

The Big Picture

By

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FADE IN:

Shot of a single open window in a third story bedroom. Next to the window is a desk, and on the other side of the window a Fender telecaster sits in a stand.

On the flat roof of the same house sits a lawn chair, next to the chair is two empty twenty ounce ginger ale bottles.

Three stories down in the driveway we watch as a torn out piece of notebook paper filled with writing gently floats to the ground.

FADE OUT

ERIC(V.O.)

I should probably tell you why this happened...

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Same bedroom as the first shot. The window is closed. On the desk sits the two ginger ale bottles, they are full but open and resealed.

ERIC BICKFORD, 16, stuffs the ginger ale bottles in his pockets, opens the window and proceeds to climb out.

ERIC(V.O.)

I guess it can be traced back to something my father said...

Insert a still of ERIC'S FATHER, he is in his forties.

ERIC(V.O.)

He said, "life is a game." I always hated that... because I knew he was right.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Eric lies in bed and stares at the ceiling.

ERIC(V.O.)

Life is a game, you play and fake your way through life and you get far with everybody but yourself. That's what did it, the thought of the big picture, faking your way through life and settling for something less than you want.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Eric climbs up and walks over to the lawn chair.

ERIC(V.O.)

I want to make it clear that I  
don't blame my father for this, he  
told me the truth.

(beat)

But anyway, that's not the only  
reason this happened.

Eric sits down in the chair, places one ginger ale on the  
roof, opens the other one, and takes a sip.

ERIC(V.O.)

There was this girl...

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

We see MELISSA, a girl around Eric's age, sitting at a table  
reading. Eric sits a few tables back and hopelessly stares  
at her.

ERIC(V.O.)

Her name was Melissa, and I was  
madly in love with her.

An IMAGINARY MELISSA appears next to Eric.

IMAGINARY MELISSA

Why don't you just ask me out?

ERIC

I don't know. I can't. I'm frozen.

IMAGINARY MELISSA

Why not? I'm all alone. I'm  
basically begging for you to come  
over. I thought you loved me.

ERIC

I don't know.

The real Melissa gets up and walks away. Eric watches her  
leave in pain.

IMAGINARY MELISSA

Way to go, douche bag.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC

I know.

Imaginary Melissa disappears. Eric looks at where she was and sighs.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Eric is finishing his first ginger ale.

ERIC(V.O.)

But the thing is, with my friends  
those feelings didn't exist.

EXT. ERIC'S BACKYARD - DAY - FLASHBACK

Eric and two friends, RYAN and PAUL (both 16), sit around a table. Ryan is finishing a story.

RYAN

So I come home that night, and my  
mom asks me, "so who's Kelsey?"  
Because the whole conversation was  
recorded on the answering machine!

This get some laughter.

ERIC

The whole thing?!

RYAN

The whole fuckin' thing. Paul won't  
even come to my house anymore.

PAUL

Well yeah, Ryan, all I can imagine  
is your mom's face saying, "I know  
what you did, you said tits like  
thirty times on my answering  
machine."

ERIC

He has a point.

RYAN

Yeah, I guess so.

(beat)

Hey, I'm gonna get goin'.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC  
Alright, man, I'll see ya.

Ryan leaves. Long beat.

PAUL  
So anyway...

ERIC  
I'll see ya later, Paul.

PAUL  
Peace.

Paul leaves. Eric's face drops.

ERIC(V.O.)  
But alone I got depressed.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Eric opens the second ginger ale and takes a sip.

ERIC(V.O.)  
I had suicidal thoughts, but there were two things that kept me from going through with it. Number one, my little sister.

Insert a still of ERIC'S LITTLE SISTER (10).

ERIC(V.O.)  
Every time I thought about offing myself and then thought of her, I broke down and couldn't do it. Only when I thought of her, though.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Eric is slumped over his desk writing in a notebook. He gets frustrated, rips the paper out and throws it on the ground.

ERIC(V.O.)  
There was that, and the fact I couldn't write a suicide note I wanted people to read.

Eric leans back in his chair.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC(V.O.)  
This went on for a while.

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

Same set up as before. Eric and Imaginary Melissa sit next to each other. The real Melissa gets up and walks away. Eric and Imaginary Melissa watch.

ERIC(V.O.)  
Not finding the balls to ask out  
the girl I loved...

IMAGINARY MELISSA  
You're such an ass.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Eric is slumped over his desk writing in the same notebook. He angrily tears out the paper, crumples it up and throws it.

ERIC(V.O.)  
...Not being able to write a  
descent suicide note...

Eric sees a photo of his little sister on the desk. A tear rolls down his cheek.

ERIC(V.O.)  
...Then thinking of my sister and  
wondering how I could even consider  
killing myself.

CUT TO:

Eric lies in bed and just stares at the ceiling.

ERIC(V.O.)  
Just thinking got me depressed. My  
own thoughts fucking with my brain.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Eric sits and drinks. His phone vibrates in his pocket, He takes it out and opens it.

A text from Paul: yo wanna hang out 2day?

Eric texts back: cant busy

(CONTINUED)

Eric closes the phone and puts it on the roof next to the chair.

ERIC(V.O.)  
I hope nobody ever feels the way I  
do...

EXT. PARK - DAY - EARLIER

Eric and Imaginary Melissa watch the real Melissa leave. This time she walks past Eric. When she passes Imaginary Melissa is no longer there and Eric sits alone.

ERIC(V.O.)  
...But there comes a time when you  
get sick and tired of your own  
thoughts and call it quits.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - EARLIER

Eric walks in, sets his backpack on the counter, pulls two unopened twenty ounce ginger ale bottles out, and pours them half way out in the sink.

ERIC(V.O.)  
I came home today, mixed some of my  
father's whiskey with ginger ale...

CUT TO:

Eric picks up the two ginger ale bottles, now open and resealed, off the counter and walks out of shot.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - EARLIER

Eric sits at his desk and quickly writes in his notebook with the two ginger ale bottles on the desk.

ERIC(V.O.)  
...Jot this down and left.

Eric rips out the piece of paper, folds it, and puts it in his pocket.

He sees the picture of his little sister on his desk and turns it over.

He then takes the two bottles, shoves them in his pockets, opens the window and proceeds to crawl out, just like the first scene.

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Eric finishes the last of the ginger ale and places it on the roof next to the other one.

ERIC(V.O.)  
The one thing I ask is my little  
sister gets my telecaster.

Insert still of Eric's telecaster resting on the stand in his room.

ERIC(V.O.)  
Tell her I love her and that I hope  
every note she plays reminds her of  
me.

BACK TO THE ROOF

Eric stands up, sloppily, takes out the notebook paper (which we now know is his suicide note), unfolds it, and clenches it in his hand.

ERIC(V.O.)  
I just don't want to live in the  
world I think my father described.

ERIC'S POV:

Everything is drunkenly blurry. He looks at the note in his hand, then at the three story fall to the driveway. We hear a SKID, like he slipped. Everything gets shaky and hard to see.

CUT TO BLACK

There is a THUD.

FADE IN:

Shot of a single open window in a third story bedroom. Next to the window is a desk and, further away than the desk, a Fender telecaster sits in a stand.

On the roof of the same house sits a lawn chair, next to the chair is two empty twenty ounce ginger ale bottles.

Three stories down in the driveway we watch as Eric's suicide note gently floats to the ground. When it lands we see Eric's signature at the bottom.

(CONTINUED)

ERIC(V.O.)  
Sincerely, Eric Bickford.

FADE OUT

We hear a phone VIBRATING.

FADE IN:

ERIC'S POV:

He is still on the roof, no longer drunk. He sees his phone vibrating on the roof in front of him.

NORMAL VIEW:

Eric sits up and answers his phone, not looking at the caller I.D.

ERIC  
Hello?

RYAN(THROUGH PHONE)  
Yo, what are ya doin?

ERIC  
um... nothing.

RYAN(THROUGH PHONE)  
Oh, because Paul said you were busy.

Long beat.

RYAN(THROUGH PHONE)  
Hello?

ERIC  
Oh, uh... not anymore.

RYAN(THROUGH PHONE)  
Sweet, so we can come over?

ERIC  
Yeah, sure.

Eric hangs up and looks almost enlightened, like he has reached an epiphany.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY - LATER

Eric, Ryan, and Paul sit around the table and talk. Eric's V.O. overrides whatever is being said.

ERIC(V.O.)  
I used to think things happened  
randomly without purpose, and we  
just happened to be there.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Melissa sits and reads. Eric walks up to her.

ERIC  
Hi.

MELISSA  
(happy)  
Hi.

Eric's V.O. overrides what is being said.

ERIC(V.O.)  
And the big picture of life was  
just a series of disappointments  
and settlements.

Eric sits down across from Melissa they talk and smile.

EXT. ERIC'S DRIVEWAY - DAY - LATER

Eric's suicide note is still on the ground. Eric picks it up, lights it on fire with a lighter, drops it and gladly watches it burn.

ERIC(V.O.)  
But today I think...

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - LATER

Eric writes something at his desk.

ERIC(V.O.)  
...Maybe there's more to life...

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

10.

Eric tapes the piece of paper to his wall. Written on it is Eric's last V.O. (not the suicide note). At the bottom, separate from the rest it says: Maybe there's more to life than the big picture.

ERIC(V.O.)  
...Than the big picture.

CUT TO:

Eric sits in the chair and plays his telecaster.

FADE OUT