car, unlocks the door and gets in.
INT. - LUKE’S CAR - CONTINUOUS

LUKE gets into his car and takes a look at the gas gauge. It isn’t empty but it’s close to it. Sitting in the driver’s seat he contemplates for a moment and then looks down at his watch.

CUT TO:

EXT. - BUS STOP - LATER

At a bus stop bench LUKE sits, hands folded on his lap staring straight forward. The bus pulls up and he boards almost reluctantly.

INT. - CITY BUS - LATER

The bus contains a handful of people. People riding to work, mostly blue-collar types. LUKE sits near the middle of the bus. His briefcase sits on his lap and his hands are folded, he stares straight ahead.

The man searches for a seat, there are many open ones but as it were he chooses the seat right next to LUKE.

The bus departs.

LUKE continues to look straight forward. The man puts his hand out and greets LUKE.

HOBO

Howdy, just made the bus, almost missed the damn thing. Didn’t want to have to walk to work.

LUKE smiles, just to humor the man.

HOBO (CONT’D)

Just pulling your chain. Nope, no work for me today. I don’t exactly have a job, per se. So where you headed?

LUKE

Work. Start a new job today.

HOBO

Howabout that. That’s nice. I don’t work anymore cause I found careers to be dull and boring, for suckers really. No offense.
LUKE
None taken.

HOBO
You see, for years I did that whole nine to five gig, not for me. I found a loophole where I don’t have to work ever again. I’m as of yet to find a flaw in my system.

LUKE
Is that right?

HOBO
Yeah, you see people think a lot of us,
(emphasizing)
Homeless, have no power over our situation but just between you and me, I love this life.

LUKE
Naturally.

HOBO
Sure I’m shunned by half of society and haven’t even talked to a woman since the Regan-era but the pros dramatically outweighed the cons.

For some reason out of his control LUKE is becoming interested in what this man has to say.

LUKE
Are you serious?

HOBO
Sure. I mean look at me do I look like I’m depressed? On the brink of starvation? Hell no, I’m living the dream.

LUKE
What dream?

HOBO
The dream. In fact, living on my own terms and not having to work like a pawn to survive and to live, very well may be my greatest accomplishment.

(BEAT)
(MORE)
HOBO (CONT'D)

Oh and coming home from Vietnam the same day I was sent. But that is for very different reasons.

LUKE just nods. The bus comes to a stop.

EXT. - PANAMA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

The bus pulls up to PANAMA elementary school, it seems to be the normal elementary school. Its a suburban setting, kids are being dropped off by their parents and buses are letting off drones of children who walk in through the front gates.

LUKE gets off the bus and turns his head back to the window and sees the HOBO waving goodbye. He just half-hardily smiles.

LUKE proceeds to walk in through two glass doors in the front of the school that say: “Front Office”.

INT. - FRONT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LUKE walks into the office.

He looks around for a minute and takes in his surroundings. He stares at some trophies inside a case and a few plaques on the wall (teachers of the month pap. A teacher, MR. SAGE graces the wall six times but this award was given some time ago. The awards are collecting dust and cobwebs)

LUKE gets up to the secretaries' front desks. The name tag on one woman’s desk says: PENNY, one in front of the other reads: DEBBIE, whom is on the phone but PENNY greets him with an enthusiastic smile.

PENNY

Hello, may I help you?

LUKE

Well hello, my name is Luke Wilson, I’m here to fill in for a Mr. Lowell.

PENNY

Oh yes.

LUKE

On the phone they didn’t tell me if it was permanent or?
PENNY
Oh yes, you will be filling in for 
the remainder of the year, at 
least.

LUKE
Um? Why is Mr. Lowell out for the 
year?

PENNY
The school isn’t quite at liberty 
to discuss the matter, but I’m sure 
you’ll be a more than an adequate 
replacement. You look like you’ll 
fit right in.

LUKE
Well I hope to Ms?

He fishes for a name.

PENNY
Penny.

LUKE
Oh, Penny what?

PENNY points to her name tag proudly.

PENNY
Just Penny, and this fine woman 
next to me or my better half as 
she’s become known down here in the 
front office is, Debbie.

LUKE
Let me guess, just Debbie.

DEBBIE
That’s right just Debbie.

LUKE
Howabout Deb?

DEBBIE
Not unless you have a death wish.

LUKE points at DEBBIE with his hand, as if it is a gun and 
smiles.

LUKE
I just might.
PENNY and DEBBIE laugh, in unison, in a quite annoying manner.

PENNY
Well class starts in about half an hour but I was told to send you into David’s office when you arrived so just go on in.

LUKE
David?

DEBBIE
The principal.

LUKE
OK, well thanks. I’ll catch you guys later.

PENNY
Good luck.

LUKE
Am I going to need it?

PENNY
That’s difficult to answer. Maybe he’ll like you, I sure do. Then again maybe he won’t.

LUKE
Does he like most people?

PENNY and DEBBIE laugh, in unison, in a quite annoying manner, once again.

INT. - DAVID BRADY’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DAVID BRADY sits behind his desk.

He can only be described as a short man; hair parted perfectly down the middle, wearing a red sweater vest and a bow tie that complements the huge gap between his front teeth nicely.

A knock on the door.

DAVID BRADY
Come on in.

In comes LUKE, a bit frightened and a bit disturbed.
He peers around the office; on the walls are plenty of posters that are meant to evoke inspiration.

Examples include: A poster cleverly stating, "Hang in there" with a cat hanging from a tree branch. Another saying "A child's mind is for molding, a child's heart is for holding." And last but not least, one says, "Get a mental high!" Which displays a picture of a cartoon guy injecting a syringe that says “knowledge” into his veins.

LUKE sits down. The office is silent. MR. BRADY reads over a file, probably LUKE'S. Finally the silence is broken.

DAVID BRADY (CONT’D)
So, Mr. Wilson.

LUKE
Mr. Brady.

DAVID BRADY
So you’ve come highly recommended out of Fresno’s regional school district, I see you were awarded favorite substitute by the students two years in a row.

LUKE seems unenthusiastic.

LUKE
Well you know, it was a little poll by the children, they gave me a little plaque, not a big deal.

DAVID BRADY
Well don’t be coy, Mr. Wilson, what it means is that children like you and you are probably an effective instructor. Which is becoming extremely rare these days.

LUKE
Well.

MR. GEORGE reads over the file once again.

DAVID BRADY
It also says here that you majored in Physical education And minored in culinary arts. How ambitious.

(BEAT)
A renaissance man really.
LUKE
Yeah, I’m not going to lie to you, at first, I wasn’t thinking teaching per se but after a few missed opportunities and eight years of community college, I found out I only needed a few more credits to become a certified instructor. I decided to take the road less traveled, teaching.

DAVID BRADY
A less traveled road yes but a high one at that.

LUKE
Oh, no argument here, I love what I do. There’s a sense of gratification in educating the minds of the future.

DAVID BRADY
A first class attitude indeed.

LUKE
Well I hope to do my best here at Panama elementary. Rise fast, heck, maybe even find myself gracing that teacher of the month wall.

DAVID BRADY
We haven’t had a teacher of the month in some time.

LUKE
Oh, I’m sorry, work ethic down?

DAVID BRADY
Well productivity is at an all time low but maybe with your help we can correct this problem. It is, in my mind, achievable.

LUKE
I’ll try my best here, sir.

DAVID BRADY
Well that’s all we can hope for. Well, we’re all done here, you can go up to Carl’s office to get the key to your classroom.

LUKE
Carl?
INT. - CARL’S OFFICE - MORNING

CARL, the main man when it comes to janitorial services at this school, sits at a desk in his office. If this can even be called an office, it’s more like a dark room in the corner of the school, secluded from everything and everybody.

Again, the room is dark, smells like ammonia and houses dozens of cleaning supplies and in the corner is a small desk with a lonesome computer, this is where CARL sits.

LUKE walks in on him. CARL seems happy to have a visitor.

LUKE
Excuse me, Carl?

CARL gets up from his desk and walks up to LUKE.

CARL
Yep, I’m Carl.

They shake hands.

LUKE
I’m new and Mr. Brady sent me here to pick up the key for my classroom.

CARL
Oh, not a problem, which classroom is this.

CARL walks up to a near wall that has many sets of keys just hanging.

LUKE
It’s Mr. Lowell’s old class.

CARL seems a little sad to hear this.

LUKE

CARL
Yeah but I don’t know why, no one has even told me. They must be hiding something, am I right?
LUKE chuckles. CARL doesn’t laugh but gets a serious demeanor.

CARL
They must be and are trying to cover it up. I know. They think old crazy Carl just cleans up the messes, you know replaces the toilet paper and repairs the electric hand dryers, which don’t dry your hands anyway, its insane but boy do I ever know what goes on in this place. Mr. Lowell, he isn’t exactly someone you wanted around children, If you catch my drift. I mean, its nice to have a passion for the students but not like that. The man was disturbed.

LUKE
Figures. In this day and age.

CARL
A frightening statement, if there ever was one.

LUKE
Yep but you know the deterioration of the moral fibers that once held our society together seems quite inevitable.

CARL
Its sad but true. Your a smart guy, I like that.

CARL jumbles through the wall of keys and finally pulls a set down.

CARL (CONT’D)
Here we are, room 908, or as I like to call it: Where it all happens. The place where the future politicians, doctors, firemen, police officers and garbage men do their daily geography. Its a noble cause what you do.

LUKE
And you too.

CARL
You really feel that way or are you just saying that.
LUKE
No. I wouldn’t patronize you like that. Don't ever let anyone tell you that what you do isn’t cause for praise. Somebody has got to do it and you deserve to be recognized, in some form.

CARL
Well I appreciate that.

CARL sits back down at his computer and turns the monitor on.

CARL (CONT’D)
Well before you leave, if I may ask, I reckon you know something about computers? I mean your technologically literate I assume.

LUKE
Considerably.

CARL
Well. I was just wondering how I could have multiple windows of these adult web sites open at the same time. I’ve been getting into this whole Asian thing lately.

LUKE seems plagued with embarrassment but not for himself.

LUKE
I’ll see you later, Carl.

INT. - TEACHER’S LOUNGE - MORNING

Three teachers: MRS. HERDER, a six-foot woman, with short brown hair and an apparent limp cursing her right leg, MR. SHERWYN, a six-foot four ogre with a goatee, sunglasses and a blue Hawaiian t-shirt and MR. WILLIS, an athletic, muscular looking man wearing a jogging suit are in line awaiting their turn for coffee.

LUKE comes in the teacher's lounge. Stealthily and with compassion he ducks into the coffee line. HERDER gets coffee, and then SHERWYN but MR. WILLIS holds an obnoxiously large coffee mug that is about the size of one pot of coffee. He pours liberally.

When LUKE gets to the coffee station, no coffee remains. No more in the pot, no more to be made, none in sight whatsoever. He casually walks up to MR. WILLIS.
LUKE
Excuse me.

He taps MR. WILLIS on the shoulder. He turns around.

MR. WILLIS
Yes? Do I know you?

LUKE
Nope. I'm new. I'm a new teacher here.

MR. WILLIS
Well put a feather in your cap.

LUKE senses some tension.

LUKE
Alright. Well, I just wanted to ask if you would mind if I had some coffee?

MR. WILLIS
Why would I mind? It's a free country. Or haven't you heard, friend.

LUKE chuckles, just slightly.

LUKE
You see you took all the coffee and there seems to be no more left. I don't mean to pry but what you have in that cup seems like enough for two, hell, even maybe three people.

MR. WILLIS
I'm confused.

LUKE
I'm sorry? Which part confused you?

MR. WILLIS raises his voice for all the teachers in the lounge to hear.

MR. WILLIS
You see, it seems that the new guy, who hasn't been here for no more than say an hour is demanding me to give up my coffee. What next my salary, my coaching position or my department chair responsibilities.
LUKE
Maybe we got lost along somewhere but I was just simply inferring that maybe the awkward proportion of your cup could be divided into several smaller cups of coffee that could ultimately be shared among the staff.

MR. WILLIS
Oh. Well you know what happens when you infer.

(BEAT)
LUKE
I’m truly at a loss.

MR. WILLIS
Well if I can remember correctly I think the saying goes, if you infer you open a doorway to trouble.

LUKE
I don’t think anyone ever said that.

MR. WILLIS
And do you know what’s behind that doorway?

MR. WILLIS sets down his coffee. LUKE shrugs but remains silent.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
This guy
(flexes and points to his left biceps)
And this guy.
(points to his right biceps)

LUKE
Enjoy your coffee, sir.

MR. WILLIS
You enjoy your first day, I sure will.
(BEAT)
Sir.

MR. WILLIS picks up his coffee and takes a long drawn out sip.
MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
Hot and black, just how I like it.

MR. WILLIS then looks at the only African American teacher in
the room.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
No pun intended.

LUKE walks over to a nearby couch and sits down. MR. SHERWYN
sits next to him and diligently looks over the back cover of
a CROSBY, STILLS, NASH and YOUNG vinyl. Where he got this
album from or why he is even looking at it is beyond the
realm of human comprehension altogether but he just is.

SHERYWN
Mr. Willis, what an asshole, am I
right?

LUKE
Is he always like this?

SHERYWN
Level with me, it wasn’t about the
coffee but about the naked ambition
of the human spirit, man.

LUKE
I think I just wanted some coffee.

SHERYWN
Oh, right on. So let me introduce
myself, I am Mr. Sherywn art
teacher here at Panama elementary.

LUKE
Nice.

SHERYWN
I mean in a nutshell that’s who I
am but do you want to know my real
passion?

LUKE scans him over.

LUKE
Uh? Gardening?

SHERYWN
No. Try again.

LUKE studies his face and once again takes an open-ended
guess.
LUKE

Pottery?

SHERWYN
Close, but it’s way better than that. Me and a couple friends of mine get together in front of this local coffee shop, real low-key establishment, every weekend and we drum?

LUKE

Drum?

SHERYWN
(excited)

Yeah. Drum.

LUKE

Like with real drums or?

SHERYWN

Well more like with bongos and tambourines and the occasional maraca and chime, just to keep them guessing. Guess what we call it?

LUKE

I don’t know, fun?

SHERYWN

Oh no. I mean its loads of fun but no. Now brace yourself for this and take it in for all its worth.

(places index and middle finger on mouth, then removes as he speaks)

Drum circle.

SHERWYN elaborately motion a circle with his hands.

LUKE

Drum circle?

SHERYWN

Sure. Its simple and to the point. I mean we drum in a circle, its right there, plain as day, clear as crystal.

LUKE

I guess it has that whole straight faced quality to it. I mean you drum in a circle and all.
SHERYWN
This is what I’m saying.

LUKE
Level with me. Your kind of that crazy, out of whack, unconventional, post-modern hippie teacher aren’t you?

SHERWYN just stares at him for a moment.

SHERYWN
Self-classification is the first step into the crumbling of the human psyche, so no.

LUKE
I will catch you later, Mr. Sherwyn.

SHERYWN
Not if I catch you first.

LUKE gets off the couch and walks away. SHERWYN continues to look at the album exactly how he was before LUKE came and sat down.

EXT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

LUKE walks through the hallway.

Kids of all grades stare at him as he passes by, he sees one kid in particular getting picked on by two bigger kids, they start to push him around. He intervenes.

The BULLIES are your average looking bullies, we all know the type. The kid that is getting picked on looks of Indian decent, that's India not Native American.

LUKE
Gentleman, will you leave this kid alone?

BULLY 1
What the hell is it to you?

LUKE
Let’s watch the language son.

BULLY 1
Who are you? I’ve never seen you before. (MORE)
I live by the code if you’ve never given me a test, an F or detention, then I don’t listen to you.

LUKE
Well I’m a new teacher but that doesn’t matter. Why are you messing with this kid?

BULLY 1
(impersonating LUKE)
Why are you messing with this kid?
(normal)
Just look at him, he looks like one of those guys who bombed our country. Plus we caught him peeing in the drinking fountain, last week.

AMIT
Not True! You lie!

LUKE
Alright. Do you know the term racist? Do you know what it means?

BULLY 1
Are you serious. Of course I know what racist means. My Grandpa once called our gardener racist because he came into this country in the back of a van.

LUKE
OK, do you have a dictionary?

BULLY 1
(cheerfully)
Yeah. Let me pull it out of my ass really quick.

The second bully laughs his head off.

BULLY 1 (CONT’D)
Hell no. Who carries around a dictionary.

BULLY 2
I have a mini-pocket thesaurus, if that helps.

He pulls it out to show it off.
BULLY 1
Faggot.

He puts it away in dismay.

LUKE
Now, I want you to find a dictionary. Next, I want you to flip it open to the “I” section and look up the word ignorance. Then, write me a full page on why you and your Grandpa’s flawed outlook on life is generally considered ignorant by society.

BULLY 1
Why would I do that?

BULLY 2
Yeah, why would he do that?

LUKE
If you don’t then I’ll have to take you up to the principal’s office. He’ll probably suspend you from school for a few days and you’ll end up learning nothing. So I offer you this option, one page, ignorance and leave this kid alone. Now get outta here.

They exit.

LUKE (CONT’D)
What’s your name?

AMIT
Amit Gupta.

LUKE
Well Amit, you alright?

AMIT
Yeah, I’m ok. When those guys mess with me I just imagine where they’ll be in fifteen years.

LUKE
And where do you guess that’ll be?
AMIT
Well, with their current views on the importance of a proper education, I believe they will be abusing the comforts of our social welfare programs.
(he laughs)

LUKE
Wow, that was really smart. How old are you?

AMIT
eleven, but I’m supposed to be moved up to the 8th grade after the end of the year. Finally I can be with my own intellectual peers.

LUKE
Well, good luck, maybe you’ll cure some disease or something, then you’ll show those bullies who gets the last laugh. Unless they have the disease you may in fact cure. But I wouldn’t worry to much on that, the odds on that can’t be very significant.

INT. - CLASSROOM - LATER

The elementary school classroom, it truly brings back memories. Only usually upon memory we remember a vibrant room with lots of colors and decorated walls but in this case all four walls are bare. The room is off-white and rings quite dull.

LUKE sits in the front of the class behind his desk. Fifteen or twenty kids file in and await for class to start.

LUKE gets up and walks over to the blackboard and in chalk writes: MR. WILSON

A student raises his hand. LUKE points at him immediately.

LUKE
Question?

CHARLES
Yes, my name is Charles Dunmeyer, you can call me Charlie.
(MORE)
Well myself as well as many of my classmates would like to know why we are getting a teacher change mid-year.

Another student, REN, interrupts.

REN
Yes, I feel this change in events will ultimately lead to the further decline of my already slumping grades.

LUKE
Well Charlie and I didn’t catch your name.

REN
Ren.

LUKE pulls a paper out of his jacket pocket and begins to read it.

LUKE
Well Charlie and Ren
(begins to read very generically)
I will try my best to pick-up where your last teacher left off. In hope to further progress your curriculum so you can make the most out of the remainder of your school year.

REN
That sounds like a pre-written statement from the principal. Is that a pre-written statement from the principal?

LUKE
Uh? Yes it is. Though I must say I strongly agree with your principal’s outlooks on the matter.

LUKE walks back to his desk and looks at some papers.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Well if what I read here is correct it seems that we’re off the magical world of mathematics. So buckle up your seat belts, we’re off.
Another STUDENT in the back of the classroom raises his hand.

    LUKE (CONT’D)
    Yeah. In the back there.

    STUDENT
    Before we take off can we take a quick pit stop? Unless you-

    LUKE
    For what?

    STUDENT
    I need to use the bathroom.

    LUKE
    Is it an emergency? An immediate threat?

    STUDENT
    Somewhat.

    LUKE
    Number one or number two?

Scattered laughs ensue.

    STUDENT
    (sighs)
    Frankly, a little bit of both.

More laughing ensues. REN interrupts.

    REN
    Nice.

    LUKE
    Just go.

He leaves the room.

    LUKE (CONT’D)
    OK, Math, where did you leave off?

    CHARLES
    Leave off?

    LUKE
    Yeah. What’s the last thing you learned?

A girl near the front, JENNIFER, raises her hand. LUKE points to her.
JENNIFER
Yeah, we didn’t leave off anywhere.

LUKE
I don’t understand.

JENNIFER
Mr. Lowell never taught us anything. Well nothing worth learning that is.

LUKE
What did he teach you then?

JENNIFER
How he owed a lot of what he called back taxes. Oh and how his girlfriend left him and how he was indeed contemplating suicide.

REN
He also told us this cool trick to do with a can of whip cream. I think he called it Whip-its.

LUKE
Hmm. Wow. Well no wonder he’s not your teacher anymore. But I am and I’m going to teach you math, reading, grammar, history and some science. Oh, and if we have time then maybe just about life in general.

REN raises his hand.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Yes, Ren?

REN
Yeah, that last subject, life, we only have a few weeks left in school so we’re probably not going to get to that.

LUKE
Well Ren, that last subject, life, I will be teaching you that at all times. Lucky for you it just comes extra.

REN
Alright lets do some math then.
LUKE
Alright, grab your math books and turn to page one, we’ll cover all we can.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

It is now recess. LUKE comes out of his classroom and locks the door behind him. He walks into the classroom right next to his.

INT. - MR. SAGE’S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

LUKE enters the room. The lights are dim and a dreary rock song like “AS TEARS GO BY” by THE ROLLING STONES plays faintly in the background.

Sitting at a corner desk is MR. SAGE, his head is buried deep inside a book, HEART OF DARKNESS or perhaps an unauthorized biography of Henry Kissinger but whatever it is we cannot see his face, nor has he acknowledged LUKE’S presence yet.

As LUKE approaches closer, he bumps into a nearby table and knocks a stack of papers on the ground. MR. SAGE sets down the book and stares LUKE directly in the eyes.

We now see his face; this is not the same MR. SAGE whose pictures were plastered all over the front office as teacher of the month. His face is covered in a thick, slovenly kept beard and his hair is long, almost shoulder length, he no more dons a dress shirt and tie but wears a faded black shirt and dark black ray bans but it sure as hell ain’t bright.

MR. SAGE
What are you doing?

LUKE
Mr. Sage?

MR. SAGE
Yes. Again what do you want?

LUKE
I’m Luke Wilson, the teacher from next door taking over for Mr. Lowell. Just wanted to introduce myself.
MR. SAGE
Oh right. Mr. Lowell, sorry to hear that we lost him.

LUKE
That’s strange.

MR. SAGE
What is?

LUKE
Oh, its just that no one else feels that way. Everyone else on the faculty seemed to embrace his departure.

MR. SAGE removes his sunglasses and stares at LUKE with a sort of fury.

MR. SAGE
Oh. Is that so? Its because they’re all cowards. The bunch of em’. Cowards. Bred from the same machine and they’re all sucking off the same tit but sadly that milk went bad years ago.

LUKE
(seemingly confused)
Pardon?

MR. SAGE
Wait. That’s good stuff.

MR SAGE puts down his book and grabs a small memo book out of his back pocket and opens it, roughly to the middle. He grabs a freshly sharpened pencil, licks the tip and begins to jot something down.

MR. SAGE (CONT’D)
(to self)
Cowards...
Bred from the same machine...
Tit, milk went bad years ago.

He finishes writing and puts the notebook back in his pocket.

MR. SAGE (CONT’D)
So why are you here again?

LUKE
Again I just wanted to introduce myself.
MR. SAGE
Well the pleasure is all mine. I hope you find a little niche for yourself in the place. God knows I have.

He goes back to reading his book. A school bell rings.

LUKE
Well I better get back to my classroom but I hope to see you later.

MR. SAGE
(staring into his book)
Well our paths are destined to cross again, inevitable as death it would seem.

LUKE exits.

EXT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

LUKE strolls out of MR. SAGE’S classroom and immediately crosses paths with MR. WILLIS. He has fire in his eyes.

MR. WILLIS
Sweet. The temp. Just the man I was looking for.

He puts his arm firmly around LUKE'S neck; this makes us as uncomfortable as LUKE.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
You see I have a problem. Well we have a problem because your actually directly involved with this dilemma. Granted your not the catalyst of my sorrows but you are indeed the solution, You interested?

LUKE shrugs, He’s clearly not interested.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
Oh come on tenderfoot. Be a sport.

LUKE
Fine. I’m listening.
MR. WILLIS
Good. Here’s the thing. You see today, after lunch, is the annual teacher-student-flag-football-game. We have it every year and every year the teachers win.

LUKE
I fail to see the problem.

MR. WILLIS
Well you see, I groomed Mr. Lowell to be our star quarterback. I trained with that guy day and night rain and shine for two weeks straight. He was a well-conditioned machine but unfortunately for us he is here no more.

LUKE
Drag.

MR. WILLIS
Drag? That’s all you got. Come on you fucking dote. Its more than that, its a goddamned tragedy what has happened to our once elite team. Without a finesse and competent quarterback those students, those fucking kids could beat us. You know what that would do don’t you.

LUKE
A morale boost for the children?

MR. WILLIS
No. My reputation would be shot. A long running tradition here at Panama Elementary would be tarnished and not to mention bragging rights are clearly on the line.

LUKE
Well, Its just a game right?

MR. WILLIS
Just a game? That’s sweet but seriously how about it? Do you know your way around the gridiron? Can you handle the rock? Last but not least could you lead my (MORE)
MR. WILLIS (CONT'D)
(bites tongue)
Our team to victory?

LUKE
Why don’t you play quarterback.

MR. WILLIS
(stunned)
What are you insane? Who’s going to play running back? Average twenty yards per carry, break and elude tackles all the way down the field and stomp his way into the end zone? Huh? Is it going to be you? Carl?!

He points to CARL, who we now see on his hands and knees nearby, scraping old gum off the floor. CARL looks at them.

CARL
That ain’t my bag baby.

MR. WILLIS
Fucking A.

LUKE
Fine I’ll do it.

MR. WILLIS
That, is what I thought. Meet me in the lounge during lunch we’ll go over the playbook.

MR. WILLIS leaves. LUKE walks over to CARL still on the ground.

CARL
(looks up)
Man you folded like a card house, built by a hippie, on a bad acid trip.

(he looks down again)

LUKE
Could you find a more obscure reference?

CARL
(looks up once again)
What?
INT. - CLASSROOM - LATER

The Classroom is dark; the only thing we can see is the television in the front of the classroom. We see black and white footage of Hitler and the Nazi party on the screen.

We hear a narrator overlay, maybe Morgan Freeman or even an Alec Baldwin type:

NARRATOR
So in conclusion the Nazis were bad. Really, very bad. Actually suspiciously bad.

We see the end credits roll up on the screen. LUKE turns on the lights in the classroom and with the illumination of the room many of the kids wake up from their naps.

LUKE strides over to the television and turns off the T.V.

LUKE
So that concludes our video, Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party: How Bad Were They?

CHARLES raises his hand.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Yes, question, Charlie.

CHARLES
That was a terrible film.

LUKE
More of a statement really. Why, I feel as if it dealt a valuable yet positive message.

CHARLES
A repetitive message. I mean we all knew the Nazis were bad.

REN
(interrupts abruptly)
Suspiciously bad.

LUKE
Thank you Ren.

REN
No problem.
LUKE
Anyway, that was the only video that I could find on such short notice.

REN
So what’s on the agenda now boss?

LUKE reads a schedule on his desk.

LUKE
Well if my schedule serves correct which it should, it is time to walk you down to music class. That sounds like a treat. Its probably a real learning environment down there, huh?

REN
Not exactly.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. - MR. BIRCHBECK’S CLASSROOM - MUSIC CLASS

The frame is filled up with the awkward mug of MR. BIRCHBECK, music teacher and acoustic guitar guru.

His hair, which is in the process of thinning dramatically, is in a short flattop but the back is longer, very en-proportional to the front, like a mullet but not quite that groomed.

He is wearing a plain t-shirt with a vest over it, which holds his three differently tuned harmonicas, and on the other side is his gold-plated pitch pipe.

He is the true archetype of musical visionary. His look is dramatically topped off with black sweat pants and Birkenstocks.

He is sitting in the front of the class on a stool. Posters ranging from Beethoven to Fleetwood Mac seemingly cover the walls.

LUKE stands up in the back of the classroom just taking in that, which is music class here at Panama Elementary.

MR. BIRCHBECK is strumming away a tune on his guitar and then abruptly stops.
MR. BIRCHBECK
So can anyone name the notes that I cleverly and slyly crafted together to form that little ditty?

A student raises his hand.

STUDENT
G. Or something along those lines.

MR. BIRCHBECK
Not quite but its alright. Let me tell you a story about another young man who didn’t really even know music but overcame this retardation and became simply phenomenal in the field. Anyone familiar with a Mr. Jimi Hendrix? A raise of hands please.

A few students raise their hands.

MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
Come on, don’t be shy. Touch some sky.

Reluctantly and slowly more students raise their hands.

MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
Good. I mean that is great, the majority of you are with me. So you guys know that Jimi Hendrix, was arguably the greatest guitar player of all time. Well let me slap you with some knowledge, you don’t know. Hendrix, didn’t even know how to play the guitar properly, he just memorized songs. There was no chord progressions, music notes or names like A's, B's, C's, G's or whatever. In his world, it was strictly what strings to hit on his guitar and where to hold down on the neck. So the lesson here is even though you guys don’t know about reading music or the specifics of music appreciation that should never hold you back from achieving true musical genius. As I myself did years ago.

CHARLES
Wow, your humble.
REN
That sounds made up, is that made up?

The other children laugh at the teacher. MR. BIRCHBECK seems oddly offended.

MR. BIRCHBECK
How dare you. Both of you. I open my classroom for creative learning and you throw it back in my face and insult me. I wish I could express in words what I am feeling right now but instead I will sing it in a song I wrote for occasions just as this.

He pulls out his pitch pipe and tunes his guitar, without true reason. He then proceeds to pull a harmonica holder out of nowhere and put it around his neck and inserts one of his harmonicas.

He strums down on his guitar slowly.

MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
You, back there, Mr. Wilson.

LUKE responds but is taken aback when he is called upon.

MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
Yes, you. Come on up I need someone to man the tambourine and you seem rightly fit.

LUKE
I’ve never done that.

MR. BIRCHBECK
You would never had needed to until now. Come on get up here. If Linda McCartney could do it, so can you.

The class starts a slow chant: MR. WILSON

LUKE
What the hell.

He jogs to the front of the classroom and grabs the tambourine out of MR. BIRCHBECK’S hand.

MR. BIRCHBECK
I need something slow, yet at the same time, rhythmic.
LUKE plays a default tambourine beat, simple and slow.

    MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
    Speed it up a little.

He speeds up just a bit.

    MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
    That tempo is a little rapid for my
taste. What do you say we bring her
down a peg.

He slows down a tad and gets the thumbs up from BIRCHBECK. BIRCHBECK starts to play an upbeat and soothing guitar intro.

    MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
    I wrote this one after I was semi-
honorably discharged from the war.

    LUKE
    (still beating the
tambourine)
    Oh, Vietnam?

    MR. BIRCHBECK
    That goes without saying.

MR. BIRCHBECK begins to sing the song, the lyrics a tad disturbing and almost surreal for the students only because the tempo is a little upbeat compared to the stark lyrics.

    MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
    (singing)
    First it was the Indians, you raped
and killed their people. Then it
was the black man you singed and
burned their steeple. Then it was
the women they could not even vote.
The worst thing to ever happen to
the world were the rich white
folk...

LUKE seems dumbfounded. As are the students.

    MR. BIRCHBECK (CONT’D)
    Sing it with me, rich white folk.

    FADE OUT.

INT. - CLASSROOM - LATER

LUKE is in front of his class. They finish reading a short story.
LUKE
So, the main character in the short story is whom?

A student raises their hand.

STUDENT
I think it was the narrator.

LUKE
Good, I mean your wrong but good.

JENNIFER raises her hand.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Yes, Jennifer.

JENNIFER
I think, well no, unlike him, I know, that the main character is the farmer.

LUKE
Good. Now what is the writer and the main character trying to stress here? What’s the focal point?

JENNIFER
Well I think it deals with what the farmer thinks is the most important thing in life. In his case he almost sells his soul for a healthy crop so we can see he thinks wealth is the most important thing in life.

LUKE
Very good. Financial security everybody, we got that. Its the most important thing in life, we all agree.

REN raises his hand.

LUKE (CONT’D)
My man Ren, an objection?

REN
Yeah. I don’t think money is all that matters. There’s other things in life more important.

LUKE
Well, examples.
REN
How about your family. Or more specifically the safety of friends and loved ones. That’s certainly more important than money, in my opinion.

Another student speaks up.

STUDENT 2
Good call Ren. To friends and family.

LUKE
Yes Ren. Good call. Anyone disagree?

JENNIFER raises her hand and without being called on speaks.

JENNIFER
I sort of feel, in a way, money and wealth can be more important.

REN
In what way? That’s absurd.

JENNIFER
Well, I think money can buy security for your family, money can help guarantee their safety.

LUKE
That’s an interesting thought, Jennifer. Money buying your safety. Can I ask you something though?

JENNIFER
I guess.

LUKE walks up next to her.

LUKE
Well Jennifer. Lets pretend, for a minute that I sit here before you and tell you Ren over there is planning on coming to your house later tonight and burglarizing your home. Its hypothetical and just a threat.

JENNIFER
Alright.
LUKE
Fine. So the threat is out there. SO you take the most important thing in the world to you, your money and use it to protect yourself and your family. Buy security systems, guard dogs and whatever need be to protect yourself.

JENNIFER
Yeah that’s right like I said money can buy security.

LUKE
But can it really? So, your sleeping at home comfortable in your bed and you hear a noise downstairs. You walk down cautiously and you see Ren, clad in all black, wearing a ski mask climbing through your open window. He’s in the house.

The class laughs.

REN
(deep voice)
Oh yeah.

LUKE
You see, he’s disabled the security system and I won’t even tell you how he got rid of the dogs and he’s on his way to burglarize your home. Your vulnerable, your family is vulnerable and what do you do? Pull out your check book? Credit cards?

JENNIFER
I don’t get it.

LUKE
Can money truly buy security? Can money buy anything, really? Well anything valuable that is?

REN
It can’t buy love or happiness.

STUDENT
Or friendship.

LUKE walks back up to his desk and sits down.
LUKE
So the most valuable things in the world cannot be bought.

They all nod.

LUKE (CONT’D)
That’s what I’m saying. That is what that story is saying.

The students have a look on their faces. Like they actually just learned something.

INT - CAFETERIA - DAY

Students slide their trays down the line, each grabbing miscellaneous foods that in a way distinguish each of their different personalities.

A slim kid grabs a salad, another larger kid passes it right up and just grabs the main course, something that we can’t exactly pin-point, definitely deep-fried, maybe a corndog, its always a guessing game in this cafeteria.

The slim kid pays the cafeteria lady for his food, and then it is the larger kid’s turn.

CAFETERIA LADY
What is this now?

LARGE KID
What is what. Oh this?
(pointing to his tray)
That’s my lunch, obviously.

We see the lunch tray contains merely the fried concoction, two cookies and a carton of chocolate milk.

CAFETERIA LADY
Now that’s hardly a lunch, dear.

LARGE KID
Well I feel as if its a lunch. I mean, its food and its drink aka, lunch.

CAFETERIA LADY
You probably haven’t heard but the state has made a new law that each student must have at least one serving of fruits and vegetables with their lunch. No if’s, and’s, or but’s.
LARGE KID
That’s a gyp.

CAFETERIA LADY
Why?

LARGE KID
Why? I’ll tell you why because I hate vegetables and only like a select group of fruit. None of which are available in this cafeteria.

CAFETERIA LADY
I think we have a wide variety of fruit available. I mean apples, oranges, bananas, pears, peaches, plums and the list goes on and on.

LARGE KID
Yet no tangelos, Pomegranates, kiwis, apricots nor any (scans the fruit selection) Papaya. And you try to call yourselves a cafeteria.

CAFETERIA LADY
You do know why we are making children eat fruit, right?

LARGE KID
Out of spite?

CAFETERIA LADY
No. Childhood obesity is now an absolutely staggering epidemic.

The child seems distraught, almost sad.

LARGE KID
Am I obese?

CAFETERIA LADY
(compassionately)
I’m afraid so, sweetheart.

LARGE KID
Bummer.
CAFETERIA LADY
Now go back there, get a salad and save yourself, before it's too late.

CUT TO:

INT. - LUNCHROOM - DAY

At a table in the back of the lunchroom sits LUKE, reading over a newspaper and eating a small lunch.

Suddenly we see MR. SHERWYN. He sits next to LUKE and holds a box of something in his hand.

LUKE
Oh, hey. What's going on Mr. Sherwyn.

SHERYWN
Not a damn thing. Want some granola?

He opens the box he's holding and offers some granola to LUKE.

LUKE
Granola, that's what you eat for lunch, ay?

SHERYWN
Sure. It keeps me young. I used to go for the bars and whatnot. But this stuff in the box is so much more natural, it's organic, it's like the closest thing to consuming nature.

LUKE
In that case I guess I'll take some.

SHERYWN
Far out. Hold your hand out.

LUKE holds out his hand flat out like a small child. SHERWYN seems irate.

SHERYWN (CONT'D)
Come on, cup it!

He cups it and takes a handful of granola. He throws it in his mouth.
SHERWYN
Huh? What do you think? Good, right?

LUKE
It’s good, it is good.

It isn't good, we can tell because he hasn't truly swallowed it yet but he pretends it's delicious anyway. He finally swallows it. Granola usually tastes alright but this isn't just any granola, this is Mr. Sherwyn’s granola.

SHERWYN
So, I heard through the grapevine that your playing in the football game. Any truth in this?

LUKE
Well Willis was just relentless he wouldn’t leave me alone until I said yes.

SHERWYN
So he muscled you into it?

LUKE
Hardly. I mean I know I shouldn’t have said yeah but frankly, I’m kind of looking forward to playing. As weird as that sounds.

SHERWYN
Oh, so your good?

LUKE
Not to pat myself on the back or anything but yeah.

SHERWYN
Well this we will see.

LUKE
So what about you, do you usually play?

SHERWYN
I mean I’m always on the team but I never played before. I’m a alternate tight-end but no one ever gets hurt.

LUKE
Surprisingly. But you don’t really even want to play do you? (MORE)
LUKE (CONT'D)
You just kind of go through the motions and everything.

SHERYWN
Well, honestly? I have always wanted to try it. It looks like loads of fun but Willis would never let me. I mean who am I? The art teacher.

LUKE
Well, I can try and get you some play time. I mean I am the quarterback and all.

SHERYWN
(ecstatic)
Really? You’d do that for me?

LUKE
Oh yeah, no problem.

SHERWYN
Man, thank you, I’ll owe you.

LUKE
Oh, don’t even mention it.

LUKE gets up and prepares to leave.

SHERYWN
Oh hey, you want some more granola? For the road?

LUKE thinks for a second and then sticks his hand out. He gets a nice helping of granola and walks away.

EXT. - OUTSIDE CAFETERIA/HALLWAY- DAY

LUKE comes out of the cafeteria doors and immediately dumps his handful of granola into a nearby trash barrel.

He makes his way to a nearby drinking fountain and indulges himself into the luke-warm almost acidic tasting water.

A voice is heard and it surprises LUKE.

VOICE (O.C.)
You know there is better tasting water in the teacher’s lounge.
LUKE turns around, only to see DANA ERICSSON, a fairly good looking blonde woman, about 26 years old, he is taken aback because a normal looking woman such as herself should never be found in a place like this.

DANA
The sour tasting, warm water is usually reserved for the students.

LUKE laughs while wiping his mouth dry.

LUKE
I take it you are?

DANA
Dana Ericsson.

LUKE
Are you a teacher, or?

DANA
Of course, I teach fourth grade two classes down from yourself. I heard Mr. Lowell’s replacement was here today and I just wanted to introduce myself.

LUKE
Well the pleasure is all mine.

DANA
Well do you want to go into the lounge with me and grab some coffee?

LUKE
Well, we just met (beat)
But what the hell.
(LUKE checks his watch)
I got ten minutes to spare anyway.

INT. - TEACHER’S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

DANA and LUKE walk into the lounge and MR. SAGE walks right past them.

LUKE
Hey Mr. Sage.

MR. SAGE
Go fuck yourself.
MR. SAGE, steams right out of the door.

LUKE
Well if you couldn’t tell, he probably doesn’t like me.

DANA laughs briefly. Then collects herself.

DANA
Well that’s more then I have heard him say to anybody recently.

LUKE
Well then I should be honored, right?

They laugh. LUKE and DANA walk over to the coffee pot. She pours a cup for herself and one for LUKE.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Coffee, sensational.

DANA
Never heard anybody so fond of a cup of coffee.

LUKE
Oh well, you should of been there. This morning it was this guy, with this silo of coffee, he wouldn’t let me have any, it wasn’t a pretty sight. Let’s just leave it at that.

DANA
Sounds that way.

LUKE
Yeah well, let’s just say I had to kick some ass and take some names. But don’t you worry this guy knows not to mess with me again.

DANA
Let me guess. Mr. Willis?

LUKE
That’s him. That’s the son of a bitch that wronged me. You familiar with the gentleman.

DANA
You can say that.
LUKE
Well then you know how much of an asshole he is.

DANA
Yeah he’s my fiance.

It's like she just dropped a bomb on him.

LUKE
Fiance. Your marrying that guy?

DANA
That’s usually what a fiance is.

LUKE
Well it’s a small world.

DANA
Nope. Just a small school.

LUKE
Congratulations, good luck or whatever.

DANA
Well thank you.

They walk over to the nearby couch and sit down.

LUKE
So how did you guys end up hitting it off? If you don’t mind me asking.

DANA
Well you know how these things go.

LUKE
Oh, I’m sorry, lack of options?

DANA
No. There’s a side to him that no one sees but me. A good side, a loving side.

LUKE
Well good luck with that.

DANA
Thanks, I guess.
LUKE
Well this whole thing is kind of funny.

DANA
Why?

LUKE
Because until about two minutes ago I was going to ask you out on a date, or something. I guess that’s dead in the water.

DANA
That’s a shame.

LUKE
So what was the first date like? I’m thinking (BEAT) Bowling? He probably yelled at you and made you keep playing until you bowled like a two-fifty, two-seventy five. Was that it? Bowling?

DANA laughs but not for long.

DANA
We went to a Beatles concert.

LUKE
(confused)
Like The Beatles. John, Paul, George and the drummer?

DANA
Well a mock band. Impersonators. You see that was the first real connection we had, The Beatles. He loves them and I love them. It built off that.

LUKE
Well I love the Beatles. I always felt as if they were the best band of all time.

Out of nowhere from behind the couch comes MR. BIRCHBECK, he interrupts.

MR. BIRCHBECK
Couldn’t help but notice you referring to The Beatles as the best band of all time.
LUKE
Yeah, So?

MR. BIRCHBECK
Well that crown would belong to The Rolling Stones not the Beatles.

LUKE
Well that’s debateable. Your opinion, really.

MR. BIRCHBECK
Well I being a musician feel as if my opinion holds just a little more weight than yours.

LUKE
Well let’s agree to disagree.

MR. BIRCHBECK
Well certainly.

As quickly as he appeared, MR. BIRCHBECK disappears.

LUKE
That’s a strange guy. Actually, can I speak frankly?

DANA
Be my guest.

LUKE
Well this administration is full of strange and awkward people.

DANA
I don’t know, I mean there sure are a few characters.

LUKE
Characters? Have you met the music teacher or Mr. Sherwyn? How about Carl the janitor? Its like a goddamned David Lynch movie in here.

DANA
Hey, Carl is a sweetheart.

LUKE
That may be so but, still. Come on.

Suddenly MR. WILLIS comes into the lounge. He alerts his presence with a yell.
MR. WILLIS
Who’s ready to kick some
prepubescent ass? Who wants to kick
the shit out of these little tykes?

LUKE
Oh god. Its him.

DANA
Oh, stop it.

MR. WILLIS makes his way towards DANA and LUKE.

MR. WILLIS
Hey sweetheart.

He kisses her on the cheek and sits between LUKE and DANA on
the couch. He throws a packet of papers on LUKE’S lap.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
So here they are.

LUKE
What’s this?

MR. WILLIS
The plays.

LUKE
Our plays?

MR. WILLIS
No their plays.

LUKE
The children’s?

MR. WILLIS
Yeah.

He seems to be laughing erratically. LUKE stares blankly. MR.
WILLIS composes himself.

MR. WILLIS
Yeah you see, we got them right
where we want them. Directly amidst
our cross hairs. Now all we got to
do is lock it, load it and pull the
trigger.
LUKE
They’re kids. Not our cross-town high school rivals. Aren’t you taking this a bit to far?

MR. WILLIS
To far? If by to far you mean the ambition and the hunger to win anyway necessary then I’ve taken it above and beyond.

An awkward silence ensues.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
Go ahead. Open it up. Peek inside. They’re running a cute little system. But I’ve taken it apart from every angle, they’re getting nothing past this guy.

LUKE
So where are our plays?

MR. WILLIS
I’ve got em’. Don’t you worry I got them right here.
(pointing to his head)

LUKE
So they’re not on paper?

MR. WILLIS
On paper? What are you cracked? And what, leave a paper trail? Give those fucking kids a chance to steal my plays? No way,
(BEAT)
Jose.

LUKE
Your gonna need to calm down.

MR. WILLIS
No. Your gonna need to calm up and get your head in the game. The plays, don’t worry you’ll get them soon enough. I’m going to go change, I expect you to do the same. See you on the field in ten.

LUKE
I have no other clothes.
MR. WILLIS
Check your cubby.

CUT TO:

INT. - STAFF BOXES - MOMENTS LATER

This is the room with all the staff boxes. LUKE scans over the boxes and then finds a box that is labeled: LOWELL but scratched out and replaced with WILSON.

He sees a pair of black athletic shorts and a white shirt folded nicely. He unfolds the shorts and looks at them.

LUKE
(to self)
Nice.

Then he unfolds the shirt and it says: TEAM WILLIS.

LUKE (CONT’D)
(inaudibly mouthing)
What the fuck?

CUT TO:

EXT. - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

This is not an actual football field but just a big open space of grass next to the playground where the children can play soccer, baseball or in this case a game of football.

All along the sidelines are children of all grades sitting. Just anticipating what is about to go down.

In the middle of the field we can see MR. WILLIS stretching, he is wearing a neon green tank top that says TEAM WILLIS, a pair of white sweat pants, and a white Adidas headband he’s clearly come ready to play.

LUKE steps onto the field he is wearing his uniform.

MR. WILLIS and LUKE meet in the middle of the field.

LUKE
Why are you wearing that? Why don’t we have the same uniforms?
MR. WILLIS
Cause I’m the leader, I have to make a statement. Anyway, are you ready to play?

LUKE
Somewhat?

MR. WILLIS
(quietly)
Did you study their plays?

LUKE
Do you mean in the ten minutes since you gave me the plays have I read over them? No.

MR. WILLIS
(irate)
Why not?

LUKE
I refuse. I believe in equal opportunity and a little concept called fair play.

MR. WILLIS
That’s fair. You respect the opponent. I don’t but whatever. I guess we’re gonna have to play the little fuckers straight up. Well fuck it.

LUKE
Oh, I was going to ask you, do you think Mr. Sherwyn could get some play time?

MR. WILLIS

LUKE
Yeah.

MR. WILLIS
That ogre couldn’t play a slot machine let alone football. Where could he play?
LUKE
He say’s he’s been alternate tight end, forever.

MR. WILLIS
(stunned)
Who made that son of a bitch an alternate. He can’t play football.

LUKE
Look you don’t even know the guy.

MR. WILLIS
Hey don’t put this on me. I tried to get to know that guy. I once had a conversation with him for ten minutes on why he keeps a picture of Jerry Garcia in his wallet. One time he told me he sneaks onto private property just to pick flowers. Know what else he told me that he named his twin sons Buddy and Herbert, just so he could call them Herb and Bud for short. This cat is fucked up.

LUKE
I know. I know he’s a little cooky and out there but he just wants to play. So can he play or not?

MR. WILLIS
So you vouch for him?

LUKE
Yes.

MR. WILLIS
Fine but one slip up and its your ass.

FADE TO:

EXT. - FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

A group of about eight teachers including LUKE stand in attention towards MR. WILLIS, who reminds us of a really lame version of Sgt. Hartman from FULL METAL JACKET.

A few noticeable teachers at attention are: MR. SHERWYN, MRS. HERDER, MR. BIRCHBECK and of course CARL the janitor, not exactly a teacher but he plays anyway.
MR. WILLIS paces back and forth in front of the row of teachers and then stops in front of Mr. SHERWYN.

SHERWYN is sweating profusely and is wearing the TEAM WILLIS shirt only his is tye-died.

MR. WILLIS
(forcefully)
Mr. Sherwyn, I just gave out these shirts this morning how in the hell did you have enough time to turn it fucking rainbow. You look like you should be marching in a fag parade.

CARL interrupts.

CARL
That might not be politically correct. I believe the preferred nomenclature is gay pride parade.
(BEAT)
Sir.

MR. WILLIS
(outraged towards CARL)
What janitor? Did you say something custodian? This doesn’t concern you. If a kid throws up his lunch by the monkey bars that’s your deal. Somebody tries to piss in bathroom, misses and the walls become soaked with urine, that’s when you throw in your two cents but until that time let’s keep that mouth shut.

CARL
Sorry sir.

MR. WILLIS
Now back to Mr. Sherwyn.
(looking at Sherwyn)
You know what your problem is?

SHERWYN
I’m selfless?

MR. WILLIS
No. You aging hipster. You think your the cat’s meow and that your values and way of life seem genuine but realistically their moronic and make no sense.
(MORE)
What’s the matter you couldn’t find a jersey made of hemp? Huh? Peace and love my ass. Clean yourself up, take a shower and shave your beard, the hippies lost.

SHERWYN somewhat enjoys this in a weird, weird way. He faintly smiles.

MR. WILLIS

What are you smiling at green peace? You tree-hugging beatnik, your nickname on this field today will be the green machine. Congratulations your playing football.

He slaps SHERWYN on the cheek. SHERWYN just absorbs the hit and keeps staring forward and once again faintly smiling.

WILLIS steps up to MRS. HERDER.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)

Mrs. Herder. The only thing this school knows you for is what? What’s your claim to fame?

MRS. HERDER

I would have to say that it’s because my classes score the highest on the state tests each year.

WILLIS makes an obscene buzzer sound with his mouth.

MR. WILLIS

Wrong. The reason people know you is for that limp. The awkward, crippling of that leg to the likes of which I have never seen, is what your known for.

BEAT.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)

When a student asks me who Mrs. Herder is I tell them, the lady that limps, you can’t miss her. And you know what they retort?

MRS. HERDER is silent. She is utterly offended and who wouldn’t be.
MR. WILLIS

They retort, “Oh, that freak show.”
So what’s the story of that limp anyway.

MRS. HERDER

If you must know, I’ll tell you.
When I was a teenager I was riding on the back of my boyfriend’s motorcycle. One late night while coming home another car clipped us from behind. He died. I came away with nothing.

MR. WILLIS

(pointing to her leg)
Except that limp.

MRS. HERDER

What’s the point of this? If it’s to prove your an asshole, good job.

MR. WILLIS

That’s fair. Do you know what that limp is? What it makes you?

MRS. HERDER

I always felt it a reminder to myself to never take life for granted, that any day could be your last and you should thank god everyday that you’re alive.

These comments seem to spring an emotional moment but sadly it is broken up by MR. WILLIS.

MR. WILLIS

Wrong.

MRS. HERDER

Wrong?

MR. WILLIS

Yes, that is wrong. That leg, your limp. It’s an emotional block, an impediment if you will. It’s the only thing holding you back from playing your heart out here today and proving something to yourself and your teammates.

We see LUKE lean over and whisper to CARL.
LUKE
(whispering)
Man, this is borderline harassment, its getting out of hand.

CARL
(whispering)
Yeah but I kind of want to see where its going.

MRS. HERDER
Why are you doing this to me.

MR. WILLIS
Well, are you mad?

She nods yes.

MRS. HERDER
You riled up?

Once again she nods.

MR. WILLIS
Right about now don’t you want to just kill me?

MRS. HERDER
Yes.

MR. WILLIS
Well then, take that mentality, those feelings, onto the field with you and positively direct them towards us winning the game.

In a weird and twisted way she seems inspired. There is fire in her eyes. Last but not least MR. WILLIS walks towards LUKE, we can tell he’s been waiting a long time to dish out this speech.

MR. WILLIS
What can I say about you that hasn't already been said about abortion? Your worthless, criminal and a product of a night of heavy drinking and I will pretty much leave it at that.

Unlike the others LUKE clearly doesn’t accept this as some sort of twisted motivational speech.
LUKE
Your laying it on pretty thick, huh?

MR. WILLIS
Huh?

LUKE
I mean, criticizing Mr. Sherwyn for his social beliefs and crucifying Mrs. Herder for a handicap, you believe this to be motivational speech?

MR. WILLIS
Are you questioning my coaching techniques?

LUKE
No, those I know suck. I’m questioning your moral and intellectual values.

Everyone is intrigued by this exchange of words. It becomes silent while WILLIS mulls over a comeback.

MR. WILLIS
You stand up for yourself and your not afraid to be a man, that's exactly why you're on this team. See everybody This is how you handle yourself, this man is well composed and here to take nothing from anybody, that includes myself and finding someone who'll stand up to me is a seldom experience. Learn from this man. This is our quarterback. Round of applause.

The group of teachers begins a slow-clap, while LUKE stares MR. WILLIS straight in the eyes, unimpressed. Everyone knows this is a cop out answer because LUKE isn't so much standing up to MR. WILLIS as much as MR. WILLIS is backing down from LUKE.

CUT TO:

EXT. - FOOTBALL FIELD/GAME- DAY

In offensive formation we have CARL playing center, MR. SHERWYN as a slot receiver, MR. BIRCHBECK is playing a lineman, along with another unknown teacher.
MRS. HERDER awkwardly enough is on the end, as a wide receiver and MR. WILLIS is playing running back behind LUKE who is about ready to take his first snap.

The team looks like one of the most jumbled and pathetic that we have ever seen grace a field.

The opposing team of students seems to have no familiar faces but they looking hungry for a win.

LUKE
(yelling)
Red ant, Mary seven!

MR. WILLIS
(also yelling)
You got that everybody, Red ant, Mary seven!

LUKE turns around and faces MR. WILLIS.

LUKE
I’m the quarterback, I’ll call the plays.

MR. WILLIS
Alright, I’m easy.

This scene would be much more effective if slowed down (SLOW MOTION) for dramatic effect.

LUKE
Ready!

BEAT
LUKE (CONT’D)
Set!

BEAT
LUKE (CONT’D)
Hike!

Instantly, MRS. HERDER goes out, slowly but surely and SHERWYN runs a slant pattern up the middle, LUKE looks for the open receivers and sees MR. SHERWYN wide in the middle he prepares himself for the throw but before it leaves his hand MR. WILLIS snatches it out of his grip from behind and smiles at LUKE.

MR. WILLIS briskly jogs down the field, stiff-arming and jumping over kids as they try to pull his flag;
he throws a kid to the ground and steps over his body, his unbridled desire to score this touchdown is almost sick to look at.

He makes it to the end zone and does a flashy touchdown dance, by placing the football next to his crotch and rubbing it in what seems like a sexual inappropriate manor, then dropping it on the field.

MR. WILLIS
(yelling to nobody)
That’s right, son! Can you believe Riverside community cut this beast!

The game continues through montage:

The kids are on offense, the teachers or defending but not exactly well. The quarterback throws a touchdown pass to another kid; he receives it and then hands the ball back to the ref.

CUT TO:

LUKE is quarterback again and he passes to SHERWYN down the middle, SHERWYN runs it in for a touchdown but unlike MR. WILLIS he doesn’t injure any kids on his way to scoring.

CUT TO:

We see the students on the sideline enjoying the game, cheering on their fellow students, who we now see getting the ball intercepted by MR. WILLIS on a deep pass.

MR. WILLIS runs the ball down all the way into the end zone but out comes a penalty flag. The ref, who is a student himself, runs to the middle of the field.

STUDENT REF
Pass interference defense.

The students in the crowd applaud but MR. WILLIS on the other end of the field runs over to the STUDENT REF and gets in his face.

MR. WILLIS
What interference! Who are you?

STUDENT REF
The student ref, what of it?

MR. WILLIS
Well that’s a bad call junior.
STUDENT REF
Well I call them like I see them.

MR. WILLIS
Oh, is that right? Can I see your credentials?

STUDENT REF
My what?

MR. WILLIS
Your officiating credentials. Can I see them?

STUDENT REF
I got them. Don’t you worry your pretty little head, I’ve got them. Now get away before I pull the flag for unsportsman like conduct.

MR. WILLIS
Do it. I dare you.

STUDENT REF
Get away or I will.

MR. WILLIS
I double dare you.

As expected up goes the flag.

STUDENT REF
Unsportsman like conduct, fifteen yards.

MR. WILLIS
Oh that’s it.

He looks like he is going to charge the kid but LUKE intervenes and drags MR. WILLIS away.

CUT TO:

It is half time and we are at the sidelines. The scoreboard rings 14-7 in favor of the teachers.

MR. WILLIS is pouring a small cup of water on his head and drying himself off with a towel and being interviewed by a student JOURNALIST.

JOURNALIST
So put your first half performance in perspective for us here at the Panama press.
MR. WILLIS
Performance? What haven't I been doing? I opened the game with a seventy-five yard rushing TD, been a shut-down corner on defense and capped the first half off with an interception for a touchdown, so you rate me.

JOURNALIST
Very well. Though that touchdown was taken back due to defensive pass interference, so what's your take on the officiating thus far?

MR. WILLIS
Shoddy, at best. I gotta ask what game that ref was watching? Son of a Bitch.
(BEAT)
Strike that from the record.

DISSOLVE TO:
Its the 4th quarter. The scoreboard says 14-21, teachers up with two minutes left.

The teachers are on defense and the kids are fifteen-yards from their goal line.

The quarterback goes into shotgun formation and hikes the ball. After a few moments, MR. WILLIS runs in for the sack but the quarterback sees what we see, MRS. HERDER has blown her coverage and the quarterback heaves the ball into the end zone for the touchdown.
The kids are ecstatic and the teachers are down, they regroup in a huddle.

MR. WILLIS
(CONT'D)
Oh, this is great.

LUKE
It's not that bad we're tied, not losing.

MR. WILLIS
Tying is just as bad as losing. Maybe worse. I can't believe you Mrs. Herder.

He flashes an ugly face towards her.
MRS. HERDER
What, I didn't do anything.

MR. WILLIS
That kid exploited your limp for all it was worth, your pass coverage was beyond terrible and you may have cost us this game. But that's not anything, right?

LUKE
Calm down, we still have
(looks at clock)
A minute and a second to make this right again. This is the time losers are made and legends are born.

MR. WILLIS
Damn it.

LUKE
What?

MR. WILLIS
That was my line.

LUKE
Well sorry.

CUT TO:

The field is set, one minute left. The teachers are on the field, LUKE is in shotgun formation and all the receivers are set, including MR. WILLIS who is playing receiver.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Down, set, hike!

LUKE comes back and then drops into the pocket, he sees no one open, the students are on the teachers like white on rice but even more so.

He has left only one option, to run the ball himself, he takes off and escapes the first kid, the second kid tries to grab his flag but LUKE prevents this cleverly with a spin and juke that would put Randy Moss to shame.

He is inching closer and closer to the end zone but just as he approaches the end zone a student trying to grab LUKE’S flag inadvertently hits the ball out of his hands, resulting in a fumble near the end zone.
Another student rushes in picks up the fumble and strides his way to the end zone on the other side of the field. No one is going to catch the kid because nobody even wants to or tries for that matter, except WILLIS who runs swiftly to try to catch the kid but he fails as the kid high-steps his way into the end zone and then spikes the ball only as an exclamation point to their victory.

All the teachers are grouped in the middle of the field trying to catch their breaths. WILLIS runs up to them with a furious look on his face.

MR. WILLIS
Are you serious? Was I the only one chasing him. That was fucking ridiculous. I hate you guys.

MRS. HERDER
Well the feeling is mutual, trust me on that.

MR. WILLIS gets a look on his face that cannot be described, almost of disgust but a shade past that.

MR. WILLIS
Is that right? Mrs. "I couldn't play defense to save my life". Unbelievable, its going in the record books, hell the history books will always remember this year's administration as some of the most incompetent, sad losers to ever be on the fucking payroll! Led by the champion loser, Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILLIS looks at LUKE.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
Your lousy leadership will never be forgotten and quite frankly, I put all the weight of our loss on your shoulders.

LUKE
Uh, I thought you were the coach, so you take on the blame not this guy.
MR. WILLIS
I can blame whomever I want. Though
I will say, this fucking guy, Mr.
Sherwyn is the unsung hero of the
game. Him as well as myself were
the only ones who kept this game
close. For this I commend him.

SHERWYN smiles and walks up to MR. WILLIS, he then proceeds
to put his arm around his shoulder in a show of affection.

SHERWYN
You really think so, thanks
brother.

MR. WILLIS
Get your arm off me you fucking
ogre.

SHERWYN
I’m sorry, I just though since you-

MR. WILLIS
Pathetic, all of you. I’ll be in
the showers.

All of the teachers take off in different directions, except
CARL, SHERWYN and LUKE.

SHERWYN
It was a good effort. We tried and
if we’re going down in history as
losers at the very least we can be
lovable losers.

CARL
The lovable loser. Story of my
life. Now if you can excuse me, I
need to finish degumming the
sidewalks.

CARL leaves. DANA walks up to SHERWYN and LUKE.

DANA
So fellas, how’d the game go?

LUKE
You mean you didn’t see it?

DANA
Nope I was stuck in my class
grading some papers. You guys look
distraught, to say the least.
LUKE
well, so not to bore you with the
Particulars I will give you the
abridged version, basically we lost
and your Soon-to-be-husband went
off the deep-end and I have the
feeling that by the end of the day,
he may very well kill me.

DANA
Oh don’t be silly. How did you guys
really do?

LUKE
No, honestly, we lost.

DANA
Oh, wow. That has never happened.
Well the good thing is the kids
finally get a well deserved win.

LUKE
Try explaining that to your fiance.

INT. - CLASSROOM - DAY
LUKE comes into his classroom. He is still wearing his
football attire. The students are quiet, too quiet.

LUKE sits down at his desk. Someone finally speaks up.

CHARLES
Good game.

LUKE
Well Charlie, thank you. We tried
our best.

REN
My Dad used to tell me that
sometimes your best just isn't good
enough.

(BEAT)
Luckily, my mom divorced him and my
step dad, Bruce, told me that as
long as you tried that’s all that
mattered.

LUKE
That’s a valid point.

Another STUDENT stands up.
STUDENT
I say we give this man a round of applause.

He begins the slow clap. No one joins him. This is becoming awkward.

LUKE
That’s alright. Let’s just do some work. How about I take you guys over to Mr. Sherwyn’s, for art.

JENNIFER
We only do art on Fridays. It’s not Friday. It’s actually Monday.

LUKE
Who cares. Let’s just wing it.

CUT TO:

INT. - MR. SHERWYN’S ART CLASS - DAY

Finally we get to see the class that SHERWYN built, so to speak. The room seems awfully colorful, different paintings and portraits of landscapes grace the wall as well as original paintings by SHERWYN. Also seen are framed and autographed pictures of Bob Dylan, The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix and oddly enough Donald Fagen.

The students sit at different workstations around the classroom. In front of each of them sits a small chunk of modeling clay. They stare at MR. SHERWYN who stands in front of them holding his own ball of clay, somewhat instructing.

SHERWYN
Let the clay be you. Or you be clay, your choice entirely.
(Squeezing the clay in his palm firmly)
Remember art is everything and coincidentally everything is art.
Well more specifically everything can be interpreted as art.

A student abruptly speaks up.

STUDENT
Everything can be art?
SHERYWN
That’s correct, chief. The little doodles you make in class when you bored, art. When you deface your text books by putting little thought bubbles over the pictures with such clever saying as, man, I suck or I’m boring. That’s art.

STUDENT
Cool, I do-do that.

SHERYWN
As you should. And when you find yourself eating lunch and playing with the food on your tray, you know, rearranging the peas, turning your mashed potatoes into a volcano, that’s art. The point I’m trying to stress here is that creating art is easy. Its in all of us.

REN interrupts.

REN
Even me?

SHERYWN
Its in almost all of us. So go mold your masterpiece and go ahead and make-my-clay.
(chuckles)

No one laughs. Cricket chirps wouldn’t be enough.

SHERYWN (CONT’D)
Just a little art humor.

He swipes his hand over his head because he thinks they didn’t get it

The kids begin working. SHERYWN walks over to LUKE who is sitting in the back of the classroom.

LUKE
That was interesting, to say the least.

SHERYWN
Well I try. Hey come with me to go and put some of these little clay animals in the kiln.
We see a batch of oddly shaped clay farm animals ready to be hardened.

LUKE
Those are animals? I thought they were paper weights, who made those the kindergarten classes?

(SHERWYN (oddly offended)
No, I did.

LUKE
Oh. Any way we can’t leave the students here alone.

SHERWYN
Don’t worry I’ll just have my apprentice watch them.

LUKE
Apprentice?

SHERWYN
Yeah this teacher I’m training, the district sent him. He’s helpful, he’ll take care of shit while we leave.

LUKE
Oh. Whatever, I’m easy.

CUT TO:

EXT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

SHERWYN and LUKE walk through the hallway. SHERWYN holds the tray of clay animals.

SHERWYN
Your gonna love going to the kiln.

LUKE
We’re just going to the kiln right?

SHERWYN
Just going to the kiln, your funny.

They stop in front of a door, it seems to be CARL’S office.

SHERWYN
Open the door, man. My hands are full.
LUKE
This is Carl’s office.

SHERWYN
(smiling)
Yeah the kiln.

INT. - CARL’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS
SHERWYN isn’t shy about entering but LUKE proceeds with what seems like caution.

CARL is on his computer typing. He doesn’t acknowledge their presence.

SHERWYN
Hey, Carl. Here to use the kiln.

CARL
(staring at computer)
Whatever.

All of a sudden the door opens and in comes MR. SAGE. He seems paranoid. He looks out the door behind him and then proceeds to lock it.

MR. SAGE
Great, I’m not late.

LUKE whispers to SHERWYN.

LUKE
Late? For what?

SHERWYN
Don’t worry about it, come on just go sit down.

LUKE proceeds to sit down on a nearby sofa and MR. SAGE oddly enough sits right next to him. MR. SAGE seems anxious, he rubs his hands together in anticipation.

MR. SAGE
I’ve been waiting for this all day, I’ll tell you. Man, actually all week.

LUKE
(confused)
What’s going on? I’m a little in the dark.
MR. SAGE
You can say that again, fruit loop.

LUKE
Fruit loop? I think I’m going go back to my class. I don’t know what’s going on, I’m a little confused. I’m in Carl’s office, you trample in and then lock the door behind you and now I’m sitting here, not knowing what going to happen next. So maybe I should just leave.

LUKE begins to get up. SHERWYN appears and pushes him back down.

SHERWYN
Not so fast, cracker jack.

SHERWYN sits down next to them on the couch. He has a small box and places it on his lap. He opens it only to pull out a small baggy full of already rolled joints.

LUKE seems disturbed by this. Once again, who wouldn’t be.

LUKE
(stammering)
Is that-
I mean, are those Marijuana cigarettes. What are you fucking nuts?

SHERWYN pulls one out and lights it. He blows the smoke right in LUKE’S face.

LUKE (CONT’D)
You really are fucking nuts!

SHERWYN laughs and then passes the joint to MR. SAGE. Before he smokes it he looks at LUKE.

MR. SAGE
Your not gonna narc us out are you? Sherwyn, is this guy cool?

SHERWYN pulls out another joint, lights and inhales.

SHERWYN
(exhales)
Cool? Is that what your asking? This guy is fucking Peter Fonda.

They both just stare at him.
SHERWYN
Oh, he’s cool.

MR. SAGE
Oh, if he’s so cool then he’ll smoke this.

MR. SAGE pushes the joint into LUKE’S face. LUKE proceeds to push it away.

LUKE
Oh, I much rather get second-hand high, much easier, same effect.

MR. SAGE stares blankly.

MR. SAGE
Whatever,
(BEAT)
Girl. More for this cat, good thing too, I needed it.

SHERWYN
(In a daze)
You can say that again.

LUKE
Say, Mr. Sherwyn?

SHERWYN
What?

LUKE
What are kids doing while we’re gone?

SHERWYN
Like I said my teacher’s assistant is watching em’. They’re in good hands.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. – MR. SHERWYN’S ART CLASS – SIMULTANEOUS

In the front of the class sits the TEACHER’S ASSISTANT. He looks like an aged biker. Meaning in his early days he probably rode with the Hell’s Angels. Those days are over my friends, he now seems reformed.
His face is covered with a long scar and tatoos are clearly visible on his neck. He sports a formal attire, consisting of a sweater, khakis and unscuffed construction boots.

We enter the conclusion of his story.

TEACHER’S ASSISTANT
-So that’s the last time I did that for money. So I guess what I’m trying to say here is that, the angels, had no rules.

He abruptly comes out of his storytelling mind-set and looks at one of the students molding a clay snowman.

TEACHER’S ASSISTANT (CONT’D)
(Cheerfully)
Wow, look at that snowman, good job!

CUT TO:

INT. - CARL’S OFFICE - LATER

LUKE, SHERWYN and MR. SAGE are done smoking but now just sit in their drug-induced haze. Seemingly talking amongst themselves.

We enter their exchange:

LUKE
-So what I never got was, that little fucker found some spare change in the gutter and buys a wonka bar not knowing there was a golden ticket inside.

SHERWYN interrupts.

SHERWYN
It was a gamble.

LUKE
Yeah it was. I mean your eating cabbage water and the occasional loaf of bread, when your lucky, every night and a when an opportunity arises such as that, I mean finding money. You just spend it?
MR. SAGE
(Nods head)
Selfish move.

LUKE
How about Grandpa Joe, when Charlie brings home that ticket made of gold, that old coot starts singing and dancing like Gene Kelly in the fuckin’ rain! I mean if you got the stamina and agility of a twenty-five year old; why not get a job and support your family?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. - CARL’S OFFICE - LATER
They are still ranting.

MR. SAGE
I had this student, hell of a kid. He wrote phenomenal essays, aced all his tests and had the most extensive vocabulary I have ever encountered, child or adult. But, (BEAT) Frankly, he reeked of piss.

LUKE not paying attention to MR. SAGE, interrupts.

LUKE
And what about Charlie’s mom? Clearly she had to be working two jobs, poor thing. Why didn’t Charlie pick his mom for the magical tour, she deserved it.

CUT TO:

INT. - CARL’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER
They are staring at SHERWYN telling a joke.

SHERWYN
So the Priest tells the Rabbi, mind your meat and potatoes!

They all burst out in laughter.
MR. SAGE
(Pointing to SHERWYN)
This fuckin’ guy!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. - CARL’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

They are still in their post-high conversation but they are all sad, almost crying.

SHERWYN
(sad)
So when I went to the dance she was already there with John Reinhold.

LUKE
(Stunned)
No!

SHERWYN
Yeah, she said she was just playing around and wasn’t really going to the prom with me all along. Like as a cruel joke.

MR. SAGE
How dare her play with your emotions like that, it going to be alright.

MR. SAGE places his hand on SHERWYN’S shoulder

CUT TO:

QUICK-SILENT-MONTAGE-ENSUES:

First we see MR. SAGE acting like a mime in a box and LUKE and SHERWYN laughing hysterically.

CUT TO:

We see them passed out on the couch. LUKE in the middle has MR. SAGE’S and SHERWYN’S heads on each of his shoulders.

CUT TO:

MR. SAGE and LUKE sit on the couch as SHERWYN stands behind them.
They stare at SHERWYN as he makes a fake mustache with his finger across his upper lip and does an over the top “Nazi march”.

(Including high stepping and a hail Hitler to top it all off)

CUT TO:

INT. - CARL’S OFFICE - LATER

They are once again passed out in the same position. Suddenly we see CARL approach them. He nudges each of them on the shoulder in hopes to wake them.

Slowly but surely they wake.

LUKE
(groggy)
What time is it, Carl?

CARL
I think its time for you fellas to get back to work.

EXT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

MR. SAGE rolls out of CARL’S office first, looking paranoid as hell. He puts on his sunglasses, sticks his hands in his pockets and begins to whistle inconspicuously as he strolls on down the hallway.

MR. SHERWYN and LUKE come out next and begin to walk together towards MR. SHERWYN’S art class but then LUKE stops.

LUKE
You know what I’m going to head back to my class just send the kids over, will ya?

SHERWYN
Sure thing, boss. I will catch you on the flip-flop.

LUKE
Whatever.

They part ways. We follow LUKE as he walks down the hallway towards his class but along the way he passes by the BULLY kid from earlier.
LUKE (CONT’D)
Oh hey, I expect that paper on my desk by morning.

BULLY
(cheerful tone)
You got it sir!

LUKE keeps walking but we can see the BULLY making multiple obscene gestures behind his back. (I.E.: flipping the bird)

LUKE
(to self)
And they said Rome wasn’t built in a day.

He keeps striding along minding his own business when around the corner come who else but MR. WILLIS.

LUKE seems taken back to see him.

LUKE (CONT’D)
(to self)
Well this might be awkward.

MR. WILLIS is holding an unusually large stack of papers. They confront each other.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Hey Mr. Willis, that’s an awful lot of paper you got there. What did you cut down a forest?

He chuckles nervously.

MR. WILLIS
For your information, I just came out of the duplicating room, where for the last hour I’ve been cooking up these babies.

He hands him a paper off the large stack.

CU: The paper reads:

Dear Parents, I regret to inform you that quite a tragic event has taken place today within the confines of Panama Elementary. During the annual student/teacher flag football game, certain events transpired that frankly I nor anybody involved is proud of....

We see LUKE’S face as he reads the paper.
LUKE
What is this?

MR. WILLIS
That, is a letter of apology for our poor performance on the field during this afternoon’s flag football game.
(BEAT)
Scratch that, not my performance, I played my heart out, but I’m apologizing for you and the rest of the teachers. Just so you can save face.

LUKE
(confused)
O.K. Let me try and understand what you did here. You created a letter to the parents of the students emphasizing how sorry you are for their children, winning?

MR. WILLIS realizes that LUKE has a point but his ego won’t allow him to give in.

MR. WILLIS
(Nodding)
Yeah that’s right.

LUKE
Does that not strike you as a tad dumb?

MR. WILLIS
(fire in his eyes)
Are you calling me dumb?

LUKE
No, I’m calling your flyer dumb.

MR. WILLIS
(forcefully)
You take it back.

LUKE
I don’t think I’m going to.

MR. WILLIS
Are we doing this?

LUKE
 Are we?
MR. WILLIS
I think we are.

The line is drawn and they pick their sides. LUKE begins to roll-up his sleeves to decrease the chances staining them with blood. MR. WILLIS abruptly drops his stack of paper and sucker punches LUKE in the nose and he falls to the fetal position, his nose bleeds.

MR. WILLIS then kicks LUKE in the ribs three to four times, we feel his pain.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
(mimicing)
“Oh I’m the new guy, I’m so much better than the old guy, I want your coffee, cause I’m the new guy. Nah-nah, nah-nah smart comment!”

MR. WILLIS moves back and takes in what just happened. After a moment he picks up his papers and looks at LUKE once again.

MR. WILLIS (CONT’D)
Now stay the fuck away from me.

He walks away.

LUKE is on his back and stares at the sky for just a moment, he sits up and grabs his stomach wincing in pain.

A door behind him opens up and we see DANA. She is apparently trying to see what all the commotion is. She then sees LUKE on the ground, nose bloody and in pain.

DANA
Oh my gosh, what happened to you!?

LUKE
I slipped.
  (groans in pain)

DANA
You slipped? It looks really serious. Are you alright?

LUKE
Yeah.
  (looks at the ground)
  Fuckin’ linoleum.

She reaches her hand out to help him up. LUKE looks at it for a second and then grabs it. He stands to his feet.
LUKE (CONT’D)

Thanks.

DANA

No problem. SO you want me to walk you over to the office or something?

LUKE

No, I’ll be fine. I gotta get back to class.

DANA

Alright. Your sure your gonna be fine?

LUKE

Yeah don’t worry about me I’m going to be alright.

She seems to know something is up. They look at each other for a moment. Awkward silence.

LUKE (CONT’D)

So, I guess I better go.

Just then a young girl peeks her head out of the door.

GIRL

Ms. Ericcson, we finished reading that poem.

(she sees LUKE)

What happened to that man? Why is his nose bleeding?

DANA

I’m not quite sure, Chelsea but why don’t you go back into class I’ll be there in a second.

LUKE

(to CHELSEA)

See you later, Chelsea, oh, and watch out for this linoleum, tell your friends.

CHELSEA nods. Then goes back into the class.

LUKE (CONT’D)

Well, I’ll let you get back to that poem. See ya.

He abruptly speed walks away.
INT. - CLASSROOM - LATER

The students are talking amongst themselves. SHERWYN’S assistant is sitting behind LUKE’S desk looking through his belongings.

LUKE walks in. The room goes quiet as the students stare at LUKE. The teacher’s assistant just gets up and begins to walk to the door to leave.

TEACHER’S ASSISTANT
Well your back, I’ll get out of your hair.

He exits oblivious to the fact LUKE’S nose is bleeding and that he seems beat-up.

LUKE strides casually towards his desk and flops down on his chair, closing his eyes for a quick breather.

The brief silence is broken:

REN
So what happened to your face?

LUKE opens his eyes slowly and looks at REN and the other students.

LUKE
Well Ren, funny story.

LUKE gets up and walks towards a sink in the back of the room. He talks while he rinses his face off.

LUKE (CONT’D)
I ran into Mr. Willis and apparently he had a problem with my performance at the flag football game.

LUKE goes to the paper towel holder and pulls on the handle for the roll of towel to come down for several seconds, creating a long piece of paper towel that is completely unnecessary for sopping up the little bit of water on his face.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Some words were said and I guess you could say, I don’t think I will be hanging out with him any time soon.
LUKE finishes drying of his face and rips off two chunks of the towel and carefully wads them in his nose, as to prevent blood from continuing to run.

REN
So, Mr. Willis beat you up?

LUKE sits back down in his chair and look directly at Ren.

LUKE
Well he fights dirty, so no. I didn’t lose. I was just trying to roll up my sleeves, you know to become more prepared to fight and he hits me in the face, unprepared. I didn’t know we were street fighting but regardless he really didn’t need to karate kick me either.

LUKE takes a deep, long, drawn out sigh.

LUKE (CONT’D)
It’s been a very long day today, when does school let out?

REN
We got some time, a few minutes.

LUKE
(To self)
It never ends, does it.

REN
What did you say, sir?

LUKE
Uh, nothing. What do say we learn something. Do you guys want to learn something?

REN
Sure. It’ll be a change.

LUKE stands up from his chair walks in front of his desk, in the center of the room.

LUKE
Ren, let’s talk about life.

REN
I’m game.
LUKE
First of all, here’s a little lesson on the part of life that stings the most.

LUKE walks to the chalkboard and writes: All of it.

Another student raises his hand.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Yeah.

STUDENT
All of it. All of it stings? Is that right? Life sucks?

LUKE
I didn’t say life sucks but I did say that along the way it stings like a bee. I mean, I would come right out and say that life does indeed suck but occasionally you get those days or sometimes weeks where nothing goes wrong and it seems like nothing can until something does, a la me coming to this school. Frankly, I had a nice thing going on before I came here, no disruptions or anything of the sort holding me back and putting me in awkward and unwanted positions but today, I experienced life’s sting and it sucks.

REN
It wasn’t us was it, I’m so sorry.

LUKE
Nope Ren, wasn’t you. It was it.

JENNIFER
It?

LUKE sighs.

LUKE
Your school.

LUKE grabs his jacket off his chair and starts to put things back in his briefcase and closes it. He then begins to head for the door.

A STUDENT stands up.
STUDENT
Where you going Mr. Wilson? You can’t just leave.

LUKE
I’m sorry, I have no choice.

REN
Yes you do. You could stay.

JENNIFER
Yeah, Mr. Wilson you don’t have to leave. Don’t you see you’re a breath of fresh air in this place.

REN
Yeah, a day and your already giving up? A day? That’s ridiculous, I’ve been here since kindergarten and when weird things happen or a teacher goes over the edge I don’t just leave and never come back, I mean, don’t get me wrong I would love to do that, (falsetto) Parents wouldn’t let me. (normal voice) But I keep on keeping on because I knew one day I could stumble upon someone like you in a place like this.

LUKE
And what am I to you Ren?

REN
A teacher.

LUKE
What do you mean a teacher? Mr. Sage is a teacher. Mr. Sherwyn is a teacher, and Mr. Willis has to have some type of teaching credential.

REN
No, you don’t get what I’m saying here. Let me explain it like this. The guys you are talking about don’t understand what school is supposed to be. I understand that by trying in school, my future will be easier, guaranteed. (MORE)
But somewhere in teacher school, I guess these guys thought that kids were impossible just to teach. Maybe they thought that they needed to spice up math, or make English funny. I mean, I appreciate a funny joke as much as the next guy, but the things these guys put themselves through, thinking this is what kids want. It’s like as soon as they got their teaching certificate, they had to get a masters in clown college. Have you seen a clown in real life? They’re just depressing. I don’t laugh, I just want to give them some money so they don’t have to cry themselves to sleep with out their fix of booze and cigarettes.

LUKE

(BEAT)
That was insane rhetoric but I liked it.

REN
Yeah, I’ve been mulling over that speech for a while.

LUKE
It was good.

REN
So, what do you say? Will you stay and be our teacher or do we have to beg?

LUKE
This isn’t begging? Then what is?

The class laughs, slightly.

REN
No, but seriously, don’t leave. Well I mean go home but please come back tomorrow because if you just leave and never look back you’ll regret it. Maybe not today and maybe not tomorrow but one day you will look back and say, “Man, that Ren was right, I regret leaving.”

Suddenly the bell rings. School’s out.
LUKE
Well that’s something I’ll have to
deal with down the road. Class
dismissed.

LUKE gathers his stuff and leaves the classroom. All of the
students are stuck to their seats and don’t seem to leave.

After a brief moment of silence:

REN
I wonder if he’ll come back?

EXT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

LUKE walks down the hallway which is extremely congested with
students rushing madly to get out of school.

As LUKE walks semi-rapidly down the hallway, not looking
back, DANA, leaving school also, sees him and catches up.

DANA
Mr. Wilson, wait up.

He doesn’t hear nor acknowledge her.

DANA (CONT’D)
(raising voice)

LUKE turns around and sees DANA. He stops with mixed
emotions. She catches up with him and they begin to walk
together down the hallway.

DANA (CONT’D)
So?

LUKE
So...what?

DANA
So how was your first day? Are you
excited to come back tomorrow?

LUKE
It’s not looking good.

DANA
What is that supposed to mean?

They suddenly stop in the middle of the school hallway.
LUKE
Really? I mean really? Do I really have to dive into it. You know, you’ve been here forever, it’s a goddamned circus around here.

DANA
Excuse me, what? A circus?

LUKE
If you don’t see it, I feel sorry for you but I’m not going to stay here another day and be exposed to this, this--
(he can’t find the words)

Suddenly we see MR. GEORGE approach them. He interrupts:

DAVID BRADY
--This fine institution. Is that what your looking for.

LUKE isn’t happy to see him. We can see LUKE has had enough and he just lays into MR. BRADY.

LUKE
Nope Mr. George I said circus and I meant fucking circus and your the fucking ringleader.

DANA
Luke that was inappropriate.

DAVID BRADY
Well Mr. Wilson congratulations your first day is your last. Your fired.

LUKE
(pleased)
THANK GOD! I thought I was going to have to quit. Thank you for freeing me from this fucking nightmare!

This exchange is now becoming quite a scene. Students circle LUKE as well as other teachers.

We see SHERWYN approach the commotion. MR. SAGE comes out of his classroom to see what’s up and like clock work we begin to see teacher after teacher gather around the LUKE and MR. BRADY exchange.
LUKE (CONT’D)
Hey Mr. Brady, you want to know why productivity is down? Why don’t you visit the fucking kiln, see what’s happening down there. Its a fucking party down there, good times!

We see MR. SAGE and SHERWYN try and remain casual.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Howabout the music teacher, what’s his deal!? He’s clearly unstable but yet he teaches children to sing fucking a capella. Is that smart? Does that make sense? Not to me.

We see REN and another STUDENT watching this melt-down.

STUDENT
Man, Ren you ever hear anyone drop the f-bomb that many times?

LUKE
Besides my dad. Nope.

MR. BRADY is confused by many of the things LUKE is saying.

In the background we can see MR. WILLIS handing out his flyers amongst the masses.

DAVID BRADY
The kiln, the music teacher what does all of this mean?

LUKE
I don’t know, why don’t you ask Mr. Willis. There’s a mature individual...Not! This fucking guy beat me up over a flag football game. Look at my nose, bloody! He needs anger management and psychological therapy. He’s fucking crazy. I believe because his parents didn’t love him enough. Which brings me to you Mr. Brady. You seem like a borderline pedophile, just saying. I see posters in your office about a child’s heart is for holding and you part your hair nicely, like Jeffrey Dahmer-ish. Its weird, just an observation, but you fit the mold.

(MORE)
LUKE (CONT'D)
Your not running the school anywhere but into the ground to be honest. I first get here this kid over here
(pointing to the BULLY who stands nearby)
Is spouting racist rhetoric towards that kid over there (points to AMIT, also standing nearby)
And I assume that its because of his ignorant parents or family but now I can see he’s a product of his environment and its sad.

We see a random TEACHER standing next to MR. SAGE and SHERWYN. He leans over to them.

TEACHER
(whispering)
What was that about the kiln?

They silently shrug their shoulders pretending that they don’t know a thing.

The melt-down continues.

LUKE looks around at everyone staring at him. He singles out PENNY and DEBBIE the office secretaries.

LUKE
(to PENNY and DEBBIE)
And you two, get some fucking last names will ya. Its fucking creepy.

They just nod.

We see REN and a few of his classmates.

REN
This meltdown is almost poetic.

They all nod in agreement.

LUKE looks at SHERWYN and he motions for him to come closer. SHERWYN approaches him.

LUKE
Mr. Sherwyn, your a good guy but just stop smoking the devil’s lettuce, will ya.
SHERWYN
I probably should. I probably will.
See ya buddy.

LUKE
And tell Mr. Sage to stop being
such an asshole. We only have one
life to live.

SHERWYN
Not in my religion but can do
buddy.

LUKE stares at DANA.

LUKE
Dana, Dana, Dana.

He walks up to her and puts his hands on her shoulders and
looks her straight in the eyes.

LUKE (CONT’D)
Get out of here. You don’t belong
here. Stay far, far way from this
place and from that man, whom you
call your fiance, he isn’t good
people. Trust me on this.

He lightly kisses her on the forehead. Picks up his briefcase
and walks away.

Suddenly out of his office walks CARL. LUKE stops to look at
him.

CARL
(confused)
What’s going on out here.

LUKE stares for a moment and then grabs CARL for a hug. He
speaks into his ear.

LUKE
Carl, outside of your overwhelming
fascination for Asian pornography
your the greatest person I met at
this place and I hold you above all
these people. Stay true to
yourself.

Everybody watches as LUKE walks away into the distance but he
turns around for one last look. He takes it in, a mental
picture perhaps and then steams out the front gate.
SHERWYN approaches CARL and puts his arm around him, for comfort.

CARL
(sadly)
He told me I was the greatest person he met in this place.

SHERWYN
Relax Carl, that’s not saying much.

LUKE disappears into the distance.

EXT. - BUS STOP - OUTSIDE OF PANAMA SCHOOL - LATER

LUKE sits at the bus stop outside of the school identically as he did at the beginning of his saga.

The bus approaches and LUKE boards.

INT. - CITY BUS - CONTINUOUS

LUKE gets on the bus, which is seemingly empty. Except for the lonesome HOBO who graced the bus once before earlier.

The HOBO stares at LUKE and smiles. LUKE stares back and smiles and for some unexplained reason he sits right next to him.

The bus strolls away and LUKE gets one last glimpse of Panama through the back window. He stares straight forward and never looks back.

FADE TO:

EXT. - PANAMA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

The morning of the next day. We see the front of the school.

INSERT MUSIC: “EVERYDAY I WRITE THE BOOK” BY ELVIS COSTELLO

Slow motion: sequence timed to music

The camera dollies into the school, through the front office doors.
INT. - FRONT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Camera continues to pull through the office and we see familiar faces pass the camera; DAVID GEORGE, PENNY and DEBBIE.

Camera pulls through the office into the school hallway.

EXT. - SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We pull through the hallway and see MR. SHERWYN holding a tray of ceramic animals. MR. SAGE, now with a much livelier appearance strolls right behind him.

We see the BULLY kid standing next to AMIT and hassling him a bit.

We see REN and a few of his classmates listening to MR. BIRCHBECK strum a guitar.

We continue to pull through the hallway. We see MR. WILLIS and DANA standing in front of a classroom. She slowly pulls a ring off her finger and hands it to him and then heads into a classroom, the door closes behind her.

MR. WILLIS, angry, throws the ring down the hallway. We see it slowly slide down the hallway and conveniently stop before CARL who is on his knees scraping old gum off the floor. He picks it up, looks around to ensure nobody is looking and sticks it in his pocket.

For some reason we are convinced that LUKE WILSON left his mark.

FADE OUT.